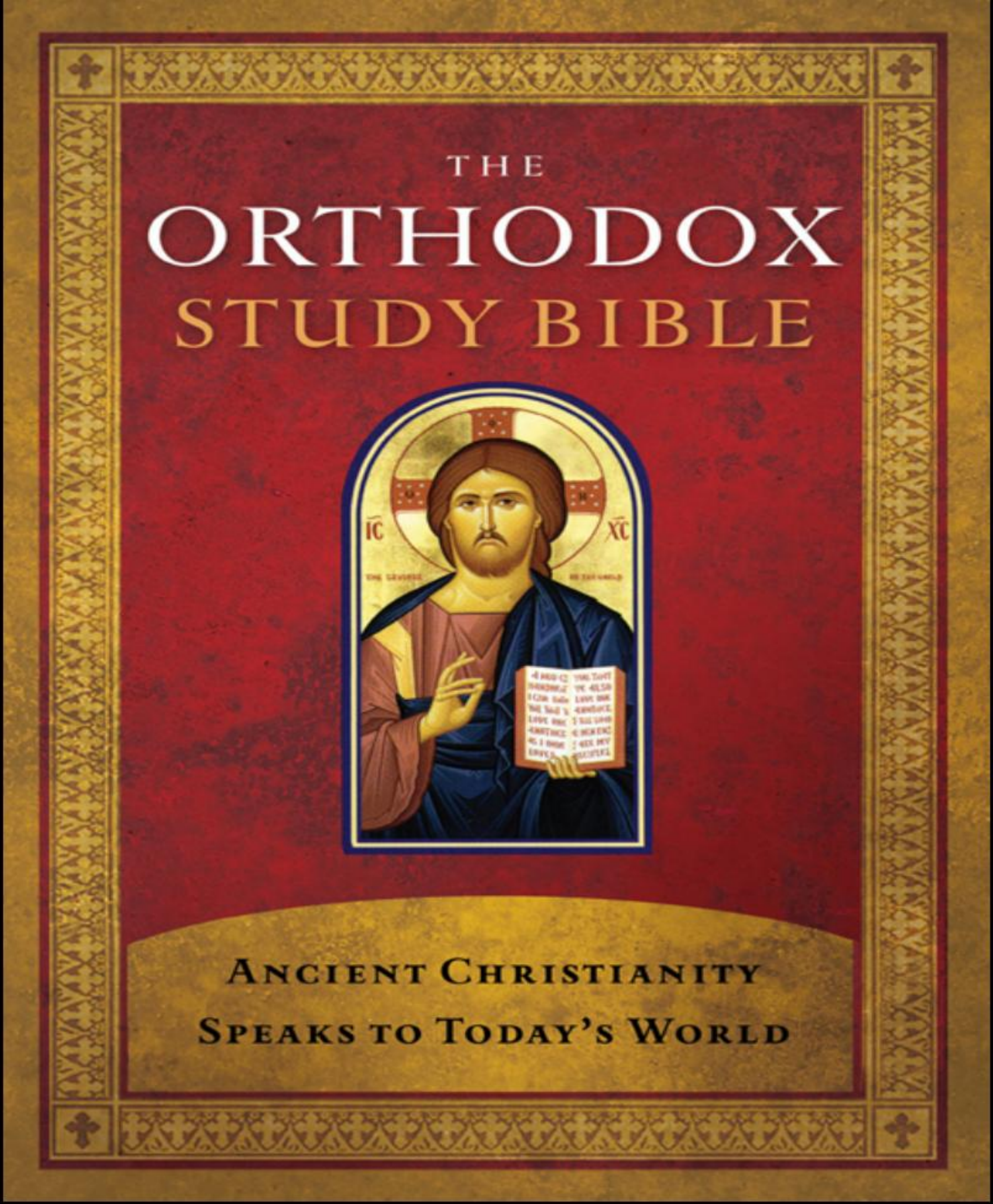

THE
ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY
SPEAKS TO TODAY'S WORLD

THE
ORTHODOX
STUDY
BIBLE

With gratitude to the
individuals who made this
Orthodox Study Bible possible

Dr. John and Helen Collis
and family

THE
ORTHODOX
STUDY
BIBLE

Prepared under the auspices of the
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of Orthodox Theology, Elk Grove, California.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Academic Community at St. Athanasius Academy is chaired by Fr. Jack N. Sparks, Dean, and includes Frs. Richard Ballew, Jon E. Braun, Michel Najim, John Finley, Polycarp Whitcomb, and Paul Goetz. Also included are Jerry Cripe, Howard Lange, Dr. David Lewis, Carol McFarland, Christina Tassos, and Alan Wallerstedt.

A number of clergy and lay scholars worked on the study material for one or more books of the New Testament and on the other supplemental sections, including Bishop KALLISTOS Ware and Frs. David Anderson, James Bernstein, David Barr, William Caldaroni, Marc Dunaway, John Elias, Antony Gabriel, George Gray, Peter Kreta, Michael Laffoon, John Morris, Constantine Nasr, Paul O'Callaghan, Jonah Paffhausen, Gregory Rogers, and Gordon Walker. Lay scholars Dr. Apostolos Athanassakis, Dr. George Cronk and Paul DeMerritt provided valuable input. Special thanks goes to Dr. Petros Vasiliadis for his work on the initial draft, and later editing by him and his colleagues at the University of Thessalonica. Additional help was supplied by the American Bible Society.

Providing help with the Old Testament text, notes and supplemental materials were: Bishops BASIL, JOSEPH, and KALLISTOS; together with Frs. Philip Armstrong, Richard Ballew, Michael Barclay, Jon Braun, William Caldaroni, Ross Caldwell, Joseph Corrigan, Thomas O'Dea, Dale Dickerson, John Elias, John Finley, Titus Fulcher, Sam Gantt, Michael Gillis, Isaiah Gillette, Peter E. Gillquist, George Gray, Daniel Griffith, David Hester, Benjamin Henderson, Don Hock, John Kalantzis, Nathan Kroll, Stephen Lilley, John Morris, Michel Najim, Patrick O'Grady, John

Peck, Eugen Pentiuc, Theodore Petrides, John R. Probish, Gabriel Rochelle, Gregory Rogers, Patrick Henry Reardon, John Reeves, Robert Sanford, David Sedor, Jack N. Sparks, Allyne Smith, Gordon Walker, Bartholomew Wojcik, Christopher Wojcik, Thaddeus Wojcik, Stefan Zencuch; Deacons John Chryssavgis, Stephen Holley, Polycarp Whitcomb, Moishe Zorea, Steve Ackley; and lay scholars Peter Bouras, Renie Carr, Andrew Copeland, Shaun Daugherty, Dr. David Ford, Dr. Mary Ford, Dr. George S. Gabriel, Anastasia Goetz, Paul Goetz, Denise Greaves, Beryl Wells Hamilton, Margaret Hock, Mickey Hodges, Joel Kalvesmaki, Mark Kern, John Lamberes, Dr. David Lewis, Theron Mathis, Martin McGinty, James Miller, Samuel G. Miller, Tatiana Miller, Newman Nahas, Dr. Michel Quenot, Reader Cyrl Shartz, Dr. Donald Sheehan, Gregory Gray Smith, John Stamps, Dr. Matthew Steenberg, Nancy Tentzeras, Nicholas Tentzeras and Gary Yee.

Special thanks to Fr. Robert Sanford, of Thomas Nelson Publishers, for his careful guidance, and to Katherine Hyde for her extensive and thorough copy editing. Computer entry for the final manuscript was done by Shirley Dillon and Carolyn Tanguay, who both deserve sincere gratitude.

Undergirding all these efforts were more than three hundred individuals, churches, and organizations who served as benefactors for this historic project. Their gifts were contributed to underwrite the costs of biblical and patristic research, organizational meetings and manuscript preparation. Thanks are due to all these donors including Mr. Sam Moore, retired chairman of Thomas Nelson, Inc., who established a generous matching gift program which motivated the great breadth of financial support for this effort. It is in the memory of his mother, Marie Ziady, that the New Testament edition was published.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Special thanks to the following major donors who, along with hundreds of others, underwrote the preparation of the Orthodox Study Bible Old and New Testament manuscripts:

Charles and Marilee Ajalat

Kevin Allen Family

Reagan & Connie Amerine

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

Richard Ayoob

John Bahas

Daniel & Judy Braun

Fr. Jon & Mary Ellen Braun

Dean Brunner

Dr. John and Helen Collis

William Craig & Family

John & Cina Daskalakis Family

George & Brenda Farah

Fr. Peter and Marilyn Gillquist

Greek Ladies Philoptochos Society–Grand Rapids, MI

Andrew and Katherine Kartalis

Spero & Stacy Kinnas

Mark Mellis

Sam and Peggy Moore

William and Josie Morrison

Bill & Hazel Nassir

Louis & Eleni Nicozisis

The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

Kathleen Pinson

Mike Ryan

Katherine Strakes

John & Patti Truslow

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE

The last decade of the twentieth century saw an historic event. In 1993, *The OrthodoxStudy Bible: New Testament and Psalms* was released as the first English Bible with study material reflecting the ancient faith of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

St. Athanasius Academy, which had organized this effort, began receiving requests for the completion of the Old Testament—a monumental task which involved not only preparation of the study notes and outlines, but also the presentation of an acceptable Old Testament text. Though the Orthodox Church has never officially committed itself to a single text and list of Old Testament books, it has traditionally used the Greek Old Testament of the Septuagint (LXX). However, in Orthodoxy's 200-year history in North America, no English translation of the LXX has ever been produced by the Church.

The contributors used the Alfred Rahlfs edition of the Greek text as the basis for the English translation. To this base they brought two additional major sources. The first is the Brenton text, a British translation of the Greek Old Testament, published in 1851. The availability of this work, and the respect accorded it, made it an obvious choice as a source document. Secondly, Thomas Nelson Publishers granted use of the Old Testament text of the New King James Version in the places where the English translation of the LXX would match that of the Masoretic (Hebrew) text. The development team at St. Athanasius Academy carefully studied these sources, along with other documents, to produce an English Old Testament text suitable for the project.

The organization of the Old Testament books, that is, their canonical order, was taken from *The Old Testament According to the Seventy*, published with the approval of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece. The first edition was released in June, 1928. The Old Testament text presented in this volume does not claim to be a new or superior translation. The goal was to produce a text to meet the Bible-reading needs of English-speaking Orthodox Christians.

In some Old Testament books, including the Psalms, the numbering of chapters, and sometimes individual verses is different in the LXX version from the English translation of the Hebrew text (such as the *New King James Version* and *New Revised Standard Version*). To help the reader, the LXX psalm number appears first, followed by the alternate number in parentheses, such as Psalm 50 (51).

In addition to the difference in the numbering of the Psalms, the books of Jeremiah and Malachi show differences in the chapter and verse numbering when comparing *The OrthodoxStudy Bible* alongside English translations based on the Hebrew Old Testament text. The following shows how the Hebrew and LXX texts compare in the books of Jeremiah and Malachi.

Jeremiah

Hebrew	**LXX**
1:1—25:13	1:1—25:13
25:14	——
25:15–38	32:1–25
26:1—43:13	33:1—50:13
44:1–30	51:1–30

45:1–5	51:31–35
46:1	——
46:2–25	26:1–24
46:26	——
46:27, 28	26:25, 26
47:1–7	29:1–7
48:1–44	31:1–44
49:1–5	30:17–21
49:6	——
49:7–22	30:1–16
49:23–27	30:28–32
49:28–33	30:22–27
49:34a, 35–39	25:14–19
49:34b	25:20
50:1—51:44	27:1—28:45
51:45–49	——
51:50–64	28:46–60
52:1	52:1
52:2–3	——
52:4–14	52:2–12
52:15	——
52:16–27	52:13–24
52:28–30	——
52:31–34	52:25–28
Malachi	
1:1—3:18	1:1—3:18
4:1–3	3:19–21
4:4	3:24
4:5–6	3:22–23

The New Testament of *The Orthodox Study Bible* is taken from the New King James Version of the Bible. It is a translation of the Received Text of the Greek New Testament, with notes showing major variants in the Majority Text and the critical text of Nestle-Aland and the United Bible Societies.

The introductory material, commentary and notes accompanying the Old and New Testament books are presented in a vocabulary understandable to a high school graduate. This is not a book of scholars addressing other scholars, but rather scholars clearly communicating the treasures of the

Orthodox biblical tradition with clergy and laypeople desirous of understanding their Christian beliefs and making them accessible to others.

Further, the decision was made that the notes and commentary which clarify the biblical text would emphasize the major themes of the Christian faith. Thus, the notes give primary attention to:

1. The Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

2. The Incarnation: The Divine Son of God becoming Man

3. The Centrality of the Church, the “dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2:22)

4. The Virtues: God’s call to His people to live righteous and holy lives in Christ

To attain these goals, specific attention was given to the biblical interpretations of the fathers of the ancient and undivided Church, and to the consensus of the Seven Ecumenical or Church-wide Councils of Christendom, held from the fourth to eighth centuries.

The Holy Scriptures have always been integral to the life of the Church. The liturgical cycle of the year and the days of feasting and fasting are accompanied by Scripture readings from throughout the Bible. The lectionary in the back of *The Orthodox Study Bible* guides the reader along this biblical path through the Church year. Further, liturgical notes at the foot of the pages of *The Orthodox Study Bible* relate specific readings to the yearly cycle of prayer and worship. These notes are designated with the symbol ω.

The prayer of the editors and contributors of *The Orthodox Study Bible* is that it presents an understandable Bible text and commentary to (1) English-speaking Orthodox Christians the world over and to (2) non-Orthodox readers interested in learning more about the faith of the historic Orthodox Church.

Lent, 2008

THE OLD TESTAMENTBOOKS
LISTED AND COMPARED

Orthodox
Old Testament

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Kingdoms (1 Samuel)

2 Kingdoms (2 Samuel)

3 Kingdoms (1 Kings)

4 Kingdoms (2 Kings)

1 Chronicles (1 Paraleipomenon)

2 Chronicles (2 Paraleipomenon)[*]

1 Ezra**

2 Ezra** (Ezra)

Nehemiah

Tobit

Judith

Esther

1 Maccabees

2 Maccabees

3 Maccabees

Psalms (151 in number)

Job

Proverbs of Solomon

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

Wisdom of Solomon

Wisdom of Sirach

Hosea

Amos

Micah

Joel

Obadiah

Jonah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Baruch

Lamentation of Jeremiah

Epistle of Jeremiah

Ezekiel

Daniel ***

* Includes the Prayer of Manasseh

**Also known as 1 & 2 Esdras

***“Susanna” is at the beginning of Daniel, “Bel and the Serpent” at the end. Also includes the “Hymn of the Three Young Men.”

Roman Catholic
Old Testament

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Kings

2 Kings

3 Kings

4 Kings

1 Chronicles (1 Paraleipomenon)

2 Chronicles (2 Paraleipomenon)

1 Esdras

2 Esdras (Nehemiah)

Tobit

Judith

Esther

1 Maccabees

2 Maccabees

Psalms (150 in number)

Job

Proverbs of Solomon

Ecclesiastes

Canticle of Canticles

Wisdom of Solomon

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)

Hosea

Amos

Micah

Joel

Obadiah

Jonah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Baruch[*]

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

*Includes Epistle of Jeremiah

Protestant
Old Testament

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther*

Job

Psalms (150 in number)

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel**

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

*Esther does not include those sections called “Additions to Esther.”

**Daniel here does not include those sections separately labeled as the “Hymn of the Three Young Men,” “Susanna,” “Bel and the Serpent.”

SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

Source	**Abbreviation**
Ambrose of Milan	AmbM
Antony of Egypt	AntEg
Aphrahat the Persian	AphP
Athanasius the Great	AthanG
Augustine of Hippo	Aug
Aurelius	Aur
Basil the Great	BasilG
Caesarius of Arles	Caes
Cassiodorus	Cass
Clement of Alexandria	ClemA
Cyprian of Alexandria	CypA
Cyprian of Carthage	CypC
Cyprian of Jerusalem	CypJ
Cyril of Alexandria	CyrAl
Cyril of Jerusalem	CyrJer
Dionysius	Dion
Elias the Presbyter	ElPres
Ephraim the Syrian	EphS
Epistle of Barnabas	Barn
Eusebius	Eusb
Eustathius of Antioch	Eust
Gregory of Nazianzus	GrgNa
Gregory of Nyssa	GrgNy
Gregory Palamas	GrgPal
Gregory the Great (Pope)	GrgGt
Gregory the Theologian	GrgTheo
Hesychius	Hesych
Hilary of Poitiers	HilryP
Hippolytus	Hippol
Ignatius of Antioch	IgnAnt
Irenaeus	Iren
Isaac the Syrian	IsaacS
Jerome	Jerome
John Cassian	JohnCas
John Chrysostom	JohnChr
John Climacus	JohnCli
John of Damascus	JohnDm
Justin Martyr	Justin
Leo the Great	LeoG
Mark the Ascetic	MkAsc
Maximos the Confessor	MaxCon
Methodius	Meth
Neilos the Ascetic	Neilos
Nicetas	Nic
Seraphim of Sarov	SerSar
Symeon the New Theologian	SymNew
Theodore of Mopsuestia	TheoMop
Theodoret	Theod

Theophylact of Bulgaria	Theoph
Vincent of Lerins	VincLer
Nicene Creed	Creed
Canon of St. Andrew	CanonAnd
Akathist Service	Akath

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

By The Right Reverend BASIL, Bishop of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

THE OLD TESTAMENT

This introduction is a brief description of each of the forty-nine books of the Old Testament. It is helpful to keep in mind that, like the earliest Christian community, the Orthodox Church of today continues using the Greek version of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint (LXX). The Septuagint—referencing the seventy finest Jewish scholars, from all twelve Jewish tribes, who made the translation from the Hebrew into Greek—became the universally accepted version of the Old Testament since the time of its appearance some three centuries before the birth of Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ, together with His apostles and evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and also Peter and Paul, used this Greek version when quoting the Old Testament in their gospels and epistles. These inspired Old Testament books tell the story of God's dealings with ancient Israel, from approximately 2000 BC until the time of Jesus.

A study of the Old Testament in the light of the authentic apostolic tradition will lead the reader to Him Who fulfilled the Law and the Prophets as He promised: Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This collection of forty-nine Old Testament books is traditionally subdivided into four sections: 1) the five books of the Law; 2) the books of history; 3) the books of wisdom and; 4) the books of prophecy.

The Five Books of the Law

First there are the books of the Law: *Genesis*, meaning “beginning,” since it recounts the beginning of God’s creation; *Exodus*, which means “exit” or “departure,” referring to the journey of the Hebrews from out of slavery in Egypt; *Leviticus*, a book detailing worship as led by the priests ordained from the tribe of Levi; *Numbers*, whose title is derived from the book’s opening account of the census or numbering of the people of Israel; *Deuteronomy*, meaning “second law,” since it gives a detailed listing of the additional laws given by God through Moses.

These first five books of the Old Testament, known jointly as the Pentateuch (*penta* means “five” in Greek) describe God’s creation of the world, the rebellion of Adam and Eve and the fall of man, and the history of God’s people from the days of Abraham, about 2000 BC, through the days of Moses, dated by many scholars at approximately 1250 BC.

The Books of History

The second section of the LXX Old Testament is known as the historical books. This group begins with the book of *Joshua*, the leader of the children of Israel following the death of Moses, who brings God’s people into the promised land after their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. *Judges* relates to the traditions of the various Hebrew tribes and the exploits of their own particular heroes, the Judges of whom the title speaks, who ruled the nation. The book of *Ruth* is the charming and heroic account of a Gentile woman who placed herself under the protection of the one true God, and in the process became an ancestor of King David, and of his descendent, Jesus Christ the Messiah of Israel.

First and Second Kingdoms (First and Second Samuel), whose principle characters are Samuel the faithful prophet, Saul the first king to rule over God's people, and David, Saul's successor and the first king of Judah in the south of Palestine, and Israel to the north. The books of *Third and Fourth Kingdoms* (First and Second Kings) opens with the enthronement of David's son Solomon and ends with the fall of the kingdom, including the destruction of its capital city of Jerusalem, and the exile of God's people from Palestine to Babylon.

First and Second Chronicles (First and Second Paraleipomenon) expand on the history recorded in *Third and Fourth Kingdoms*. The word *Paraleipomenon* is transliterated from the Greek and means "that which is omitted" in the two preceding books. The books of *First and Second Ezra* and *Nehemiah* continue this chronicle of divine history, focusing on the Jewish religious community after its return to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon.

The final books in the historical section of the Old Testament reveal the stories of people who lived heroic and God-directed lives under foreign domination and during the exile: *Tobit*, who was taken into captivity by the Assyrians; *Judith*, the pious and beautiful widow who saved her people from massacre by the invading Assyrian general; *Esther*, the Jewish queen of Persia who achieved the revocation of Haman's decree that would have allowed the persecution and mass murder of God's people; and the *Maccabees*, the family of the Hasmoneans and their followers, the faithful people who began the revolt and fought the wars of independence against foreign armies occupying their land.

The Books of Wisdom

The third section of the Old Testament is known as the books of Wisdom. The magnificent *Psalms* is the hymnal of both ancient Israel and of the Church. The book of *Job*, which in the canonical Greek LXX comes between *Psalms* and *Proverbs*, probes the depths of a man's unshakable faith in the face of tragedy and innocent suffering. *Proverbs* is a collection of moral and religious instruction taught to young people after their return from exile in Babylon. *Ecclesiastes* tells of the preacher who philosophically seeks to understand the meaning of human existence that the good man can find in this life. The moving *Song of Songs* by Solomon is a collection of lyric poems, written in the language of human love and courtship, which also speaks prophetically of God's love for His beloved Bride, His Church. The *Wisdom of Solomon* promises reward and immortality to the righteous, praises wisdom and condemns the folly of idolatry. The *Wisdom of Sirach* consists of lectures to young people on ethical and religious themes.

These seven books of Wisdom literature—*The Psalms*, *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, the *Song of Songs*, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the *Wisdom of Sirach*—proclaim that happiness (or "blessedness," in the language of the Bible) is possible only through faith in and obedience to the one true God.

The Books of Prophecy

The fourth and final section of the LXX Old Testament includes the books of prophecy, which appear in an order different from the Hebrew and Vulgate collections.

Hosea gives a message of God’s own redeeming love for His chosen people, even when they spurn Him and prostitute themselves to false gods. *Amos* is the simple shepherd called by God to denounce a self-satisfied nation for its grave social injustice, abhorrent immorality and its shallow and meaningless piety. *Micah* foretells the day when nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. He speaks of peace reigning over all who do justice, who love kindness, and who walk humbly with God. *Joel* is the prophet who foretells the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. *Obadiah* prophesies the return of the exiles from Babylon. *Jonah* unwillingly accepts God’s command to preach His mercy and forgiveness to a foreign nation.

Nahum prophesies the defeat of the powerful Assyrian enemy. *Habakkuk* deals with the perennial question, “How long, O Lord, shall I cry out to You, and You will not hear me?” (Hab 1:2). *Zephaniah* prophesies the dark days of Judah’s destruction, but promises comfort and conciliation to those who wait patiently for the Lord and serve Him. *Haggai*, following the return of the exiles, exhorts them to rebuild the destroyed temple in order to unify their disrupted religious life and, more importantly, to prepare for the coming of the long awaited Messiah.

Zechariah prophesies the image of the messianic Prince of Peace, the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for the flock. *Malachi* exhorts God’s people to faithfulness and asserts the fatherhood of God over all nations. He foretells that God will appoint a forerunner, similar to the ancient prophet Elijah (or Elias) who will appear before the Messiah and prepare the world for the coming Day of the Lord.

Isaiah exhorts the people of God to place their confidence in the Lord, and to lead private and public lives which manifest this reliance. From Isaiah, we hear the prophecies of a Son to be born of a virgin, and of the Suffering Servant—the Messiah—who would be led as an innocent sheep to the slaughter, and by whose stripes we would be healed. *Jeremiah* severely criticizes God's people for abandoning the one true God and turning instead to the worship of idols. *Baruch* was appointed to be read on feast days as a confession of sins. In *Lamentations*, the author Jeremiah mourns the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The *Epistle of Jeremiah* is addressed to those about to be carried off into exile in Babylon.

Ezekiel, the prophet of the exiles, assures his hearers of the abiding presence of God amongst them, even in exile and servitude. Finally, *Daniel* writes an apocalyptic or mystical end-time prophecy which is filled with difficult and often obscure signs and symbols. In the Greek LXX, *Daniel* begins with the heroic story of Susanna and ends with the fascinating account of Bel and the Serpent.

These forty-nine God-inspired Old Testament books divided into four sections—books of the Law, of History, of Wisdom, and of Prophecy—which serve as an introduction to John the Baptist's preparation of the world for the coming of the Messiah, who is Isaiah's Suffering Servant, Zechariah's Prince of Peace, and the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the flock.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Four Gospels

Matthew, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John* recall the events in the life of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man. The first three are called the Synoptic Gospels, in that they set forth a “common viewpoint” of the chronology of events and the message of Christ in His life and ministry. *Matthew* addresses his gospel primarily to fellow Jews. *Mark* is likely the first gospel to be written, and speaks of Christ as servant of all (Mk 10:45). *Luke*, himself a physician, reveals the Incarnate Christ and His earthly ancestry. This Son of Man saves and heals the fallen race.

John, the last of the four gospels to be written, emphasizes the divinity of Christ, the eternal Son and Word of God, who became Man. John’s gospel further reveals seven miracles of Christ, not all of them in chronological order.

Acts

Written by St. Luke, these are the *Acts* (or accomplishments) *of the Apostles*, but mainly of Peter (chapters 1—12) and Paul (chapters 13—28). Acts chronicles the earliest history of the Church from Pentecost through approximately AD 65.

The Letters (or Epistles) of St. Paul

The first nine of Paul’s letters are written to churches. *Romans*, which begins this section, was the only letter Paul wrote to a community he had not previously visited. Thus, the implication is that much of what he wrote to the church at Rome he preached in other places.

Most prominent of the cities of first century Greece was Corinth, a center of commerce, immorality and false religion. Predictably, this fledgling church would have to deal with these same matters. *First Corinthians* is therefore a corrective epistle calling for unity, virtue, forbearance, Eucharistic order and proper use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In contrast *Second Corinthians* recognizes the repentance within the church on the part of many, and St. Paul defends his apostolic authority.

In *Galatians*, Paul addresses several churches in Asia Minor, defending his apostleship and calling the faithful to live their lives in the strength of the Holy Spirit instead of in submission to the laws of the old covenant. *Ephesians* is a marvelous discourse on how the Church should conduct itself. This community is rich in dedication to Christ. Yet just a few decades later the Lord tells them, "you have left your first love" (Rev 2:4).

Philippians is the epistle of joy. Paul writes from a Roman prison, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Php 4:4). *Colossians* presents Christ as "the head of the body, the church . . ." (Col 1:18), preeminent in all things.

First Thessalonians, the first letter St. Paul penned, was written to the believers at Thessalonica, a beautiful coastal city of Greece in about AD 51, shortly after Paul planted that Church. This is a letter of encouragement. *Second Thessalonians* acknowledges persecution and warns of lawlessness, urging the Christians to "stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught . . ." (2Th 2:15).

Next, Paul addresses the following letters to individuals. In *First Timothy*, the aging apostle speaks to his youthful understudy about effective oversight of the church. In *Second Timothy*, the last letter St. Paul wrote (see 2Ti 4:6–8), he encourages Timothy to "be strong in the grace that is in

Christ Jesus" (2Ti 2:1). Paul is already in prison in Rome (1:8) awaiting martyrdom.

Titus is sent by Paul to Crete to set the church "in order," and "appoint elders in every city" (Tts 1:5). If this sounds like the work of a bishop, it is (Tts 1:7, 8), and Titus is consistently named in early Church records as the first bishop of Crete. *Philemon* is a Christian slave-holder, and Paul writes him to receive back Onesimus (Phm 10—16), his runaway slave, who has become a Christian with Paul in Rome.

Hebrews is the last of the epistles attributed to St. Paul, but with little evidence it was actually written by Paul. It is a general letter to Jewish believers in Christ to continue on in the Faith. It assures them that Christ, the great High Priest in the heavenlies (Heb 8:1), is their once for all sacrifice for sin (Heb 10:10) and victor over death (Heb 12:1, 2).

The General Epistles

James, the brother of the Lord and first bishop of Jerusalem, writes to fellow Jews, "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (Jam 1:1). His message? "Faith without works is dead" (Jam 1:20). Christianity is a belief that behaves.

First Peter, written by the first among the apostles, urges obedience to God and man, willingness to suffer for Christ's sake, and effective pastoring of the flock. In *Second Peter*, the apostle discusses divine power for the faithful (deification), divine judgment for false teachers and the Day of the Lord.

Next, John the Theologian offers three general epistles. *First John* is a stirring personal testimonial to God's forgiveness, His love for His children and His gift of eternal life. In *Second John*, he addresses an "elect lady and her children" (v. 1), urging them to obey the Lord's commands and beware of deceivers. *Third John* commends Gaius and Demetrius, and warns against Diotrephes.

Finally, *Jude*, the Lord's brother, writes a short letter exhorting the faithful to contend for the truth and to beware of the devil's servants. He finishes with a stunning benediction.

Revelation

Written by St. John the Theologian, he entitles his book "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1). What the book of *Daniel* is to the Old Testament, *Revelation* is to the New Testament. Another title is the *Apocalypse*, which is a transliteration of the Greek word for "revelation" or "unveiling." The book speaks prophetically both to current and future events, to judgment and salvation, and ends with the glorious New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven "as a bride adorned for her husband" (21:2).

INTRODUCING THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The publication of *The Orthodox Study Bible* begs a question: exactly what is the Orthodox Church? Many people have heard of the Russian Orthodox Church which celebrated its 1000th birthday in 1988, or the Greek Orthodox Church which was born centuries earlier. But Orthodoxy itself—what is it, and what are its historic roots?

THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

To answer the question, let us go back to the pages of the New Testament, specifically to the Book of Acts and the birth of the Church at Pentecost. For on that day the Holy Spirit descended on the twelve apostles in the Upper Room, and by afternoon some 3000 souls believed in Christ and were baptized. The Scriptures record that when the first Christian community began, “they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

From Jerusalem, the faith in Christ spread throughout Judea, to Samaria (Acts 8:5–39), to Antioch and the Gentiles (Acts 11:19–26). We find new converts and new Churches throughout Asia Minor and the Roman Empire as recorded in Acts and the Epistles.

The Church, of course, was not simply another organization in Roman society. The Lord Jesus Christ had given the promise of the Holy Spirit “to lead you into all truth” (Jn 16:13). With the fulfillment of that promise beginning with Pentecost, the Church was born far beyond mere institutional status. She was not an organization with mystery, but a mystery with organization. St. Paul called the Church “a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2:22). The Church was a dynamic organism, the living Body of Jesus Christ. She made an indelible impact in the world, and those who lived in her life and faith were personally transformed.

But we also discover in the New Testament itself that the Church had her share of problems. All was not perfection. Some individuals even within the Church sought to lead her off the path the apostles established, and they had to be dealt with along with the errors they invented. Even whole local communities lapsed on occasion and were called to repentance. The Church in Laodicea is a vivid example (Rev 3:14–22). Discipline was administered for the sake of purity in the Church. But there was growth and maturation, even as the Church was attacked from within and without. The same Spirit who gave her birth gave her power for purity and correction, and she stood strong and grew, eventually invading the whole of the Roman Empire.

THE EARLY CENTURIES

As the Church moves from the pages of the New Testament and on into the succeeding centuries of her history, it is helpful to trace her growth and development in terms of specific categories. We shall look first at a category important for all Christian people: *doctrine*. Did she maintain the truth of God as given by Christ and His apostles? Second, what about *worship*? Is there a discernible way in which the people of God have offered a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to Him? Third, we will consider Church *government*. What sort of polity did the Church practice?

1. *Doctrine:* Not only did the Church begin under the teaching of the apostles, but she was also instructed to “stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2Th 2:15). The apostle Paul insisted that those matters delivered by him and his fellow apostles, both in person and in the writings that would come to be called the New Testament, be adhered to carefully. Thus, followed such appropriate warnings as “in the name of Jesus Christ . . . withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us” (2Th 3:6). The doctrines taught by Christ and His disciples are to be safeguarded by “the Church, the pillar and support of the truth” (1Ti 3:15) and are not open for renegotiation.

Midway through the first century, a dispute had arisen in Antioch over adherence to Old Testament laws. The matter could not be settled there; outside help was needed. The leaders of the Antiochian Church, the community which had earlier dispatched Paul and Barnabas as missionaries, brought the matter to Jerusalem for consideration by the apostles and elders there. The matter was discussed, debated, and a written decision was forthcoming.

It was James, the brother of the Lord and the first bishop of Jerusalem, who put forth the solution to the problem. This settlement, agreed to by all concerned at what is known as the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–35), set the pattern for the use of Church councils in the centuries ahead to settle doctrinal and moral issues that arose. Thus, throughout the history of the Church we find scores of such councils, and on various levels, to settle matters of dispute and to deal with those who do not adhere to the Apostolic faith.

The first three hundred years of Christian history were marked by the appearance of certain heresies or false teachings such as secret philosophic schemes for the elite (Gnosticism), dazzling prophetic aberrations (Montanism), and grave errors regarding the three Persons of the Trinity (Sabellianism).

Then, in the early fourth century, a heresy with potential for Church-wide disruption appeared, propagated by one Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt. He denied the eternal-ity of the Son of God, claiming contrary to the apostles' doctrine that the Son was a created being who came into existence at a point in time and thus was not truly God. This deadly error struck the Church like a cancer. Turmoil spread almost everywhere. The first Church-wide, or Ecumenical, Council met in Nicea in AD 325 to address this issue. Some 318 bishops, along with many priests, deacons and laymen rejected the new teaching of Arius and his associates, upholding the apostles' doctrine of Christ, affirming the eternality of the Son and His consubstantiality with the Father. Their proclamation of the Apostolic teaching concerning Christ included a creed, which, with the additions concerning the Holy Spirit made in 381 at the Council of Constantinople, forms the document we today call the Nicene Creed.

Between the years 325 and 787, seven such Church-wide conclaves were held, all dealing first and foremost with some specific challenge to the Apostolic teaching about Jesus Christ. These councils, meeting in the cities of Nicea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople, are known as the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

For the first thousand years of Christian history, the entire Church, save for the heretics, embraced and defended the New Testament Apostolic faith. There was no consequential division. And this one faith, preserved through all trials, attacks and tests, this Apostolic doctrine, was called "the Orthodox faith."

2. *Worship:* Doctrinal purity was tenaciously maintained. But true Christianity is far more than adherence to a set of correct beliefs alone. The life of the Church is centrally expressed in her worship, adoration of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It was Jesus Himself Who told the woman at the well, "the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him" (Jn 4:23).

At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist, the communion service, when He took bread and wine, gave a blessing, and said to His disciples, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me" and "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Lk 22:19, 21). From the New Testament we know the Church participated in communion at least each Lord's Day (Acts 20:7, 11). From such first and second century sources as the *Didache*, the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, and St. Justin Martyr, we are assured the Eucharist is the very center of Christian worship from the Apostolic era on.

And just as the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets were read in the Temple worship and the synagogue in Israel, so the Church also immediately gave high priority to the public reading of Scripture and to preaching in her worship, along with the Eucharistic meal.

Even before the middle of the first century, Christian worship was known by the term *liturgy* which literally means “the common work” or “the work of the people.” The early liturgy of the Church’s worship was composed of two essential parts, (1) the liturgy of the word, including hymns, Scripture reading, and preaching and (2) the liturgy of the faithful, composed of intercessory prayers, the kiss of peace, and the Eucharist. From virtually the beginning, Christian worship has had a definable shape or form which continues to this day.

Modern Christians advocating freedom from liturgy in worship are usually shocked to learn that spontaneity was never the practice in the ancient Church! A basic pattern or shape of Christian worship was observed from the start. And as the Church grew and matured, liturgy matured as well. Hymns, Scripture readings, and prayers were intertwined in the basic foundation. A clear, purposeful procession through the year, marking and joining in word, song, and praise the birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sancitfying crucial aspects of Christian life and experience, was forthcoming. The Christian life was lived in reality in the worship of the Church. Far from being routine, the worship of the historic Church participated in the unfolding drama of the richness and mystery of the Gospel itself!

Further, specific landmarks in our salvation and walk with Christ were celebrated and sanctified. Baptism and the anointing with oil, or chrismation, were there from the start. Marriage, healing, confession of sin, and ordination to the ministry of the Gospel are other early rites in the Church. On each of these occasions Christians understood, in a great mystery, grace and power from God were being given according to the individual need of each person. The Church saw these events as holy moments in her life and called them mysteries or sacraments.

3. *Government:* No one seriously questions whether the apostles of Christ led the Church at her beginning. They had been given the commission to preach the Gospel (Mt 28:19, 20) and the authority to forgive or retain sins (Jn 20:23). Theirs was by no means a preaching-only mission! They built the Church itself under Christ's headship. To govern it, three definite and permanent offices, as taught in the New Testament, were in evidence.

a. *The office of bishop*. The apostles themselves were the first bishops in the Church. Even before Pentecost, after Judas had turned traitor, Peter declared in applying Psalm 108:8, "Let his bishopric another take" (Acts 1:20). The word "bishopric" refers, of course, to the office of bishop and its use indicates the apostles themselves are bishops. Some have mistakenly argued the office of bishop was a later invention. Quite to the contrary, the apostles were themselves bishops, and they appointed bishops to succeed them to oversee the Church in each locality.

Occasionally, the objection is still heard that the office of bishop and presbyter were originally identical. The terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament while the apostles were present, the bishop being the presiding elder in a local church. But after the apostles' deaths, the offices of bishop and presbyter soon became distinct throughout the Church. Ignatius of Antioch, consecrated bishop by AD 70 in the Church from which Paul and Barnabas had been sent out, writes just after the turn of the century that bishops appointed by the apostles, surrounded by their presbyters, were everywhere in the Church.

b. *The office of presbyter*. Elders or presbyters are mentioned very early in the life of the Church in Acts and the Epistles. It is evident that in each place a Christian community developed, elders were appointed by the apostles to pastor the people.

As time passed, presbyters were referred to in the short form of the word as “prests,” then as “priests,” in full view of the fact that the Old Covenant priesthood had been fulfilled in Christ and that the Church is corporately a priesthood of believers. The priest was not understood as an intermediary between God and the people nor as a dispenser of grace. It was the role of the priest to be the presence of Christ in the Christian community. And in the very capacity of being the presence of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, the priest was to safeguard the flock of God.

c. *The office of deacon.* The third order or office in the government of the New Testament Church was the deacon. At first the apostles fulfilled this office themselves. But with the rapid growth of the Church, seven initial deacons were selected (Acts 6:1–7) to help carry the responsibility of service to those in need. It was one of these deacons, Stephen, who became the first martyr of the Church.

Through the centuries, the deacons have not only served the material needs of the Church, but have held a key role in the liturgical life of the Church as well. Often called “the eyes and ears of the bishop,” many deacons have become priests and ultimately entered the episcopal office.

The authority of the bishop, presbyter, and deacon was not anciently understood as being apart from the people, but always from among the people. In turn the people of God were called to submit to those who ruled over them (Heb 13:17), and they were also called to give their agreement to the direction of the leaders for the Church. On a number of occasions in history, that “Amen” was not forthcoming, and the bishops of the Church took note and changed course. Later in history, many Church leaders departed from the ancient model and usurped authority for themselves. In the minds of some this brought the ancient model into question. But the problem was not in the model but in the deviation from it.

It should also be mentioned that it was out of the ministry and life of the apostles that the people of God, the laity, were established in the Church. Far from being a herd of observers, the laity are vital in the effectiveness of the Church. They are the recipients and active users of the gifts and grace of the Spirit. Each of the laity has a role in the life and function of the Church. Each is to supply something to the whole (1Co 12:7). And it is the responsibility of the bishops, the priests, and the deacons to be sure that this is a reality for the laity.

The worship of the Church at the close of its first 1000 years had substantially the same shape from place to place. The doctrine was the same. The whole Church confessed one creed, the same in every place, and had weathered many attacks. The government of the Church was recognizably one everywhere. And this One Church was the Orthodox Church.

DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN WEST AND EAST

Tensions began to mount as the first millennium was drawing to a close. While numerous doctrinal, political, economic, and cultural factors were working to separate the Church in an East-West division, two giant divisive issues ultimately emerged above others: (1) that one man, the Pope of Rome, considered himself the universal bishop of the Church and (2) the addition of a novel clause to the Church's creed.

1. *The Papacy:* Among the Twelve, Saint Peter was early acknowledged as the leader. He was spokesman for the Twelve before and after Pentecost. He was the first bishop of Antioch and later bishop of Rome. No one challenged his role.

After the death of the apostles, as leadership in the Church developed, the bishop of Rome came to be recognized as first in honor, even though all bishops were equals. But after nearly 300 years, the bishop of Rome slowly began to assume to himself a role of superiority over the others, ultimately claiming to be the only true successor to Peter. The vast majority of the other bishops of the Church never questioned Rome's primacy of honor, but they patently rejected the Roman bishop's claim as the universal head of the Church on earth. This assumption of papal power became one major factor in rending the Roman Church, and all those it could gather with it, from the historic Orthodox Church.

2. *The Addition to the Creed:* A disagreement concerning the Holy Spirit also began to develop in the Church. Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father? Or, does He proceed from the Father and the Son?

Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches, "But when the Helper comes, Whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who *proceeds from the Father*, he will testify of Me" (Jn 15:26). This is the basic statement in all the New Testament about the Holy Spirit "proceeding," and it is clear: He "proceeds from the Father."

Thus, when the ancient council at Constantinople in AD 381 reaffirmed the Creed of Nicea (AD 325), it expanded that Creed to proclaim these familiar words: “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Life-Giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. . . .”

But two hundred years later, at a local council in Toledo, Spain (AD 589), King Reccared declared, “the Holy Spirit also should be confessed by us and taught to proceed from the Father and the Son.” The King may have meant well, but he was contradicting Jesus’ teaching, confessed by the entire Church, concerning the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, that local Spanish council agreed with his error.

Because of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, believed by the Church at Nicea and at Constantinople and for centuries beyond, there is no reason to believe anything other than that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.

But centuries later, in what was at least partially a politically motivated move, the Pope of Rome unilaterally changed the universal creed of the Church without an ecumenical council. Though this change was initially rejected in both East and West, even by some of Rome’s closest neighboring bishops, the Pope managed to eventually get the West to capitulate. The consequence, of course, in the Western Church has been the tendency to relegate the Holy Spirit to a lesser place than God the Father and God the Son. The change may appear small, but the consequences have proven disastrously immense. This issue, with the Pope departing from the Orthodox doctrine of the Church, became another instrumental cause separating the Roman Church from the historic Orthodox Church, the New Testament Church.

THE GREAT SCHISM

Conflict between the Roman Pope and the East mounted—especially in the Pope’s dealings with the bishop, or patriarch, of Constantinople. The Pope even went so far as to claim the authority to decide who should be the bishop of Constantinople, in marked violation of historical precedent. No longer operating within the government of the New Testament Church, the Pope appeared to be seeking by political means to bring the whole Church under his domination.

Bizarre intrigues followed, one upon the other, as a series of Roman popes pursued this unswerving goal of attempting to control all Christendom. Perhaps the most incredible incident of these political, religious, and even military schemes occurred in the year 1054. A Cardinal, sent by the Pope, slapped a document on the altar of the Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople during the Sunday worship, excommunicating the Patriarch of Constantinople from the Church!

The Pope, of course, had no legitimate right to do this. But the repercussions were staggering. Some dismal chapters of Church history were written during the next decades. The ultimate consequence of the Pope’s action was that the whole Roman Catholic Church ended up dividing itself from the New Testament faith of Orthodox Christianity. The schism has never been healed.

As the centuries passed conflict continued. Attempts at union failed and the Roman Church drifted farther and farther from its historic roots. There are inevitable consequences in deviating from the Church. The breaking away of Rome from the historic Orthodox Church would prove no exception.

FURTHER DIVISIONS IN THE WEST

During the centuries after AD 1054, the growing distinction between East and West was becoming indelibly marked in history. The East maintained the full stream of New Testament faith, worship, and practice—all the while enduring great persecution. The Western or Roman Church, crippled because of its schism from the Orthodox Church, bogged down in many complex problems. Then, less than five centuries after Rome committed itself to its unilateral alteration of doctrine and practice, another upheaval was festering—this time not next door to the East, but inside the Western gates themselves.

Though many in the West had spoken out against Roman domination and practice in earlier years, now a little-known German monk named Martin Luther inadvertently launched an attack against certain Roman Catholic practices which ended up affecting world history. His famous Ninety-Five Theses were nailed to the Church door at Wittenburg in 1517. In a short time those theses were signalling the start of what came to be called in the West the Protestant Reformation. Luther sought an audience with the Pope but was denied, and in 1521 he was excommunicated from the Roman Church. He had intended no break with Rome. Its papal system of government, heavy with authority, refused conciliation. The door to future unity in the West slammed shut with a resounding crash.

The protests of Luther were not unnoticed. The reforms he sought in Germany were soon accompanied by demands of Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, John Calvin in Geneva, and hundreds of others all over Western Europe. Fueled by complex political, social, and economic factors, in addition to religious problems, the Reformation spread like a raging fire into virtually every nook and cranny of the Roman Church. The ecclesiastical monopoly to which it had grown accustomed was greatly diminished, and massive division replaced its artificial unity. The ripple effect of that division impacts even our own day as the Protestant movement itself continues to split and shatter.

If trouble on the continent were not trouble enough, the Church of England was in the process of going its own way as well. Henry VIII, amidst his marital problems, replaced the Pope of Rome with himself as head of the Church of England. For only a few short years would the Pope ever again have ascendency in England. And the English Church itself would soon experience great division.

As decade followed decade in the West, the many branches of Protestantism took various forms. There were even divisions that insisted they were neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic. All seemed to share a mutual dislike for the Bishop of Rome and the practice of his Church, and most wanted far less centralized forms of leadership. While some, such as the Lutherans and Anglicans, held on to certain forms of liturgy and sacrament, others, such as the Reformed Churches and the even more radical Anabaptists and their descendants, questioned and rejected many biblical ideas of hierarchy, sacrament, historic tradition, and other elements of Christian practice, no matter when and where they appeared in history, thinking they were freeing themselves of Roman Catholicism. To this day, many sincere, modern, professing Christians will reject even the biblical data which speaks of historic Christian practice, simply because they think such historic practices are "Roman Catholic." To use the old adage, they threw the baby out with the bathwater without even being aware of it.

Thus, while retaining, in varying degrees, portions of foundational Christianity, neither Protestantism nor Catholicism can lay historic claim to being the true New Testament Church. In dividing from the Orthodox Christianity, Rome forfeited its place in the Church of the New Testament. In the divisions of the Reformation, the Protestants—as well-meaning as they might have been—failed to return to the New Testament Church.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH TODAY

But that original Church, the Church of Peter and Paul and the apostles—despite persecution, political oppression, and desertion on certain of its flanks—miraculously carries on today the same faith and life of the Church of the New Testament. Admittedly, the style of Orthodoxy looks complicated to the modern Protestant eye, and understandably so. But given an historical understanding of how the Church has progressed, it may be seen that the simple Christ-centered faith of the apostles is fully preserved in its doctrines, practices, services, and even in its architecture.

In Orthodoxy today, as in years gone by, the basics of Christian doctrine, worship, and government are never up for alteration. One cannot be an

Orthodox priest, for example, and reject the divinity of Christ, His virgin birth, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and second coming. The Church simply has not left its course in nearly 2000 years. It is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. It is the New Testament Church. The gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

But Orthodoxy is also, in the words of one of her bishops, “the best kept secret in America.” Though there are more than 225 million Orthodox Christians in the world today, many in the West are not familiar with the Church. In North America, for example, the Orthodox Church has, until recently, been largely restricted to ethnic boundaries, not spreading much beyond the parishes of the committed immigrants that brought the Church to the shores of this continent.

Still, the Holy Spirit has continued His work, causing new people to discover this Church of the New Testament. People have begun to find Orthodox Christianity both through the writings of the early Church Fathers, and through the humble witness of contemporary Orthodox Christians. Significant numbers of evangelicals, Episcopalians and mainline Protestants are becoming Orthodox. And Orthodox student groups are springing up on campuses worldwide. The word is getting out.

What, then, is the Orthodox Church? It is the first Christian Church in history, the Church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ, described in the pages of the New Testament. Her history can be traced in unbroken continuity all the way back to Christ and His Twelve apostles.

And what is it that’s missing in the non-Orthodox Churches—even the best of them? Fullness. For the fullness of the New Testament faith is to be found only in the New Testament Church. Being in the Church does not guarantee all those in it will take advantage of the fullness of the faith. But the fullness of the faith is there for those who do.

For persons who seriously desire the fullness of Orthodox Christianity, action must be taken. There must be a return to this Church of the New Testament. Being aware of this ancient Church is not enough. In our time people have had ample opportunity to investigate and decide about the Roman Catholic faith, the Baptist, the Lutheran, and so on. But relatively few have taken a serious look at the Orthodox Church. Three specific suggestions will provide those interested with a tangible means of becoming acquainted with Orthodox Christianity on a personal basis.

1. *Visit:* Look up “Orthodox” or “Eastern Orthodox” in the “Church” section of your Yellow Pages. Ask the whereabouts of the nearest Orthodox parish. Pay a visit—several visits. Meet the priest, and ask him to help you study and learn. And be prepared to exercise patience—sometimes a portion of the Liturgy is not in English! But the Service Book in the pew will help.

2. *Read:* There are a number of books and periodicals immensely helpful to people seeking to learn about the Orthodox Church. *The Orthodox Church* by Kallistos Ware (Penguin); *For theLife of the World* by Alexander Schmemann (St. Vladimir Seminary Press); *The Apostolic Fathers* edited by Jack N. Sparks (Light and Life Publishers), and *Becoming Orthodox* by Peter E. Gillquist, *Divine Energy* by Jon E. Braun, and *AGAIN Magazine* (all by Conciliar Press).

3. *Write:* The people at Conciliar Press (P.O. Box 76, Ben Lomond, CA 95005-0076) have volunteered to answer questions regarding the Orthodox

Church from *Orthodox Study Bible* readers, and to suggest further reading. Send your name and address, with a request for information.

In a day when Christians are realizing anew the centrality and importance of worship, of the Church as the body of Christ, and the need to preserve true Christian faith, the doors of Orthodoxy are open wide. The invitation is extended to “come and see.” Examine her faith, her worship, her history, her commitment to Christ, her love for God the Father, her communion with the Holy Spirit.

For two thousand years the Orthodox Church has by God’s mercy kept the faith delivered once for all to the saints. Within her walls is the fullness of the salvation which was realized when “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16).

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Exodus

Leviticus

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Joshua

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Ruth

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2 Kingdoms (2 Samuel)

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4 Kingdoms (2 Kings)

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2 Chronicles (2 Paraleipomenon)

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2 Ezra (Ezra/2 Esdras)

Nehemiah

Tobit

Judith

Esther

1 Maccabees

2 Maccabees

3 Maccabees

Psalms

Job

Proverbs of Solomon

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

Wisdom of Solomon

Wisdom of Sirach

Hosea

Amos

Micah

Joel

Obadiah

Jonah

Nahum

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THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Book of Genesis

Author—Traditionally, both Jews and Christians believe Moses is the author and compiler of Genesis and of each of the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch.

Date—Genesis was written during Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness, in the time between the crossing of the Red Sea and the entrance into Canaan.

Major Theme—*The early history of man and of Israel.* Genesis, which means “origin,” is divided into two parts. The first is the account of the creation of the world and the beginning of the human race with Adam and Eve, and the history of their descendants. The second part of Genesis concerns the early history of Israel, starting with the three patriarchs of the Hebrews, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the twelve tribes that were their descendants. God created all things good, and although His creation rebelled and sinned against Him, He still loves and cares for His people.

Background—Genesis covers the longest time span of any book in the Bible, stretching from the creation of the world to the coming of the Hebrews to Egypt. The first three chapters of Genesis are reflected in the last three chapters of Revelation, the Alpha and Omega of writings “given by inspiration of God” (2Ti 3:16).

Outline

I. The Early History of Man (1:1–11:27)
    A. Creation and the Fall of man (1:1–5:32)
    B. Judgment of man by the Flood and the Tower of Babel (6:1–11:32)
II. The Early History of Israel (12:1–50:26)
    A. The patriarchs and tribes of Israel (12:1–36:42)
    B. Israel in Egypt (37:1–50:26)

CREATION

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.” These opening words of the Nicene Creed, the central doctrinal statement of Christianity, affirm that the One True God is the source of everything that exists—both physical and spiritual, both animate and inanimate. The Holy Scriptures begin with a similarly striking assertion: “In the beginning God made heaven and begin with a similarly striking earth.” St. Basil the Great declares:

> In the fear that human reasonings may make you wander from the truth, Moses has anticipated inquiry by engraving in our hearts, as a seal and a safeguard, the awesome name of God: ‘In the beginning God created.’ It is He—beneficent Nature, Goodness without measure, a worthy object of love for all beings endowed with reason, the beauty the most to be desired, the origin of all that exists . . .—it is He who ‘in the beginning created heaven and earth.’

The ever-existent Almighty God was not forced to create the universe. Rather, in His goodness and lovingkindness, He freely chose to do so. And the fact that the Lord created the universe *out of nothing* stands in clear contrast to the creation myths of the surrounding cultures in the ancient world.

The central role of Jesus Christ, the Word of the Father, in the creation of all things is plainly stated in the first chapter of the apostle John's gospel, where it is written, "In the beginning was the Word, . . . All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." And the specific role of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Undivided Trinity, in the creation of the world is seen in Genesis 1:2 (see also Ps 103:30; 32:6).

Regarding questions about the scientific accuracy of the Genesis account of creation, and about various viewpoints concerning evolution, the Orthodox Church has not dogmatized any particular view. What is dogmatically proclaimed is that the One Triune God created everything that exists, and that man was created in a unique way and is alone made *in the image and likeness of God* (Gn 1:26, 27). The Church Fathers also consistently affirm that each species of the animate creation came into existence instantaneously, at the command of God, with its seed within itself.

The development of life was not by accident. Rather, Supreme Intelligence and Impenetrable Wisdom were at work in the creation and sustenance of all that exists. In discussing various scientific theories of his day, St. Basil the Great declared, "If there is anything in this [or any other] system which seems probable to you, keep your admiration for the source of such perfect order—the wisdom of God." He also wrote, "We must still remain faithful to the principle of true religion and recognize that all that exists is sustained by the Creator’s power.”

The repeated affirmation “and God saw that it was good” in Genesis 1 underscores the intrinsic, fundamental *goodness* of matter and the whole created order, even after the Fall. This understanding is the basis for a sacramental world-view—that the created order not only is good, but also can be a means for communion with God, by virtue of being created by the All-Good God. Moreover, the astounding beauty, intricate order, and sublime harmony of all aspects of Creation, as well as the tremendously vast expanse of the universe, are intended to draw mankind to an awareness of and appreciation for the Creator, and to the worship of Him—and Him alone (see Ps 18:1-4; Rom 1:20).

The Creation

1 In the beginning God made heaven and earth.[† ω] [2]The earth was
invisible and unfinished; and darkness was over the deep. The Spirit of
God was hovering over the face of the water.[†] [3]Then God said, “Let there
be light”; and there was light.[†] [4]God saw the light; it was good; and God
divided the light from the darkness.[†] [5]God called the light Day; the
darkness He called Night; and there was evening and morning, one day.

[6]Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and
let it divide the water from the water”; and it was so. [7]Thus God made the
firmament, and God divided the water under the firmament from the water

above the firmament. [8]So God called the firmament Heaven, and God saw that it was good; and there was evening and morning, the second day.

[9]Then God said, “Let the water under heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. The water under heaven was gathered into its places, and the dry land appeared. [10]So God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas; and God saw that it was good. [11]Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the herb of grass, bearing seed according to its kind and likeness. Let the fruit tree bear fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind on earth.” It was so. [12]Thus the earth brought forth the herb of grass, bearing seed according to its kind and likeness. The fruit tree bore fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind on earth. God saw that it was good. [13]So evening and morning were the third day.

[14]Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven for illumination to divide day from night.[ω] [15]Let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years. Let them be for illumination in the firmament of heaven to give light on the earth.” It was so. [16]Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. [17]God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light on the earth, [18]and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. [19]So evening and morning were the fourth day.

[20]Then God said, “Let the waters bring forth creatures having life, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of heaven's firmament.” It was

so. [21]Thus God made great sea creatures and every living thing that moves with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. God saw that it was good. [22]God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on earth." [23]So evening and morning were the fifth day.

[24]Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: the quadrupeds, the creeping things, and the wild animals of the earth according to their kind." It was so.[ω] [25]So God made the wild animals of the earth according to their kind, the cattle according to their kind, and all the creeping things on earth according to their kind. God saw that it was good. [26]Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of heaven, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that moves on the earth."[†] [27]So God made man; in the image of God He made him; male and female He made them. [28]Then God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of heaven, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

THE HOLY TRINITY

The Holy Trinity is revealed both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Trinity is revealed in subtle ways; in the New Testament, the Trinity is revealed fully and plainly, beginning at the Baptism of our Lord.

The Holy Trinity is one God in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These Persons are distinct, but not separate, and are not three gods. They are One God because They are one in essence or nature. The Father is the unbegotten Fountainhead of Deity. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father (Jn 1:18; 3:16; 16:28). The Holy Spirit is the Helper (Jn 14:16) and Spirit of Truth (Jn 14:17; 16:13), Who proceeds from the Father (Jn 15:26).

THE HOLY TRINITY CREATED THE WORLD

Genesis 1:1—God the Father created the heavens and the earth. The Creed says: "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Genesis 1:2—The Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit. He hovered over creation in creative power and equality with the Father. He co-created with the Father.

Genesis 1:3—As the Word of God, the Son made the light (Jn 1:1–3). With creative power and equality with the Father, He also co-created with the Father and the Spirit.

Genesis 1:26—The pronouns "Us" and "Our" reveal a plurality of divine Persons. These Persons are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit operating in complete unity out of the one divine Nature.

THE HOLY TRINITY SAVES THE WORLD

Isaiah 63:16—The Father is our Redeemer. He not only created the world but redeems it as well.

Psalm 2:7, 8—The Father's decree reveals the Son as inheriting the world. This inheritance is the people saved by the Son.

Isaiah 6:1–3—The words "Holy, Holy, Holy" declare the three Persons who save us. The name "Lord" declares the one essence of the Three.

Isaiah 44:3—The Father pours out His Spirit on people like water on dry ground. The Holy Spirit quenches the thirst of the person who thirsts for salvation.

Isaiah 48:16, 17—The Son declares that the Father and the Spirit sent Him to redeem the world. Although the Son alone became a Man, all three Persons save mankind.

THE NEW TESTAMENT AFFIRMS THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

John 1:1–3—The Word is the Son of God, who was present with the Father at the beginning of creation. He was Co-worker with the Father in creating the world.

John 8:58—Jesus identifies Himself as having existed before Abraham. Before His coming in the flesh as Man, Jesus existed as the eternal Son of the Father, for He is begotten from the Father before all time and ages. He appeared to Moses in the burning bush and proclaimed Himself as "I Am" (Ex 3:1).

Acts 2:17—The Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost affirms His presence in the Old Testament (Joel 2:28–32).

Hebrews 1:8–10—This Scripture affirms the Father is speaking to the Son in Psalms 44:7 and 101:26–28, in which the Father acknowledges the Son as God and Creator of the world. For the Son was the Father’s Co-worker in creation.

THE INCARNATE SON FULLY REVEALS THE HOLY TRINITY

Luke 1:35—At the Annunciation, the Holy Spirit, the “power” of God the Father (“the Highest”), overshadowed the Virgin Mary; and she gave birth to the Son of God in His flesh.

Matthew 3:16–17—When the Son of God was baptized in the Jordan by John, the Father’s voice was heard from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. As the main hymn for the Feast of Theophany says, “When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.”

[29]Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every seed-bearing herb that sows seed on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. [30]I also give every green plant as food for all the wild animals of the earth, for all the birds of heaven, and for everything that creeps on the earth in which is the breath of life.” It was so. [31]Then God saw everything He had made, and indeed, it was very good. So evening and morning were the sixth day.[†]

2 Thus heaven and earth and all their adornment were finished.[†] [2]And on the seventh day God finished the works He made, and He rested on the seventh day from all the works He made. [3]Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His works God began to make.

[4]This is the book of the genesis of heaven and earth when they were made, in the day the Lord God made heaven and earth,[†ω] [5]before any plant of the field was on earth and before any herb of the field sprang up. For God had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; [6]but a fountain came up from the ground and watered the whole face of the earth. [7]Then God formed man out of dust from the ground, and breathed in his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul.[†]

The Garden of Eden

[8]Then the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man He formed.[†] [9]Besides this, God caused every tree beautiful to the sight and good for food to grow from the ground. Also, in the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of learning the knowledge of good and evil. [10]Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it separated into four heads. [11]The name of the first is Pishon. It circles all the land of Havilah, where there is gold. [12]And the gold of that land is good. The carbuncle and the emerald are there as well. [13]The name of the second river is Gihon. It circles all the land of Ethiopia. [14]The name of the third river is Tigris. It flows over against the Assyrians. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

[15]Then the Lord God took the man He formed and put him in the garden to tend and keep it. [16]And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying, “You

may eat food from every tree in the garden; [17]but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat; for in whatever day you eat from it, you shall die by death.”

[18]And the Lord God said, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.”[†] [19]Also, God formed out of the ground all the wild animals of the field and all the birds of heaven, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. Thus whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. [20]So Adam gave names to all the cattle, to all the birds of heaven, and to all the wild animals of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.[ω] [21]Thus God brought a trance upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and filled up the flesh in its place. [22]Then the Lord God built the rib He took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to him. [23]So Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. [24]For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.” [25]Now the two were naked, both Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The Fall of Mankind

3 Now the serpent was more cunning than all the wild animals the Lord God made on the earth. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat from every tree of the garden’?”[†] [2]And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees of the garden; [3]but from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You shall not eat from it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” [4]Then the serpent said to the woman, “You shall not die by death. [5]For God knows in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.” [6]So when the woman saw the tree was good for food, was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree beautiful to contemplate, she took its fruit and ate. She also gave it to her husband with her, and he ate. [7]Then the eyes of the two were opened, and they knew they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

ANCESTRAL SIN

In the Old Testament account of creation, God created mankind and established a place for him called Paradise. He also gave him a commandment regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: “And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying, ‘You may eat food from every tree in the garden; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat; for in whatever day you eat from it, you shall die by death’ ” (Gn 2:16, 17). In that Adam and Eve did not physically die the day they ate from the tree, the words “you shall die” indicate a spiritual death through separation from God.

Ancestral sin is the disobedience of Adam to God’s command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam willingly disobeyed this commandment and diverted himself, or fell, from God’s path to perfection, thus separating himself from His Creator, the Source of life.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL?

1 This Fall of Adam caused mankind to become subject to mortality. While this is often seen mainly as a punishment, or penalty, the emphasis concerning God's judgments on Adam and Eve at the Fall is best understood in terms of His mercy. So, for example, concerning man's mortality (Gn 3:19), St. Gregory the Theologian states, "Yet here too He provides a benefit—namely death, which cuts off sin, so that evil may not be everlasting. Thus His punishment is changed into a mercy."

2 We who are of Adam's race are not guilty because of Adam's sin, but because of our own sin. However, because all of mankind fell away from the grace of God through Adam's disobedience, man now has a propensity, a disposition, an inclination towards sin, because just as death entered the world through sin, now sin enters through fear of death.

3 Mankind's strong propensity to commit sin reveals that in the Fall, the image of God in man (Gn 1:26, 27) is also fallen. However, the ancient Fathers emphasize that the divine image in man has not been totally corrupted or obliterated. Human nature remains inherently good after the Fall; mankind is not totally depraved. People are still capable of doing good, although bondage to death and the influences of the devil can dull their perception of what is good and lead them into all kinds of evil.

4 Adam's Fall not only brought mortality and sin into the world, but also sweat, toil, hunger, thirst, weariness, sorrow, pain, suffering, sickness, tribulations, tragedy and tears.

5 Even after the Fall, the intellectual, desiring and incensive (forceful or driving) aspects of the soul are natural and therefore neutral. They can be used in a good way, or in a bad, harmful way. For instance, desire is very

good when one directs it towards God. But when desire is out of control, one may use it in very inappropriate ways, such as becoming gluttonous or desiring another person's spouse. The classic analogy is that these powers of the soul are like iron, which can be made into a plow to help grow food, or into a sword to be used to kill someone.

Christ, by His Death and Resurrection, conquered the devil and death, freeing mankind from the fear of death (Heb 2:14–15) and making possible a more complete communion between God and man than was ever possible before. This communion allows people to become "partakers of the divine nature" (2Pt 1:4), to transcend death and, ultimately, all the consequences of the Fall.

[8]Then they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden that afternoon, and Adam and his wife hid themselves within the tree in the middle of the garden from the presence of the Lord God.[†] [9]So the Lord God called Adam and said to him, "Adam, where are you?" [10]He replied, "I heard Your voice as You were walking in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." [11]Thus He said, "Who said you were naked? Have you eaten from the one tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" [12]Then Adam said, "The woman You gave me, gave me of the tree, and I ate." [13]So the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." [14]Thus the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than all the wild animals of the earth. On your breast and belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the

days of your life. [15]I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall be on guard for His heel.”[†]

[16]To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your pain and your groaning, and in pain you shall bring forth children. Your recourse will be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.” [17]Then to Adam He said, “Because you heeded the voice of your wife, and ate from the one tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it,’ cursed is the ground in your labors. In toil you shall eat from it all the days of your life.[†] [18]Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. [19]In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground from which you were taken. Earth you are, and to earth you shall return.” [20]So Adam called his wife's name Life, because she was the mother of all living.

[21]Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made garments of skin, and clothed them.[ω] [22]Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. Now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—” [23]therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of pleasure to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. [24]So He cast out Adam, and made him dwell opposite the garden of pleasure. He then stationed the cherubim and the fiery sword which turns every way to guard the way to the tree of life.[†]

Cain Kills Abel

4

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man through God.”[†] [2]Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a shepherd of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. [3]Now in the process of time Cain brought a sacrifice to the Lord from the fruits of the ground.[†] [4]Abel also brought a sacrifice from the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. The Lord respected Abel and his offering, [5]but He did not respect Cain and his sacrifices. So Cain was extremely sorrowful, and his countenance fell.[†] [6]So the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you extremely sorrowful? And why has your countenance fallen?[†] [7]Did you not sin, even though you brought it rightly, but did not divide it rightly? Be still; his recourse shall be to you; and you shall rule over him.”[†]

[8]Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.[†ω] [9]Then God said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He replied, “I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?”[†] [10]Thus God said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. [11]So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. [12]When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You will be groaning and trembling on the earth.” [13]Then Cain said to the Lord, “My guilt is too great to be forgiven![†] [14]Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be groaning and trembling on the earth. Then it will happen if anyone finds me, he will kill me.” [15]So the Lord God said to him, “Not so! Whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” Thus the Lord set a sign on

Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. [16]Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod opposite Eden.[†]

Cain's Family

[17]And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch. [18]To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael; and Mehujael begot Methushael; and Methu-shael begot Lamech. [19]Then Lamech took two wives for himself: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. [20]So Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. [21]His brother's name was Jubal. He is the one who invented the psaltery and harp. [22]As for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, a smith and a manufacturer of bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah. [23]Then Lamech said to his wives Adah and Zillah:

“Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech,

And listen carefully to my words,

Because I killed a man for wounding me

And a young man for hurting me.

[24] If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,

Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

[25]Again Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore a son, and he named him Seth, saying, “God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.”[†] [26]As for Seth, to him also a son was born. He named him Enosh, and he hoped in the Lord God and called upon His name.[†]

The Descendants of Adam

5 This is the book of the genesis of mankind in the day God made Adam, whom He made in God's image.[†ω] [2]He made them male and female, and blessed them; and the day He made them He called his name Adam. [3]Now Adam lived two hundred and thirty years, and begot a son according to his form and image, and named him Seth.[†] [4]After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were seven hundred years; and he begot sons and daughters.[†] [5]So all the days Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

[6]Now Seth lived two hundred and five years, and begot Enosh. [7]After he begot Enosh, Seth lived seven hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. [8]So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

[9]Now Enosh lived one hundred and ninety years, and begot Cainan. [10]After he begot Cainan, Enosh lived seven hundred and fifteen years, and begot sons and daughters. [11]So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

[12]Now Cainan lived one hundred and seventy years, and begot Mahalalel. [13]After he begot Mahalalel, Cainan lived seven hundred and forty years, and begot sons and daughters. [14]So all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.

[15]Now Mahalalel lived one hundred and sixty-five years, and begot Jared. [16]After he begot Jared, Mahalalel lived seven hundred and thirty

years, and begot sons and daughters. [17]So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.

[18]Now Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. [19]After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. [20]So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died.

[21]Now Enoch lived one hundred and sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. [22]After he begot Methuselah, Enoch was well-pleasing to God for two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. [23]So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. [24]Thus Enoch was well-pleasing to God, and was not found, for God translated him.

[25]Now Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. [26]After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begot sons and daughters. [27]So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.

[28]Now Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-eight years, and begot a son. [29]And he called his name Noah, saying, “He will give us rest from our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground the Lord God cursed.”[†] [30]After he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and sixty-five years, and had sons and daughters. [31]So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and fifty-three years, and he died.

[32]And Noah was five hundred years old, and he begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.[ω]

Man's Wickedness

6 Now it came to pass that men began to exist in great numbers on the earth, and daughters were born to them. [2]So when the sons of God saw the daughters of men were beautiful, they took wives for themselves of all they chose. [3]Then the Lord God said, “My Spirit shall not remain with these people forever, for they are flesh. So their days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”[†] [4]Now there were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men of old, men of renown.

[5]Then the Lord God saw man's wickedness, that it was great in the earth, and every intent of the thoughts within his heart was only evil continually.[†] [6]So God was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and He thought this over.[†] [7]Then God said, “I will blot out man whom I created from the face of the earth, from man to cattle, and from the creeping things to the birds of heaven, for I am grieved I made them.”[†] [8]But Noah found grace in the presence of the Lord God.[†]

Righteous Noah Builds the Ark

[9]This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, who was perfect in his generation and well-pleasing to God.[†ω] [10]So Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[11]Now the earth was corrupt before God and filled with unrighteousness.[†] [12]Thus the Lord God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh corrupted their way on the earth. [13]Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with unrighteousness through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. [14]Make yourself an ark of square timber. You shall make the ark in compartments, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.[†] [15]Thus you shall make the ark: three hundred cubits in length, fifty cubits in breadth, and thirty cubits in height. [16]Now when you assemble the ark, you shall gradually finish it up to a cubit at the top, and set the door in its side. You shall make the ark with lower, second, and third stories. [17]And behold, I am bringing a flood of water on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life. Whatever is on the earth shall die. [18]But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark —you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. [19]From every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. [20]Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing on the earth after its kind, two of every kind, they will enter into the ark with you, male and female, to keep them alive. [21]You shall also take for yourself all kinds of food to eat, and you shall gather it both for yourself and for them.” [22]Thus Noah did according to all the Lord God commanded him, so he did.

The Flood

7 Then the Lord God said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your family, because I have seen you righteous before Me in this generation.[†ω] [2]You shall also bring with you into the ark the clean cattle by sevens, male and female; and the unclean cattle by twos, male and female;[†] [3]and the clean birds of heaven by twos, male and female, to keep seed alive on the face of all the earth. [4]For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out from the face of the earth every living thing I made.” [5]So Noah did all the Lord God commanded him.

[6]Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth.[ω] [7]Then Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, entered the ark because of the flood waters. [8]Also the clean and unclean birds, the clean and unclean cattle, and everything that creeps on the earth, [9]entered with Noah into the ark, two by two, male and female, as God commanded him. [10]Then it came to pass after seven days, the waters of the flood came upon the earth. [11]In the six-hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the floodgates of heaven were opened.[ω] [12]Then it rained on the earth forty days and forty nights. [13]On the very same day Noah and his wife, his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives entered the ark. [14]Also, all the wild animals after their kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing moving upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, [15]entered the ark with Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. [16]So those that

entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God commanded him. Then the Lord God shut him in the ark.†

[17]Now the flood was on the earth forty days and forty nights. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. [18]So the waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. [19]The waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. [20]The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and covered all the high mountains. [21]And all flesh died that moves on the earth: birds and cattle, wild animals, and every creeping thing that moves on the earth, and every man. [22]Thus all things in whose nostrils was the breath of life, and everything on dry land, died. [23]So He blotted out all living things on the face of the earth: both man and cattle, creeping things and the birds of heaven. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah and those with him in the ark remained alive. [24]Now the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

The Flood Ceases

8 Then God remembered Noah, and whatever was with him in the ark: all the wild animals, all the cattle, all the birds, and all the creeping things. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.† [2]The fountains of the deep and the floodgates of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. [3]And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. [4]Then the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.[ω] [5]And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

[6]So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark he had made. [7]Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters dried up from the earth. [8]He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. [9]But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned to him in the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and brought her to himself in the ark. [10]Then he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark.[†] [11]The dove returned to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew the waters had receded from the earth. [12]So he waited yet another seven days and again sent out the dove; however, she did not return to him any more. [13]And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed, the surface of the ground was dry. [14]Now in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

[15]Then the Lord God spoke to Noah, saying, [16]“Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and their wives with you. [17]Also, bring out with you every living thing of all flesh: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that moves upon the earth, so they may abound on the earth, and increase and multiply on the earth.” [18]So Noah went out, along with his

wife and his sons and their wives. [19]Every animal, every bird, and every creeping thing that moves upon the earth, according to their kind, went out of the ark. [20]Then Noah built an altar to God, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered whole burnt offerings on the altar.[†] [21]So the Lord God smelled a sweet aroma. Then the Lord God thought it over and said, “I will never again curse the earth because of man's works, although the mind of man is diligently involved with evil things from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.[†ω] [22]While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and spring shall not cease by day or by night.”[†]

9 Thus God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and have dominion over it.[†] [2]For the dread and fear of you shall be upon all the wild animals of the earth, all the birds of heaven, all that move upon the earth, and all the fish of the sea. I have put them under your authority. [3]Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as I did the green herbs. [4]But you shall not eat flesh with its lifeblood. [5]Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of all the wild animals I will require it; and I will require the life of man at the hand of his fellow man. [6]Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; because I made man in God's image. [7]So then, increase and multiply; and fill the earth and have dominion over it.”

God's Covenant with Noah

[8]Then God spoke to Noah and his sons with him, saying,[†ω] [9]“Behold, I am establishing My covenant with you and with your seed after you, [10]and every living creature with you: the birds, the cattle, and all the wild animals of the earth, of all that came out of the ark with you. [11]Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; nor shall there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth.” [12]Then the Lord God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between Me and you, and every living creature with you, for perpetual generations: [13]I am setting My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. [14]It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; [15]and I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. [16]My rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will certainly remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh on the earth.” [17]Again God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I established between Me and all flesh on the earth.”

[18]Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.[ω] [19]These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

[20]Then Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard. [21]So he drank of the wine and was drunk and naked in his house. [22]Now Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. [23]But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walking backwards they covered their father's

nakedness. Since their faces were turned away, they did not see his nakedness. [24]Thus when Noah became sober and knew what his younger son had done to him, [25]he said:

“Cursed be Canaan;

A servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.”

[26] He also said,

“Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,

And Canaan shall be his servant.[†]

[27] May God enlarge Japheth,

And let him dwell in the habitations of Shem.

Let Canaan be his servant as well.”

[28]Now Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. [29]So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.

The Genealogy of Noah

10 Now this is the genealogy of Noah's sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and sons were born to them after the flood.[†]

[2]The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Elisa, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. [3]The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. [4]The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim, and Rhodians. [5]From these the coastal nations were separated into their lands, each according to his language, in their tribes and nations.

[6]The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. [7]The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of

Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. [8]Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a giant on the earth. [9]He was a giant, a hunter before the Lord God; therefore they would say, “As Nimrod the giant, the hunter before the Lord.” [10]And the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. [11]From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, [12]and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (the principal city). [13]Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, [14]Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and the Caphtorim). [15]Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and the Chettite; [16]the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; [17]the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; [18]the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward, the tribes of the Canaanites were dispersed. [19]And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. [20]These were the sons of Ham, according to their tribes, according to their languages, in their countries and in their nations.

[21]Now sons were also born to Shem himself, the father of all the sons of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder.[†] [22]The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram and Cainan. [23]The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. [24]Arphaxad begot Cainan, and Cainan begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber. [25]Two sons were born to Eber: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. [26]Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, [27]Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [28]Obal, Abimael, Sheba, [29]Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. [30]And their dwelling place was

from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. [31]These were the sons of Shem, according to their tribes, according to their languages, in their countries, according to their nations.

[32]These were the tribes of Noah's sons, according to their genealogy, in their nations; and from these the coastal nations were divided on the earth after the flood.[ω]

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole earth was one language and one speech. [2]And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there. [3]Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them with fire.” They had brick for stone and asphalt for mortar. [4]They also said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, whose top will reach to heaven; and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” [5]But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the sons of men built. [6]Then the Lord said, “Indeed, the people are one race and one language, and they have begun to do what they said. Now they will not fail to accomplish what they have undertaken.[†] [7]Come, let Us go down there and confuse their language, so they may not understand one another's speech.”[†] [8]So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city and the tower.[†] [9]Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the languages of all the earth; and from there the Lord God scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

The Genealogy of Shem

[10]Now this is the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood.[†] [11]After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[12]Now Arphaxad lived one hundred and thirty-five years, and begot Cainan. [13]After he begot Cainan, Arphaxad lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died. Now Cainan lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot Salah. So after he begot Salah, Cainan lived three hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[14]Now Salah lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot Eber. [15]After he begot Eber, Salah lived three hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[16]Now Eber lived one hundred and thirty-four years, and begot Peleg. [17]After he begot Peleg, Eber lived three hundred and seventy years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[18]Now Peleg lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot Reu. [19]After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[20]Now Reu lived one hundred and thirty-two years, and begot Serug. [21]After he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[22]Now Serug lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot Nahor. [23]After he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[24]Nahor lived seventy-nine years, and begot Terah. [25]After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and twenty-nine years, and begot sons and daughters; and he died.

[26]Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The Genealogy of Terah

[27]Now this is the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran begot Lot. [28]So Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans. [29]Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. [30]But Sarai was barren, and had no child. [31]Now Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and led them out from Ur of the Chaldeans, to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. [32]So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

God's Promise to Abram

12 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land I will show you.[†ω] [2]I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great;

and you shall be a blessing. [3]I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you; and in you all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed.” [4]Then Abram departed as the Lord said to him, and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he de-parted from Haran. [5]So Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son and all their possessions and every soul they acquired in Haran, and they departed for the land of Canaan. Thus they came to the land of Canaan. [6]Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. [7]Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your seed I will give this land.” And there Abram built an altar to the Lord, who appeared to him. [8]So he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.[†] [9]Then Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Abram in Egypt

[10]Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. [11]So it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “Indeed I know you are a beautiful woman. [12]Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, so they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. [13]Therefore say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and I may live because of you.” [14]So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. [15]The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. Then the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. [16]Now he

treated Abram well for her sake, and gave him sheep, oxen, donkeys, male and female servants, mules and camels. [17]But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.[†] [18]So Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me she was your wife? [19]Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way.” [20]So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning Abram; and they sent him away, with his wife and all he had.

Abram and Lot Part Ways

13 Now Abram went up from Egypt to the South, he and his wife and all he had, and Lot with him.[†] [2]Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold. [3]So he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent was at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, [4]to the place of the altar he made there at the beginning. There Abram called on the name of the Lord. [5]Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. [6]But the land was not able to support them, so they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great they could not dwell together.[†] [7]So strife arose between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and those of Lot. Now the Canaanites and the Perizzites dwelt in the land at that time. [8]So Abram said to Lot, “Let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. [9]Is not the whole land before you? Separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.”

[10]Thus Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), like the garden of God, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.[†] [11]Then Lot chose all the plain of Jordan for himself, and journeyed east. So they separated from each other. [12]Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, but Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.[ω] [13]Now the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful before God.

[14]Then God said to Abram, after Lot separated from him, “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward;[†] [15]for all the land you see I give to you and your seed forever. [16]And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth; that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your seed also could be numbered. [17]Arise, walk in the land through its length and its breadth, for I will give it to you.” [18]Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the oak of Mamre in Hebron, and built an altar there to the Lord.

Lot's Capture and Rescue

14 Now it came to pass in the reign of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, [2]that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). [3]All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). [4]Twelve years they served Chedor- laomer, and in the thirteenth they rebelled. [5]Now in the fourteenth year, Chedorlaomer and the kings with him came and cut down the giants in Ashteroth Karnaim and strong nations with them: the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, [6]and the Horites in the mountains of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. [7]Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and cut down all the princes of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.

[8]Now the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim [9]against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. [10]Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell in there; but those left fled to the mountains. [11]Then they took all the cavalry of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. [12]They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

[13]Then one who escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who at that time dwelt by the oak of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. [14]Now when Abram heard his brother Lot was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.[†ω] [15]So he divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked and pursued them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. [16]So he brought back all the cavalry of Sodom, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

The Blessing of Melchizedek

[17]Then the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings with him. [18]Now Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.[†] [19]He blessed Abram and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth;[†] [20]and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hands.” Then Abram gave him a tithe of all. [21]Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people, and keep the cavalry for yourself.”[†] [22]But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, [23]that I will take nothing of yours, from a thread to a sandal strap, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’— [24]except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.”

God's Covenant with Abram

15 After these things the Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield and will be your exceedingly great reward.”[†ω] [2]But Abram said, “Lord, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus, the son of Masek, my domestic maidservant?” [3]Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed, my household servant is my heir.”

[4]And immediately the Voice of the Lord came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but the One who will come from your own body shall

be your heir.”[†] [5]Then He brought him outside and said to him, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your seed be.”[†] [6]And Abram believed God, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.[†] [7]Then He said to him, “I am the God who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.”[†] [8]And he said, “Master and Lord, how will I know I will inherit it?”[†] [9]So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” [10]So he brought all these to Him and cut them in half, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. [11]And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

[12]Now around sunset, a trance fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. [13]Then He said to Abram, “Know for certain that your seed will be strangers in a land not their own, and will serve them; and they will afflict and humble them four hundred years. [14]Also, the nation they serve I will judge; and afterward, they shall come out with great possessions. [15]But as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace, buried in a good old age. [16]Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the sin of the Amorites is not yet filled up.”

[17]And it came to pass, when the sun went down, that there was a flame, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and lamps of fire that passed between those divided pieces. [18]On the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “I will give this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— [19]the Kenites, the

Kenezzites, the Kadmonites, [20]the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, [21]the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Euaites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

Hagar and Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children, but she had an Egyptian maidservant, whose name was Hagar.† [2]So Sarai said to Abram, “See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.” Thus Abram obeyed the voice of Sarai. [3]Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. [4]So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. [5]Then Sarai said to Abram, “My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. May God judge between you and me.” [6]Thus Abram said to Sarai, “Indeed, your maid is in your hand; do with her as you please.” So when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

[7]Now the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.† [8]Then He said, “Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?” She replied, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”† [9]The Angel of the Lord then said to her, “Return to your mistress, and humble yourself under her hand.”† [10]Again, the Angel of the Lord said to her, “I

will surely multiply your seed exceedingly, that it may not be counted because of its multitude."[†] [11]Once again, the Angel of the Lord said to her:

"Behold, you are with child,

And you shall bear a son.

You shall call his name Ishmael,

For the Lord has taken notice of your humiliation.[†]

[12] He shall be a rustic man,

And his hand shall be against every man,

And every man's hand against him.

He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

[13]Then Hagar called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees-Me"; for she said, "I have seen the One who appeared to me face to face."[†] [14]Therefore, she called the well the-Well-of-Him-I-Saw-Before-Me; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

[15]So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son whom Hagar bore Ishmael. [16]Now Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Circumcision: Sign of the Covenant

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am your God; be pleasing before Me and blameless.[†ω] [2]I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."[†] [3]Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, [4]"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. [5]No longer shall your name be called

Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.[†] [6]I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. [7]I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be your God and the God of your seed after you.[†] [8]Also I will give you and your seed after you the land you are occupying as a sojourner, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

[9]Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. [10]This is the covenant you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;[†] [11]and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin. It shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. [12]A child of eight days old shall be circumcised by you—every male child throughout your genealogy, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner not of your seed. [13]He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. [14]And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be cut off from his people; for he has broken My covenant."

[15]Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. [16]And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; and I will bless him, and he shall become nations; and kings of peoples shall be from him." [17]Then Abraham fell on his face

and laughed, and said in his mind, “Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old, and shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” [18]And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!” [19]Then God said, “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.[†] [20]As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him and will increase and multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve nations, and I will make him a great nation. [21]But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.” [22]So God finished talking with Abraham and departed from him.

[23]So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house, and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God said to him. [24]Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [25]And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [26]That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael. [27]Also, all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

The Hospitality of Abraham

18 Then God appeared to him at the oak of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door during the noon hour.[†] [2]So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood before him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, [3]and said, “O Lord, if I have now found grace in Your sight, do not pass by Your servant. [4]Let water be brought, and let them wash Your feet, while You cool Yourselves under the tree.[†] [5]And I will bring bread for You to eat. After that You may pass by, inasmuch as You have come to Your servant.” They said, “Do as you have said.” [6]So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.” [7]Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a young calf, tender and good, gave it to his servant, and he hastened to prepare it. [8]He also took butter and milk and the calf he prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

Promise of a Son

[9]Then He said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” He replied, “Here, in the tent.”[†] [10]Again He said, “I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.” (Sarah was listening in the tent door behind him.) [11]Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. [12]Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, “I have not yet had a child until now, and my lord is old also?” [13]Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh within herself, saying, ‘Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?’ [14]Is anything impossible with God? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”[†] [15]But Sarah denied she had laughed, for she was afraid, saying, “I did not laugh”; but He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

[16]Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham went along and escorted them on their journey. [17]Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham, My servant, what I am about to do?[†] [18]But Abraham shall surely become a great and populous nation, and in him all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. [19]For I know he will order his sons and his house after him. They will keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken to him.” [20]Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah has been completed, and their sins are exceedingly great.[ω] [21]Therefore, I will go down now and see whether or not they are carrying out the outcry coming to Me concerning them.”

[22]Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained before the Lord.[†] [23]So Abraham drew near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the ungodly?[†] [24]Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous in it? [25]Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” [26]Then the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.” [27]So Abraham answered and said, “Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: [28]But suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?” He replied, “If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it.” [29]Again he spoke to

Him and said, “But suppose there should be forty found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of forty.” [30]Then he said, “Let not the Lord be offended, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it if I should find thirty there.” [31]Again he said, “Since I have permission to speak to the Lord, suppose twenty should be found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of twenty.” [32]Then he said, “Let not the Lord be offended, and I will speak but once more, suppose ten should be found there?” So He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of the ten.”

[33]So the Lord went His way as soon as He finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.[†]

The Wickedness of Sodom

19 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. So when he saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed with his face toward the ground.[†] [2]Then he said, “Behold, my lords, turn in to your servant's house and rest and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.” But they said, “No, but we will spend the night in the open square.”[†] [3]But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

[4]Now before they went to sleep, the men of the city, the Sodomites, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. [5]Thus they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.”

[6]But Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, [7]and said, “By no means, my brethren, do not act wickedly. [8]I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the protection of my roof.”

[9]But they said, “Stand back! You came in to sojourn among us. Was it also to be making judgments? Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. [10]But the men reached out their hands, pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. [11]Then they struck the men at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, and they became weary trying to find the door.

[12]Now the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here in the city: sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone? —then take them out of this place! [13]For we will destroy this place, because their outcry has become great before the Lord, and the Lord sent us to destroy it.”[†] [14]So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Get up, get out of this place; for the Lord is about to wipe out this city!” But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

[15]Now when the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and the two daughters you have, and get out, lest you be destroyed with the transgressions of the city.” [16]But they were thrown into confusion, and the Lord being merciful to him, the angels seized his

hand, and the hands of his wife and two daughters, and brought them outside the city.[†]

[17]So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, they said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be overtaken.” [18]Then Lot said to them, “I pray, O Lord,[†] [19]since Your servant found mercy in Your sight, and You magnified Your righteousness which You showed me by saving my life, nevertheless, I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. [20]See now, this city, which is small, is near enough to flee to for refuge, and I shall escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.” [21]And He said to him, “See, I have acquiesced to you on this matter also, in that I will not overthrow this city, concerning which you have spoken.[†] [22]Therefore, hurry to escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” For this reason he called the name of that city Zoar.[†]

[23]Now the sun rose upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. [24]Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah from the Lord out of heaven.[†][†] [25]Thus He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and whatever grew on the ground. [26]But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.[†]

[27]Then Abraham rose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the Lord. [28]Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, a flame was ascending from the land, like the smoke of a furnace. [29]So it came to pass, when God wiped out all the cities of the plain, that God

remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the destruction, when the Lord overthrew the cities where Lot had dwelt.

The Sons of Lot

[30]Then Lot with his two daughters went up from Zoar and settled in the mountains; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar; and he dwelt in a cave with his two daughters. [31]Now the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us, as is the custom of all the earth. [32]Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may raise up seed from our father.” [33]So they made their father drink wine that night, and the elder went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. [34]It happened on the next day, the elder said to the younger, “Indeed, I slept with our father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may raise up seed from our father.” [35]So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger went in and slept with him; but he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. [36]Thus both the daughters of Lot conceived by their father. [37]Then the elder bore a son and called his name Moab, saying, “He is from my father.” He is the father of the Moabites to this present day. [38]Now the younger also bore a son and called his name Ammon, saying, “The son of my family.” He is the father of the Ammonites to this present day.

Abraham and Abimelech

20 Now Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned among the Gerarites.[†] [2]Then

Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister,” for he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” lest at a given time the men of the city should kill him because of her. Now Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.[†] [3]But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, “Indeed, you are a dead man because of the woman you have taken, for she is a man's wife.”

[4]Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “O Lord, will You destroy an ignorant and just nation? [5]Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and did she not say to me, ‘He is my brother’? I did this thing with a clean heart and righteous hands.” [6]Then God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clean heart, and I spared you that you might not sin against Me; therefore, I did not allow you to touch her. [7]Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet; and he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, rest assured you shall die, you and all who are yours.”

[8]So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. [9]Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done.” [10]Again Abimelech said to Abraham, “What possessed you to do this thing?” [11]Abraham replied, “Because I thought, surely the worship of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. [12]But indeed, she truly is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not of my mother; and she became my wife. [13]So it came to pass, when God caused me to

wander from my father's house, I said to her, ‘This righteousness shall you do for me: in every place we enter, say of me, “He is my brother.” ’ ”

[14]Then Abimelech took one thousand pieces of silver, sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. [15]Thus Abimelech said to Abraham, “See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you.” [16]Then to Sarah he said, “Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver, which will vindicate your honor before all those with you. But tell the truth in all things.” [17]So Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; [18]for the Lord closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

The Birth of Isaac

21 Now the Lord visited Sarah as He said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken.[†] [2]For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in old age, at the set time, of which God had spoken to him.[†] [3]So Abraham called the name of his son born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. [4]Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God commanded him. [5]Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. [6]And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh; all who hear will laugh with me.” [7]She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne a child in my old age.”

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

[8]So the child grew and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the same day Isaac was weaned. [9]Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, who was born to Abraham, playing with Isaac her son. [10]Therefore she said to Abraham, “Cast out this maidservant and her son, for the son of this maidservant shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”[†] [11]And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. [12]But God said to Abraham, “Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of your son and your maidservant. Whatever Sarah said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. [13]Yet I will also make a great nation of the son of your maidservant, because he is your seed.”

[14]So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the wilderness, near the Well of Oath. [15]When the water in the skin was used up, she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. [16]Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, “Let me not see the death of the boy.” So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.

[17]But God heard the voice of the lad from the place where he was. Then the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.[†] [18]Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation.”[†] [19]Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink.

[20]Thus God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the desert, and became an archer. [21]He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Abraham's Agreement with Abimelech

[22]Now it came to pass at that time that Abimelech, and his friend Ochozath, and Phichol, the commander-in-chief of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, “God is with you in all you do. [23]Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, or with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the righteousness I did to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt.” [24]So Abraham said, “I swear.” [25]Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water Abimelech's servants had seized. [26]Abimelech replied, “I do not know who did this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today.”

[27]So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. [28]Then Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. [29]Thus Abimelech asked Abraham, “Why have you placed these seven ewe lambs by themselves?” [30]He replied, “You must take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, to witness that I dug this well.” [31]Therefore he called that place, the Well of Oath, because the two of them swore an oath there. [32]Thus they made a covenant at the Well of Oath. So Abimelech rose with Ochozath his friend and Phichol, the commander-in-chief of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

[33]Then Abraham planted a field at the Well of Oath, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the eternal God. [34]So Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

Abraham Offers Isaac

22 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham! Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”[†][ω] [2]Then He said, “Take now your beloved son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a whole burnt offering on one of the mountains I tell you.”[†]

[3]So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey; and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split firewood for the whole burnt offering, and arose and went to the place God told him.[†] [4]Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. [5]Thus Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.”

[6]So Abraham took the firewood of the whole burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. Then he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. [7]Then Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the firewood, but where is the sheep for a whole burnt offering?” [8]And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the sheep for a whole burnt offering.” So the two of them went together. [9]They came to the place where God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed

the firewood in order; and he bound Isaac his son hand and foot and laid him on the altar, upon the firewood.

[10]Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. [11]But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham! Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.” [12]He then replied, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him, for now I know you fear God, since for My sake you have not spared your beloved son.”[†] [13]Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him a ram was caught in a thicket by its horns. So he brought it for a whole burnt offering in the place of his son. [14]Thus Abraham called the name of the place The-Lord-Has-Appeared; as it is said to this day, “In the mountain the Lord was seen.”[†]

[15]Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, [16]and said, “By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you did this thing, and for My sake did not spare your beloved son,[†] [17]I will certainly bless you, and assuredly multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore; and your seed shall inherit the cities of their enemies.[†] [18]In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you obeyed My voice.” [19]So Abraham returned to his servants, and they rose and went together to the Well of Oath; and Abraham dwelt at the Well of Oath.

The Children of Nahor

[20]Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, “Indeed, Milcah also has borne sons to your brother Nahor: [21]Huz

his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, [22]Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” [23]And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. [24]His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Ma-achah.

The Death and Burial of Sarah

23 Now Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years.[†] [2]Then Sarah died in the city of Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. [3]Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, [4]“I am a sojourner and a stranger among you. Give me therefore a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”[†] [5]So the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying, [6]“Hear us, my Lord, you are a king from God among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold his burial place from you, to bury your dead there.” [7]Then Abraham stood and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. [8]Thus he spoke with them, saying, “If you have it in mind for me to bury my dead out of my sight, then listen to me, and speak on my behalf to Ephron the son of Zohar,[†] [9]that he may give me the cave of Mach-pelah, which he has at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as a burial place among you.”

[10]Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, and of all who entered at the gate of the city, saying, [11]“No, my Lord, hear me, I give you both the field and the cave within it; I give it to you in the presence of

all my fellow citizens. Bury your dead." [12]Then Abraham bowed himself before the people of the land, [13]and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you are for me, hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there." [14]Ephron then answered Abraham, saying to him, [15]"My lord, listen to me, the land is worth four hundred silver drachmas; but what is that between you and me? So bury your dead." [16]So Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron, which he had mentioned in the hearing of the sons of Heth, the four hundred silver drachmas, currency of the merchants.

[17]Thus the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was opposite Mamre, the field and the cave in it, and all the trees in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded [18]to Abraham as his possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who entered the city. [19]Then after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which was opposite Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.[†] [20]So the field and the cave in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

Isaac and Rebekah

24 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. [2]So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, [3]and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell;[†] [4]but you shall go to my land where I was born, and to my tribe, and take from there a wife for my son Isaac.”

[5]And the servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land you came from?” [6]But Abraham said to him, “Beware that you do not take my son back there. [7]The Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, who took me from my father's house and from the land where I was born, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, ‘To you and your seed I give this land,’ He will send His Angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.[†] [8]And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there.”[†] [9]So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his lord, and swore to him concerning this matter.

[10]Then the servant took ten of his lord's camels and some of all his goods and departed, and he went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. [11]And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. [12]Then he said, “O Lord, the God of my lord Abraham, give me success this day, and show mercy to my lord Abraham.[†] [13]Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. [14]Now let it be that the virgin to whom I say, ‘Let down your pitcher that I may drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink’—let her be the one You appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know You have shown mercy to my lord.”[†]

[15]Thus it happened, before he finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. [16]Now the virgin was very beautiful to behold, and she was a virgin, for no man had known her. She went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. [17]Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Let me drink a little water from your pitcher.” [18]So she said, “Drink, my lord.” Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. [19]When she finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will also draw water for your camels, until they finish drinking.” [20]Thus she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

[21]And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. [22]So it was, when the camels finished drinking, the man took golden earrings, each a drachma in weight, and two bracelets for her wrists, ten pieces of gold in their weight, [23]and said, “Whose daughter are you? Tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?” [24]So she said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor.” [25]Moreover she said to him, “We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge.” [26]Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord. [27]And he said, “Blessed is the Lord, the God of my lord Abraham, who has not allowed His righ-teousness and His truth to forsake my lord. As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me to the house of my lord's brethren.”[†] [28]So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things.

[29]Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and he ran out to the man by the well. [30]So it came to pass, when he saw the earrings and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, “Thus the man spoke to me,” that he went to the man, as he stood by the camels at the well. [31]Laban said to him, “Come in, O blessed of the Lord! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels.” [32]Then the man came to the house and unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men with him. [33]Bread was then set before them to eat, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told my business.” And he said, “Speak on.”

[34]So he said, “I am Abraham's servant. [35]The Lord has blessed my lord greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. [36]And Sarah my lord's wife bore a son to my lord when he was old; and to him he has given all he has. [37]Now my lord made me swear an oath, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I sojourn; [38]but you shall go to my father's house and to my tribe, and take a wife for my son.’ [39]And I said to my lord, ‘Perhaps the woman will not return with me.’ [40]But he said to me, ‘The Lord, before whom I walk, will send His Angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my tribe and from my father's house. [41]You will be clear from this oath when you arrive at my tribe; for if they will not give her to you, then you will be released from my oath.’

[42]“So I came to the well today and said, ‘O Lord, the God of my lord Abraham, if You will now prosper the way I go, [43]behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the daughters of the men come to draw water, and the virgin to whom I will say, “Give me a little water from your pitcher to drink,” [44]and she says to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,”—let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for His own servant Isaac; and in this I will know You have dealt mercifully with my lord Abraham.’ [45]But before I finished speaking in my mind, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water And I said to her, ‘Let me drink.’ [46]And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink.’ So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also. [47]Then I asked her, and said, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ And she said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the earrings on her and the bracelets on her wrists.

[48]“Thus being well pleased I worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my lord Abraham, who led me in the way of truth, to take the daughter of my lord's brother for his son. [49]Now if you will deal mercifully and justly with my lord, tell me. But if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.”

[50]Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, “The command comes from the Lord; we cannot speak to you either good or bad. [51]Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your lord's son's wife, as the Lord has spoken.” [52]And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he bowed to the earth and worshiped the Lord.

[53]Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver and gold and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave gifts to her brother and her mother. [54]And he and the men with him ate and drank and stayed all night.

Then they arose early in the morning, and he said, “Send me away to my lord.” [55]But her brother and her mother said, “Let the virgin remain with us about ten days; after that she may go.” [56]And he said to them, “Do not hinder me, since the Lord has prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my lord.” [57]So they said, “We will call the young woman and ask her personally.” [58]Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will go.”[†] [59]Thus they sent away Rebekah their sister and her goods and Abraham's servant and those with him. [60]They blessed Rebekah their sister and said to her, “Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of myriads, and may your seed possess the gates of their enemies.” [61]Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and rode on the camels and went with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.

[62]Now Isaac came through the desert to the Well of the Vision, for he dwelt in the South.[†] [63]Isaac then went out to meditate in the field in the evening, and he lifted his eyes and saw camels coming. [64]Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from her camel; [65]for she had said to the servant, “Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my lord.” So she took a veil and covered herself. [66]Now the servant told Isaac all the things he had done. [67]Thus Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took her and she became his wife. So he loved her, and was comforted concerning Sarah his mother.

Abraham and Keturah

25 Now Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah.[†] [2]So she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. [3]Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. Thus the sons of Dedan were Ragouel, Nabdeed and the Asshurim, the Letushim, and the Leummim. [4]And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.

[5]Now Abraham gave all his possessions to Isaac.[†] [6]But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines; and while he was still living, he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

The Death and Burial of Abraham

[7]After these things, the sum of years Abraham lived were one hundred and seventy-five years.[†] [8]Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, old and full of days and was added to his people. [9]So his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, opposite Mamre, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, [10]the field and the cave Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife.

[11]Thus it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt at the Well of the Vision.[†]

The Genealogy of Ishmael and Isaac

[12]Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. [13]These were the names of Ishmael's sons, by their names, according to their families: Ishmael's firstborn, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, [14]Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [15]Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kede-mah. [16]These were the sons of Ishmael, and these were their names, by their towns and settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. [17]These were the years of Ishmael's life: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was added to his people. [18](He dwelt opposite Egypt, from Havilah as far as Shur, as you go toward Assyria, and dwelt separate from all his brothers.)

[19]Now this is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac.[†] [20]Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as his wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Mesopotamia, and the sister of Laban the Syrian. [21]Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and God granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. [22]But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. [23]And the Lord said to her:

“Two nations are in your womb,

And two peoples shall be separated from your body.

One shall be stronger than the other,

And the older shall serve the younger.”[†]

[24]Thus, when her days were fulfilled to give birth, indeed, there were twins in her womb. [25]Now the firstborn came out red. He was like a hairy

garment all over; so she named him Esau. [26]Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so she called his name Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah bore them.

Esau Sells His Birthright

[27]So the boys grew. Now Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a simple man, dwelling in tents.[†] [28]Now Isaac loved Esau because he ate his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob. [29]Then Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and was weary. [30]So Esau said to Jacob, “Let me taste this red stew, for I am exhausted.” Therefore his name was called Edom. [31]But Jacob said to Esau, “Sell me your birthright today.” [32]Esau replied, “Look, I am about to die. What good then is this birthright to me?” [33]Then Jacob said, “Swear to me today.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

Isaac and Abimelech

26 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine in the days of Abraham; and Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in Gerar. [2]Then the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I will tell you.[†] [3]Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your seed I give all these lands; and I will perform the oath I swore to Abraham your father.[†] [4]And I will make your seed multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give your seed all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;[†] [5]because Abraham your father obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My laws.”[†] [6]So Isaac dwelt in Gerar.

[7]Now the men of the place asked about his wife, and he said, “She *is* my sister,” for he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” lest the men of the place should kill him for Rebekah, because she was beautiful to behold. [8]Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of Gerar looked through a window and saw Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. [9]Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac said to him, “Because I said to myself, ‘Lest I should die on account of her.’ ” [10]Thus Abimelech said, “Why have you done this to us? One of the people could easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us.” [11]So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

[12]Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him. [13]The man began to prosper, and continued

prospering until he became very prosperous; [14]for he had herds of sheep and oxen and many fields. So the Philistines envied him. [15]Now the Philis-tines had stopped up all the wells his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. [16]Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.” [17]Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

[18]Again, Isaac dug the wells of water they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names his father had called them. [19]Also, Isaac's servants dug in the valley of Gerar, and found a well of fresh water there. [20]But the herdsmen of Gerar fought with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” So he called the name of the well Injustice, because they quarreled with him.[†] [21]Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Enmity. [22]So he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not fight over it. Thus he called its name Room, because he said, “Now the Lord has made room for us, and has increased us in the land.”

[23]Then he went up from there to the Well of Oath. [24]Now the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your seed for My servant Abraham's sake.”[†] [25]So he built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord; and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.[†] [26]Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his friend, and Phichol the commander-in-chief of his army. [27]Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?” [28]But they said, “We have certainly seen the Lord is with

you. So we said, ‘Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, [29]that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good, and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord.’ ” [30]So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.

[31]Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. [32]It came to pass the same day, Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they dug, and said to him, “We have found water.” [33]So he called it, Oath; therefore, the name of the city is the Well of Oath to this day.

[34]Now when Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.[†] [35]But they were contentious with Isaac and Rebekah.

Isaac Blesses Jacob

27 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.” And he answered him, “Here I am.”[ω] [2]Then he said, “Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death.[†] [3]Now therefore, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. [4]Then make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

[5]Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son; and Esau went to the field to hunt game for his father. [6]So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her younger son, saying, “Indeed, I heard your father speak to Esau your brother,

saying, [7]‘Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.’[†] [8]Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. [9]Go now to the sheep and bring me from there two kids, choice and good, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. [10]Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it and bless you before his death.”

[11]Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. [12]Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.” [13]But his mother said to him, “Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.” [14]So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. [15]Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. [16]She also put the skins of the kids on his hands and on the exposed part of his neck. [17]Then she gave the savory food and the bread she had prepared into the hands of her son Jacob.

[18]Thus he went to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” [19]Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” [20]But Isaac said to his son, “How is it you have found it so quickly, my son?” He said, “Because the Lord your God brought it to me.” [21]Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are my son Esau or not.” [22]So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's.” [23]Thus he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's

hands; so he blessed him. [24]Then he said, “Are you my son Esau?” He said, “I am.”

[25]He said, “Bring your game to me, my son, and I will eat from it, that my soul may bless you.” So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. [26]Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” [27]So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing.

Thus he blessed him and said:

“Surely, the smell of my son

Is like the smell of a field the Lord has blessed.

[28] Therefore, may God give you of the dew of heaven

And of the fatness of the earth,

And plenty of grain and wine.

[29] Let peoples serve you,

And nations bow down to you.

Be lord over your brethren,

And let your mother's sons bow down to you.

And cursed be everyone who curses you,

And blessed be those who bless you.”

Esau's Lost Blessing

[30]Now it happened, as soon as Isaac finished blessing Jacob his son, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. [31]He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his

son's game, that your soul may bless me.” [32]And his father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” So he said, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.”

[33]Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, “Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed, he shall be blessed.” [34]When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me—me also, O my father!”[†] [35]But he said, “Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing.” [36]Then Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing.” So he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”

[37]Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Indeed, I have made him your lord, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?” [38]Esau said to his father, “Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!” But when Isaac was troubled, Esau lifted up his voice and wept. [39]Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

“Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,

And of the dew of heaven from above.

[40] By your sword you shall live,

And you shall serve your brother;

And it shall come to pass, when you become restless,

That you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

Jacob Sent to Laban

[41]Thus Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him; and Esau said in his mind, “Let the days of mourning for my father draw near, then I will kill my brother Jacob.” [42]So the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah, and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, “Surely, your brother Esau is threatening to kill you. [43]Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; arise, flee to Mesopotamia to my brother Laban in Haran. [44]And stay with him a few days, until your brother's anger [45]and wrath turn away from you, and he forgets what you did to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?”

[46]Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of this land, what good will my life be to me?”

Isaac Sends Jacob to Mesopotamia

28 Now Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, saying, “You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. [2]Arise, go to Mesopotamia, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. [3]May God bless you, and increase and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of nations; [4]and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your seed with you, that you may inherit the land of your sojourning, which God gave to Abraham.”[†] [5]So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Mesopotamia, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

[6]Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Mesopotamia to take himself a wife from there, and as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, “You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan,” [7]and Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Mesopotamia. [8]Also, Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. [9]So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Jacob's Ladder

[10]Now Jacob went out from the Well of Oath and went toward Haran.[ω] [11]So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. Then he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. [12]Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.[†] [13]So behold, the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. Do not fear, the land on which you lie I will give to you and your seed. [14]Also, your seed shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed. [15]Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

[16]Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “The Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” [17]So he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”[†]

[18]Now Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone he put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it.[†] [19]Thus Jacob called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city was Luz previously.

[20]Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If the Lord God will be with me, and keep me in this way I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, [21]and bring me back in safety to my father's house, then the Lord shall be my God. [22]And this stone I set as a pillar shall be God's house to me, and of all You give me I will surely give a tithe to You.”[†]

Jacob and Rachel

29 Now Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the east, to Laban. [2]So he looked and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it, for out of that well they watered the flocks; and a large stone was on the well's mouth. [3]Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

[4]So Jacob said to them, “My brethren, where are you from?” And they said, “We are from Haran.” [5]Then he said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know him.” [6]So he said to them, “Is he well?” They said, “He is well. Look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep.” [7]Then he said, “It is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them.” [8]But they said, “We cannot, until all the shepherds are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we will water the sheep.”

[9]Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. [10]And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother. [11]Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. [12]So Jacob told Rachel he was her father's relative and Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father these words. [13]Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. [14]Now Laban said to him, “Surely you are my bone and my flesh.” And he stayed with him for a month.[†]

[15]Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my brother, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?”[†] [16]Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. [17]Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. [18]Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, “I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter.” [19]So Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than to another man. Stay with me.” [20]So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her. [21]Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her.”

[22]Now Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a wedding feast. [23]Thus it came to pass in the evening, he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. [24]So Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a handmaiden. [25]Then it came to pass in

the morning, behold, it was Leah; and he said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?” [26]Laban replied, “It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. [27]Fulfill her week, and I will give you this one also for the service you will render me still another seven years.”[†]

[28]Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. [29]Laban also gave his handmaiden Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a handmaiden. [30]Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah; and he served with Laban still another seven years.

Jacob's Children

[31]But when the Lord saw Leah was hated, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. [32]So Leah conceived and bore Jacob a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, “The Lord has surely looked on my humiliation. Now therefore, my husband will love me.” [33]Then she conceived again and bore Jacob a second son, and said, “Because the Lord heard I was hated, He has therefore given me this son also.” So she called his name Simeon. [34]She conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will be on my side, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore she called his name Levi.[†] [35]Now she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now I will give thanks to the Lord.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

30 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die.” [2]So Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?” [3]She replied to

Jacob, “Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear on my knees, that I also may have children by her.” [4]She then gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. [5]Thus Bilhah, Rachel's handmaiden, conceived and bore Jacob a son. [6]Then Rachel said, “God has judged me; and He has heard my voice and given me a son.” Therefore, she called his name Dan.[†] [7]Now Rachel's handmaiden Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. [8]Then Rachel said, “God has helped me, and I have wrestled with my sister; and indeed, I have prevailed.” So she called his name Naphtali.[†]

[9]Now when Leah saw she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her handmaiden and gave her to Jacob as wife. [10]So Jacob went in to her, and Zilpah, Leah's handmaiden, conceived and bore Jacob a son. [11]Then Leah said, “Good fortune!” Thus she called his name Gad.[†] [12]Now Zilpah, Leah's handmaiden, bore Jacob a second son. [13]Then Leah said, “I am blessed, for the women will call me blessed.” So she called his name Asher.[†]

[14]Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Thus Rachel said to Leah, “Give me some of your son's mandrakes.” [15]But she said to her, “Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?” So Rachel said, “Not so! Let him lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes.” [16]Now when Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes.” So he lay with her that night. [17]Thus God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. [18]Then Leah said, “God has given me my wages, because I have given my handmaiden to my husband.” So she called his name Issachar.[†] [19]Now Leah

conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. [20]Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will choose me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she called his name Zebulun.[†] [21]Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

The Agreement of Jacob and Laban

[22]Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. [23]Thus she conceived and bore a son, and said, “God has taken away my reproach.”[†] [24]So she called his name Joseph, and said, “The Lord shall add another son to me.”

[25]Now it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. [26]Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know the service I rendered you.” [27]Then Laban said to him, “If I could find grace in your eyes, I would seek for it divinely, for God has blessed me by your coming.” [28]So he said, “Name me your wages, and I will give it.” [29]Jacob replied, “You know how I have served you and how numerous your cattle became with me. [30]For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the Lord has blessed you since my coming. Now therefore, when shall I also establish my own house?”

[31]Thus Laban said to him, “What shall I give you?” Jacob replied, “You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your sheep: [32]Let me pass through all your flocks today, removing from them all the gray sheep, and all the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages. [33]So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that

is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and gray among the sheep, will be considered stolen, if it is with me.”[†] [34]Then Laban said to him, “Let it be according to your word.” [35]So he removed that day all the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the gray ones among the sheep, and gave them into the hands of his sons. [36]Then he put three days’ journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

[37]Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, tearing off the bark. So the white strips he had peeled appeared on the rods as spotted. [38]Then he placed the rods he had peeled in the gutters of the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so they should conceive at the rods as they came to drink. [39]So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth speckled, spotted, and ash-colored speckled. [40]But Jacob separated the male lambs, and placed a speckled ram before the sheep and all that were spotted among the male lambs. Then he separated for himself flocks by themselves and did not mix them with the sheep of Laban.

[41]Thus it came to pass, whenever the sheep conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the sheep in the gutters, so they might conceive according to the rods. [42]But whenever the sheep had already given birth, he did not put them in. Thus it came to pass, that the unmarked were Laban's and the marked were Jacob's. [43]So the man became exceedingly rich, and had many cattle and oxen, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys.

Jacob Flees from Laban

31 Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, “Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from our father's property he acquired all this wealth.” [2]So Jacob saw Laban's countenance, and indeed, it was not favorable toward him as before. [3]Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Return to your father's land and to your family, and I will be with you.”[†ω]

[4]So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field where the flocks were, [5]and said to them, “I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. [6]Now you know that with all my might I served your father. [7]Yet your father deceived me and changed my wages ten times with respect to the male lambs, but God did not allow him to harm me. [8]If he said thus, ‘The speckled shall be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore speckled. But if he said thus, ‘The white shall be your wages,’ then all the sheep bore white. [9]So God has taken away all your father's cattle and given them to me. [10]Now it came to pass, when the flocks conceived, I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats and the rams that were speckled, spotted, and ash-colored speckled were mating with the sheep and the goats. [11]Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, ‘Jacob.’ Thus I said, ‘Here I am.’[†] [12]So He said, ‘Lift your eyes now and see, all the male goats and the rams mating with the sheep and the goats are speckled, spotted, and ash-colored speckled; for I have seen everything Laban is doing to you. [13]I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and made a vow to Me. Now then, arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your nativity, and I will be with you.’ ”[†]

[14]Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, “Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? [15]Are we not considered

strangers by him? For he sold us, and also completely consumed our money. [16]For all the riches and glory God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it.”

[17]Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. [18]And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions acquired in Mesopotamia, everything belonging to him, to go to his father Isaac in Canaan. [19]Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen her father's idols. [20]But Jacob had hidden from Laban the Syrian his intention of running away. [21]So he fled with all that he had, and crossed the river, and headed for the mountains of Gilead.

Laban Pursues Jacob

[22]Then Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. [23]So he took all his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days’ journey; and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. [24]But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, “Be careful that you do not speak evil things to Jacob at any time.”[†] [25]So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. [26]Then Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and robbed me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? [27]Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? [28]And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. [29]It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be careful that you do not speak evil things to Jacob at any

time.’[†] [30]Now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?”

[31]Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I said, ‘Perhaps you would take your daughters and all my possessions from me by force.’ [32]With whomever you find your gods, let him not live in the presence of our brethren. Identify what I have of yours and take it with you.” For Jacob did not know Rachel had stolen them. [33]Thus Laban went in and searched Leah's tent, but found nothing. Then he searched Jacob's and those of the handmaidens, but found nothing. Then he entered Rachel's tent. [34]Now Rachel had taken the idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. [35]Then she said to her father, “Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me.” So he searched the entire tent but did not find the idols.

[36]Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban, “What is my injustice? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? [37]Although you searched all my things, what part of your household goods have you found? Set them here before my brethren and your brethren, so they may judge between us. [38]These twenty years I have been with you; your sheep and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. [39]That which was caught by wild animals I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of any stolen by day or by night. [40]There I was. In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. [41]Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times with respect to the female lambs. [42]Unless the God of my father Abraham and the fear of Isaac

had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. But God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.”[†]

Jacob's Pact with Laban

[43]Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, “These daughters are my daughters, and these sons are my sons, and these sheep are my sheep; all you see belongs to me and my daughters. But what can I do for them today or for the children they bore? [44]Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.” Then he said, “Look, there is no one with us. God Himself is witness between you and me.”

[45]So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.[†] [46]Then Jacob said to his brethren, “Gather stones.” So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate and drank there on the heap; and Laban said to him, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.”[†] [47]Laban called it the Heap of Testimony, but Jacob called it the Witness Heap.

[48]Then Laban said, “This heap and this pillar are a witness between you and me this day.” Therefore its name was called This-Heap-Witnesses,[†] [49]and also The Vision, because he said, “May God watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. [50]If you humble my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us—see, God is witness between you and me.” [51]Then Laban said to Jacob, “Listen, this heap and pillar are a witness. [52]This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. [53]The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor judge between us.” Thus Jacob swore by the fear of his

father Isaac. [54]Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren; and they ate bread and drank and stayed all night on the mountain.

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

32 So early in the morning, Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.[ω]

[2]So Jacob went on his way, and saw the hosts of God encamped. [3]When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God's encampment”; and he called the name of that place Encampments.

[4]Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. [5]And he commanded them, saying, “Speak thus to my lord Esau, ‘Thus your servant Jacob says, “I sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, sheep, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in your sight.” ’ ” [6]Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him.” [7]So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people with him and the oxen and sheep into two companies. [8]Thus Jacob said, “If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the other company will escape.”

[9]Again Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, ‘Return to the land of your nativity, and I will deal well with you,’ [10]let me be satisfied with all the righteousness and all the truth You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. [11]Deliver me from the hand of my brother, Esau; for I am afraid of him, lest he come and attack me and the

mother with the children. [12]For You said, ‘I will surely treat you well, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’ ”[†]

[13]So he lodged there that same night, and took some of the things he had brought as a present for Esau his brother: [14]two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred sheep and twenty rams, [15]thirty milk camels with their offspring, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. [16]Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, each flock by itself, and said to his servants, “Go on before me, and put some distance between successive droves.” [17]And he commanded the first one, saying, “When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these going before you?’ [18]Then you shall say, ‘Your servant Jacob's. These things are a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.’ ” [19]So he commanded the first, the second, and the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, “In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; [20]and also say, ‘Behold, your servant Jacob is coming behind us.’ ” For he said to himself, “I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.” [21]So the present went on before him, but he himself lodged that night in the encampment.

Jacob Wrestles with God

[22]And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. [23]He took them and crossed over the brook, and sent over what he had. [24]Then Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.[†] [25]Now when

He saw He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was dislocated as he wrestled with Him. [26]Then He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me.” [27]So He said to him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” [28]And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have prevailed with God and with men.”[†]

[29]Then Jacob asked, saying, “Tell me Your name, I pray.” And he said, “Why do you ask about My name?” And He blessed him there. [30]So Jacob called the name of that place, the Form of God: “For I saw God face to face, and my soul was saved.”[†] [31]When the Form of God passed by, the sun rose on him, but he limped on his hip. [32]Therefore to this day, the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip, in the muscle that shrank.

Jacob and Esau Meet

33 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau his brother was coming, and four hundred men with him. So Jacob divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. [2]Then he put the maidservants and their sons in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. [3]He then crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. [4]But Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept. [5]Then he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, “Who are these with you?” He replied, “The children God mercifully gave your servant.”[†] [6]Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. [7]Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Rachel and Joseph came near, and they bowed down.

[8]Then Esau said, “What are these things to you, all this company I met?” So he said, “That your servant might find grace in the sight of my Lord.” [9]But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” [10]But Jacob replied, “If I have now found grace in your sight, receive the present from my hands, inasmuch as I have seen your face, as though someone might see the face of God; and you were pleased with me. [11]Receive my blessing I brought you, because God has shown me mercy; and I have enough.” Thus he urged him, and he took it.

[12]Then Esau said, “Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.” [13]But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows the children are weak, and the flocks and herds with me are giving birth. If therefore the men should drive them hard one day, all the cattle would die. [14]Let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace the children are able to bear, until I come to my lord in Seir.” [15]Then Esau said, “Let me leave with you some of the people with me.” But he said, “What need is there? It is enough that I found grace in my lord's sight.” [16]So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

[17]Then Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built houses, and made booths for his cattle. Therefore, he called the name of that place, Succoth. [18]Then Jacob came safely to Salem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, when he came from Mesopotamia of Syria; and he took up a position in front of the city. [19]He then bought the parcel of land where he pitched his tent from Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred male lambs.[†] [20]There he set up an altar and called on the God of Israel.

The Violation of Dinah

34 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. [2]But when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, a ruler of the land, saw her, he took her, lay with her, and violated her.[†] [3]Now his soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and sought to win her heart. [4]Then Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get this young woman as a wife for me.”

[5]But Jacob heard Hamor's son had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his cattle in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. [6]Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. [7]Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were stunned and extremely grieved, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, something that should never have happened. [8]But Hamor spoke with them, saying, “My son Shechem is passionately in love with your daughter. Give her to him as a wife.[†] [9]Make marriages with us; give us your daughters, and take our daughters for your sons. [10]Dwell among us, and behold, the land before you is spacious. Dwell therein and trade, and acquire possessions in it.”

[11]Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, “Let me find grace in your eyes, and we will give whatever you ask. [12]Make the dowry as great as you wish, and I will give it; only give me this young woman as a wife.” [13]But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully to them, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. [14]So Simeon and Levi, the brothers of Dinah and the sons of Leah, said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised, for that would be a

reproach to us. [15]But on this condition we will consent to you, if you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, [16]then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. [17]But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughters and be gone."

[18]Now their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. [19]So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He was the most esteemed of all those in his father's house. [20]And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying, [21]"These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters as wives, and let us give them our daughters. [22]Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us is circumcised, as they are circumcised. [23]Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." [24]Thus all who went out of the gate of their city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised in the flesh.

[25]Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, two sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. [26]They also killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. [27]Then the sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city in which Dinah their sister had been defiled. [28]They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in

the field; [29]and took captive all their wives, their children, and their servants and plundered whatever was in the city and in the houses.

[30]Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You made me an object of hatred, so as to be evil to all the inhabitants of the land, both among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I.” [31]But they said, “Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?”[†]

Jacob at Bethel

35 Now God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.”[†] [2]Then Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. [3]Let us arise and go up to Bethel and make there an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my tribulation, and was with me and saved me on the road I traveled.” [4]So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods in their hands, and the earrings in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree near Shechem.

[5]Then Israel departed from Shechem, and the fear of God was upon all the cities around them. Thus they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. [6]Now Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), in the land of Canaan, he and all the people with him. [7]He built an altar there and called the place Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother Esau. [8]Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak. So Jacob called its name the Oak of Mourning.

[9]Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Mesopotamia, and blessed him.[†] [10]God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; your name shall not any more be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” [11]God also said to him, “I am your God. Increase and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.[†] [12]The land I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your seed after you I give this land.” [13]Then God ascended from him in the place where He talked with him.[†] [14]So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. [15]Thus Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him Bethel.

The Death of Rachel

[16]Then Jacob departed from Bethel, and when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored with much difficulty in childbirth. [17]Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, “Take courage; you will have this son also.” [18]So it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin. [19]Thus Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). [20]Then Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

[21]Now Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. [22]So it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. Israel heard about it, and it was seen as evil in his sight.

The Twelve Sons of Jacob

[23]Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; [24]the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; [25]the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; [26]and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Mesopotamia of Syria.

The Death of Isaac

[27]Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. [28]Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. [29]So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. Thus his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

The Genealogy of Esau

36 Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom. [2]Esau took his wives from the daughters of the Canaanites: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; [3]and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. [4]Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel, [5]and Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. [6]Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods he gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. [7]For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land of their sojourning could not support them because of their abundance. [8]So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.

[9]Now this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. [10]These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. [11]The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. [12]Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eli-phaz. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. [13]These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. [14]These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. She bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

[15]These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, [16]Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, and Chief Amalek. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah. [17]These were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. [18]These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and Chief Korah. These were the chiefs from Aholibamah. [19]These were the sons of Esau, and these were their chiefs, the sons of Edom.

[20]These were the sons of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, [21]Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom. [22]And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister was Timna. [23]These were the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. [24]These were the sons of Zibeon: Ajah and Anah. This was the Anah who found the hot springs in the

desert, as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon. [25]These were the children of Anah: Dishon and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. [26]These were the sons of Di-shon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. [27]These were the sons of Ezer: Balaam, Zucam, Jucam and Ucam. [28]These were the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. [29]These were the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah, [30]Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, and Chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefdoms in the land of Seir.

[31]Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: [32]Balak the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. [33]So when Balak died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. [34]When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. [35]When Husham died, Hadad the son of Barad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Gethaim. [36]When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. [37]When Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. [38]When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. [39]And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Harad the son of Barad reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Phogor. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

[40]These were the names of the chiefs of Esau, in their tribes and places, and in their countries and nations: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth, [41]Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, [42]Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, [43]Chief Magdiel, and Chief Zaphoim. These were the chiefs of Edom, in their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau was the father of the Edomites.

Joseph's Dream

37 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. [2]This is the genealogy of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the sheep with his brothers. Now the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. [3]Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age. He also made him a tunic of many colors.[†] [4]But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak civilly to him.

[5]Then Joseph had a dream, and reported it to his brothers. [6]Thus he said to them, “Hear this dream I dreamed: [7]There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.” [8]So his brothers said to him, “Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.[†]

[9]Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.” [10]So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come and bow down on the ground before you?” [11]And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Is Sold into Egypt

[12]Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. [13]And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers shepherding the sheep in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” So he said to him, “Here I am.” [14]Then Israel said to him, “Go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the sheep, and bring back word to me.” So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

[15]Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. So the man asked him, saying, “What are you seeking?” [16]He replied, “I am looking for my brothers. Tell me where they are feeding their sheep.” [17]The man said to him, “They have departed from here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.”’ So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. [18]Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. [19]Then they said to one another, “Look, this dreamer is coming. [20]Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, ‘Some wild beast has devoured him.’ We shall see what will become of his dreams.”

[21]But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, “Let us not kill him.” [22]Again, Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit in the desert; and do not lay a hand on him”—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father. [23]So it came to pass, when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped the tunic of many colors off him. [24]Then they took him and cast him into a pit, which was empty; for there was no water in it.

[25]They then sat down to eat a meal, and lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelite wayfarers coming from Gilead with their

camels bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. [26]So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?[†] [27]Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh”; and his brothers listened. [28]Thus the Midianite traders passed by, and the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit; and they sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of gold. So they took Joseph to Egypt.[†] [29]Then Reuben returned to the pit, and when he saw Joseph was not in there, he tore his clothes. [30]So he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad is not there; and I, where shall I go?”

[31]Thus they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. [32]Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and had it brought to their father and said, “We found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?” [33]So he recognized it and said, “This is my son's tunic. A wild animal has devoured Joseph and carried him off.” [34]Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. [35]Thus all his sons and daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” So his father wept for him. [36]Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Judah and Tamar

38 It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. [2]Then Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her. [3]So she conceived and bore a son, and called his name

Er. [4]She conceived again and bore a son, and called his name Onan. [5]She conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. She was at Chezib when she bore them.

[6]Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. [7]But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the Lord, and God killed him. [8]So Judah said to Onan, “Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and as her brother-in-law raise up seed to your brother.” [9]But Onan knew the seed would not be his; and it came to pass that whenever he went in to his brother's wife, he emitted his semen on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother. [10]But the thing he did appeared evil in the sight of the Lord; therefore, He also put him to death. [11]Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown.” For he said, “Lest he also die like his brothers.” So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

[12]Now in the process of time, the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his shepherd, Hirah the Adullamite. [13]So it was told Tamar, saying, “Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.” [14]Thus she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil, made herself beautiful, and sat down near the gates of Ainan on the way past Timnah; for she saw Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. [15]When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face and he did not recognize her. [16]Then he turned to her by the way, and said, “Let me come in to you”; for he did not know she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?” [17]He replied, “I will send a young goat from the flocks.” So she said, “Will you give me a pledge till you send it?” [18]Then he said, “What pledge shall I give you?” So she said, “Your

ring and cord, and the staff in your hand.” Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. [19]So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

[20]Thus Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his shepherd the Adullamite to receive his pledge from the woman, but he did not find her. [21]Then he asked the men of that place, saying, “Where is the prostitute who was in Ainan by the roadside?” They replied, “There was no prostitute here.” [22]So he returned to Judah and said, “I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said no prostitute had been there.” [23]Then Judah said, “Let her have them, lest we should become a laughingstock; for I sent this young goat but you did not find her.”

[24]Thus it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has committed fornication and is pregnant because of her adultery.” So Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned.”[†] [25]When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “By the man to whom these belong, I am with child.” So she said, “Determine whose these are—the ring, the cord, and the staff.” [26]So Judah acknowledged them and said, “She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son.” But he never knew her again.

[27]Then it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. [28]So it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” [29]Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, “How did you break through? This breach be upon you.” Therefore she called his name Perez. [30]Afterward

his brother came out, with the scarlet thread on his hand; and she called his name Zerah.

Joseph Imprisoned in Egypt

39 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, Pharaoh's eunuch and captain of the guard, an Egyp-tian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. [2]The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was living in the house of his lord the Egyptian. [3]So his lord saw that the Lord was with him and the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. [4]Thus Joseph found grace in his sight and was pleasing to him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and put everything he had under Joseph's authority. [5]So it was, from the time he made him overseer of his house and all he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyp-tian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all he had in the house and in the field. [6]Thus he left all he had in Joseph's hand, and did not know what he had except for the bread he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

[7]Then it came to pass after these things that his lord's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, “Lie with me.” [8]But he refused and said to his lord's wife, “Look, my lord does not know what is with me in the house and has committed all he has to my hand. [9]There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”[†] [10]So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to have relations with her. [11]But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, [12]she

caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

[13]So it was, when she saw he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, [14]she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, “See, he brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. [15]Thus it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.” [16]So she kept his garment with her until his lord came home. [17]Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, “The Hebrew servant you brought to us came in to me to mock me; [18]so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, he left his garment with me and fled outside.” [19]So it was, when his lord heard the words his wife spoke to him, saying, “Your servant did to me after this manner,” his anger was aroused. [20]Then Joseph's lord took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined.[†]

[21]But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him grace in the sight of the chief prison keeper.[†] [22]So the chief keeper of the prison put under Joseph's authority both the prison and all the prisoners, and whatever they did there. [23]The chief keeper of the prison did not look into anything under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.[†]

Joseph Interprets the Dreams of the Prisoners

40 Now it came to pass after these things, that the king of Egypt's chief cupbearer and chief baker offended their lord, the king of Egypt. [2]So Pharaoh was angry with his two eunuchs, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. [3]Thus he put them in custody with the chief bodyguard in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. [4]Then the chief jailer committed them to Joseph, and he attended them; so they were in custody for a while.

[5]Then the king of Egypt's chief cupbearer and the chief baker, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. [6]So Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw they were troubled. [7]Thus he asked Pharaoh's eunuchs, who were with him in the custody of his lord, saying, “Why do you look so sad today?” [8]So they said to him, “We each had a dream, and there is no one to interpret it.” Then Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Therefore, relate them to me.”[†] [9]Then the chief cupbearer related his dream to Joseph, and said to him, “Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, [10]and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. [11]Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.”

[12]And Joseph said to him, “This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. [13]Now within three days Pharaoh will remember your position and restore your office of chief cupbearer; and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his cupbearer. [14]But remember me when it is well with you, and have mercy on me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this prison. [15]For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and I also have done nothing for them to put me into the dungeon.”

[16]When the chief baker saw the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. [17]In the

uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head.” [18]So Joseph answered and said, “This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. [19]Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you.”

[20]Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he remembered the positions of his chief cupbearer and chief baker among his servants. [21]Then he restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. [22]But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. [23]Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.[†]

Joseph Interprets the Dreams of Pharaoh

41 Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. [2]Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine-looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. [3]Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. [4]But the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine-looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. [5]He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven ears of corn came up on one stalk, plump and good. [6]Then behold, seven ears of corn, thin and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. [7]But the seven thin ears of corn devoured the seven plump and full ears. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream.

[8]Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the interpreters of Egypt and all its wise men. Thus Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for

Pharaoh. [9]Then the cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, “I remember my sin this day. [10]When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the chief bodyguard, both myself and the chief baker, [11]we each had a dream in one night, both he and I. Each had a dream regarding himself. [12]Now there was with us a young Hebrew servant of the chief bodyguard, and we related our dreams to him; and he interpreted them for us. [13]And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, but he hanged him.”[†]

[14]Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. [15]Thus Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.” [16]So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”

[17]Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. [18]Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine-looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. [19]Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. [20]And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. [21]When they had eaten them, no one would have known they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke and fell asleep again. [22]Again, I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven ears of corn came up on one stalk, full and good. [23]Then behold, seven ears of corn, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. [24]But the thin ears of corn devoured the seven good ears. So I told all this to the interpreters, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

[25]Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: [26]The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears of corn are seven years; the dreams are one. [27]But the seven thin and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. [28]This is the thing I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. [29]Indeed, seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; [30]but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. [31]So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. [32]Now the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. [33]Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a sensible and intelligent man, and set him over the land of Egypt. [34]Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint governors over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. [35]So let them gather all the food of the seven good years that are coming, and store up grain under Pharaoh's authority, and let them keep food in the cities. [36]That food shall then be as a reserve in the land for the seven coming years of famine in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.”

Joseph Made Ruler of Egypt

[37]Now this advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants.[†] [38]Thus Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a man as this, who has the Spirit of God in him?” [39]Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as sensible and

intelligent as you. [40]You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” [41]So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

[42]Then Pharaoh took the signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. [43]Then he had him ride in the second of his chariots; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt. [44]Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” [45]Then Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah, and he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah, priest of On.

[46]Now Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. Then Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. [47]Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. [48]So he gathered up all the food of the seven years of prosperity in the land of Egypt, and stored the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields that surrounded them. [49]Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable.

[50]Now two sons were born to Joseph before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah, priest of On, bore to him. [51]Joseph called the name of his firstborn Manasseh: “For God has made me forget all my troubles and all my father's house.” [52]And the name of the

second he called Ephraim: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my humiliation.”[†]

[53]Then the seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt ended, [54]and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. [55]So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do.” [56]The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. [57]Then all countries also came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt

42 When Jacob found out there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why are you standing idle?”[†] [2]Then he said, “Indeed, I heard there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy for us there, that we may live and not die.” [3]So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. [4]But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “Lest some calamity befall him.”

[5]Thus the sons of Israel went to buy grain with those who were going there, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. [6]Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. So Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the ground. [7]Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, “Where do you come from?” And they said, “From the land of Canaan to buy food.” [8]So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

[9]Then Joseph remembered the dreams he dreamed about them, and said to them, “You are spies. You have come to map out the roads of the country.”[†] [10]But they said to him, “No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. [11]We are all one man's sons; we are men of peace; your servants are not spies.” [12]But he said to them, “No, but you have come to map out the roads of the land.” [13]Then they said, “Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more.” [14]But Joseph said to them, “It is as I spoke to you, namely, ‘You are spies!’ [15]In this manner you shall be manifested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. [16]Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.” [17]So he put them all together in prison three days.

[18]Then Joseph said to them the third day, “Do this and live, for I fear God.[†] [19]If you are men of peace, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. [20]But bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” So they did so. [21]Then they said to one another, “We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.” [22]Reuben then answered them, saying, “Did I not speak to you, saying, ‘Do not sin against the boy,’ but you would not listen? Therefore, behold, his blood is now required of us.”[†] [23]But they did not know Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter.

[24]Then Joseph turned himself away from them and wept. So he returned to them again, and talked with them; and took Simeon from them, and bound him before their eyes. [25]Joseph then gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.

The Brothers Depart for Canaan

[26]So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. [27]But as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. [28]So he said to his brothers, “My money has been returned to me, and there it is, in my sack.” Then their hearts failed them, and they were afraid, saying to one another, “What is this God has done to us?”

[29]Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that happened to them, saying, [30]“The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. [31]But we said to him, ‘We are men of peace; we are not spies. [32]We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.’ [33]Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, ‘By this I will know you are men of peace: leave one of your brothers here with me, take food for your households, and be gone. [34]Now, bring your youngest brother to me; then I shall know you are not spies, but men of peace. I will then grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’ ”

[35]Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. [36]So Jacob their father said to them, “You

have bereaved me: Joseph is no more; Simeon is no more; and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.” [37]Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, “Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.” [38]But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.”

Joseph's Brothers Return to Egypt with Benjamin

43 Now the famine was severe in the land. [2]So it came to pass, when they had eaten the grain they brought from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go back, and buy us a little food.” [3]But Judah spoke to him, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ [4]If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. [5]But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ ”

[6]Then Israel said, “Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had yet another brother?” [7]But they said, “The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ Thus we replied to him according to these words. Could we possibly have known he would say, ‘Bring your brother down’?” [8]Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and all we have. [9]I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame all my days. [10]For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time.”

[11]Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. [12]Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. [13]Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. [14]May God give you grace before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved.”[†]

[15]So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. [16]When Joseph saw Benjamin, his brother by the same mother, with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon.” [17]Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

[18]Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house, and they said, “It is because of the money returned to our sacks the first time, that we are brought here to make a case against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.”[†] [19]When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, [20]saying, “We entreat you, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; [21]but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there to our surprise, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. [22]And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put the money in our sacks.” [23]But he said, “Mercy be on you; do not be afraid.

Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; and I am receiving your genuine money as full payment.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.[†]

[24]So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. [25]Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard he would eat bread there. [26]Thus when Joseph came home, they brought the present in their hand to him in the house, and bowed down before him to the earth.[ω] [27]Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?” [28]So they answered, “Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive.” Then he said, “Blessed be that man in God”; and they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.[†]

[29]Then Joseph lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, “Is this your younger brother you said you would bring to me?” So he said, “May God grant you mercy, my son.” [30]Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. Then he went into his inner chamber and wept there. [31]He then washed his face and came out; and he composed himself, and said, “Serve the bread.” [32]So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. [33]Now they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. [34]Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.[†]

Joseph's Stolen Cup

44 Now Joseph commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men's
sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in
the mouth of his sack. [2]Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the
sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word
Joseph had spoken. [3]As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away,
they and their donkeys. [4]When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet
far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you
overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? [5]Why have
you stolen my silver cup? Is not this the cup from which my lord drinks, and
with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.’ ”

[6]So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. [7]But they
said to him, “Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your
servants should do such a thing. [8]Look, we brought back to you from the land
of Canaan the money we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we
steal silver or gold from your lord's house? [9]With whomever of your servants it
is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's servants.” [10]Then he
replied, “Now as you say, so it will be; he with whom it is found shall be my
servant, and you shall be blameless.” [11]Then each man speedily let down his
sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. [12]So he searched the oldest and
left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. [13]Then
they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the
city.

[14]So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there;
and they fell before him on the ground. [15]Thus Joseph said to them, “What is

this thing you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?” [16]Then Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the wrongdoing of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found.” [17]But Joseph said, “Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my servant. And as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

Judah Speaks Up for Benjamin

[18]Then Judah came near to him and said, “O my lord, let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. [19]My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ [20]Then we said to my lord, ‘We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.’ [21]Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.’ [22]But we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.’ [23]But you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.’

[24]“So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. [25]And our father said, ‘Go back and buy us a little food.’ [26]But we said, ‘We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.’ [27]Then your servant our father said to us, ‘You know my wife bore me two sons; [28]and the one went out from me, and I said, “Surely he

was eaten by a wild animal"; and I have not seen him since. [29]But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' [30]Now therefore, when I come to your servant our father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, [31]it will happen, when he sees the lad is not with us, he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. [32]For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my days.' [33]Now therefore, let your servant remain instead of the lad as a servant to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. [34]For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

45 Now Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.[†] [ω] [2]Then he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. [3]Joseph then said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were stunned in his presence.

[4]But Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me." So they came near. Then he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. [5]Now therefore, do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to save life.[†] [6]For this is the second year of famine in the land, and five years still remain in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. [7]For God sent me before you to preserve you as a

remnant on the earth, and to sustain you as a great remnant. [8]So now, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

[9]“Hurry then and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, “God made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry.[†] [10]You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your sheep and oxen, and all you have. [11]There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all you have, come to poverty; for five years of famine still remain.’ ” [12]And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see it is my mouth that speaks to you. [13]Therefore, you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here.” [14]Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. [15]Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after this his brothers talked with him.

[16]Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, “Joseph's brothers have come.” So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. [†] [17]So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this, load your conveyances and depart; go to the land of Canaan. [18]Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. [19]Now you are commanded—do this, take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. [20]Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’ ”

[21]Thus the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. [22]He gave to all of them, to each man, two changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of gold and five changes of exceptionally fine garments. [23]He also sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten mules loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. [24]So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become angry with each other along the way.”

[25]Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. [26]Thus they told him, saying, “Joseph your son is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” But Jacob's mind was completely stunned, for he could not believe them. [27]But when they told him all the words Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.[†] [28]Then Israel said, “It is a great thing to me that my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Jacob Journeys to Egypt

46 Now Israel took his journey with all he had, and came to the Well of Oath, and offered a sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac.[†ω] [2]Then God spoke to Israel in a vision of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!” So he said, “Here I am.”[†] [3]So God said to him, “I am the God of your fathers; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. [4]I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again, and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.” [5]Then Jacob arose from the Well of Oath, and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their baggage, and their wives in the carts Pharaoh had sent to carry him. [6]So they took their livestock and their goods which they had acquired in the land of Canaan and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him. [7]His sons and his sons’ sons, his daughters and his sons’ daughters, and all his seed he brought with him to Egypt.

[8]Now these were the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben was Jacob's firstborn. [9]The sons of Reuben were Enoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. [10]The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. [11]The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. [12]The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. [13]The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron. [14]The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. [15]These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Mesopotamia of Syria, and his daughter Dinah. All the souls, his sons and his daughters, were thirty-three.

[16]The sons of Gad were Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. [17]The sons of Asher were Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah, their sister; and the sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel. [18]These were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen souls. [19]The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, were Joseph and Benjamin. [20]Also, to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Ase-nath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. Sons were also born to Manasseh: Machir, whom his Syrian concubine bore to him; and Machir begot Gilead. Also, the sons of Ephraim, Ma-nasseh's brother, were Shuthelah and Tahan. [21]The sons of Benjamin were Belah, Becher, Ashbel, and the sons of Belah were Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim; and

Gera begot Ard. [22]These were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: all the souls were eighteen. [23]The son of Dan was Hushim. [24]The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. [25]These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven souls in all. [26]All the souls who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his loins, besides Jacob's sons’ wives, were sixty-six souls in all. [27]The sons of Joseph born to him in the land of Egypt were nine. Thus all the souls of Jacob's house who went to Egypt were seventy-five.

Joseph Meets Jacob in Goshen

[28]Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph, that he might meet him in Goshen in the land of Rameses. [29]So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept a good while.

[30]Then Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die in peace, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive.”[†] [31]Joseph then said to his brothers, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, ‘My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. [32]But the men are shepherds, for they are pastoral men; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all they have.’ [33]So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ [34]that you shall say, ‘Your servants are pastoral men from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,’ that you may dwell in the land of Goshen in Arabia; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.”

47 Now Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, “My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed, they are in the land of Goshen.” [2]So he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. [3]Then Pharaoh said to Joseph's brothers, “What is your occupation?” So they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers.” [4]They also said to Pharaoh, “We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their cattle, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” [5]Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, “Let them dwell in the land of Goshen, and if you know of capable men among them, make them overseers of my cattle.”

Thus Jacob and his sons came to Egypt, and Pharaoh king of Egypt heard about it. So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. [6]The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land.” [7]Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. [8]Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How old are you?” [9]Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my sojourn are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have they been; but they have not attained to the days and years of my father's sojourn in life.”[†]

[10]So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before him. [11]Thus Joseph settled his father and brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh commanded. [12]Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number of individual persons.

Joseph Confronts the Famine

[13]Now there was no food in all the land; for the famine was very severe; and both the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan were devastated by the

famine. [14]So Joseph gathered up all the money found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain they bought and all he doled out to them; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. [15]Thus when the money ran out in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For our money has run out.” [16]Then Joseph said, “Bring your cattle, and I will give you bread for them, if your money has run out.” [17]So they brought their cattle to Joseph, and he gave them bread in exchange for their horses, sheep, oxen, and donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread that year in exchange for all their cattle.

[18]When that year ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, “We will not hide from my lord that our money has run out; and my lord also has our possessions and cattle. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. [19]Why should we die therefore before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate.”

[20]So Joseph bought all the land of the Egyptians for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his land to Pharaoh, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's. [21]Now as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other. [22]Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations allotted to them by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land. [23]Then Joseph said to all the Egyptians, “Indeed, I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. [24]Then it shall come to pass in the harvest that you

shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households.” [25]So they said, “You have saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.” [26]Then Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's.

Joseph's Promise to Jacob

[27]So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they acquired possessions there and increased and multiplied exceedingly. [28]Now Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. [29]Thus when the time drew near for Jacob to die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If I have found grace in your sight, put your hand under my thigh, and deal with me in mercy and truth. Do not bury me in Egypt,[†] [30]but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” So he said, “I will do as you say.”[†] [31]Then he said, “Swear to me.” And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the top of his staff.

Jacob Blesses His Grandsons

48 Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, “Indeed your father is sick”; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to Jacob. [2]Thus Jacob was told, “Look, your son Joseph is coming to you”; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. [3]Then Jacob said to Joseph, “My God appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me[†] [4]and said to me, ‘Behold, I will increase and multiply you;

and I will make of you a gathering of nations, and give this land to your seed after you as an everlasting possession.’[†]

[5]“Now therefore, your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.[†] [6]Your offspring whom you beget after them shall take possession of their inheritances within the tribes of their brothers. [7]But as for me, when I came from Mesopotamia of Syria, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath” (that is, Bethlehem).

[8]Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, “Who are these with you?”[†] [9]So Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons God gave me here.” Jacob then said, “Bring them to me that I may bless them.” [10]Now the eyes of Israel were dim by reason of old age, and he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed and embraced them. [11]Then Israel said to Joseph, “I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your seed.” [12]So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and they bowed down with their face to the ground.

[13]Then Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. [14]Thus Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. [15]Then he blessed them and said:

> “God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac were well-pleasing,
>
> The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,[†]

[16] The Angel who redeemed me from all evil,

Bless these lads;

Let my name be named upon them,

And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;

And let them grow into a great multitude in the midst of the earth.”

[17]Now when Joseph saw his father put his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. [18]So Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.” [19]But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be exalted; but truly, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.”

[20]So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will be blessed, saying, ‘May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.’ ” Thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh. [21]Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers.[†] [22]Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers; I am giving you Shechem, which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and bow.”

Jacob's Final Words to His Sons

49 Now Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:[†ω]

[2] “Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob,

And listen to Israel your father.

[3] “Reuben, you are my firstborn,

My might and the beginning of my children;

You are hard to bear;

You are hardened in your self-will.[†]

[4] Unstable as water in your insolence,

You went up to your father's bed;

Then you defiled it.

[5] “Simeon and Levi are brothers;

They accomplished their injustice from their free choice.

[6] Let not my soul enter their council;

Let not my honor be united to their assembly;

For in their anger they slew a man,

And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.

[7] Cursed be their anger, for it was self-willed;

And their wrath, for it was hardened.

I will divide them in Jacob,

And scatter them in Israel.[†]

[8] “Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise;

Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;

Your father's sons shall bow down before you.[†]

[9] Judah is a lion's cub;

From being a shoot, my son, you have grown up.

He bows down, and slept as a lion and a cub;

And who shall rouse him?

[10] The scepter shall not depart from Judah,

Nor a lawgiver from his loins,

Until Shiloh comes;

And to Him shall be the expectation of the nations.

[11] Binding his colt to a vine,

And his donkey's colt to its branch,

He will wash his garments in wine,

And his clothes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes are gladdened from the wine,

And his teeth are whiter than milk.

13 “Zebulun shall dwell by the seacoast;

He shall be near a haven for ships,

And his border shall adjoin Sidon.

14 “Issachar. desired what was good,

Resting between the inheritances;[†]

15 And seeing his resting place was good

And the land was fertile,

He set his shoulder to hard work,

And became a farmer.

16 “Dan shall judge his own people

As one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way,

A viper lying in ambush by the path,

That bites the horse's heels,

That its rider may fall backward,

18 Waiting for the Lord's salvation.

19 “As for Gad, a raider gang shall raid him,

But he shall raid them in close pursuit.

20 “As for Asher, his food shall be abundant,

And he will furnish dainties for rulers.

21 “Naphtali is a spreading stem,

Bestowing beauty by its produce.

22 “Joseph is a grown-up son,

A grown-up son that was envied.

Oh my youngest son, return to me.

[23] They devised evil plans against him and reviled him,

And the archers were taking aim at him.

[24] But their bows were broken by force,

And the sinews of the arms of their hands were enfeebled

On account of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob.

Thence, he who strengthened Israel

[25] Is from the God of your father,

And my God has helped you and blessed you

With a blessing from heaven above

And with a blessing of the earth containing everything.

By reason of the blessing of breasts and the womb,

[26] He made the blessings of your father and mother

Stronger than the blessings of stable mountains and everlasting hills.

They shall be on the head of Joseph

And on the crown of the brothers he led.

[27] “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;

In the morning he will still be eating,

And in the evening he will provide food.”

The Death and Burial of Jacob

[28]All these are the twelve sons of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them and blessed them; and he blessed each one according to his own blessing. [29]Then he charged them and said to them, “I am to be added to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, [30]opposite Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. [31]There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. [32]The field and the cave there were purchased from the sons of Heth.”

[33]Thus when Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was added to his people.[ω]

50 Now Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him, and kissed him. [2]Then Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. [3]Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

[4]So when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the princes of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found grace in your sight, speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, [5]‘My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, in the grave I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.” Now therefore, let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.’ ” [6]Then Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.”

[7]So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, [8]as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their sheep and oxen they left in the land of Goshen. [9]There also went up with him both chariots and horses, and it was a very great gathering. [10]Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father.

[11]So when the inhabitants of the land of Canaan saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, “This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians.” Therefore its name was called the Mourning of Egypt, which is beyond the Jordan. [12]Thus his sons did for him just as he commanded them. [13]For his

sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, opposite Mamre, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. [14]After he buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

Joseph Comforts His Brothers

[15]When Joseph's brothers saw their father was dead, they said, “Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil we did to him.” [16]So they came to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying, [17]‘Thus you shall say to Joseph, “I beg you, forgive the injustice of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.’ ” Now, forgive the injustice of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. [18]Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we are your servants.”

[19]So Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for I belong to God. [20]But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. [21]Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your households.” Thus he comforted them and spoke to their heart.[†]

Joseph Dies in Egypt

[22]So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his brothers. Then Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. [23]Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation and the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees. [24]Then Joseph said to his brethren, “I am about to die; but God

will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land God swore to our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."[†] [25]Thus Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." [26]So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and put him in a coffin in Egypt.[†]

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The Book of Exodus

Author—According to Hebrew and Christian tradition, Moses is the author of Exodus. This is the teaching of Christ (Mk 1:44), of His disciples (Jn 1:45), and of the book itself (17:14).

Date—Exodus, which means "departure," was written during the forty years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, from the crossing of the Red Sea to the entrance into the land of Canaan.

Major Themes—*God's covenant with Israel and the judgment of her oppressors.* God reveals Himself and His Name "YAHWEH," meaning "I AM the Existing One."

Background—Exodus immediately follows in the timeline after Genesis. God brought about a series of miracles to release His people from slavery in Egypt. The nation of Egypt was judged by God for its treatment of the Hebrews and its rejection of Him as the One True God. The forty years of wandering in the wilderness is the consequence of Israel's sins, as well as a necessary time of preparation to inherit the promised land as a people set apart for God.

Outline

I. Deliverance from Bondage in Egypt (1:1–15:21)

   A. Israel's life in Egypt (1:1–22)

   B. Moses' youth (2:1–25)

   C. God calls Moses (3:1–4:31)

   D. The plagues in Egypt (5:1–11:10)

    E. The Passover (Pascha) (12:1–13:16)
    F. Departure from Egypt and crossing the Red Sea (13:17–15:21)
II. Wandering in the Wilderness (15:22–18:27)
III. God's Covenant with Israel (19:1–24:18)
    A. The covenant and the Decalogue (19:1–20:21)
    B. The book of the covenant (20:22–23:33)
    C. Ratification of the covenant (24:1–18)
IV. Instructions for Building the Sanctuary and for Its Ministers (25:1–31:18)
V. The Golden Calf (32:1–34:35)
    A. The people's sins (32:1–35)
    B. Renewal of the covenant (33:1–34:35)
VI. Instructions for Building and Furnishing the Sanctuary (35:1–40:32)

Israel Suffers in Egypt

1 Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob:[ω] [2]Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; [3]Is-sachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; [4]Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. [5]All those who were the seed of Jacob were seventy-five persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already). [6]Now Joseph died, as well as all his brothers and all that generation.[†] [7]Then the children of Israel increased and multiplied, became numerous, and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

[8]But there arose a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph. [9]Then he said to his nation, “Look, the race of the children of Israel is a great multitude and is stronger than we; [10]come, let us outwit them, lest they multiply, and it happen in the event of war that they also join our enemies and fight against us

and so escape out of the land.”[†] [11]Therefore he set taskmasters over them to afflict them in their works; and they built for Pharaoh strong cities—Pithom and Raamses and On, which is Heliopolis. [12]But the more they humbled them, the more they multiplied and grew; and the Egyptians greatly abhorred the children of Israel.[†] [13]So the Egyptians tyrannized the children of Israel by force. [14]They made their lives bitter with hard labor—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their labor in which they made them serve was by violence.

[15]Then the king of the Egyptians spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah;[†] [16]and he said, “When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women and see they are about to give birth, if it is a male, then you shall kill him; but if a female, let her live.” [17]But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.

[18]So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing and saved the male children alive?” [19]Thus the midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the women of Egypt; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.” [20]Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. [21]So it was, because the midwives feared God, He provided households for them. [22]So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every male born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the river, but every female you shall save alive.”

The Birth of Moses

2 Now a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. [2]So the woman conceived and bore a son; and seeing he was a beautiful child, they hid him three months.[†] [3]But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes, daubed it with asphalt, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. [4]Now his sister was watching from a distance to learn what would be done with him.[†]

[5]Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked along the riverside; and seeing the ark among the reeds, she sent a maid to get it.[ω] [6]So when she opened the ark, she saw the child crying, and the daughter of Pharaoh had compassion on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.” [7]Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, “Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?” [8]So Pharaoh's daughter said to her, “Go.” Then the maiden went and called the child's mother. [9]Pharaoh's daughter then said to her, “Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.” So the woman took the child and nursed him.[†] [10]Now when the boy was grown, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son; and she called his name Moses, saying, “Because I drew him out of the water.”

Moses Flees to Midian

[11]Thus it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and saw their burdens. He also saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren of the sons of Israel.[†ω] [12]So he looked this way and that, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.[†] [13]When he went out the second day, he saw two Hebrew men fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you hitting your

neighbor?” [14]He replied, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses was alarmed and said, “Surely this thing is known.” [15]Thus when Pharaoh heard this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.[†]

[16]Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, who fed the sheep of their father Jethro; and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. [17]Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

[18]When they came to Reuel their father, he said to them, “How is it you came so soon today?” [19]They replied, “An Egyptian delivered us from the shepherds; and he also drew enough water for us and watered our sheep.” [20]So he said to his daughters, “And where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” [21]Then Moses dwelt with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. [22]So the woman conceived and bore Moses a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”[†]

[23]Now in the course of time, it happened that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of their labors and cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the labors. [24]So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[†] [25]Then God looked upon the children of Israel and was made known to them.

The Burning Bush

3 Now Moses was tending the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. Then he led them to the back of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.[ω] [2]Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he saw the bush burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.[†] [3]So Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed.”[†]

[4]When therefore the Lord saw him turn aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses! Moses!” Then he said, “Here I am.”[†] [5]So He said, “Do not come any closer. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”[†] [6]Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Moses then hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.[†]

[7]Then the Lord said, “Indeed, I have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrow.[†] [8]So I came down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Gergesites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. [9]Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the affliction with which the Egyptians oppress them. [10]Come now, I will send you to Pharaoh, to bring My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt.”

[11]But Moses said to God, “Who am I to go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt?” [12]Then God said to Moses, “I will be with you, and this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you:

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” [13]So Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I go to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I tell them?”

[14]Then God said to Moses, “I AM the Existing One.” He also said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The Existing One sent me to you.’ ”[†] [15]Moreover God said to Moses again, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The Lord God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and My memorial to all generations. [16]Go then, and gather the elders of the children of Israel together and say to them, ‘The Lord God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—appeared to me, saying, “I have surely looked upon you and all the things that happened to you in Egypt; [17]and I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Gergesites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’ ”

[18]“Then they will heed your voice; and you shall go, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, ‘The God of the Hebrews met with us; and now, let us go three days’ journey into the desert to sacrifice to our God.’ [19]But I know Pharaoh the king of Egypt will not let you go, not even by a mighty hand. [20]Thus I will stretch out My hand and strike the Egyptians with all My wonders which I will work among them; and after that he will let you go. [21]Then I will give this people grace in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty-handed. [22]But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house,

articles of silver, gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you shall plunder the Egyptians.”

Attesting Miracles

4 Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you.’ ” [2]So the Lord said to him, “What is in your hand?” He said, “A rod.”[†] [3]Thus He said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. [4]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail” (so he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), [5]“so they may believe the Lord God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—appeared to you.”

[6]Furthermore, the Lord said to him, “Now put your hand in your bosom.” So he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, it was leprous like snow. [7]Again He said, “Put your hand in your bosom” (so he put his hand in his bosom again and then removed it; and it was restored to the complexion of his other flesh),[†] [8]“then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, they may believe the message of the second. [9]Then it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land; and the water you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.”

[10]Then Moses said to the Lord, “I pray, O Lord, I am not capable, neither before nor since You spoke to Your servant; but I am weak in speech and slow of tongue.” [11]So the Lord said to him, “Who made man's mouth? And who made the mute, the deaf, the seeing, and the blind? Did not I, God? [12]Now

therefore, go, and I will open your mouth and teach you what you shall say.” [13]But he said, “I pray, O Lord, appoint another capable one whom You may send.”

[14]Then the Lord was very angry with Moses, and He said, “Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know he will speak for you, and indeed, he will come out to meet you; and indeed, when he sees you, he will be glad in heart.[†] [15]Now you shall speak to him and put My words in his mouth, and I will open your mouth and his mouth; and I will teach you what you shall do. [16]So he shall be your spokesman to the people, and he himself shall be your mouth; and you shall be to him as God. [17]Now you shall take in your hand the rod that was turned into a serpent, with which you shall work miracles.”[†]

Moses Returns to Egypt

[18]So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, “I will go and return to my brethren in Egypt and see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.” [19]Now in those days, after some time, the king of Egypt died. So the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead.” [20]Then Moses took his wife and sons and set them on beasts of burden; and he returned to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. [21]Again, the Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you work before Pharaoh all the wonders I put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go.[†] [22]Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Israel is My firstborn son.[†] [23]So I say to you, ‘Let My people go so they may serve Me.’ But if you refuse to let them go, indeed, I will kill your firstborn son.” ’ ”

[24]Thus it came to pass on the way, at the inn, that the Angel of the Lord met him and sought to kill him. [25]Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son, and fell at His feet and said, “The flow of blood from my son's circumcision is stopped.” [26]So He departed from him, because she said, “The flow of blood from my son's circumcision is stopped.” [27]Now the Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the desert to meet Moses.” So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and they kissed one another. [28]Then Moses reported to Aaron all the words of the Lord which He sent to him, and all the signs which He commanded him. [29]Thus Moses and Aaron went and gathered together the elders of the children of Israel. [30]Aaron then spoke all the words the Lord spoke to Moses, and he did the signs in the sight of the people.[†] [31]So the people believed and rejoiced because God had visited the children of Israel and because He had seen their affliction. Then the people bowed and worshiped.

Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh

5 Now after this Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let My people go, so they may hold a feast to Me in the desert.’ ” [2]Then Pharaoh said, “Who is He, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.”[†] [3]So they said, “The God of the Hebrews has called us to Him. Let us go three days’ journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest at any time death or slaughter happen to us.” [4]Then the king of Egypt said to them, “Why, Moses and Aaron, do you take the people from their work? Get back to your work.” [5]Again Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land are many now, so let us not give them rest from their work.”

[6]So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their clerks, saying, [7]“You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks as yesterday and the day before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. [8]Furthermore, you shall lay on them a daily quota of bricks they are to do each day. You shall hold them to it. You shall not reduce it, for they are loafers; therefore they cry out, saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ [9]Let the labors of these men be oppressive and cause them anxiety; and let them not pay attention to empty words.”

[10]So the taskmasters of the people and their clerks went out and spoke to the people, saying, “Thus says Pharaoh: ‘I will not give you straw. [11]Go, get it yourselves wherever you can find it; yet nothing will be reduced from your workload.’ ” [12]The people were then dispersed throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. [13]The taskmasters also forced them to hurry, saying, “Fulfill your daily quota of work as when straw was given you.” [14]Also the clerks from the race of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters set over them, were beaten and questioned, “Why have you not fulfilled your task in making bricks both yesterday and the day before, and also today?”

[15]Then the clerks of Israel's sons entered and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, “Why are you dealing thus with your servants? [16]No straw is given your servants, and they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ and indeed, your servants are beaten, but the fault is with your own people.” [17]But he said, “You are loafers! You are loafers! Therefore you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’ [18]Now therefore, go and work; for no straw shall be given you; yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks.” [19]So the clerks from the children of

Israel saw they were in trouble after it was said, “You shall not reduce any bricks from your daily quota.”

[20]Then as they departed from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron, who stood there to meet them. [21]They said to them, “Let the Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in his hand to kill us.”[†]

God Promises Israel's Deliverance

[22]So Moses returned to the Lord and said, “O Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You sent me?[†] [23]From the time I went to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has afflicted this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.”

6 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them from his land.”

[2]God also spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the Lord.[†] [3]I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their God, but I did not reveal to them My name, Lord. [4]I also established My covenant with them to give them the land of the Canaanites, the land of their sojourn, in which they were strangers.[†] [5]I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I remembered My covenant. [6]Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the Egyptian tyranny; I will rescue you from their bondage and redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgments. [7]I will take you as My people and be your God. Then you shall know I am the Lord your God who brought you

out from under the Egyptian tyranny.[†] [8]I will also bring you into the land I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.' " [9]So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they paid no heed to Moses because of their faintheartedness and cruel bondage.[†]

[10]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [11]"Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to send forth the children of Israel from his land." [12]Moses then spoke before the Lord, saying, "The children of Israel have paid no heed to me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am not eloquent?" [13]Thus the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to send forth the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

The Families of Moses and Aaron

[14]Now these are the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. This is the family of Reuben. [15]Now the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These are the families of Simeon. [16]Now these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their genealogy: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; and Levi lived one hundred and thirty-seven years. [17]The sons of Gershon were Libni and Shimi, the houses of their family. [18]The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and Kohath lived one hundred and thirty-three years. [19]The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their kindreds. [20]Now Amram took as his wife Jochebed, the daughter of his father's brother; and she bore him Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister;

and Amram lived one hundred and thirty-seven years. [21]The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. [22]The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. [23]Now Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [24]The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. This is the genealogy of Korah. [25]Eleazar, Aaron's son, took as his wife one of the daughters of Putiel; and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the families of the Levites according to their genealogy. [26]Now these are the same Aaron and Moses to whom God said, “Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt with their army.” [27]These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron.

God's Instructions to Moses and Aaron

[28]In the day the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, [29]the Lord said to him, “I am the Lord. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt everything I tell you.” [30]But Moses said before the Lord, “Behold, I am weak in speech; and how shall Pharaoh heed me?”

7 Now the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.† [2]You shall speak all I command you, and Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh to send the children of Israel from his land. [3]I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.† [4]But Pharaoh will not heed you; and I shall lay My hand on Egypt and bring My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt with My power and great vengeance. [5]Then all the Egyptians shall know I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”[†] [6]Thus, as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. [7]Now Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

[8]Again the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [9]“When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Show us a sign or a wonder,’ then you shall say to Aaron your brother, ‘Take your rod and cast it on the ground before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.’ ”[†] [10]So Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and his servants, and they did so, as the Lord commanded them. Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. [11]In response, Pharaoh called together the wise men, the sorcerers, and the charmers of Egypt, and in like manner, they did the same with their sorceries. [12]For each man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. [13]But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not give heed to them as the Lord commanded.

The Plague of Water Turned to Blood

[14]So the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. [†] [15]Go to Pharaoh early in the morning, when he goes to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and you shall take in your hand the rod that turned to a serpent. [16]Then you shall say to him, ‘The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, “Let My people go, to serve Me in the desert”; but indeed, until now you would not hear. [17]Thus says the Lord: “By this you shall know I am the Lord. Behold, I will strike the water in the river with the rod in my hand, and it shall be turned to blood. [18]Then the fish in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will be unable to drink water from the river.” ’ ” [19]Then the Lord

spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron your brother, ‘Take your rod in your hand and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over their rivers, their canals, their ponds, and all their standing water, so they may become blood. There shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and of stone.’ ”

[20]So Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded them. Aaron lifted his hand with the rod and struck the waters in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants. Then all the waters in the river were turned to blood. [21]The fish in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. [22]Then the sorcerers of Egypt did the same with their sorceries; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not heed them, as the Lord said. † [23]Pharaoh then turned and went to his house. Neither was his heart moved by this.† [24]So all the Egyptians dug around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink water from the river. [25]Then seven days passed after the Lord struck the river.

The Plague of Frogs

[26]Now the Lord spoke to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Let My people go to serve Me. [27]But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. [28]So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. [29]The frogs shall come up on you, your people, and all your servants.” ’ ”

8 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron your brother, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the rivers, the canals, and the pools, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’ ” [2]So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. [3]Then the sorcerers did the same with their sorceries and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

[4]Pharaoh then called for Moses and Aaron and said, “Pray to the Lord for me, and let Him take away the frogs from me and my people; and I will let the people go and sacrifice to the Lord.”[†] [5]Moses replied to Pharaoh, “Appoint me a time when I shall pray for you, for your servants, and for your people to make the frogs disappear from you, your people, and your houses. Only in the river will they remain.” [6]So Pharaoh said, “Tomorrow.” Moses then said, “Let it be according to your word, that you may know this is none other than the Lord.[†] [7]Now the frogs shall depart from you, your houses, your servants, and your people. They shall remain in the river only.”

[8]Then Moses and Aaron departed from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord about the time He had agreed to, concerning the frogs He had brought against Pharaoh. [9]So the Lord did just as Moses said, and the frogs died away from the houses, the villages, and the fields. [10]Then they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. [11]But when Pharaoh saw there was relief, his heart was hardened; and he did not heed them, as the Lord said.[†]

The Plague of Lice

[12]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your rod and strike the dust of the land, that it may become lice on men, on four-footed

animals, and throughout all the land of Egypt.' " [13]Thus Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and four-footed animals; and there were lice in all the dust of the land. [14]Now the sorcerers so worked with their sorceries to bring forth lice, but they could not; and there were lice on man and four-footed animals. [15]Then the sorcerers said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not heed them, as the Lord said.[†]

The Plague of Flies

[16]Again the Lord said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he goes to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Let My people go to serve Me in the desert. [17]Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send the dog-fly on you and your servants, and on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with the dog-fly, and also the ground on which they stand. [18]Now on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no dog-fly be there, that you may know I am the Lord, the Lord of all the earth.[†] [19]I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this shall be a sign in the land." ' " [20]So the Lord did thus; and the dog-fly came in abundance into the houses of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt, and the land was destroyed by the dog-fly.

[21]Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." [22]But Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God. If we should sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, they would stone us. [23]We will go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice

to the Lord our God, as He said to us.” [24]Pharaoh then said, “I will send you away, and you shall sacrifice to the Lord your God in the desert; only you shall not go very far away, and then pray for me to the Lord.” [25]Then Moses said, “Indeed, I will go out from you and pray to God, and tomorrow the dog-fly will depart from you, and from your servants and your people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go sacrifice to the Lord.”

[26]So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to God. [27]Thus the Lord did as Moses said and removed the dog-fly from Pharaoh, his servants, and his people. Not one remained. [28]But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.[†]

The Plague of Diseased Cattle

9 Now the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: “Let My people go so they may serve Me. [2]But if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, [3]behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the fields—on the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the oxen, and the sheep—a very severe pestilence. [4]Then I will make a clear distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.” ’ ”

[5]Then God appointed a set time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.” [6]So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the cattle of the Egyptians died; but of the cattle of the children of Israel, not one died. [7]Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one among the cattle of the

Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.[†]

The Plague of Boils

[8]So the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh; [9]and let it become dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils to break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” [10]So they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven; and they caused boils to break out in sores on man and beast. [11]Now the sorcerers could not stand before Moses because of the sores, for the sores were on the sorcerers and in all the land of Egypt. [12]But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart; and he did not heed them, as the Lord said to Moses.

The Plague of Hail

[13]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: “Let My people go, so they may serve Me, [14]for at this time I will send all My plagues into your very heart, and on your servants and your people, that you may know there is not another such as I in all the earth.[†] [15]For now I will stretch forth My hand and smite you and kill your people, and you will be cut off from the earth. [16]But for this very reason were you preserved, that I might display in you My strength, and that My name might be declared in all the earth. [17]As yet, you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go.[†] [18]Behold, tomorrow about this time, I will cause very heavy hail to

rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. [19]Therefore, hurry now and gather your cattle and all you have in the fields, for the hail shall come down on every man and animal found in the fields; and whatever is not brought home shall die.” ’ ” [20]Thus he who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh gathered his cattle into the houses.[†] [21]But he who did not regard the word of the Lord left his servants and cattle in the field.

[22]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, and there shall be hail in all the land of Egypt—both on man and cattle, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” [23]So Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. Thus the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. [24]This hail and the fire mingled with it were so very heavy, there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation; and [25]throughout the whole land of Egypt it struck both man and cattle and every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field. [26]Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.

[27]Then Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said to them, “I have sinned this time. The Lord is righteous, and my people and I are ungodly. [28]Therefore, pray for me to the Lord, and let Him cause the thunderings of God to cease, and the hail and fire, for I will let you go and you shall stay no longer.” [29]So Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail and rain, that you may know the earth is the Lord's. [30]But as for you and your servants, I know you will not yet fear the Lord.” [31]Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was ripe and

the flax was beginning to seed. [32]But as for the wheat and the rye, they were not struck, for they were late crops.

[33]So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the Lord; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. [34]Thus when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants. [35]So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the Lord said to Moses.

The Plague of Locusts

10 Now the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that these signs may come upon them;[†] [2]and that you may tell in the hearing of your children and your children's children, in how many things I mocked the Egyptians, and My wonders I wrought among them; and you shall know I am the Lord."[†]

[3]So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go so they may serve Me.[†] [4]Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring an abundance of locusts into your territory. [5]And they shall cover the face of the earth, so no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left of the land's abundance which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. [6]They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians—which neither your fathers nor their forefathers saw, since the day they were on the earth to this day.' " So Moses turned and went out from Pharaoh.

[7]Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go so they may serve their God. Do you not yet know Egypt is destroyed?”

[8]So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, “Go, serve the Lord your God, but who are the ones going?” [9]Moses replied, “We will go with our young and old; with our sons and daughters, with our sheep and oxen, for we must hold a feast to the Lord.” [10]Then he said to them, “Let the Lord be with you when I let you and your little ones go, but not your belongings, for evil lies before you. [11]Not so, but let the men go and serve God, for that is what you desired.” Then they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

[12]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt, and let the locusts come upon the land of Egypt and eat every herb of the land—everything the hail left.” [13]So Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven, and the Lord brought a south wind on the land all that day and night. When it was morning, the south wind brought the locusts; [14]and the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested in very great abundance on all the territory of Egypt. Previously there were no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. [15]For they covered the face of the land, and the land was wasted. They ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees left by the hail. There remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

[16]Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you.[†] [17]Now therefore, pardon my sin yet this time, and pray to the Lord your God that He take away from

me this death.” [18]So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to God. [19]Then the Lord brought in from the opposite direction a strong wind from the sea, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. [20]But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

The Plague of Darkness

[21]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven and let there be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that may be felt.”[†] [22]So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. [23]No one saw his brother for three days; nor did anyone rise from his bed for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

[24]Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, “Go, serve the Lord your God; only let your sheep and oxen be kept back. Let your belongings also go with you.” [25]But Moses said, “No, but you must give us whole burnt offerings and sacrifices that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. [26]Thus our cattle shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the Lord our God, and even we do not know in what manner we shall serve the Lord our God until we arrive there.”

[27]But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. [28]Then Pharaoh said to him, “Depart from me. Take heed to yourself that you see my face no more. For in the day you see my face, you shall die.” [29]So Moses said, “You have spoken well. I will never see your face again.”

Death of the Firstborn Announced

11 Now the Lord said to Moses, “I will bring yet one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward, he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here. [2]Speak now secretly in the hearing of the people, and let everyone ask from his neighbor articles of silver and gold and clothing.” [3]So the Lord gave the people grace in the sight of the Egyptians, and they lent to them. Moreover, the man Moses was very great before the Egyptians and before Pharaoh and all his servants.[†]

[4]Then Moses said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord: ‘About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; [5]and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne even to the firstborn of the female servant behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. [6]Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. [7]But against not even one of the descendants of Israel, be it man or cattle, shall a dog snarl its tongue, that you may know the Lord shall make a wide distinction between the Egyptians and Israel.’ [8]And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Go from here, and all the people who follow you.’ After that I will go out.” Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

[9]But the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not heed you, that I may multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.” [10]So Moses and Aaron did all these signs and wonders in the land of Egypt before Pharaoh; and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel depart from the land of Egypt.[†]

The Passover

12 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, [2]“ month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.† [3]Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the family households, a lamb for each home.† [4]If there be too few in a household, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of souls; he will make his count in lambs according to the needs of each one. [5]Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You shall take it from the sheep or the kids. [6]Then you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. [7]Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.† [8]They shall eat the flesh on that night, roasted in fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9]Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. [10]You shall let none of it remain until morning, nor shall you break a bone of it; and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.† [11]Thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Pascha.† [12]For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute vengeance: I am the Lord. [13]Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.† [14]So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.†

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

Passover, the central rite and symbol of Judaism, is based on the experience of the liberation of the Hebrew people from bondage in Egypt (Ex 12:1—15:21). It is called Passover both because the Lord passed over the homes of the Hebrews, sparing them from the death that came to the first-born in Egypt, and because the Hebrews passed over the Red Sea as if it were dry land. Passover celebrates God's steadfast love and devotion to His people and their freedom in Him.

Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, Passover preeminently signifies God's rescue and forging together of His chosen people, Israel. The Lord repeatedly brings this event to mind as He encourages and exhorts His people to return to their covenantal responsibilities (Jdg 6:7–10; 1Kg 10:17–19; Ps 80:10, 11; Jer 11:1–8; Mic 6:1–8).

Through His saving work, Christ becomes our Passover (*pascha* in Greek). Through Him we experience liberation from sin, death, and the devil. St. Paul exclaims, "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast" (1Co 5:7, 8). He is the Paschal Lamb (Is 53:7; Jn 1:29; Rev 5:6–14) who gave Himself up in sacrifice "once for all" (Heb 10:10–14) to reconcile us with God. At every Pascha—"Easter"—the Church sings:

Today a sacred Pascha is revealed to us, a new and holy Pascha, a mystical Pascha, a Pascha worthy of veneration, a Pascha which is Christ the Redeemer.

In many typological details, the Passover of the Jews clearly points towards Christ as our Passover.

1 The Passover lamb, whose blood was smeared by the Hebrews on their doorposts in the sign of the Cross, was a male without blemish; Jesus was a male without blemish who died on the Cross.

2 The blood of the Passover lamb saved the first-born of the Hebrews from death; the blood of Christ saves all those believing in Him from eternal death (Rom 5:8–10; 1Pt 1:17–19).

3 The Passover lamb had none of its bones broken (Ex 12:10, 46); Jesus also had no bones broken as He was sacrificed (Jn 19:31–36).

4 The Hebrews escaped from the burden of slavery in Egypt by passing through the Red Sea; Christians pass “from Egypt, from the burden of sin,” being “set free and saved” through the waters of Holy Baptism (GrgNy). For in the waters of Baptism, we are “baptized into His death,” “crucified with Him,” and raised up “in the likeness of His resurrection” to “walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3–11).

St. John Chrysostom marvels at the power of Christ’s blood:

> If the type of it had such great power . . . in the midst of Egypt, when smeared on the doorposts, much more the reality. . . . if death so shuddered at the shadow, tell me how would it not have dreaded the very reality? This blood is the salvation of our souls; by it the soul is washed, and made beautiful and . . . more gleaming than gold (see Rev 7:13, 14).

Sustained and strengthened by the blood of Christ our Passover, we resume daily our journey to the eternal promised land, the promised kingdom to come.

[15]‘Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. [16]On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No servile work shall be done on them; and whatever must be done by each soul, this only shall be done by you.[†] [17]So you shall keep this commandment, for on this same day I will bring your army out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. [18]In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. [19]For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. [20]You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’ ”

[21]Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go away and take a lamb for yourselves according to your families, and sacrifice the Pascha. [22]Then you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. But none of you shall go out from the door of his house until morning.[†] [23]For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass by the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.[†] [24]Now you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your children forever. [25]So if you enter the land the Lord shall give you, as He promised, you shall keep this service. [26]Thus it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What

does this service mean?’ [27]that you shall say, ‘This is the Paschal sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’ ” So the people bowed down and worshiped. [28]Then the children of Israel went away and did as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron; so they did.

The Plague of the Death of the Firstborn

[29]Now it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive woman in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the cattle. [30]So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in all the land of Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.[†] [31]Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night and said, “Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. Go and serve the Lord as you said. [32]Take also your sheep and oxen and go, and bless me as well.” [33]The Egyptians also urged the people so as to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, “We shall all be dead.”[†] [34]So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. [35]Thus the children of Israel did as Moses commanded them, and they asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, gold, and clothing. [36]Now the Lord gave the people grace in the sight of the Egyptians, who lent to them. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

The Exodus

[37]Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides their belongings. [38]A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with sheep, oxen, and a great deal of cattle.[†] [39]Then they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because the Egyptians drove them out; and they could not remain, nor had they prepared for themselves provisions for the journey. [40]Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt and in the land of Canaan was four hundred and thirty years. [41]Then it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years that the entire army of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt by night. [42]It is a night of vigil to the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of vigil to the Lord for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

Paschal Regulations

[43]Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the law of Pascha: no foreigner shall eat it. [44]But every man's servant bought with money, when you circumcise him, then he may eat it. [45]A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. [46]In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones. [47]All the congregation of the children of Israel shall keep it. [48]But when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Lord's Pascha, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and sacrifice it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. [49]One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.” [50]Thus all the children of Israel did; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so

they did. [51]So it came to pass, on that very same day, that the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with their army.[ω]

Sanctification of the Firstborn

13 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Sanctify to Me all the firstborn, the first-begotten, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both man and cattle; it is Mine.”

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

[3]Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day, in which you went out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. [4]On this day you are going out, in the month of new grains. [5]And it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Gergesites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. [6]Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. [7]Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days, and no leavened bread shall be seen among you; nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your regions. [8]Then you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the Lord my God did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ [9]It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial before your eyes, that the Lord's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord God brought you out of Egypt. [10]You shall therefore keep this law according to the times of the seasons from year to year.

Tradition of the Firstborn

[11]“Then it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to your fathers, and gives it to you, [12]that you shall set apart to the Lord all that open the womb, that is, every male, everything that opens the womb from the herds or among your cattle; as many as you shall have, you shall sanctify the males to the Lord. [13]But every offspring that opens the womb of a donkey you shall exchange for a sheep; but if you will not exchange it, you shall redeem it; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. [14]So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ that you shall say to him, ‘With a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. [15]Thus it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of cattle. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ [16]It shall be as a sign on your hand and immoveable before your eyes, for with a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”

Pillar of Cloud, Pillar of Fire

[17]Thus when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, “Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” [18]So God led the people around by way of the desert to the Red Sea, and in the fifth generation the children of Israel went up from the land of Egypt. [19]Now Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall

carry up my bones from here with you.” [20]So they took their journey from
Succoth and camped in Etham by the desert.[ω] [21]Moreover, God led them, by
day in a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire.
[22]Thus the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart
from before all the people.[†]

Crossing the Red Sea

14 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Speak to the children of Israel
that they turn and camp at the village between Migdol and the sea,
opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before them by the sea. [3]For Pharaoh
will say of the children of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the desert
has closed them in.’ [4]Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue
them; and I will be glorified in Pharaoh and over all his army, that the
Egyptians may know I am the Lord.” So they did.[†]

[5]Now it was told the king of the Egyptians that the people had fled, and the
heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said,
“Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” [6]So he
made ready his chariot and took his people with him. [7]Also, he took six
hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over
every one of them. [8]Thus the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of
Egypt and his servants, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children
of Israel went out with a high hand. [9]So the Egyptians pursued them, all the
cavalry and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook
them camping by the village opposite Baal Zephon.

[10]Now when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. [11]Then they said to Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the desert? Why have you so dealt with us to bring us up out of Egypt? [12]Is this not the word we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert.”

[13]Then Moses said to the people, “Be of good courage. Stand still and see the Lord's salvation which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never see again. [14]The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”

[15]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.[†ω] [16]Now lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it; and let the children of Israel go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. [17]I indeed will harden Pharaoh's heart and all the Egyptians, and they will go in after them. So I will be glorified in Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horses. [18]Then the Egyptians will know I am the Lord, when I am glorified upon Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horses.”

[19]Now the Angel of God who went before the camp of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud also went from before them and stood behind them.[†] [20]So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and the night passed; but there was such darkness and blackness, they did not come near one another all that night. [21]Then Moses

stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord carried back the sea by a strong south wind all that night and made the sea dry ground. Thus the waters were divided.[†] [22]So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.[†] [23]Then the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and horsemen. [24]Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, the Lord looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud; and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. [25]He bound the axles of their chariot wheels and caused them to proceed with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.”

[26]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots and the riders.” [27]So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were trying to flee. But the Lord shook off the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.[†] [28]Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all of Pharaoh's army that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. [29]But the children of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. The waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. [30]So the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. [31]Thus Israel saw the Lord's mighty hand and the things He did to the Egyptians; therefore, the people feared the Lord and believed God and His servant Moses.

The Song of Moses

15 Now Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to God and spoke, saying:

“Let us sing to the Lord, for He is greatly glorified.

Horse and rider He has thrown into the sea.†

2 The Lord became my helper and the shield of my salvation;

He is my God, and I will glorify Him;

My father's God, and I will exalt Him.†

3 The Lord brings wars to nothing;

The Lord is His name.

4 Pharaoh's chariots and army He cast into the sea;

His chosen captains also were drowned in the Red Sea.

5 The sea covered them;

They sank to the bottom like a stone.

6 “Your right hand, O God, is glorified in strength;

Your right hand, O God, dashed the enemy in pieces.†

7 In the greatness of Your glory

You broke the adversaries to pieces;

You sent forth Your wrath;

It consumed them like stubble.

8 By the Spirit of Your anger the waters were gathered together;

The waves stood upright in the midst of the sea;

The depths congealed in the heart of the sea.†

9 The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoils;

I will satisfy my soul;

I will destroy with my sword;

My hand shall have dominion.’

10 You sent forth Your Spirit;

The sea covered them;

They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 “Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods?

Who is like You, glorified in holiness,

Marvelous in praises, doing wonders?

12 You stretched out Your right hand;

The earth swallowed them up.

13 In righteousness You guided Your people whom You redeemed;

In strength You called them to Your holy resting place.

14 “The nations heard and were angry;

Pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

15 The princes of Edom

And the chiefs of the Moabites were dismayed;

Trembling took hold of them;

All the inhabitants of Canaan melted away.

16 Fear and dread fell upon them;

By the greatness of Your arm, let them become as stone

Till Your people pass over, O Lord,

Till Your people pass over, whom You purchased.[†]

17 Bring them in and plant them in the mountain of their inheritance,

In Your prepared habitation, O Lord, which Your hands made ready;

The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands established.

18 “The Lord reigns forever and ever and ever.”

19 For Pharaoh's horses went with his chariots and horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea.

The Song of Miriam

[20]Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances. [21]So Miriam led them:

“Let us sing to the Lord, for He is greatly glorified.

Horse and rider He cast into the sea.”[†]

Bitter Waters Sweetened

[22]Thus Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the desert and found no water to drink.[†] [23]Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore he named that place Bitterness.[†] [24]Then the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” [25]So he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them. There He proved him[†] [26]and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is pleasing in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His ordinances, I will put none of the diseases on you that I brought on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord your God who heals you.”[†]

[27]Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve fountains of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.[†]

Manna and Quail

16 Now they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. [2]Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron.[†] [3]The children of Israel said to them, “Would we had died, smitten by the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate bread to the full. For you brought us out into this desert to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”[†] [4]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread out of heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.[†] [5]So it shall be on the sixth day, they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.”

[6]Then Moses and Aaron said to all the congregation of the children of Israel, “At evening you shall know the Lord brought you out of the land of Egypt. [7]In the morning you shall see the Lord's glory; for He hears your complaints against God. But what are we, that you complain against us?” [8]Also Moses said, “The Lord's glory shall be seen when He gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the Lord hears your complaints you make against Him. But what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against God.”

[9]Then Moses spoke to Aaron, “Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, ‘Come near before God, for He has heard your complaints.’ ” [10]Now when Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, they looked toward the desert, and behold, the Lord's glory appeared in the cloud. [11]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [12]“I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know I am the Lord your God.’ ”

[13]So it was that quail came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp.[†] [14]But when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the desert, was a small round substance, white like coriander seed, like frost on the ground. [15]So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is this?” For they did not know what it was. Thus Moses said to them, “This is the bread the Lord gives you to eat. [16]This is what the Lord has ordered, ‘Let every man gather it for his family, one omer according to the head count and number of souls among you. Each one should gather it with those who share your tents.’ ”

[17]Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. [18]So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Each one gathered according to the need of those sharing the tent with him.[†] [19]Moses then said, “Let no one leave any of it till morning.” [20]Notwithstanding, they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. So Moses was angry with them.[†] [21]Thus they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need, and when the sun became hot, it melted.

[22]So it was, on the sixth day, they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. [23]Then he said to them, “This is the word the Lord has spoken: ‘Tomorrow is the Sabbath, a holy rest to the Lord. Bake what you will bake, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains to be kept until morning.’ ” [24]So they laid it up till morning as Moses commanded them; but it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. [25]Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in

the field. [26]Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there will be none."

[27]Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. [28]Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? [29]Behold, for the Lord has given you this day as the Sabbath; therefore, on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days. Let every man remain in his house; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."[†] [30]Thus the people rested on the seventh day.

[31]Now the children of Israel called its name manna, and it was white like coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. [32]Then Moses said, "This is the thing the Lord commanded: 'Fill an omer with the manna to be kept for your generations, so they may see the bread you ate in the desert when the Lord led you out of the land of Egypt.' " [33]Moses then said to Aaron, "Take a golden pot, put one full omer of the manna in it, and lay it up before God to be kept for your generations."[†] [34]As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony to be kept. [35]Thus the children of Israel ate the manna forty years until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of Phoenicia. [36]Now an omer was the tenth part of three measures.

Water from the Rock

17 Now all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the Wilderness of Sin, according to their encampments and by the word of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. [2]Therefore the people contended with Moses, saying, “Give us water, that we may drink.” Moses then said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?” [3]Thus the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why is it you brought us up out of Egypt to kill us, our children, and our cattle with thirst?” [4]So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

[5]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go before this people and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand the rod with which you struck the river and go. [6]Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so the people may drink.” So Moses did so before the children of Israel.[†] [7]Thus he called the name of that place Temptation and Abuse, because of the abusive language of the children of Israel and because they tempted the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Victory over Amalek

[8]Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. [9]So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for yourself some mighty men and go out, and set the army in array against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” [10]So Joshua did as Moses said to him and set the army in array against Amalek. Then Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. [11]And so it was, when Moses held up his hands, that Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed.[†] [12]Now Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and

one on the other; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.[†] [13]So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

[14]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in a book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” [15]Now Moses built an altar and called its name The-Lord-My-Refuge; [16]for with a secret hand the Lord wars with Amalek from generation to generation.

Jethro's Visit and Counsel

18 Now Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard about all God did for Moses and for Israel His people—that the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt. [2]Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses’ wife, after he sent her back [3]with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, “I was a sojourner in a foreign land”)[†] [4]and the name of the other was Eliezer (for he said, “The God of my father is my help, and He rescued me from the hand of Pharaoh”); [5]and Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the desert, where he encamped at the mountain of God.

[6]Now he had said to Moses, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and two sons with her.” [7]So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. Thus they greeted one another, and he brought them into the tent. [8]Then Moses told his father-in-law all the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to all the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and how the Lord had delivered them out of the hand of Pharaoh and from the hand of the

Egyptians. [9]Then Jethro was amazed at all the good things the Lord had done for Israel, whom He delivered out of the hand of Pharaoh and from the hand of the Egyptians. [10]Then Jethro said, “Blessed be the Lord, who delivered you out of the hand of Pharaoh and from the hand of the Egyptians. [11]Now I know the Lord is great above all the gods; for this reason they did not prevail over them.” [12]Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for God, for Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.

[13]So it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. [14]So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all he did for the people, he said, “What is this thing you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?”[†] [15]Then Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to seek judgment from God. [16]When they have a dispute, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the ordinances of God and His laws.” [17]So Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “The thing you are doing is not good. [18]Both you and these people with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself.

[19]“Now listen to me; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people that you may bring their concerns to God. [20]Teach them God's ordinances and laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the works they are to do. [21]Moreover, you shall select from all the people able men such as fear God, just men, hating covetousness; and set them over the people to be rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and

tens. [22]Let them judge the people at all times. Then every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will relieve and help you. [23]If you do this thing, God will strengthen you; then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace.”

[24]So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all he said. [25]Thus Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. [26]They judged the people at all times; all the hard cases they brought to Moses, but the small ones they judged themselves. [27]Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he returned to his own land.

Israel at Sinai

19 Now in the third month after the children of Israel departed from the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came into the Sinai Desert. [2]For they departed from Rephidim, came into the Sinai Desert, and camped in the desert. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

[3]Then Moses went up to the mountain of God, and God called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel: [4]‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.[†] [5]Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be a special people to Me above all nations; for all the earth is Mine. [6]You shall be to Me a royal priesthood and a holy nation.’ These are the words you shall speak to the children of Israel.”[†]

[7]So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words the Lord commanded him. [8]Then all the people answered with one accord and said, “Everything the Lord said we will do and hearken to.” So Moses reported these words to God.[†] [9]The Lord then said to Moses, “Behold, I come to you in the pillar of cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you and believe you forever.” So Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.

[10]Again the Lord said to Moses, “Go down and solemnly charge the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.[ω] [11]Let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will descend upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. [12]You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely die. [13]Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.’ When the thunders, the trumpets, and the cloud depart from the mountain, they shall ascend the mountain.”

[14]So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified them, and they washed their clothes.[†] [15]Then he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives.”

[16]So it was that on the third day in the morning, there were thunderings and lightnings and a dark cloud on Mount Sinai; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, and all the people in the camp trembled. [17]And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.[†] [18]Now Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke, because

God descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the people were exceedingly amazed. [19]And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.[†]

[20]Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. [21]Then God spoke to Moses, “Go down and solemnly charge the people, lest they break through to gaze at God, and many of them perish. [22]Also let the priests who come near the Lord God sanctify themselves, lest He destroy some of them.” [23]But Moses said to God, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You solemnly charged us, saying, ‘Set bounds around the mountain and sanctify it.’ ” [24]The Lord then said to him, “Go! Go down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to God, lest the Lord destroy some of them.” [25]So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

The Ten Commandments

20 Now the Lord spoke all these words, saying:[†]

[2]“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.[†] [3]You shall have no other gods before Me.[†]

[4]“You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth.[†] [5]You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, recompensing the sins of the fathers on the children to the third

and fourth generation of those who hate Me;[†] [6]but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

THE GRACE OF CHRIST AND THE LAW OF MOSES

The Apostle John wrote, “The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17). The grace of Christ and the Law of Moses are complementary, not contradictory. The following helps explain both.

FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND MOSES

Christ and Moses were friends and conversed as friends. The pre-incarnate Christ gave Moses the Law; in turn, Moses gave it to Israel (Ex 20:1–26). As the Lawgiver, Christ, not Moses, was the Author of the Law. Moses was His servant.

In the New Testament, Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they conversed with Him as friend with friend (Mt 17:1–8). The presence of Moses shows Christ as the fulfillment of the Law. The presence of Elijah shows Christ as the fulfillment of the Prophets.

CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND MOSES

Christ is incomparably greater than Moses, for Christ, the Son of God, who brought all creation into existence from nonexistence, is building His Church. When Christ gave Moses and Israel the Law, He spoke as the Lord their God. Moses, however, spoke to Israel in the name of the Lord their God, not in his own name (Ex 20:22). When the Son of God became incarnate, He continued to speak to Israel, but now directly and not through a prophet. Although during His three-year ministry in Israel, He did works and spoke words in His almighty power, Israel refused to believe Him, their own Lord God. But to those Jews who did believe, He gave authority to become His children (Jn 1:11, 12).

Christ also gave authority to believing Gentiles to become His children. In the Old Testament, He made it clear through Moses and His prophets the Gentiles would be included in promises to Israel (for example, Gn 12:1–3; Is 49:5, 6). Both would be in His Church. Race is not the issue, but rather faith in Christ. His Church is one, composed of every nation, tongue and tribe (Rev 5:9).

HARMONYBETWEEN LAW AND GRACE

Christ is the Lawgiver in both Old and New Testaments. Therefore, there is no opposition or contradiction between the old and new laws. In His Incarnation, the Lawgiver Himself fulfilled the old Law, making it obsolete (Heb 8:13).

Christ gave His written Law through Moses to make sin known (Rom 3:20; 7:7). Man's God-given natural law, written in the conscience, was dulled through disobedience in the years between Adam and Moses. The Mosaic Law helped renew this knowledge of sin to lead man to repentance. After His Ascension, Christ sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to convict the world of sin (Jn 16:8), to renew the natural law in man's conscience (Heb 8:10), to lead us into all truth (Jn 16:13), and to make it possible for us to become partakers of the divine nature (2Pt 1:4).

GRACE FROM THE LAWGIVER

Christ is the Incarnate Lawgiver who offers us remission of sins through His precious blood. The old Law could never remit sins (Heb 10:1–4). Christ not only forgives sins, but also heals the damage done through sinning. This is the unspeakable grace of the Lawgiver.

[7]“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

[8]“Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. [9]Six days you shall labor and do all your work, [10]but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: neither you, nor your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, nor your stranger who sojourns with you. [11]For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it.

[12]“Honor your father and mother that it may be well with you, and your days may be long upon the good land the Lord your God is giving you.[†]

[13]“You shall not murder.[†]

[14]“You shall not commit adultery.

[15]“You shall not steal.

[16]“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

[17]“You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his house, and neither shall you covet his field, nor his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his

donkey, any of his cattle, or whatever belongs to your neighbor."†

The People Tremble

[18]Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw this, they trembled and stood afar off. [19]Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."† [20]And Moses said to the people, "Be of good courage, for God is come to test you, that His fear may be among you so you may not sin." [21]So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.†

Making an Altar

[22]Then the Lord said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and report it to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I talked with you from heaven. [23]You shall not make for yourselves gods of silver, and gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. [24]An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your whole burnt offerings, your peace offerings, your sheep and your calves. In every place where I record My name I will come to you and bless you.† [25]If you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you defile it. [26]Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.'

Buying a Servant

21 “Now these are the ordinances you shall set before them:† [2]If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. [3]If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. [4]If his lord gave him a wife, and she bore him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her lord's, and he shall go out by himself. [5]But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my lord, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’† [6]then his lord shall bring him to the judgment seat of God, and also to the door, or to the doorpost, and his lord shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

IMAGES AND IMAGERY

Many people have been taught that the second of the Ten Commandments prohibits icons. However, if correct, all artistic representations of anything would be forbidden. The Lord Himself in the same book of Exodus commanded Moses to make two gold cherubim (angels) “of hammered work,” and to place them at each end of the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:17–21). The Lord also stipulated that the ten curtains of the tabernacle be woven with images of cherubim on them (Ex 26:1), and likewise the veil (Ex 26:31).

When King Solomon built the temple, the huge basin, or “sea,” was set upon twelve statues of oxen (3Kg 7:13, 30). And upon the ten bases of the sea were cast or engraved “lions, oxen, and cherubim” (3Kg 7:16), as well as palm trees (3Kg 7:22). The Lord bestowed His blessing upon all these artistic representations first by filling the new temple with His Glory (3Kg 8:10, 11), and then by declaring to Solomon, “I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually” (3Kg 9:3).

Perhaps a most striking example of an image made at God’s command in the Old Testament is the bronze serpent that God ordered Moses to make and put on a pole in order to protect the Hebrews bitten by the deadly serpents (Nm 21:4–9; see Jn 3:14, 15). Hundreds of years later, when the Israelites were offering incense to this same bronze serpent in a kind of idol-worship, King Hezekiah, who “did what was right in the sight of the Lord,” had the serpent smashed into pieces (4Kg 18:3, 4).

So it is not the image itself which is faulty or prohibited, but rather its improper use. The prohibition in Exodus 20:4 is not against all artistic representations. Rather, it is against images, whether in human form or not, which would be worshipped as gods and goddesses—“gods of silver, and gods of gold” (Ex 20:23). For the Lord knew that such images would tempt the Hebrews to depart from worshipping Him, the One true God (Ex 20:3–5).

Certainly, before the invisible and limitless Lord God of Israel became incarnate, it was impossible to make an image of Him. However, after God the Son assumed a visible and tangible human body, it was natural and beneficial for the Church to create artistic representations of Him—and of His holy Mother, and of the saints and angels—from the earliest times. According to tradition, St. Luke the Evangelist made at least three icons of Christ and His Mother.

Every image, or *icon*, of Christ has significant theological content. For it proclaims anew the Incarnation of God, who “became flesh” for our salvation (Jn 1:14). Recognized icons of our Savior, prayerfully made, provide us with inspired, trustworthy representations of Him.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in Nicea in AD 787, condemned the heresy of iconoclasm (the rejection, and even destruction, of icons). These Holy Fathers articulated the critical distinction between the *worship* reserved for God alone, and the *veneration/honor/ reverence* given to the icons. In addition, this Council declared that “the honor given to the image passes on to that which the image represents.”

Through icons, Orthodox Christians are drawn closer to Christ. A hymn sung the first Sunday of Great Lent, which commemorates the restoration of icons in AD 843, declares: “the icons that depict Thy flesh lead us to the desire and love of Thee.”

[7]“If a man sells his daughter to be a domestic, she shall not go out as the maidservants do. [8]If she does not please her lord who betrothed her to himself, he shall let her go free. But he has no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. [9]If he betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the right of daughters. [10]But if he takes another wife, he shall not deprive her of necessities, clothing, and marriage rights. [11]If he will not do these three things for her, she shall go out free, without paying money.

Responding to Violence

[12]“He who so strikes a man that he dies shall surely be put to death. [13]However, if he did not willfully lie in wait, but God delivered him into his hands, I will appoint for you a place where the slayer may flee.[†] [14]But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar that he may die. [15]He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. [16]He who curses his father or mother shall surely be put to death.[†] [17]Whoever kidnaps one of the children of Israel and overcomes and sells him, and he is found with him, let him surely die.

[18]“If two men revile one another, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, [19]if the man rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall only pay for his loss of time and for his healing. [20]If a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. [21]Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, the lord shall not be punished; for he is his property.

[22]“If two men fight and hurt a woman with child, and her child is born imperfectly formed, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. [23]But if the child is perfectly formed, he shall give life for life, [24]eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,[†] [25]burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. [26]If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant and destroys it, he shall let them go free for their eye's sake. [27]If he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let them go free for their tooth's sake.

Owners of Animals

[28]“If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, then the bull shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the bull shall be acquitted. [29]But if the bull tended to gore in times past, and it was made known to its owner, but he did not keep it confined, and it killed a man or a woman, the bull shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. [30]But if a sum of money is imposed on him, then he shall pay the amount imposed so as to redeem his life. [31]If a bull gores a son or daughter, it shall be done to him according to this ordinance. [32]If a bull gores a male or female servant, he shall pay their lord thirty shekels of silver, and the bull shall be stoned.

[33]“If a man opens a pit, or digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, [34]the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his. [35]If any man's bull gores his neighbor's bull, and it dies, they shall sell the live bull and divide the money; and the dead bull they shall also divide. [36]But if the bull was known to gore in times past, and its owner did not keep it confined, he shall surely pay bull for bull, and the dead animal shall be his own.

Stolen Property

[37]“Now if a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.

22 “If a thief is found breaking in at night and is killed, there shall be no guilt for his blood. [2]But if the sun rises on the thief, there shall be guilt if his blood is shed. However, he should make full restitution; but if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. [3]If the thing stolen, from a donkey to a sheep, is found alive in his hand, he shall restore double. [4]If a man allows his field or vineyard to be grazed upon, but lets loose his animal and it feeds in the field of another man, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

[5]“If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, but sets threshing floors, stacked grain, or a field on fire, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. [6]If a man gives his neighbor money or goods to keep, but it is stolen out of the man's house, the thief shall pay double if he is found. [7]But if the thief is not found, then the lord of the house shall be brought before God; and he shall swear he played no wicked part with regard to any of his neighbor's deposit. [8]For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, or any alleged loss of whatever kind, the cause of both parties shall come before God; and he that is convicted by God shall repay double to his neighbor. [9]If anyone gives his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is injured, or is taken, but no one knows it, [10]then an oath of God shall be between them both, that he is not guilty with regard to the deposit; and the owner of the deposit shall accept this. Thus no compensation shall be made to him. [11]But if, in fact, the deposit is stolen from him, he shall compensate the owner. [12]But if it is torn to pieces by a beast, he shall bring it as evidence and make no compensation. [13]If a man borrows anything from his neighbor and it becomes injured or dies, the owner not being with it, he shall make

compensation to the owner. [14]But if its owner was with it, he shall not make compensation; if it was hired, it came for its hire.

Moral Laws

[15]“If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. [16]But if her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money to her father according to the bride-price of virgins. [17]You shall not permit a sorcerer to live. [18]Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. [19]He who sacrifices to any god except to the Lord alone, he shall be put to death. [20]You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.[†] [21]You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. [22]If you afflict them in any way and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry; [23]and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows and your children orphans. [24]If you lend money to any poor brother among you, you shall not be hard on him or charge him interest. [25]If you take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. [26]For that is his only covering, his only garment for covering his nakedness. What will he sleep in? So it will be when he cries to Me, I will hear him, for I am merciful.

[27]“You shall not speak against gods, nor curse a ruler of your people. [28]You shall not delay to offer the first of your threshing floor and fruit press. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. [29]Likewise you shall do with your calf, sheep, and donkey. It shall be with its mother seven days;

on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. [30]Now you shall be holy men to Me, and you shall not eat meat torn by wild animals in the field; you shall throw it to the dog.

Justice

23 “Now you shall not circulate a false report. Do not agree with the wicked man to be an unrighteous witness.[†] [2]You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor join with them, so as to turn aside with the majority to pervert justice.[†] [3]You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.[†] [4]If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again.[†] [5]If you see your enemy's donkey fallen beneath its load, you shall not walk away from it, but shall surely help him with it. [6]You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. [7]Keep yourself far from every unjust matter; do not kill the innocent and the righteous; and do not justify the wicked for his gifts. [8]You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes and corrupts just pronouncements. [9]Also you shall not oppress a resident alien, for you know the heart of a resident alien, because you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt.

Sabbath Laws

[10]“Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce,[†] [11]but in the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove. [12]Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox

and donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

Three Yearly Feasts

[13]“Now in everything I said to you, be circumspect and do not invoke the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth. [14]Keep a feast to Me three times in the year: [15]You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of new grains, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty);[†] [16]and the Feast of Harvest, the first fruits of your labors you sowed in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. [17]Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God. [18]When I cast out the nations from before your face and expand your borders, you shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. [19]The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a lamb in its mother's milk.

An Angel of Protection

[20]“Behold, I send My Angel before your face, to keep you in the way and to bring you into the land I prepared for you.[†] [21]Listen to Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him.[†] [22]But if you will indeed obey My voice and do all I command you and keep My covenant, you shall be My special people above all nations, for the whole earth is Mine; and you shall

be a royal priesthood and a holy nation. You shall speak these words to the children of Israel; and if you shall indeed obey My voice and do all I tell you, I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.[†] [23]For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Gergesites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.[†] [24]You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars. [25]So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread, wine, and water; and I will take away sickness from you.[†] [26]No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.[†]

[27]“I will send My fear before you; and I will cause confusion among all the nations to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. [28]I will also send hornets before you which shall drive out the Amorites, the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you. [29]I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild animals of the field become too numerous for you. [30]Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and inherit the land. [31]And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the Euphrates River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand and will drive them out from before you. [32]You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. [33]They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a stumbling block to you.”

The Covenant Affirmed

24 Now He said to Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.† 2Moses alone shall come near to God, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with them.”

3So Moses came and told the people all the words of God and all the ordinances, and all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words the Lord spoke we will do.”† 4Then Moses wrote all the words of the Lord; and he rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve stones according to the twelve tribes of Israel.† 5Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered whole burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of calves to God. 6Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he poured on the altar. 7Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All the Lord said, we will do, and be obedient.” 8Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant the Lord made with you according to all these words.”

Moses with God on Mount Sinai

9After this, Moses went up, along with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy of the elders of Israel; 10and they saw the place where the God of Israel stood. Under His feet was, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone and the appearance of heaven's firmament in its purity. 11And of

Israel's chosen men not one was missing. So they saw the place of God, and ate and drank. [12]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone and the law and commandments I wrote, that you may teach them.”[†] [13]So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and they went up to the mountain of God. [14]But he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them.” [15]Then Moses and Joshua went up the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.[†] [16]Now the glory of God descended on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. Then on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. [17]The sight of the Lord's glory was like a burning fire on the top of the mountain before the children of Israel. [18]So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up the mountain; and he was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.[†]

Offerings for the Sanctuary

25 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Speak to the children of Israel, that they take first fruits from everyone who gives it willingly from the heart. Thus you shall take My first fruits. [3]This is the offering you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; [4]blue, purple, and scarlet cloth, fine spun linen; and female goats’ hair, [5]ram skins dyed red and skins dyed blue, and incorruptible wood; [6]oil for the light, and incense for anointing oil and for the composition of incense; [7]sardius stones, and stones for the carved work of the breastplate and the full-length robe. [8]Also, you shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will appear among you. [9]According to all

I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, so you shall make it.[†]

The Ark of the Covenant

[10]“Thus you shall make the ark of testimony from incorruptible wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height.[†] [11]You shall overlay it with pure gold; inside and out you shall overlay it and shall make on it a wreath of gold all around. [12]You shall cast four golden rings for it and put them on its four corners; two rings on one side and two rings on the other. [13]You shall make poles of incorruptible wood and overlay them with gold. [14]You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. [15]The poles shall remain fixed in the rings of the ark. [16]Then you shall put into the ark the testimonies I will give you.

[17]“You shall also make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. [18]Then you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat.[†] [19]Make one cherub at one end and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. [20]And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. [21]You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimonies I will give you. [22]There I will make Myself known to you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the

two cherubim which are on the ark of testimony, about everything I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.[†]

The Table for the Holy Bread

[23]“You shall also make a golden table of pure gold; two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. [24]You shall make for it golden wreaths twisted all around, and also a crown of a handbreadth all around, [25]and you shall make a twisted wreath of gold for the crown all around. [26]You shall make four golden rings for it and put the rings on the four corners of its four legs under the crown. [27]The rings shall be bearings for the poles, so they may bear the table with them. [28]And you shall make the poles of incorruptible wood and overlay them with pure gold, that the table may be carried with them. [29]You shall make its dishes, censers, bowls, and cups of pure gold, that you may offer drink offerings with them; [30]and you shall set the bread on the table before Me continually.

A Lampstand of Gold

[31]“You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold which shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, branches, and bowls, and its stem and corolla shall be of one piece. [32]Six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side and three branches out of the other. [33]Three bowls shall be made like almonds on each branch, with its ornamental knobs and lilies—and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. [34]On the lampstand itself four bowls shall be made like almonds, and each with its ornamental knob and lilies. [35]There shall be a

knob under the first two branches of the same, a knob under the second two branches of the same, and a knob under the third two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. [36]Their knobs and their branches shall be of one piece; all of it shall be one hammered piece of pure gold. [37]You shall make its seven lamps, and you will lay the lamps upon them. From this one presence they will shine outward. [38]You shall make its funnels and dishes of pure gold. [39]It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. [40]And see to it you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.[†]

The Tabernacle

26 “Now you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen, with blue, purple, and scarlet fabric, and you shall weave them with artistic designs of cherubim. [2]The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits and the width of each curtain four cubits. Each curtain shall have the same measurements. [3]Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another. [4]You shall make loops of blue yarn on the edge of the curtain of one set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of the curtain of the second set. [5]Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain at the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another. [6]You shall make fifty clasps of gold and couple the curtains together with the clasps, that it may be one tabernacle.

[7]“You shall also make curtains of goats’ hair skins to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven such curtains. [8]The length of each

curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements. [9]You shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent. [10]You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the outermost curtain in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set. [11]You shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. [12]The remaining remnant of the tent's curtains, that is, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. [13]A cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side of the remaining length of the tent's curtains shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it. [14]You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and blue skins as coverings above that.

[15]“You shall make the tabernacle posts out of incorruptible wood. [16]Ten cubits shall be the length of each post, and a cubit and a half its width. [17]Two joints shall be made in each post for binding one to another. Thus you shall do for all the posts of the tabernacle. [18]Thus you shall make the posts for the tabernacle, twenty for the north side. [19]You shall make forty bases of silver for the twenty posts: two bases for each of the two joints of the posts. [20]For the second side of the tabernacle, the south side, there shall be twenty posts, [21]and their forty bases of silver: two bases for each of the posts’ two joints. [22]For the far side of the tabernacle, westward, you shall make six posts. [23]You shall also make two posts for the two back corners of the tabernacle. [24]They shall be coupled together at the bottom and at the top by one ring. Thus it shall be for both of them. They shall be equal. [25]So

there shall be eight posts with their sixteen bases of silver, two bases for both sides of each post.

[26]“You shall make bars of incorruptible wood: five for the posts on one side of the tabernacle, [27]five bars for the posts on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the posts of the side of the tabernacle toward the sea. [28]The middle bar shall pass through the midst of the posts from end to end. [29]You shall overlay the posts with gold, make their rings of gold as holders for the bars, and overlay the bars with gold. [30]Then you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern shown you on the mountain.

[31]“You shall then make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet fabric and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.[†] [32]You shall hang it upon the four posts of incorruptible wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold upon four bases of silver. [33]You shall hang the veil on the posts. Then you shall bring the ark of the testimony in there behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the holy of holies. [34]You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the holy of holies. [35]You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side.

[36]“You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle woven of blue, purple, and scarlet fabric and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. [37]You shall make five posts for the veil and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them.

The Altar

27 “Now you shall make an altar of incorruptible wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar shall be square—and its height shall be three cubits. [2]You shall make horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. [3]Also you shall make a crown around the altar; and its cover, its libation bowls, its flesh-hooks, its incense bowl, and all its utensils you shall make of bronze. [4]You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. [5]You shall put them below under the grate of the altar, that the grate may be midway up the altar. [6]You shall make poles for the altar of incorruptible wood, and overlay them with bronze. [7]The poles shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to carry it. [8]You shall make it hollow with boards; as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall you make it.

The Court of the Tabernacle

[9]“You shall also make a court for the tabernacle. For the west side there shall be hangings for the court made of fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. [10]And its twenty posts and their twenty bases shall be bronze. The hooks of the posts and their bands shall be silver. [11]Likewise along the east side shall be curtains one hundred cubits in length, with its twenty posts and their twenty bases of bronze, and the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. [12]And along the width of the court on the north side shall be curtains of fifty cubits, with their ten posts and ten bases. [13]The width of the court on the south side shall be curtains of fifty

cubits, with their ten posts and ten bases. [14]The length of the curtains on one side shall be fifty cubits, with their three posts and three bases. [15]On the other side shall be curtains of fifteen cubits, with their three posts and three bases. [16]For the gate of the court there shall be a veil twenty cubits long, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet fabric and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It shall have four posts and four bases. [17]All the posts around the court shall be overlaid with silver; their hooks shall be of silver and their bases of bronze. [18]The length of the court shall be one hundred cubits on each side, the width fifty on each side, and the height five cubits, made of fine woven linen, and its bases of bronze. [19]All the utensils, all the instruments, and all the pegs of the court shall be of bronze.

The Lighted Lamp

[20]“You shall also command the children of Israel to bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually [21]in the tabernacle of testimony, outside the veil before the testimony. Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the Lord. It shall be an ordinance forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

The Priest's Vestments

28 “Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar may minister to Me. [2]Then you shall make a holy garment for Aaron your brother, for honor and glory. [3]So you shall speak to all who are wise in understanding, whom I filled with the spirit of wisdom and perception, so they may make Aaron's holy vestments for the sanctuary, in which he shall minister to Me as priest. [4]These are the garments they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a full-length robe, a skillfully woven tunic with a fringe, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, so they may minister to Me as priests. [5]They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet fabric and fine linen, [6]and they shall make the ephod of fine spun linen, the woven work of a designer. [7]The two parts of the ephod shall be joined together, attached at their two hems. [8]The woven joining of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, made of pure gold, and blue, purple, and scarlet fabric, and fine woven linen. [9]Then you shall take two stones, emeralds, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: [10]six of their names on one stone, and six names on the other stone, in the order of their birth. [11]With the work of the stone-engraver's art, the engraving of a seal, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. [12]You shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders as a memorial. [13]You shall also make bosses of gold, [14]and you shall make two fringes of pure gold intermixed with flowers, a braided work, and fasten the braided fringes to the bosses on the shoulder bands in front.

The Breastplate

[15]“You shall make the oracle of judgment. Artistically woven according to the style of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet fabric and fine spun linen you shall make it. [16]It shall be doubled into a square: a span shall be its length, and a span its width. [17]Interwoven into this texture shall be a setting for four rows of stones. There shall be a row

for a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald. This shall be the first row.[†] [18]The second row shall be a carbuncle, a sapphire, and a jasper; [19]the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; [20]and the fourth row, a chrysolite, a beryl, and an onyx. They shall be set in gold settings, bound together with gold, according to their row. [21]The stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, as the engravings of seals, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes. [22]You shall make chains for the oracle, a braided work of pure gold. [23]Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel upon the oracle of judgment on his breast, as a memorial before God for him as he goes into the sanctuary. [24]You shall put fringes upon the oracle of judgment, and wreaths on both sides of the oracle. You shall put the two bosses on both shoulders of the ephod in the front. [25]You shall put the revelation and the truth on the oracle of judgment, which will be on the breast of Aaron when he enters the holy place in the Lord's presence; and on his breast Aaron will discern the judgments for the children of Israel at all times.

THE PRIESTHOOD,
HEBREW AND CHRISTIAN

OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS

The Hebrew word for “priest” is *kohen*. He is the Levite who stood as intercessor for the people before God. Old Testament priests offered up gifts and sacrifices to the Lord on behalf of the people, that they might be reconciled to Him.

The Lord directed Moses to construct the tabernacle (Ex 25:1—27:21). Then He established a permanent, hereditary priesthood, beginning with Moses' brother Aaron and continuing through Aaron's sons (Ex 28:1). The priests were sanctified, or consecrated, with holy oil (Ex 30:22–30). Their holy garments of finely woven and richly decorated material were for the honor and glory of God (Ex 28:2–39).

After Aaron's death, "the Lord separated the tribe of Levi [Aaron's tribe] to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord, to minister to Him, and to bless in His name" (Dt 10:8). Besides the various sacrifices, the priests blessed the people (Nm 6:23–25), maintained the tabernacle (later, the temple) and its grounds (Nm 18:1–7), received tithes and offerings (Nm 18:8–32), supervised purification procedures (Lv 13:1—14:57), acted as judges (Dt 17:8–13) and taught the Law (Dt 33:8–11). Only male Levites administered the liturgical rites.

NEW TESTAMENT PRIESTS

From the Christian perspective, the authority of the levitical priesthood ended when Christ willingly offered Himself up to the Father as a perfect sacrifice on the cross, typified by the curtain being torn asunder in the temple (Mt 27:51).

Orthodox Christians believe the priesthood of the Church is Christ's priesthood, with the Eucharist as the first-fruit offering. Concerning the Eucharist, St. John Chrysostom notes, "It is not men who sanctify this offering. It is the Same One who sanctified the first one [the Last Supper] who also sanctifies this one . . . Christ even now is present, and even now acts." In the Divine Liturgy, the celebrant prays, "Thou Thyself art the One who offers and is offered, who accepts and is distributed." The Church retains the male priesthood because the Man Christ Jesus, the Son of God, officiates at every Eucharistic service in and through His bishops, priests and deacons. The clergy do not serve in the place of Christ; rather, Christ Himself serves in them.

St. John Chrysostom marvels at how the "fearful and awe-inspiring symbols" of the leviti-cal priesthood are now "outshone by a splendor greater still" (see 2Co 3:10), namely the new covenant priesthood. He writes:

> When you see the Lord sacrificed and lying before you, and the priest standing over the sacrifice and praying, and all who partake being instilled with that precious blood, can you think that you are still among men and still standing on earth? Are you not at once transported to heaven? . . . He who sits above with the Father is at that moment held in our hands, and gives Himself to those who wish to clasp and embrace Him . . . how great is the honor which the grace of the Spirit has bestowed on priests.

While the ordained priesthood serves on behalf of all, every believer—baptized and anointed—is a member of God's royal priesthood. This priestly calling of all believers is foretold in Exodus 19:6: "You shall be to Me a royal priesthood and a holy nation" (see also Is 61:6), and finds its fulfillment in the Church, the new Israel: "You are . . . a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1Pt 2:9; see also 2:5; Rev 1:5, 6). Thus, all Christians are called to offer all of creation back to God, with praise and thanksgiving. And in this work, man and creation become evermore reconciled with God.

Other Priestly Garments

[26]“To go underneath the ephod, you shall make a full-length robe, entirely blue. [27]In the middle of it there shall be an opening for the head, the collar bordered in sheepskin, a woven piece. The hem shall be interwoven with the rest, to prevent ripping. [28]Beneath the border of the robe you shall make knobs as of a flowering pomegranate, constructed of blue, purple, and scarlet fabric and fine spun linen, all around the hem of the garment. [29]Hanging from each golden knob will be a flower-shaped bell all around the hem of the garment. [30]Its sound will be heard when Aaron is serving as a priest, entering and leaving the holy place before the Lord, that he not die. [31]You shall also make a plate of pure gold and, as the inscription of a seal, engrave on it: Holiness to the Lord. [32]You shall put it on a blue cord, and it shall be on the turban. It shall be on the front of the turban. [33]So it shall be on Aaron's forehead. Aaron shall take away the defilements of the holy things which the children of Israel might dedicate, of their every gift of holy things. It shall always be on Aaron's forehead to make them acceptable before the Lord.

[34]“The appointments of the robes you shall make of linen. You shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash of woven work. [35]For Aaron's sons you shall make robes and sashes for them, and turbans you shall make for them for honor and glory. [36]So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate their hands, and sanctify them so they may minister to Me as priests. [37]You shall make for them trousers to cover their naked skin from

loin to thigh. [38]Thus Aaron and his sons shall wear them when they come into the tabernacle of testimony or when they come near the altar of the holy place to minister as priests, so they not bring guilt upon themselves so as to die. It shall be an ordinance forever to him and his seed after him.

Aaron and His Sons Consecrated as Priests

29 "Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them for ministering to Me as priests, to serve Me in the priesthood: Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, [2]and unleavened loaves kneaded with oil, and unleavened cakes anointed with oil. You shall make them of wheat flour. [3]You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the young bull and the two rams.

[4]"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doors of the tabernacle of testimony, and wash them with water. [5]Then taking the garments, you shall dress Aaron your brother with the cloak, the ephod, the full-length robe, and the oracle, and you shall attach the oracle on the ephod for him.[†] [6]You shall put the miter on his head, and the sanctified golden plate on the miter. [7]You shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him. [8]Then you shall bring his sons and put the robes on them. [9]You shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and crest them with turbans. Their priesthood to Me shall be for a continual ordinance. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

[10]"You shall also have the young bull brought before the tabernacle of testimony, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the young bull before the Lord at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony.

[11]Then you shall kill the young bull before the Lord at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony. [12]You shall take some of the blood of the young bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. [13]You shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat on them and burn them on the altar. [14]But the flesh of the young bull, with its skin and offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering.[†]

[15]"You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram; [16]and you shall kill the ram and take its blood and sprinkle it all around on the altar. [17]Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and legs, and put them with its pieces and its head. [18]You shall offer the whole ram on the altar. It is a whole burnt offering to the Lord for a sweet aroma, an offering of incense to the Lord. [19]You shall also take the second ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. [20]Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right earlobe, on the thumb of his right hand, on the big toe of his right foot, and on the earlobes of his sons, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. [21]You shall take some of the blood on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his robe, on his sons and on his sons' robes with him; and he and his garments shall be sanctified, and his sons and his sons' garments with him. But the blood of the ram you shall pour all around on the altar.

[22]“You shall also take the fat of the ram, and the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration), [23]and one loaf of bread, one unleavened cake from the basket of unleavened bread set before the Lord; [24]and you shall put all these things in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall set them aside as a separate offering before the Lord. [25]You shall receive them from their hands and offer them on the altar as a whole burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the Lord. It is an offering to the Lord.

[26]“Then you shall take the breast from the ram of Aaron's consecration and set it aside before the Lord. It shall be your portion. [27]You shall sanctify the reserved breast and the shoulder that was lifted (both that which was reserved and that which was lifted) from the ram of consecration, both Aaron's portion and that of his sons. [28]It shall be for Aaron and his sons an ordinance forever among the children of Israel. For it shall be a special offering from the children of Israel from their peace offerings, a special offering to the Lord.

[29]“Moreover, Aaron's holy garment of the sanctuary shall be his sons’ after him, to be anointed and consecrated in them. [30]That son who succeeds him as priest shall put them on for seven days when he enters the tabernacle of testimony to minister in the holy place. [31]You shall then take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place. [32]Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram and the bread in the basket by the doors of the tabernacle of testimony. [33]They shall eat those things by which they were sanctified to consecrate their hands. But an outsider shall not eat them,

because they are holy. [34]If any of the flesh of the consecration offerings or of the loaves remains until the morning, you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten because it is holy.

[35]“Thus you shall do for Aaron and his sons according to all I have commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate their hands. [36]You shall sacrifice a young calf for the sin offering on the day of purification. You shall purify the altar when you perform a consecration on it, and anoint it so as to sanctify it. [37]Seven days you shall purify the altar and sanctify it, and the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar will be holy.

Daily Offerings

[38]“Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two unblemished lambs of the first year, day by day continually. [39]One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer in the evening. [40]With the one lamb shall be one-tenth of a measure of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. [41]The other lamb you shall offer in the evening, as at the morning offering, and according to the drink offering of the morning lamb. You shall offer it as a sacrifice of sweet aroma to the Lord.

[42]“This shall be a continual sacrifice throughout your generations at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony before the Lord, where I will be known to you to speak to you. [43]There I shall give directions to the children of Israel, and I shall be sanctified in My glory. [44]So I will sanctify the tabernacle of testimony and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. [45]I will be called upon among the

children of Israel and will be their God. [46]So they shall know I am the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt to be called upon among them and to be their God.

The Altar of Incense

30 “Now you shall make an altar of incense of incorruptible wood. [2]You shall make it a cubit in length and a cubit in width—it shall be square—and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. [3]You shall overlay its grating, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a rim of gold all around. [4]Two gold rings you shall make for it under the molded rim on both its sides. You shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. [5]You shall make the poles of incorruptible wood and overlay them with gold. [6]You shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the testimonies, where I will make Myself known to you. [7]Aaron shall burn on it fine compounded incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. [8]When Aaron lights the lamps in the evening, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. [9]You shall not offer strange incense on it, or an offering made by fire, or a sacrifice; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. [10]Now Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year, purging it with the blood of purification throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord.”[†]

Gifts of Money

[11]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [12]“When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for his soul to the Lord, so there may be no plague among them when you number them. [13]This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a drachma according to the drachma of the sanctuary (a drachma is twenty obols). The half-drachma shall be an offering to the Lord. [14]Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the Lord. [15]The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a drachma when you give an offering to the Lord to make atonement for your souls. [16]You shall take the money of the offering of the children of Israel and shall give it for the ser-vice of the tabernacle of testimony, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord to make atonement for your souls.”

A Laver of Bronze

[17]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [18]“You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of testimony and the altar. You shall put water in it, [19]for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet with water from it. [20]When they go into the tabernacle of testimony, they shall wash with water, lest they die, or when they come near the altar to minister and to offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord. [21]So they shall wash their hands and feet with water when they go into the tabernacle of testimony, lest they die. It shall be an ordinance forever to them—for him and his genealogy after him.”

Holy Oil for Anointing

[22]Furthermore the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [23]“Also take for yourself aromatic spices, the flower of costly myrrh—five hundred shekels’ worth—and fragrant cinnamon—half as much, two hundred and fifty, and two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling calamus, [24]and five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. [25]You shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. [26]With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of testimony and the ark of the tabernacle of testimony; [27]and the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; [28]and the altar of whole burnt offerings with all its utensils, and the table and all its utensils, and the laver and its base. [29]You shall sanctify them so they may be most holy; whatever touches them will be holy. [30]You shall anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may minister to Me as priests. [31]You shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘This shall be a holy anointing oil throughout your generations. [32]It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make any like it according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. [33]Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.’ ”

Incense

[34]And the Lord said to Moses, “Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and sweet galbanum, and pure frankincense; there shall be equal amounts of each. [35]You shall make of these perfumed incense, a compound according

to the art of the perfumer, mixed, pure, and holy. [36]And you shall beat some of it very fine and put some of it before the testimonies in the tabernacle of testimony, where I will make Myself known to you. It shall be a most holy incense to you. [37]You shall not make any for yourselves according to this composition. It shall be to you a holy thing for the Lord. [38]Whoever makes any like it to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people.”

Craftsmen to Build the Tabernacle

31 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. [3]I have filled him with the divine Spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, and in every manner of workmanship,[†] [4]to design artistic works, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, [5]in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in every manner of workmanship. [6]Indeed I have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put understanding in the hearts of all who are gifted artisans, so they may make all I commanded you: [7]the tabernacle of testimony, the ark of the testimony and the mercy seat on it, and all the utensils of the tabernacle— [8]the altars and the table and its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, [9]and the laver and its base— [10]the liturgical garments for Aaron and the garments of his sons, to minister to Me as priests, [11]and the anointing oil and the compound incense for the holy place. According to all I have commanded you they shall do.”

Keeping the Sabbath

[12]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [13]“You shall direct the children of Israel, saying, ‘See to it that you keep My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know I am the Lord who sanctifies you. [14]You shall keep the Sabbaths, because this is holy for you to the Lord. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; for whoever works on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. [15]Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath, a holy rest to the Lord. Whoever works on the seventh day shall be put to death.[†] [16]Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbaths, to observe them throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. [17]It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord created heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased and rested.’ ”

[18]So when He made an end of speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.[†]

The Golden Calf

32 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron and said to him, “Rise up and make us gods that shall go before us. As for Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”[†] [2]Aaron then said to them, “Remove the golden earrings in the ears of your wives and daughters and bring them to me.” [3]So all the people removed the golden earrings in their ears and brought them to Aaron. [4]He received them from their hands; and he fashioned them with an engraving tool and made a molten calf. Then he said, “These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.” [5]So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. Aaron then made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord.” [6]Thus he rose early the next day and offered whole burnt offerings and peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

[7]But the Lord said to Moses, “Go quickly! Get down from here! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt are transgressing the law. [8]They turned aside quickly from the way I commanded them. They made themselves a calf and are worshiping and sacrificing to it, and are saying, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.’ [9]Now therefore, let Me be, that I may burn in wrath against them and consume them. [10]Then I will make of you a great nation.”[†] [11]But Moses prayed before the Lord God and said, “Why, O Lord, does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? [12]Why should the Egyptians speak and say, ‘He brought them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce wrath and be merciful to the wickedness of Your people. [13]Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself and said to them, ‘I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of heaven for multitude; and all this land I spoke about to give their seed, they shall inherit unto the ages.’ ” [14]So the Lord granted mercy for the harm He said He would do to His people.

[15]Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands. They were stone tablets written on both sides, on one side and on the other. [16]Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets. [17]When Joshua therefore heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.” [18]But Moses said, “It is not the noise of those that begin the battle, nor of those that begin the cry of defeat, but the noise of those that begin the banquet of wine that I hear.” [19]So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing. Thus Moses became very angry; and he cast the two tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. [20]Then he took the calf they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it. [21]Moses then spoke to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you brought so great a sin upon them?” [22]Aaron replied, “Do not be angry, my lord. You know how impulsive this people is. [23]For they said to me, ‘Make us gods that shall go before us; as for this man Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ [24]So I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let him remove it.’ Thus they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out.”

[25]Now when Moses saw the people were scattered (for Aaron scattered them, making them a prey to their enemies), [26]Moses then stood in the entrance of the camp and said, “Whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me.” So all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. [27]He said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword

on his side and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' " [28]So the sons of Levi did as Moses said to them, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. [29]Then Moses said, "You filled your hands to the Lord today, each one on his son or brother, that blessing be given you."

[30]Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You committed a great sin. So now I will go up to God to make atonement for your sin." [31]Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, "I pray, O Lord, these people have committed a great sin and have made for themselves a god of gold! [32]Yet now, if You will forgive their sin, forgive it—but if not, blot me out of the book You have written." [33]Then the Lord said to Moses, "Whoever sins against Me, I will blot him out of My book. [34]Now therefore, go down and lead the people to the place of which I spoke to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before your face. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will strike them for their sin."[†] [35]So the Lord struck the people for making the calf which Aaron made.

God Orders Israel to Depart Sinai

33 Now the Lord said to Moses, "Depart, go up from here, you and the people you brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your seed I will give it.' [2]I will send My Angel before your face, and I will drive out the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Gergesite, the Hivite, the Jebusite, and the Canaanite. [3]I will bring you into a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."[†] [4]When the people heard this bad news, they mourned in lamentations. [5]For the Lord said to the children of Israel, "You are a stiff-necked people. Beware, lest I inflict another plague on you and consume you. Now therefore, take off your bright clothes and ornaments, and I will show you what I will do." [6]So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their bright clothes and ornaments by Mount Horeb.

Moses before the Lord

[7]Moses then took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of testimony. Thus it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of testimony, which was outside the camp.[†] [8]So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, which was outside the camp, all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he went into the tabernacle. [9]Now it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and God talked to Moses. [10]All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man at his tent door. [11]Thus the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Then he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.[ω]

God Promises His Presence

[12]Then Moses said to the Lord, "Behold, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet

You have said, ‘I know you above all, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ [13]Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, reveal Yourself to me, that I may see You clearly and find grace in Your sight, and know this great nation is Your people.”

[14]So He said, “I Myself will go before you and give you rest.” [15]Then he said to Him, “If You Yourself do not go up with us, do not bring us up from here. [16]For how then will it be known that Your people and I found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So both I and Your people shall be glorified beyond all the nations on the earth.” [17]The Lord then said to Moses, “I will also do this thing you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you above all.” [18]Moses replied, “Reveal Yourself to me.”

[19]Then God said, “I will pass before you in My glory, and I will proclaim My name, the Lord, before you. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”† [20]But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man can see My face and live.”† [21]Moreover, the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me: you shall stand on the rock.† [22]So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.† [23]Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”†

A Second Set of Tablets

34 Now the Lord said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets you broke. [2]So be ready in the morning to come up on Mount Sinai and to present yourself to Me there on top of the mountain. [3]But no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither sheep nor oxen feed before that mountain.” [4]So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai as the Lord commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone. [5]Now the Lord descended in the cloud; and He stood with him there, and he called upon the name of the Lord.[†] [6]Then the Lord passed before his face and proclaimed, “The Lord God, compassionate, merciful, longsuffering, abounding in mercy and true,[†] [7]preserving righteousness and showing mercy unto thousands, taking away lawlessness, wrongdoing, and sins; and He will not clear the guilty, visiting the lawlessness of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.” [8]So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the ground and worshiped. [9]Then he said, “If now I have found grace in Your sight, let my Lord go with us, for the people are stiff-necked; and You will take away our sins and lawlessness, and we will be Yours.”[†]

The Covenant Is Renewed

[10]The Lord then said to Moses, “Behold, I am establishing a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the works of the Lord, for I will do awesome things for you. [11]Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hittite, the Hivite,

the Gergesite, and the Jeb- usite. [12]Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a stumbling-block in your midst. [13]But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their groves; and you shall burn the graven images of their gods with fire [14](for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord God, a jealous name, is a jealous God),[†] [15]lest you make a covenant with the foreigners of the land; and they indulge themselves in gross immorality with their gods by making sacrifice to them; and they invite you, and you eat of their sacrifices; [16]and you take of their daughters for your sons and give your daughters to their sons; and your daughters commit fornication with their gods, and your sons commit fornication with their gods. [17]You shall make no molten gods for yourselves.

[18]“The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the season in the month of new grain; for in the month of new grain you came out from Egypt. [19]All that open the womb are Mine: every male firstborn among your livestock, of oxen or sheep. [20]But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a sheep, and if you will not redeem it, you shall pay a price. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem, and none shall appear before Me empty-handed. [21]Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. There shall be rest in seedtime and harvest. [22]You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.

[23]“Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God of Israel. [24]For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your

borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year. [25]You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifices with leaven, nor shall the sacrifices from the Feast of Pascha be left until morning. [26]The first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a lamb in its mother's milk."

[27]Again the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words for yourself, for according to these words I established a covenant with you and with Israel." [28]So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Moses' Face Shines

[29]Now when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), he did not know the skin of his face was glorified while God talked with Him.[†] [30]So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses and the glorified appearance of the skin of his face, they were afraid to come near him. [31]Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. [32]Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord commanded him on Mount Sinai. [33]When Moses finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. [34]But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever the

Lord commanded him. [35]So the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that it was glorified; and Moses put the veil on his face again until he went in to speak with Him.

Regulations Regarding the Sabbath

35 Now Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together and said to them, “These are the words the Lord said for you to do. [2]Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. Whoever does work on it shall be put to death. [3]You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath Day; I am the Lord.”

[4]Again Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, “This is the thing the Lord commanded, saying, [5]‘Take from among you an offering to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring his first fruits to the Lord: gold, silver, and bronze;[†] [6]blue, purple, and scarlet fabric, fine linen, and female goats’ hair; [7]ram skins dyed red, skins dyed blue, and incorruptible wood; [8]sardius stones and stones to be set in the ephod and the full-length robe.

[9]‘Every man wise in heart among you, let him come and do all the Lord has commanded: [10]the tabernacle, its cords, coverings, rings, bars, and posts; [11]the ark of the testimony, its poles, mercy seat, and veil; [12]and the curtains of the court and its posts; [13]and the emerald stones; [14]and the incense and the anointing oil; [15]and the table and all its utensils; [16]and the illuminating lampstand and all its utensils; [17]and the altar and all its

utensils; [18]and the holy vestments of Aaron the priest and the garments in which they shall do service; [19]and the priestly robes for the sons of Aaron and the compounded incense.' "

[20]So all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. [21]Then everyone came whose heart was stirred and whose soul was willing; and they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of testimony, for all its service and the garments of the holy place. [22]They came, both men and women, as many as had a willing mind, and brought signets, earrings, rings, and necklaces, all jewelry of gold to the Lord. [23]Also every man with whom was found blue fabric and skins dyed blue and skins dyed red brought them. [24]Everyone who offered an offering of silver or bronze also brought these to the Lord; and everyone with whom was found incorruptible wood for any work of the service brought it. [25]All the women who were gifted artisans spun yarn with their hands and brought what they spun—of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen. [26]Also all the women whose heart stirred with wisdom spun yarn of female goats' hair. [27]The rulers brought emerald stones, and the stones to be set in the ephod and in the oracle, [28]and the compounds for the anointing oil, and the compounds for the incense. [29]Thus the children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the Lord, all the men and women whose minds were willing to bring material for all kinds of work, which the Lord, by the hand of Moses, commanded to be done.

Artisans for the Tabernacle

[30]Then Moses said to the children of Israel, "Behold, God has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; [31]and He has filled him with a divine Spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in all things[†] [32]to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, [33]in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship. [34]He has put in his mind and in that of Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach. [35]He filled them with wisdom, understanding, and skill to do all manner of work of the holy place, and to weave the woven and embroidered work with scarlet and fine linen, and to do all work of curious workmanship and embroidery."

THE TABERNACLE

On Mt. Sinai Moses received not only the Ten Commandments, but also precise and detailed instructions for building the tabernacle—a moveable tent—where God met the assembly of the people Israel (Ex 25:1—27:21). Consequently, the tabernacle is built according to the divine blueprints (Ex 35:4—40:33). Here God's Presence, His Glory, will be made manifest through the shining cloud filling the holy place (Ex 40:34–38).

The importance of God's Presence in the tabernacle is apparent in the prayers of the Psalms, which express a longing to be with God, a fervent desire to be in His tabernacle (Pss 26:4–6; 60:4; 64:4; 83:1–4, 10; see also 22:6; 25:8). Indeed, the Lord promises that at the tabernacle, "I shall be known to you to speak to you. There I shall give directions to the children of Israel, and I shall be sanctified in My glory" (Ex 29:42–43; see also Ezk 37:26–28). While the tabernacle is the specific place where God was encountered in Israel, this did not exhaust His Presence, for as Almighty God, He has always been everywhere present, filling all things.

Israel’s most sacred objects were kept in the ark of the covenant, located in the holy of holies (Heb 9:2–5). Each object it held was prophetic of Christ: the tablets of the Law inscribed by God (Ex 25:15) prefigure Christ the Lawgiver; the manna (Ex 16:31–34) points to Christ as the Bread of Life (Jn 6:30–58); and Aaron’s staff that budded (Nm 17:16–26) prefigures the life-giving Cross of Christ. Further, the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies foreshadows the Incarnation (Heb 10:19, 20).

The tabernacle as a whole prefigures Christ, the eternal Word of God, who “became flesh and *tabernacled* (the usual English translation is ‘dwelt’) among us” (Jn 1:14; see also Col 2:9). St. Gregory of Nyssa observes, “Moses was earlier instructed by a type in the mystery of the tabernacle, which encompasses the universe. This tabernacle would be Christ, who is the power and the wisdom of God (1Co 1:24).” The tabernacle also prefigures Mary the Theotokos, whose womb will be the tabernacle in which the Lord will dwell as He takes His flesh from her.

On the cross, Jesus offers the ultimate sacrifice of His body, which the New Testament calls “the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands” (Heb 9:11). St. John Chrysostom comments that by this greater tabernacle St. Paul “means the flesh [of Christ]. And well did he say, ‘greater and more perfect,’ since God the Word and all the power of the Spirit dwell therein.”

In time, the moveable tabernacle of the wilderness is superseded by the permanent temple in Jerusalem. The temple, in turn, is superseded by Christ

(Jn 2:18–21) and the Church, which is His Body (Eph 1:22, 23). Moreover, in Baptism every Christian becomes a tabernacle, a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul exclaims, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?” (1Co 6:19). St. Isaac of Nineveh declares, “Lord, I give praise to Your holy nature, for You have made my nature a sanctuary for Your hiddenness, a tabernacle for Your Mysteries, a place where You can dwell, and a holy temple for Your divinity.”

In his vision of the kingdom of heaven, St. John writes, “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev 21:22). All earthly types vanish as the redeemed behold God and the Lamb in unmediated glory (2Pt 1:4). The ultimate promise of the tabernacle, the temple and the Church is for God Himself to dwell in each believer forever (Jn 14:16, 17, 23; 17:20–23; see also Rev 3:20).

36 Now Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the Lord put wisdom and knowledge to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the holy place, did according to all the Lord commanded.

The Gifts of the People

[2]Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord put wisdom, everyone whose heart willed freely to come and do the work.[†] [3]They received from Moses all the offerings the children of Israel brought for all the works for making the holy place, and they continued bringing him freewill offerings every morning. [4]Then all the wise men who were doing all the work of the holy place came, each according to the work he was doing, [5]and they spoke to Moses, saying,

“The people bring much more than enough for the work the Lord commanded us to do.” [6]So Moses gave a commandment and proclaimed it throughout the camp, saying, “Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the holy place.” Thus the people were restrained from bringing more,[†] [7]for the material was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed, too much.

Articles for the Tabernacle

[8]Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on Aaron's garments for the holy places did as the Lord commanded Moses. [9]He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen. [10]Thin plates of gold were then cut into threads to be woven into the blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen; and they formed it as a woven piece. [11]He then coupled the ephod together from its two sides, a work woven by a mutual twisting of the parts into one another. [12]They constructed it according to the same workmanship of gold, blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen, as the Lord commanded Moses. [13]Then they made two emerald stones, clasped together and set in gold, carved and engraved as signets are engraved with the names of the sons of Israel. [14]He attached these as memorial stones to the shoulders of the ephod for the children of Israel, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[15]Then they made the oracle, a woven work of embroidery like the workmanship of the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen. [16]They made the oracle square by doubling it; a span was its length and a span its width when doubled. [17]Interwoven into this texture

was a setting of four rows of stones: the first row, a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; [18]and the second row, a carbuncle, a sapphire, and a jasper; [19]and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; [20]and the fourth row, a chrysolite, a beryl, and an onyx, set around with gold and fastened with gold. [21]The twelve stones bore the names of the sons of Israel, their names engraved like a signet, each one with its own name according to the twelve tribes. [22]Then they made on the oracle chains, plaited fringes of gold, a work of pure gold. [23]They also made two gold bosses and two gold rings. [24]Then they put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the oracle. [25]They also attached two golden clasps to the rings on both sides of the oracle, the two clasps to the two couplings. [26]Then they placed the two gold bosses, joining them to the shoulders of the ephod opposite one another in the front. [27]They made two gold rings and attached them to two loops on top of the oracle, near the back of it, the side toward the ephod. [28]Then they made two gold rings and attached them below the two shoulders of the ephod in front, woven into the ephod like the coupling above.

[29]Then they bound the oracle by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord. [30]That way it would be above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and the breastplate would not rip away from the ephod, as the Lord commanded Moses. [31]He made the undergarment of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. [32]The collar of the undergarment was plaited and interwoven, having a border all around that it would not tear. [33]Beneath the border of the robe there were knobs of flowering

pomegranate, constructed of blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen.

[34]Then they made bells of pure gold and put the bells on the hem of the robe all around between the pomegranates. [35]The golden bells and pomegranates, all the hem of the robe, were for the ministry, as the Lord commanded Moses. [36]They made fine linen robes, woven work, for Aaron and his sons, and belts of fine linen, and turbans of fine linen, short trousers of fine linen, [37]and their sashes of fine woven linen, blue, purple, spun scarlet, made by a weaver according as the Lord commanded Moses.

[38]Then they made the plate of gold, a dedicated thing of the holy place, of pure gold, and on it he wrote an inscription like the engraving of a signet: Holiness to the Lord. [39]And they tied a blue cord to it to fasten it above on the turban, in the manner the Lord commanded Moses.

The Tabernacle of Testimony

37 Now they made ten curtains for the tabernacle. [2]The length of one curtain was twenty-eight cubits (and thus it was for all of them), and the width four cubits. [3]They made the veil of blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen; a work woven with cherubim. [4]Then they put it on four posts of incorruptible wood overlaid with gold; and their capitals were gold, and their four bases were silver. [5]For the tabernacle of testimony, they made the veil of the door blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen, a woven work with cherubs; [6]and they made its five posts with their rings, and they gilded their capitals and bands with gold; but their five bases were bronze.

[7]Then they made the court toward the south, and its curtains were of fine twined linen, one hundred cubits symmetrically. [8]There were twenty posts for them with twenty bases. [9]On the north side they were a hundred cubits symmetrically. On the south side they were a hundred cubits symmetrically with their twenty posts and twenty bases. [10]On the west side there were curtains of fifty cubits with their ten posts and twenty bases. [11]On the east side, there were curtains of fifty cubits: [12]with one curtain on one side of the court entrance of fifteen cubits, with its three posts and bases, [13]and one on the other side of the court entrance of fifteen cubits, with its three posts and bases. [14]All the curtains of the court were of fine twined linen. [15]The bases of the posts were bronze, the hooks of the posts were silver, and their capitals were overlaid with silver; and all the posts of the court were overlaid with silver. [16]The veil of the court entrance was a woven work of blue, purple, spun scarlet, and fine twined linen. Its length was twenty cubits, and its height or width was five cubits, corresponding with the curtains of the court. [17]There were four posts and bases for the veil, made of bronze with their hooks of silver, and their capitals overlaid with silver. [18]The pegs all around the court were made of bronze and overlaid with silver.

[19]So this was the construction of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was commanded to Moses, for the service of the Levites through Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. [20]Bezalel the son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah, did as the Lord commanded Moses.

[21]There was Aholiab the son of Ahisa-mach, of the tribe of Dan, who was a master workman of woven and needlework in the scarlet and fine linen.

Making the Ark

38 Now Bezalel made the ark.[†] [2]He overlaid it with pure gold inside and out. [3]He cast for it four golden rings (two rings on one side and two on the other), [4]wide enough for the poles with which to carry it. [5]He also made the mercy seat above the ark of pure gold,[†] [6]and two cherubim of pure gold[†] [7](a cherub at one end of the mercy seat and one at the other end), [8]spreading out their wings above the mercy seat.

The Table of Offering

[9]Then he made the table of offertory of pure gold [10]and cast for it four rings (two on one side and two on the other), wide enough for the poles with which to carry it. [11]Then he made the poles of the ark and the table and gilded them with gold.[†] [12]He also made the utensils of the table, the dishes, the censers, the cups, and the pitchers for pouring drink offerings, of gold.

The Lampstand

[13]He then made the lampstand to give light, of gold,[†] [14]both its solid stem and the branches on each side thereof, [15]and the blossoms projecting from its branches, three on one side and three on the other, symmetrical to one another. [16]As to the lamps on top of them, almond blossoms budded

from them; and there were sockets to hold the lamps, the seventh of which was atop the lampstand itself at its summit, all of solid gold. [17]The seven lamps, their snuffers and funnels were also made of gold.

The Altar

[18]Then he overlaid the posts with silver and cast golden rings for the posts; and he gilded the posts supporting the veil with gold and made the hooks of gold. [19]He also made the rings of the tabernacle of gold; and the rings of the court and those for drawing out the veil above he made of bronze. [20]He then cast in silver the capitals of the tabernacle, and in bronze, the capitals of the door of the tabernacle and the gate of the court; and he made silver hooks to be attached to the posts. [21]He made of bronze all the pegs of the tabernacle and the court. [22]He made the altar of bronze from the censers used by the men engaged in Korah's rebellion. [23]He made of bronze all the utensils of the altar, and also its grate, its base, its bowls, and its flesh-hooks. [24]As an appendage to the altar, he made a network under the grate, beneath it as far as the middle of it; and he fastened four rings of bronze to the four sides of the appendage, wide enough for the bars so as to carry the altar with them. [25]He also made the holy anointing oil and the composition of the incense, the pure work of the perfumer.

A Laver of Bronze

[26]He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze from the bronze mirrors of the women who fasted by the doors of the tabernacle of witness on the day he set it up. [27]He made the laver that in it Moses and Aaron and his sons might wash their hands and feet. Whenever they went into the

tabernacle of testimony or came near to minister at the altar, they washed in it, as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Use of the Offerings

39 Now all the gold used in all the production of the holy places was that of the offerings: twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and twenty shekels, according to the holy shekel. [2]The offering of silver from the numbered men of the congregation was one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels (one drachma per head being a half shekel, according to the holy shekel), [3]for everyone surveyed in the tally from twenty years old and up, to the number of six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty. [4]The hundred talents of silver were used to cast the one hundred capitals of the tabernacle and the capitals of the veil; a hundred capitals to the hundred talents, a talent to a capital. [5]Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels he made hooks for the posts, gilded their capitals, and decorated them. [6]The bronze from the offering was seventy talents and a thousand five hundred shekels, [7]and with it they made the bases for the doors of the tabernacle of testimony, [8]the bases for the court all around, the bases for the court gate, the pegs for the tabernacle, the pegs for all around the court, [9]the bronze appendage of the altar, all the vessels of the altar, and all the instruments of the tabernacle of testimony. [10]So the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded; thus did they.

[11]Also of the gold that remained from the offering they made vessels with which to minister before the Lord. [12]The remaining blue, purple, and

scarlet cloth they made into liturgical vestments for Aaron, to minister in them in the holy place.

Presentation to Moses

[13]So they brought to Moses the garments, the tabernacle and all its vessels, the bases and their bars, the posts, [14]the ark of the covenant and its poles, [15]the altar and all its vessels, the anointing oil, the incense compound, [16]the pure lamp and its lamps (lamps for burning), the oil for light, [17]the table of offertory and the bread set forth upon it and all its utensils, [18]the garments of the holy place, which belong to Aaron and his sons for ministering as priests, [19]the curtains of the court and their posts, the veil for the door of the tabernacle, the court gate, all the utensils for the tabernacle and all its instruments, [20]the rams' skins dyed red, the blue coverings and the other coverings, [21]the pegs, and all the instruments for the work of the tabernacle of testimony. [22]Whatever things the Lord commanded Moses, thus the children of Israel made and prepared in every respect. [23]Then Moses looked over all the work, and it was done in the manner the Lord commanded Moses. They did it in this way, and Moses blessed them.[†]

Setting Up the Tabernacle

40 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†ω] [2]"On the first day of the first month, the new moon, you shall set up the tabernacle of testimony. [3]You shall put in it the ark of the testimony and cover the ark with the veil. [4]You shall bring in the table and lay out its offering, and bring in the lampstand and install its lamps. [5]You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark, and put up the veil for the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [6]Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offerings before the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [7]You shall put a cover over the tabernacle and consecrate everything pertaining to it. [8]You shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it; and you shall consecrate it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. [9]You shall anoint the altar of burnt offerings and all its utensils and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy.

Entrance of the Priests

[10]"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doors of the tabernacle of testimony and wash them with water. [11]You shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint and consecrate him that he may minister to Me as priest. [12]You shall also bring his sons and put garments on them. [13]You shall anoint them as you anointed their father, so they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." [14]Thus Moses did; according to all the Lord commanded him, so he did.

The Work Is Finished

[15]Then it came to pass in the first month of the second year after their departure from Egypt, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was set up. [16]So Moses set up the tabernacle, placed the capitals, inserted the bars, and set up the posts. [17]He spread out the curtains over the tabernacle and put the veil of the tabernacle on it above, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[18]Then he took the testimonies, put them into the ark, and inserted the poles under the ark. [19]He then brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the testimony, as the Lord commanded Moses. [20]He put the table in the tabernacle of testimony, on the north side of the tabernacle of testimony, outside the veil of the tabernacle. [21]He also set the bread of the offertory upon it before the Lord, in the manner the Lord commanded Moses. [22]Then he put the lampstand in the tabernacle of testimony, on the south side of the tabernacle; [23]and he placed its lamps before the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses. [24]He also put the gold altar in the tabernacle of testimony in front of the veil; [25]and he burned the incense compound on it, as the Lord commanded Moses. [26]Then he put the altar of burnt offering before the doors of the tabernacle. [27]He also set up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar. So Moses finished all the work.

The Overshadowing Cloud

[28]Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of testimony, and the tabernacle was filled with the Lord's glory.[†] [29]But Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of testimony because the cloud overshadowed it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. [30]Whenever the cloud ascended from the tabernacle, the children of Israel prepared to depart with their belongings. [31]But if the cloud did not ascend, they did not prepare to depart until the cloud ascended. [32]For before all Israel, throughout all their journeys, the cloud was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night.

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The Book of Leviticus

Author—Moses uses the phrase “and the Lord said to Moses” as many as thirty times, usually to begin a chapter. Both Israel and the Church traditionally ascribe authorship to Moses.

Date—The place and time at which this book was given is specifically defined as during the sojourn at Mt. Sinai (7:38; 25:1; 26:46; 27:34).

Major Theme—*How to worship God.* This is our first-ever book of worship. It was especially written for priests to teach the Israelites how to rightly worship God. This book points out the differences between God's laws for His people and those of the polytheistic, idolatrous, corrupt nations surrounding them. “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (19:2).

Background—The opening statement (1:1) presupposes the Tabernacle has been erected, as described in Exodus 40. God spoke to Moses from the “tabernacle of testimony” (1:1), or “on the Mount” (Ex 25:1), or “upon the door of the tabernacle” (Nm 12:5). The writing of this book took place five months after Israel left Mt. Sinai.

Outline

I. Laws Governing Sacrifices (1:1–7:38)

II. The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons (8:1–10:20)

  A. Consecration by Moses (8:1–36)

  B. Aaron begins his office as priest (9:1–24)

  C. Aaron's sons’ sacrilege and its consequences (10:1–20)

III. Laws Regarding Uncleanness (11:1–15:33)

    - A. Uncleanness due to animals (11:1–47)
    - B. Uncleanness due to childbirth (12:1–8)
    - C. Uncleanness due to leprosy (13:1–14:57)
    - D. Uncleanness due to issues (15:1–33)
- IV. The Day of Atonement (16:1–34)
    - A. Aaron's preparation (16:1–4)
    - B. The sin-offering for the priests (16:5–14)
    - C. The sin-offering for the people (16:15–19)
    - D. The scapegoat (16:20–22)
    - E. The offerings completed (16:23–28)
    - F. Further instructions (16:29–34)
- V. The Law of Holiness (17:1–26:46)
    - A. The place of sacrifice and the sanctity of blood (17:1–16)
    - B. Sins against the moral law (18:1–20:27)
    - C. Instructions for the priests (21:1–22:33)
    - D. The holy convocations (23:1–44)
    - E. The holy oil, bread of the Presence, the sin of blasphemy (24:1–23)
    - F. The sabbatical year and the Year of Jubilee (25:1–55)
    - G. Blessings and cursings (26:1–46)
- VI. Laws Governing Vows and Tithes (27:1–34)

Burnt Offerings

1 Now the Lord called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of testimony, saying, [2]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘If a man among you should offer gifts to the Lord from the cattle—the oxen or the sheep—you shall offer your gifts.[†] [3]If his gift should be a whole burnt offering from the oxen, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall offer it at the door of the tabernacle of testimony as acceptable before the Lord.[†] [4]Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.[†] [5]He shall kill the young bull before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall offer the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar by the doors of the tabernacle of testimony.[†] [6]Then he shall skin the whole burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. [7]The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood on the fire. [8]Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head and the fat, upon the wood and fire on the altar; [9]but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. The priest shall then put all of it on the altar as a burnt offering, a sacrifice for a sweet aroma to the Lord.[†]

[10]‘If his gift to the Lord should be from the sheep—from the lambs or the kids—as a whole burnt offering, he shall offer a male without blemish, and put his hand on its head. [11]He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. [12]Then they shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priests shall lay them upon the wood and fire on the altar; [13]but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall offer all of it, and put it on the altar as a burnt offering, a sacrifice for a sweet aroma to the Lord.

[14]‘But if you should offer a gift to the Lord from the birds for a burnt offering, he shall offer his gift from the turtledoves or young pigeons. [15]The priest shall offer it on the altar, wring off its head, and put it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. [16]Then he shall remove its crop with its feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes. [17]Then he shall split it at its wings, but shall not divide it; and the priest shall put it upon the wood and fire on the altar as a burnt offering, a sacrifice for a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Grain Offerings

2 ‘Now if a soul should offer a gift for a grain offering to the Lord, his gift shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it.[†] [2]He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. Then the priest shall put it on the altar as a memorial, a sacrifice for a sweet aroma to the Lord.[†] [3]The rest of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons. It is the most holy of the Lord's sacrifices. [4]But if you should offer a gift as a grain offering baked in the oven, a gift of fine flour to the Lord, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.[†] [5]But if your gift should be a grain offering fried in a pan, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, and mixed with oil. [6]You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering to the Lord. [7]If your gift should be a grain offering from the grate, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. [8]You shall offer the grain offering made of these things to the Lord; and when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. [9]Then the priest shall take from the grain offering its memorial portion, and put it on the altar as a burnt offering, for a sweet aroma to the Lord. [10]But what is left of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons. It is the most holy of the Lord's burnt offerings.

[11]‘No grain offering you offer to the Lord shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven or honey in any burnt offering to the Lord. [12]As for a gift of firstfruits, you shall offer them to the Lord, but they shall not be offered on the altar for a sweet aroma. [13]Now every gift of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the Lord's covenant to be lacking from your grain offerings. With every gift you shall offer salt to the Lord your God.[†] [14]If you should offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the Lord, you

shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads for the Lord. Thus you shall offer your grain offering of firstfruits. [15]Then you shall put oil on it, and put frankincense on it. It is a grain offering. [16]The priest shall then offer its memorial portion: its beaten grain and oil, with all the frankincense. It is a burnt offering to the Lord.

Peace Offerings

3 ‘Now if his gift for the Lord should be a peace offering, and if he should offer it from the oxen, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord.[†] [2]Then he shall put his hands on the head of his gift, and kill it at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar of whole burnt offering. [3]He shall then offer from the peace offering a burnt offering to the Lord; and he shall remove its fat that covers the entrails, all the fat on the entrails,[†] [4]the two kidneys and the fat on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys; [5]and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall offer these upon the wood and fire on the altar of whole burnt offering as a burnt offering, for a sweet aroma to the Lord.

[6]‘Now if his peace offering should be a gift from the sheep, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. [7]If he should offer a lamb as his gift, then he shall offer it without blemish. [8]Then he shall put his hands on the head of his gift, and kill it before the doors of the tabernacle of testimony; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.[†] [9]He shall then offer from the peace offering, a burnt offering to God; and he shall remove its fat, the whole fat tail close to the backbone, the fat that covers the entrails, all the fat on the entrails, [10]the two kidneys and the fat on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys; [11]and the

priest shall offer these on the altar as a burnt offering, for a sweet aroma to the Lord.

[12]‘Now if his gift should be from the goats, then he shall offer it before the Lord. [13]He shall put his hands on its head, and kill it before the Lord at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. [14]Then he shall offer his burnt offering to the Lord; and he shall remove its fat that covers the entrails, all the fat on the entrails, [15]the two kidneys and the fat on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys; [16]and the priest shall offer these on the altar as a burnt offering, for a sweet aroma to the Lord. All the fat is the Lord's.[†] [17]This shall be a perpetual ordinance throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.’ ”

Sin Offerings

4 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘If a soul should sin involuntarily before the Lord against any of the Lord's ordinances, which ought not to be done, and does anything against them,[†] [3]even if he should be the anointed priest, and should sin to the detriment of the people, he shall offer to the Lord for the sin he committed a young bull without blemish from the oxen as a sin offering.[†] [4]He shall offer the young bull at the door of the tabernacle of testimony before the Lord, put his hand on the young bull's head, and kill the young bull before the Lord. [5]Then the anointed and consecrated priest shall take some of the young bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of testimony. [6]The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil of the holy place.[†] [7]Then the priest shall put some of the blood of the young bull on the horns of the altar of the incense compound before the Lord in the tabernacle of testimony; and he shall pour the remaining blood of the young bull at the base of the altar of whole burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [8]He shall take from it all the fat of the young bull as the sin offering. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat on the entrails, [9]the two kidneys and the fat on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove, [10]as it was taken from the young bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. [11]But the young bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and excrement— [12]the whole young bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.[†]

[13]‘Now if the whole congregation of Israel acts involuntarily in ignorance, and it is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they did something against any of the Lord's commandments, which should not be done, and committed sin;[†] [14]when the sin they committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and offer it before the doors of the tabernacle of testimony. [15]Then the elders of the congregation shall put their hands on the head of the young bull before the Lord. The young bull shall then be killed before the Lord. [16]The anointed priest shall bring some of the young bull's blood to the tabernacle of testimony. [17]Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood of the young bull, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil of the holy place. [18]The priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of the incense compound, which is before the Lord in the tabernacle of testimony; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [19]He shall take all the fat from it and offer it on the altar. [20]Then he shall do with the young bull as he did with the young bull of the sin offering; thus he shall do

with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and their sin shall be remitted them. [21]Then they shall carry the young bull outside the camp, and burn it as they burned the first young bull. It is a sin offering for the assembly. [22]Now if a ruler should sin, and do something against any of the commandments of the Lord their God, which should not be done, and commits sin involuntarily,[†] [23]and the sin he committed comes to his knowledge, he shall offer as his gift a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. [24]He shall put his hand on the head of the kid and kill it at the place where they kill the whole burnt offering before the Lord. It is a sin offering. [25]The priest shall then take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of whole burnt offering, and pour its remaining blood at the base of the altar of whole burnt offering. [26]Then he shall offer all its fat to the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be remitted him.

[27]‘If any soul of the people of the land should sin involuntarily by doing something against any of the Lord's commandments, which ought not to be done, and commits sin,[†] [28]and the sin he committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for the sin he committed. [29]He shall put his hand on the head of his sin offering and kill the kid of the sin offering at the place of the whole burnt offering. [30]Then the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of whole burnt offering, and pour all its remaining blood at the base of the altar. [31]He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall offer it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the Lord. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be remitted him. [32]If he should bring as his gift a sheep for a sin offering, he shall offer a female without blemish. [33]Then he shall put his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill it

as a sin offering at the place where they kill the whole burnt offering. [34]The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of whole burnt offering, and pour all its remaining blood at the base of the altar. [35]He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of the sheep is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering. Then the priest shall put it on the altar for a whole burnt offering to the Lord. So the priest shall make atonement for his sin he committed, and it shall be remitted him.

Trespass Offerings

5 ‘Now if a soul should sin in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he saw or knew of the matter—if he does not tell it, he shall bear his guilt. [2]Or if a soul should touch any unclean thing, whether it is the carcass of an unclean animal, or one torn by a wild animal, or the unclean carcasses of creeping things, or the unclean carcasses of cattle;[†] [3]or should touch human uncleanness—even by any uncleanness, which by touching it he is defiled—and he is unaware of it, but afterwards becomes aware, he shall bear his guilt. [4]Or if a soul should swear, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or good, whatever a man may pronounce by an oath, and it should escape his notice—and thus he should sin in one of these things, [5]then he shall confess his sin in that thing; [6]and he shall bring for his trespass against the Lord, and for his guilt, a female from the sheep, a lamb, or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning the sin he committed, and it shall be remitted him.[†]

[7]‘But if he should be unable to afford a sheep, he shall bring for the sin he committed two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the Lord: one as a sin offering and the other as a whole burnt offering. [8]He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer the first one as a sin offering. Then he shall wring off its

head from its neck, but shall not divide it. [9]Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, but the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. [10]He shall then make the second one a whole burnt offering according to the prescribed manner. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for the sin he committed, and it shall be remitted him. [11]Now if he should be unable to afford a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, he shall bring for his sin a gift: one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering.[†] [12]Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful as a memorial portion and put it on the altar of whole burnt offerings to the Lord. It is a sin offering. [13]The priest shall make atonement for him, for the sin he committed in any of these matters; and it shall be remitted him. The rest shall be the priest's as a grain offering.’ ”

Restitution Offerings

[14]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [15]“Now if a soul should be oblivious and sin involuntarily in regard to the holy things of the Lord, he shall bring to the Lord for his trespass in which he transgressed a ram without blemish from the sheep, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the holy place.[†] [16]Thus he shall make restitution wherein he sinned in regard to the holy things, and he shall add one-fifth to give to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be remitted him.

[17]“Now if a soul should sin and do anything against the Lord's commandments, though he may not know it, nevertheless, he trespassed and shall bear his guilt. [18]So he shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the sheep for a trespass offering, with your valuation of silver. So the priest shall

make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred but did not know it, and it shall be remitted him. [19]It is a trespass offering; he has certainly trespassed against the Lord.”

[20]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [21]“Now if a soul should sin and actually disregard the Lord's commandments by lying to his neighbor about a deposit entrusted to him for safekeeping, or about a joint-ownership, or about a robbery, or if he wronged his neighbor in something, [22]or if he found what was lost and should lie about it and swear falsely—in any one of these things a man may do when he sins: [23]then it shall be, whenever he should trespass and is guilty, he shall restore what he stole, or the thing he extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing he found, [24]or everything about which he swore falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs on the day his trespass is brought to light.[†] [25]Then he shall bring to the priest his trespass offering to the Lord, a ram without blemish from the sheep, with your valuation. [26]So the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be remitted him for any of these things he did wherein he trespassed.”

The Law of the Burnt Offering

6 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘Now this is the law of the whole burnt offering: The whole burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. [3]Then the priest shall put the linen trousers on his body; then he shall put on his linen garment, and take up the ashes of the whole burnt offering, which the fire consumed on the altar; and he shall put them beside the altar. [4]He shall then take off his linen garment, put on another one, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. [5]So the fire on the altar shall be burning; it shall not be put out. The priest shall burn wood on it every morning and put the whole burnt offering on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offering. [6]A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.

The Law of the Grain Offering

[7]‘Now this is the law of the grain offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it in front of the altar before the Lord. [8]He shall take from it his handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil and frankincense which is on the grain offering, and offer it on the altar of burnt offering for a sweet aroma, a memorial to the Lord. [9]Then Aaron and his sons shall eat what is left. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tabernacle of testimony.[†] [10]It shall not be baked with leaven. I gave it to them as their portion of the Lord's burnt offerings; it is most holy, like the sin offering and the trespass offering. [11]All the males of the priests shall eat it. It shall be an ordinance forever in your generations concerning the Lord's burnt offerings. Everyone who touches them shall be sanctified.’ ”

[12]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [13]“This is the gift of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer to the Lord on the day you anoint him: one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a daily grain offering, half of it in the morning and half in the evening. [14]It shall be made in a frying pan with oil. When it is mixed, you shall bring it in. The baked pieces of the grain offering you shall offer for a sweet aroma to the Lord. [15]The anointed priest who takes his place from among his sons shall make it. It is an ordinance forever. It shall be wholly consumed. [16]For every grain offering of a priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten.”[†]

The Law of the Sin Offering

[17]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [18]“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘Now this is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the whole burnt offering is killed, they shall kill the sin offering before the Lord. It is most holy.[†] [19]The priest who offers it shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of testimony. [20]Everyone who touches its flesh shall be sanctified; and if some of its blood might have been sprinkled on any garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled in a holy place. [21]But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken; and if it is boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water. [22]Every male among the priests shall eat it. It is most holy. [23]But no sin offering whose blood may have been brought into the tabernacle of testimony to make atonement in the holy place shall be eaten. It shall be burned in the fire.

The Law of the Trespass Offering

7 ‘Now this is the law of the trespass offering of the ram (it is most holy): [2]In the place where they kill the whole burnt offering, they shall kill the ram of the trespass offering before the Lord; and its blood he shall pour all around the base of the altar. [3]He shall then offer from it all its fat. The fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat above the entrails, [4]the two kidneys and the fat on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove. [5]Then the priest shall offer them on the altar of burnt offering to the Lord. It is a trespass offering. [6]Every male among the priests may eat these things. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It is most holy. [7]The trespass offering is like the sin offering; there is one law for them both: the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. [8]Now the priest who offers a man's whole burnt offering shall have for himself the skin of the whole burnt

offering he offered. [9]Also every grain offering made in the oven, and all that is made on the grate or in a frying pan, shall be the priest's who offers it. [10]Every grain offering, whether prepared with or without oil, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to one as much as the other.

The Law of the Peace Offering

[11]‘This is the law of the sacrifice of the peace offering, which he shall offer to the Lord: [12]If he should offer it for a thanksgiving, he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving loaves of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened cakes smeared with oil, and fine flour kneaded with oil.[†] [13]Besides the unleavened loaves, he shall offer with his gifts leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. [14]Then from all his gifts he shall offer one choice portion to the Lord. It shall belong to the priest who pours out the blood of the peace offering. [15]The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning.[†] [16]Now if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day he offers his sacrifice; and on the next day the remainder of it may also be eaten;[†] [17]but the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. [18]But if some of the flesh should be eaten on the third day, it shall not be accepted for him who offered it, nor shall it be imputed to him; it is a defilement; and the soul who eats from it shall bear guilt. [19]The flesh that should touch any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire, but all clean flesh may be eaten.[†] [20]But the soul who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering which is the Lord's while he is unclean, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from among his people. [21]Moreover, the soul who touches any unclean thing, or some human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any abominable unclean thing, and

who eats some of the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering which is the Lord's, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from among his people.’ ”

[22]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [23]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘You shall not eat any fat of oxen, sheep, or goats. [24]Also the fat of an animal that dies naturally and the fat of what is torn by wild beasts may be used in any other way; but you shall by no means eat it. [25]For whoever eats the fat from the cattle which someone is going to offer to the Lord as a burnt offering, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from among his people. [26]Moreover, you shall not eat any blood in any of your dwellings, whether of birds or cattle. [27]Any soul who eats blood, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from among his people.’ ”

[28]Furthermore, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [29]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘He who offers the sacrifice of the peace offering to the Lord shall bring his gift to the Lord from the sacrifice of his peace offering.[†] [30]His own hands shall offer the burnt offerings to the Lord. The lobe of the liver and the fat upon the breast, these he shall offer to place as gifts before the Lord. [31]Then the priest shall offer the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons’. [32]Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a choice portion from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. [33]He among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offering and the fat shall have the right thigh for his portion. [34]For the breast from which the fat was offered and the thigh of the choice portion I took from the children of Israel, from the sacrifices of your peace offerings, and I gave them to Aaron the priest and to his sons from the children of Israel by an ordinance forever.’ ”

[35]This is the consecrated portion for Aaron and his sons from the burnt offerings of the Lord, on the day He presented them to minister to the Lord as

priests. [36]The Lord commanded this to be given to them by the children of Israel on the day He anointed them, by an ordinance forever throughout their generations. [37]This is the law of the whole burnt offerings, the grain offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecrations, and the sacrifice of the peace offering, [38]in the manner the Lord commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day He commanded the children of Israel to offer their gifts before the Lord in the Sinai Desert.

The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons

8 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing oil, a young bull as the sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread;[†] [3]and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of testimony.”

[4]So Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and the congregation was gathered together at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [5]Then Moses said to the congregation, “This is the word the Lord commanded us to do.” [6]So Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.[†] [7]He put the tunic on him, girded him with the belt, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied the ephod on him.[†] [8]Then he put the breastplate on him, and he put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastplate. [9]He also put the turban on his head; and on the turban, on its front, he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[10]Moses then took the anointing oil, [11]and he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, anointed the altar, and sanctified it, and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to sanctify them. He also anointed the tabernacle and

everything in it, and sanctified it. [12]Moses then poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to sanctify him.[†] [13]After this, Moses brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them, girded them with the belts, and put hats on them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[14]Then he brought the young bull for the sin offering; and Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering,[†] [15]and Moses killed it. Then he took the blood, and put some on the horns of the altar all around with his finger, and purified the altar. He poured the blood at the base of the altar, and sanctified it, to make atonement upon it.[†] [16]Moses then took all the fat on the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses offered them on the altar. [17]But the young bull, its hide, its flesh, and its offal he burned with fire outside the camp, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[18]Next, Moses brought the ram as the burnt offering. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the ram, [19]and Moses killed the ram. Then he poured the blood all around on the altar [20]and cut the ram into pieces; and he offered the head, the pieces, and the fat. [21]Then he washed the stomach and the feet in water and offered the whole ram on the altar. It was a whole burnt offering for a sweet aroma, a burnt offering to the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[22]After this, Moses brought the second ram, the ram of consecration. Then Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the ram, [23]and Moses killed it. Also he took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. [24]Then Moses brought Aaron's sons; and he put some of the blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he poured the blood all around on the altar. [25]He took the fat and the fat

tail, all the fat on the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh; [26]and from the basket of consecration before the Lord, he took one unleavened cake, a cake of bread anointed with oil, and one wafer and put them on the fat and on the right thigh;[†] [27]and he put all these in Aaron's hands and in his sons’ hands and offered them as a choice portion before the Lord. [28]Then Moses took them from their hands and offered them on the altar for a whole burnt offering of consecration, which was a sweet aroma and a burnt offering to the Lord. [29]Moses also took the breast and removed it as a deposit from the ram of consecration before the Lord. It was Moses’ part, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[30]Moses then took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his garments, and on his sons and their garments with him; and he sanctified Aaron and his garments, and his sons and their garments with him.[†]

[31]After this, Moses said to Aaron and his sons, “Boil the flesh in the court of the tabernacle of testimony, in a holy place, and eat it there with the bread in the basket of consecration as I was commanded, saying, ‘Aaron and his sons shall eat it.’ [32]What remains of the flesh and the bread shall be burned with fire. [33]You shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of testimony for seven days, until the days of your consecration are fulfilled. For seven days he shall consecrate you. [34]As the Lord did on this day, He commanded to do to make atonement for you. [35]Therefore you shall stay at the door of the tabernacle of testimony day and night for seven days and keep the charge of the Lord, that you may not die; for the Lord God so commanded me.” [36]So Aaron and his sons did all the words the Lord commanded Moses.

The Priestly Service Begins

9 Now it came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and Israel's council of elders. [2]Moses said to Aaron, “Take for yourself a young calf from the oxen as a sin offering and a ram as a whole burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord.[†] [3]And to the council of elders you shall speak, saying, ‘Take one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and a young calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, as a whole burnt offering, [4]also a young bull and a ram as peace offerings before the Lord, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the Lord will appear to you.’ ”

[5]So they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of testimony, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord. [6]Then Moses spoke this word, “This is the thing the Lord commanded you to do, and the glory of the Lord will appear among you.” [7]Moses then said to Aaron, “Go to the altar, offer your sin offering and your whole burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for your house. Also offer the gifts of the people and make atonement for them, as the Lord commanded Moses.”

[8]Aaron therefore went to the altar and killed the young calf of the sin offering. [9]Then Aaron's sons brought the blood to him; and he dipped his finger in the blood, put it on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar. [10]But the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe from the liver of the sin offering he offered on the altar, as the Lord commanded Moses. [11]The flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp. [12]Then he killed the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he poured all around on the altar. [13]Then they presented the whole burnt offering to him, with its pieces and head, and he put them on the altar. [14]He washed the stomach and the feet and put them on the altar for a whole burnt offering.

[15]Then he brought the people's gift and took the young goat, which was the sin offering for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin, like the first one. [16]He also brought the whole burnt offering and offered it according to the prescribed manner.[†] [17]Then he brought the grain offering, took a handful of it, and put it on the altar, besides the whole burnt offering of the morning. [18]He also killed the young bull and the ram as sacrifices of peace offerings, which were for the people; and Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he poured all around on the altar. [19]The fat from the young bull and the ram: the fatty tail, what covers the stomach and the kidneys, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver, [20]they put on the breasts. Then he offered the fat on the altar; [21]but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron removed as a choice portion before the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses.

[22]Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the whole burnt offerings, and peace offerings.[†] [23]After this, Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of testimony, and came out, and blessed all the people. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people;[†] [24]and fire came out from the Lord, and consumed the things on the altar, both the whole burnt offerings and the fat. When all the people saw this, they were amazed and fell on their faces.

The False Offerings of Nadab and Abihu

10 Now Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.[†] [2]So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. [3]Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I shall be sanctified; and before all the congregation I shall be glorified.’ ” So Aaron was greatly distressed. [4]Moses then called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, Aaron's uncle, and said to them, “Come near, carry your brethren from the presence of the sanctuary outside the camp.” [5]So they came near and carried them by their tunics outside the camp, as Moses said. [6]Then Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, “Do not uncover your heads, nor take off your garments, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the congregation. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning the Lord kindled. [7]You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of testimony, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.” So they did according to Moses’ word.

Conduct for Priests

[8]Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying, [9]“Do not drink wine and strong drink, you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of testimony, or when you approach the altar, lest you die (it shall be an ordinance forever throughout your generations), [10]that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, [11]and that you may teach the children of Israel all the ordinances which the Lord spoke to them by the hand of Moses.”

[12]Then Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left, “Take the grain offering that remains from the burnt offerings of the Lord and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy. [13]You shall eat it in a holy place, because from the burnt offerings of the Lord, it belongs to you and your sons by ordinance; for thus I was commanded. [14]The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the choice portion you shall eat in a clean place, you, your sons, and your household with you; because it was given to you and your sons by ordinance from the peace offerings of the children of Israel. [15]The

thigh of the choice portion and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the burnt offerings of fat to offer as a wave offering before the Lord; and it shall be yours and your sons' and daughters' with you by an ordinance forever, as the Lord commanded Moses."

[16]Then Moses made careful inquiry about the young goat of the sin offering, and there it was—burned up. So he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons, saying, [17]"Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it is most holy; and He gave this to you, to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? [18]For you did not bring its blood into the holy place; you personally should have eaten it in a holy place, as the Lord commanded me." [19]Then Aaron spoke to Moses, saying, "If they had offered their sin offering and whole burnt offerings today before the Lord, and these things happened to me, and I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been acceptable to the Lord?" [20]So when Moses heard that, he was pleased.

Clean and Unclean Animals

11 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, [2]"Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These are the animals you may eat among all the animals on the earth:[†] [3]Whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat. [4]Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; [5]the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; [6]the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; [7]and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. [8]Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you.

[9]‘These you may eat of everything in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat. [10]But everything in the water or in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, from all these, and from every living creature in the water which the waters produce, they are an abomination to you. [11]They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. [12]Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that shall be an abomination to you.

[13]‘Now these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the ossifrage, and the sea eagle, [14]the kite, and the falcon after its kind; [15]every raven after its kind, [16]the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; [17]the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; [18]the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; [19]the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

[20]‘Now all flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you. [21]Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. [22]These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. [23]But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you.

[24]‘Now by these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; [25]whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening:

[26]any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. [27]Now whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. [28]Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It *is* unclean to you.

[29]‘These also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; [30]the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. [31]These are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. [32]Anything on which any of them falls when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item it is in which work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. [33]Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls you shall break; and whatever is in it shall be unclean: [34]in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. [35]Everything on which a carcass falls shall be unclean; whether it is an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; for they are unclean and shall be unclean to you. [36]Nevertheless, a spring or a cistern where there is plenty of water shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean. [37]But if a part of any such carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it remains clean. [38]However, if water is put on the seed, and if a part of any such carcass falls on it, it becomes unclean to you. [39]Now if any animal you are permitted to eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening. [40]He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean

until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

[41]‘Now every creeping thing that creeps on the earth shall be an abomination. It shall not be eaten. [42]Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth—these you shall not eat, for they are an abomination. [43]You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. [44]For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I, the Lord your God, am holy. Neither shall you defile your souls with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. [45]For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I, the Lord, am holy.

[46]‘This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, [47]to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.’ ”

Purification After Childbirth

12 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying to them, ‘If a woman conceived and bore a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; she shall be unclean as in the days of her menstrual isolation. [3]Then on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. [4]She will then continue in the blood of her uncleanness thirty-three days. She is not to touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are fulfilled. [5]But if she bears a female child, she will be unclean two weeks, as in her menstrual isolation, and she will continue in the blood of her uncleanness sixty-six days. [6]When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she is to bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a whole burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [7]Then he shall bring it before the Lord and make atonement for her, and it will cleanse her from her flow of blood. This is the law for her who bore a male or a female. [8]But if she is unable to afford a lamb, she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a whole burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.' "

Laws Concerning Leprosy

13 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [2]"When a man has a scar on the surface of his skin, or a shiny spot, and it appears to be a leprous infection, he is to be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests.[†] [3]The priest shall examine the infection on the surface of his skin; and if the hair in the infection has turned white and the infection appears deeper than the surface of his skin, it is a leprous infection. Thus the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean.[†] [4]But if the shiny spot on the surface of his skin is white, but appears to be no more than skin deep, and its hair has not turned white, but is dark, the priest shall quarantine him for seven days. [5]Then the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed, if the infection appears as it was, and has not spread on the skin, the priest shall quarantine him another seven days. [6]Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed, if the infection is dark, and has not spread on the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a spot, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. [7]But if the spot happens to spread at all on the skin, after he was seen by the priest for his cleansing, then he must be seen by the priest again.

[8]So if the priest sees the spot has indeed spread on the skin, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy.

[9]“When the leprous infection is on a man, he shall be brought to the priest.[†] [10]The priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the scar on the skin is white, and has turned the hair white, and some of the flesh in the scar is healthy and alive, [11]it is an old leprosy on the surface of his skin. The priest shall pronounce him unclean and shall quarantine him, for he is unclean. [12]But if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and it covers from head to foot all the skin of the one with the infection, according to the full examination of the priest, [13]then the priest shall consider; and indeed, if the leprosy covers the entire surface of his skin, he shall pronounce clean him who has the infection; because it all turned white. He is clean. [14]But in whatever day an open wound appears on him, he shall be unclean. [15]Thus the priest shall examine the open wound and pronounce him unclean; for an open wound is unclean; it is leprosy. [16]But if the surface of the skin is restored and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. [17]The priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the infection has turned white, the priest shall pronounce clean him who has the infection. He is clean.

[18]“If one's body develops an ulcer in the skin, and it is healed, [19]and in the place of the ulcer there comes a white scar or a shiny or inflamed spot, it shall be shown to the priest. [20]When the priest sees it, and indeed, it appears deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy which broke out in the ulcer. [21]But if the priest examines it, and indeed, there is no white hair in it, and it is not deeper than the skin's surface, but is dark, the priest shall quarantine him seven days. [22]But if it should spread over the skin, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous infection which broke out in the ulcer. [23]But if the shiny spot stays in

one place and has not spread, it is the scar of the ulcer; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

[24]“Or if one's body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the open wound of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, [25]the priest shall examine it; and indeed, if the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it is leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous infection. [26]But if the priest examines it, and indeed, there are no white hairs in the bright spot, and it is not deeper than the skin, but is dark, then the priest shall quarantine him seven days. [27]Then the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous infection broken out in the ulcer. [28]But if the bright spot stays in one place and has not spread on the skin, but is dark, it is a scar from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean.

[29]“If a man or woman appears to have a leprous infection on the head or the beard, [30]the priest shall examine the infection; and indeed, if it appears deeper than the skin, and there is thin yellow hair in it, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a lesion, a leprosy of the head or beard. [31]But if the priest examines the infection of the lesion, and indeed, it does not appear deeper than the skin, and there is no thin yellow hair in it, the priest shall quarantine seven days the one who has the infection of the lesion. [32]Then on the seventh day the priest shall examine the infection; and indeed, if the lesion has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the indentation does not appear deeper than the skin, [33]he shall shave himself, but he shall not shave the lesion. Then the priest shall quarantine another seven days the one who has the lesion. [34]On the seventh day the priest shall examine the lesion; and indeed, if the lesion has not spread over the skin and the indentation does not appear deeper than the skin,

the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean. [35]But if the lesion happens to spread at all on the skin after his cleansing, [36]the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the lesion has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He is unclean. [37]But if the lesion appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the lesion has healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

[38]“If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, specifically shining white spots, [39]the priest shall look; and indeed, if the bright spots on the skin of the body are shining white spots, it is eczema. He is clean.

[40]“As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he is bald, but he is clean. [41]He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he is bald on the forehead, but he is clean. [42]Now if there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white infection, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead. [43]Then the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the infection of the reddish-white skin on his bald head or on his bald forehead is like the form of leprosy on the skin of the body, [44]he is a leprous man. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his infection is on his head.

[45]“Now the clothes of the leper on whom the infection is shall be torn and his head uncovered; and he shall cover his mouth, and he shall be called unclean. [46]He shall be unclean. All the days he has the infection he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell apart; his way of life shall be outside the camp.[†]

Laws Concerning Leprous Garments

[47]“Also, if a garment has a leprous infection in it, whether it is a woolen garment or a linen garment, [48]whether it is in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, [49]and if the infection is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, then it is a leprous infection and shall be shown to the priest. [50]The priest shall examine the infection and quarantine him who has the infection seven days. [51]Then he shall examine the infection on the seventh day. If the infection has spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather, or in anything made of leather, the infection is an active leprosy. It is unclean. [52]Therefore he shall burn the garment with the infection, whether the warp or woof in wool or linen, or in anything of leather, for it is an active leprosy; the garment shall be burned in the fire.[†] [53]But if the priest examines it, and indeed the infection has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, [54]then the priest shall order that the object with the infection be washed; and he shall quarantine it another seven days. [55]Then the priest shall examine the infection after it is washed; and indeed, if the infection has not changed its color, though the infection has not spread, it is unclean. It shall burned in the fire, for it is firmly established in the garment, either in the warp or the woof. [56]If the priest examines it, and indeed, the infection is dark after washing it, he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or the woof, or the leather. [57]But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a spreading leprosy; and that garment with the infection shall be burned with fire. [58]But if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or anything made of leather, and the infection disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean. [59]This is the law of the leprous infection in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean.”

Laws of Purification for Healed Lepers

14 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. [3]The priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprous infection is healed in the leper,[†] [4]the priest shall give orders to take, for the one declared clean, two small birds, live and clean, and also cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. [5]Then the priest must give orders that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. [6]As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood, the scarlet and hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird killed over the running water.[†] [7]Then he shall sprinkle the water seven times on the one cleansed from his leprosy, and he shall be clean; then he shall send away the living bird into a field. [8]And the one who was cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water; and he shall be clean. After this, he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. [9]But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair from his head, his beard, and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.

[10]“Then on the eighth day he shall take two one-year-old lambs without blemish, a one-year-old sheep without blemish, three-tenths of the finest wheaten flour for a grain offering mixed with oil, and also one cup of oil.[†] [11]Then together with these things, the priest who cleanses shall present before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of testimony the man to be made cleansed. [12]The priest shall then take one lamb and offer it as a trespass offering, and the cup of oil, and set them apart as a wave offering before the Lord. [13]Then he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering and the whole burnt offering, in a holy place; for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the

trespass offering. It is most holy. [14]The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and put it on the tip of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. [15]The priest shall also take some of the oil from the cup and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. [16]Then he shall dip his right finger in the oil in his left hand, and sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the Lord. [17]The priest shall then put some of the remaining oil on the tip of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and also on the thumb of his right hand, the big toe of his right foot, and on the blood of the trespass offering. [18]Then the priest shall put the rest of the oil on the head of the one to be cleansed. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord. [19]Afterward, the priest shall offer the sin offering, and by it make atonement for the one to be cleansed. Then he shall kill the whole burnt offering. [20]The priest shall offer the whole burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar before the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

[21]“But if he is poor and cannot afford it, he shall take one lamb as a choice portion for a trespass offering, along with one-tenth of fine flour mixed with oil and a cup of oil as a grain offering, and [22]two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering, to make atonement for him. [23]He shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of testimony, before the Lord. [24]The priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering and the cup of oil and put them as a deposit before the Lord. [25]Then the priest shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and take some of its blood, and put it on the tip of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, then on the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot. [26]The priest shall then pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand, [27]and sprinkle with his right finger some of the

oil in his left hand, seven times before the Lord. [28]Then the priest shall put some of the oil in his hand on the tip of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and also on the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering. [29]The rest of the oil in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the Lord. [30]After this, he shall offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, such as he can afford— [31]one as a sin offering and the other as a whole burnt offering, with the grain offering. Thus the priest shall make atonement for the one to be cleansed before the Lord. [32]This is the law for one who has a leprous infection, who cannot afford the usual cleansing.”

Laws Concerning Leprous Houses

[33]Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [34]“When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous infection in a house in the land of your possession, [35]and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, ‘It seems to me there is an infection in my house,’ [36]then before the priest goes into the house to examine the infection, he shall give orders for them to empty the house, that everything in the house may not become unclean. Afterward the priest shall enter the house to examine it. [37]He shall examine the infection; and indeed, if the plague on the walls of the house has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deep in the walls, [38]then the priest shall go outside the house to the door of the house, and quarantine the house seven days. [39]After this, the priest shall come again on the seventh day to examine it; and indeed, if the infection has spread on the walls of the house, [40]then the priest shall give orders to take away the stones with the infection; and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city. [41]They shall then scrape the house inside and outside, and the dust they scrape off they shall

pour out in an unclean place outside the city. [42]Then they shall take other scraped stones and put them in the place of those stones; and they shall take other mortar and plaster the house.

[43]“Now if the infection comes back and breaks out in the house, after they took away the stones and scraped and plastered the house, [44]then the priest shall enter the house to examine it; and indeed, if the infection has spread in it, there is an active leprosy in the house. It is unclean. [45]So they shall break down the house, its stones, timber, and all its plaster, and carry them outside the city to an unclean place. [46]Moreover, he who goes into the house at all while it is quarantined shall be unclean until evening. [47]Also the one who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; and the one who eats in the house shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

[48]“But if the priest enters the house to examine it, and indeed, the infection has not spread at all in the house after it was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce it clean, because the infection is healed.[†] [49]Then to cleanse the house he shall take two live birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. [50]And he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water; [51]and he shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet, and the living bird and dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. [52]Thus he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, the running water, and the living bird, along with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the spun scarlet. [53]Then he shall send away the living bird into a field outside the city and make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.

[54]“This is the law for any leprous infection and lesion,[†] [55]and for a leprous garment, a house, [56]a scar, a mark, and a bright spot, [57]to determine in which

day there is the unclean, and in which day it will be declared clean. This is the law of leprosy.”

Laws Concerning Bodily Discharges

15 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [2]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, to any and every man, ‘When any man has a seminal discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. [3]This shall be the law of his uncleanness—whether his bodily member flows with an involuntary discharge of semen, or is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness. [4]Every bed on which he who has the discharge lies is unclean, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. [5]Whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [6]Whoever sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [7]Whoever touches the skin of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [8]If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [9]Any saddle of a donkey on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean until evening. [10]Whoever touches anything under him shall be unclean until evening; and whoever carries any of those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [11]Whomever he who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [12]An earthen vessel that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.

[13]‘Now when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing. He shall wash his clothes, and

bathe his body in water; then he shall be clean.[†] [14]On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring these before the Lord, to the door of the tabernacle of testimony, and give them to the priest. [15]Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a whole burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord because of his discharge.

[16]‘If any man has an emission of semen, he shall wash all his body in water and be unclean until evening. [17]Any garment and any leather on which there is semen shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. [18]Also, when a woman lies with a man and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

[19]‘If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be in her menstrual period seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. [20]Everything she lies on during her menstruation shall be unclean; also everything she sits on shall be unclean. [21]Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and be unclean until evening. [22]Whoever touches anything she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [23]If anything is on her bed, or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. [24]If any man lies with her, and her uncleanness is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

[25]‘If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her menstruation, or if it runs beyond this time, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her menstruation. She shall be unclean.[†] [26]Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her menstruation; and whatever she sits on, it shall be unclean, as the

uncleanness of her menstruation. [27]Whoever touches her shall be unclean; and he shall wash his clothes, bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [28]But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. [29]Then on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [30]The priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a whole burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord because of the discharge of her uncleanness.

[31]‘Thus you shall make the children of Israel ungodly because of their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle among them.[†] [32]This is the law for one who has a discharge and who emits semen and is unclean thereby, [33]and for her who is indisposed because of her menstrual period, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for the man who lies with her during her menstrual period.’ ”

The Day of Atonement

16 Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they offered strange fire before the Lord and died;[†] [2]and the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the holy place inside the veil, in the presence of the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony, lest he die; for I will be seen in the cloud above the mercy seat.[†] [3]Thus Aaron shall come into the holy place with a young bull of the oxen as a sin offering, and a ram as a whole burnt offering.[†] [4]He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water and put them on.[†]

[5]“Then he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a whole burnt offering.† [6]Aaron shall offer the young bull as his sin offering, to make atonement for himself and his house.† [7]He shall take the two kids and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [8]Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two kids: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat.† [9]Aaron shall bring the kid on which the Lord's lot fell and offer it as a sin offering. [10]But the kid on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, to let it go as the scapegoat into the desert.

SACRIFICE

In the Book of Leviticus and detailed further in Deuteronomy 12—26, the Lord commands Moses to institute a comprehensive system of ritual sacrifices to be offered by the priests on behalf of the people of God, thus giving the Hebrews a means to be reconciled with God and to restore harmony amongst themselves, relationships disrupted by sin. The word “sacrifice” means to make holy or sacred. These sacrifices and offerings—offered first at the tabernacle and later in the temple—were basically of two types: animal (cattle, sheep, goats, doves) and vegetable (wheat, barley, olive oil, wine, cereal, frankincense). The offerings were types prefiguring a greater reality to be fulfilled in the coming Incarnation of Christ.

THE OLD COVENANT

In the Old Testament animal sacrifices, the blood shed and poured out represented the life-force of the animal offered to God (Gn 9:4; Lv 17:11; Dt 12:23). The animal was more than simply a substitute for the worshiper. There was also identification between the animal sacrificed and the one on whose behalf it was offered, explaining the emphasis in the Old Testament on the blood of the sacrifice (Ex 12:13; 24:4–8; 29:15–21; 30:1–10; Lv 14:24, 25; Nm 19:1–4). These sacrifices point to the blood of Christ in the New Testament: “My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt 26:28; see also Acts 20:28; Rom 5:8–10; Col 1:19, 20; Heb 9:11–14; 1Pt 1:17–19; 1Jn 1:7; Rev 1:4–6; 7:13–15).

On the Day of Atonement, the preeminent Old Testament sacrifice was made. It was to atone for all the sins the nation of Israel had committed that year (Lv 16:2–34). The ceremony included (1) animal sacrifices as offerings for sins, and (2) the placing of “all the transgressions of the children of Israel . . . on the head of the living kid”—the scapegoat—which was then driven off into the wilderness (Lv 16:21). This event prefigures the once-for-all self-sacrifice of Christ, our great High Priest (Heb 4:14—5:10; 10:19–22), who takes upon Himself all the sins of all humanity (Is 53:11, 12; Jn 1:29; 2Co 5:21; 1Pt 2:24), tramples down death by His voluntary Death on the cross, and thereby reconciles us to God (Is 53:5; Gal 3:13, 14; Col 1:13, 14; Tts 2:13, 14; 1Pt 3:18).

THE NEW COVENANT

Christ’s once-for-all offering of Himself is for all people for all time, and supersedes the Mosaic sacrificial system. Accordingly, the mystery of the eucharistic service, accomplished within the Divine Liturgy of the Church, is done “in remembrance” of Christ’s sacrifice (Lk 22:19) and is a “reasonable and bloodless sacrifice” to be understood as our sacrifice-offering to God—“a mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise.” In the Divine Liturgy, instead of an animal or grain offering, we offer the Body and Blood of Christ to God. In a mystery known only to God, we thereby participate in the very Body and Blood of Christ offered once for all. And in this substantial union between Christ—the One sacrificed—and the worshiper, we come to more fully understand how we are united to Christ in our baptism and nurtured in our union with Christ by the eucharistic offering. The Church prays, “Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee, on behalf of all and for all.”

Offering sacrifices never exempted the Hebrews from the duty to live prayerfully and morally (Pr 15:8, 9). Moreover, Old Testament prophets stood against empty ritual and vain sacrifice (1Kg 15:22; Pss 49:7–15; 50:15–17; Is 1:1–20; Hos 6:6; Am 5:9–27; Mic 6:1–8). Hence, the Mosaic sacrificial system not only prefigures Christ’s own sacrifice, but also points to the pouring out of ourselves in self-sacrificial service as detailed in Romans 12:1 and 1 Peter 2:5.

[11]“Then Aaron shall offer the young bull as his sin offering, to make atonement for himself and his house. Thus he shall kill the young bull as his sin offering. [12]He shall then take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of the incense compound, beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. [13]He shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat on the testimonies, lest he die. [14]He shall take some of the young bull's blood with his finger and sprinkle it upon the east side of the mercy seat seven times.

[15]“After that, he shall kill the kid of the sin offering before the Lord on behalf of the people, and bring some of its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the young bull, and sprinkle it upon the east side of the mercy seat seven times. [16]So he shall make atonement in the holy place because of the impurities and injustices of the children of Israel, for all their sins; and thus he shall do this in the tabernacle of testimony, built among them in the midst of their uncleanness.[†] [17]There shall be no man in the tabernacle of testimony when he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, his household, and

all the congregation of the children of Israel. [18]Then he shall go out to the altar before the Lord and make atonement upon it; and he shall take some of the blood of both the young bull and the kid and put it on the horns of the altar all around. [19]Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse and sanctify it because of the impurities of the children of Israel.

The Scapegoat

[20]“When Aaron shall finish making atonement in the holy place, the tabernacle of testimony and the altar, and shall also cleanse matters concerning the priests, then he shall bring the living kid. [21]Aaron shall place his hands on the head of the living kid, confess over it all the transgressions of the children of Israel, and all their lawlessness, and all their sins; and he shall put them on the head of the living kid, and send it away into the desert by the hand of a suitable man.[†] [22]The kid shall bear on itself all their wrongdoings to an uninhabited land. Thus he shall send away the kid into the desert. [23]Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of testimony and take off the linen garments he put on when he went into the holy place; and he shall leave them there. [24]He shall then wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, and come out to offer his whole burnt offering and the whole burnt offering of the people, to make atonement for himself, his house, the people, and in matters concerning the priests. [25]The fat of the sin offering he shall offer on the altar. [26]He who sent away the kid which was set apart for remission shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. [27]The young bull and the kid for the sin offerings whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place shall be carried outside the camp; and they shall burn them in the fire: their skin, their flesh, and their offal.[†] [28]Then he who burns them shall

wash his clothes and bathe his body in water; and afterward, he may come into the camp.

Ordinances for the Day of Atonement

[29]“This shall be an ordinance forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a resident alien who dwells among you. [30]For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you from all your sins before the Lord. Thus you shall be clean. [31]It is a Sabbath of Sabbaths, a rest for you, and you shall humble your souls. It is an ordinance forever. [32]So the priest who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place shall make atonement and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments. [33]Then he shall make atonement in the most holy place, the tabernacle of testimony and the altar; and he shall make atonement for matters concerning the priests and all the congregation.[†] [34]So this shall be an ordinance forever for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins; and he shall do this once a year,” as the Lord gave orders to Moses.

The Sanctity of Blood

17 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Speak to Aaron, his sons, and all the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘This is the thing the Lord commanded, saying, [3]“Whatever man of the children of Israel, or resident aliens dwelling among them, kills a young bull, a sheep, or a goat in the camp, or kills it outside the camp, [4]and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of testimony, to offer it as a whole burnt offering or a peace offering to the Lord, acceptable for a sweet aroma; and whatever man kills outside and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of testimony, so as to offer it as a gift to the

Lord before the Lord's tabernacle, blood shall be reckoned to that man, for he has shed blood; and that man shall be utterly destroyed from among his people, [5]that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices they kill in the fields to the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of testimony, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the Lord. [6]The priest shall pour the blood upon the altar all around before the Lord at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony, and offer the fat for a sweet aroma to the Lord. [7]They shall no more offer their sacrifices to worthless things, after whom they prostituted themselves. This shall be an ordinance forever for you throughout your generations.' "[†]

[8]"Also you shall say to them, 'Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the resident aliens who dwell among you, offers a whole burnt offering or sacrifice[†] [9]and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of testimony, to offer it to the Lord, that man shall be utterly destroyed from among his people.

[10]'And whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the resident aliens dwelling among you, eats any blood, I will set My face against that soul who eats blood and will utterly destroy him from among his people. [11]For the life of all flesh is in its blood, and I give it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for its blood makes atonement for the soul.'[†] [12]"Therefore, I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any resident alien who dwells among you eat blood.' [13]Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the resident aliens dwelling among you, hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dirt;[†] [14]for the life of all flesh is its blood. Therefore, I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be utterly destroyed.'

[15]“Every soul who eats what died naturally or what was torn by wild animals, whether a native of your own country or a resident alien, he shall both wash his clothes, bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. [16]But if he does not both wash his body and bathe in water, he shall bear his guilt.”

Laws of Sexual Morality

18 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,† [2]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘I am the Lord your God. [3]According to the way of life in the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the way of life in the land of Canaan, where I bring you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. [4]You shall do My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God.† [5]You shall therefore keep all My ordinances and My judgments, and do these, which if a man does, he shall live by them; I am the Lord your God.† [6]None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the Lord.† [7]The nakedness of your father or mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. [8]The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness. [9]The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, her nakedness you shall not uncover. [10]The nakedness of your son's daughter, or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness. [11]The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she is your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness. [12]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is near of kin to your father. [13]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. [14]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother, and approach his wife; she is your aunt. [15]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she is your son's wife—you shall not uncover her nakedness. [16]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. [17]You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover their nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is impious. [18]Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

[19]‘Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her menstrual period of uncleanness. [20]Moreover, you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her. [21]Furthermore, you shall not give your offspring to worship a ruler, nor shall you defile My holy name: I am the Lord. [22]You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. [23]Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.

[24]‘Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these ways of life the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before your face. [25]For the land is defiled, and on its account I am repaying them for their wrongdoing. Thus the land became vexed with those dwelling upon it. [26]You shall therefore keep all My ordinances and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any resident alien who dwells among you [27](for the men of the land before you did all these abominations, and thus the land was defiled), [28]that the land not be vexed with you in your defilement of it, as it was vexed with the nations before you. [29]For whoever does any of these abominations, these souls shall be utterly destroyed from among their people. [30]Therefore, you shall keep My ordinances, so as not to do

any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and not to defile yourselves by them; for I am the Lord your God.' "

Laws of Morality and Justice

19 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] 2"Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. 3Every one of you shall reverence his father and mother and keep My Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God. 4Do not follow idols, nor make for yourselves molten gods: I am the Lord your God. 5And if you offer a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, you shall offer it in a manner acceptable for you. 6It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day, and if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. 7And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is not fit to be offered. It shall not be accepted. 8Therefore, everyone who eats it shall bear his guilt, because he has defiled the holy things of the Lord; and the souls that eat it shall be utterly destroyed from among their people.

9'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10Also you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the resident alien: I am the Lord your God.

11'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. 12You shall not swear by My name unjustly, nor shall you defile the name of your God: I am the Lord your God. 13You shall not treat your neighbor unjustly, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.

[14]You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the Lord your God.

[15]‘You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor admire the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. [16]You shall not go about deceitfully among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord your God. [17]You shall not hate your brother in your mind. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear guilt because of him. [18]You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.[†]

[19]‘You shall keep My law. You shall not let your cattle mate with a different species. You shall not sow your field with mixed seeds. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.

[20]‘Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed to a man as a concubine and has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be an inquiry; but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. [21]Then he shall bring his trespass offering to the Lord, to the door of the tabernacle of testimony, a ram as a trespass offering. [22]The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the Lord for the sin he committed; and the sin he committed shall be remitted him.

[23]‘When you come into the land the Lord your God gives you and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall cleanse its impurity. Three years its fruit shall be impure to you. It shall not be eaten. [24]But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the Lord. [25]Then in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the Lord your God.

[26]‘You shall not eat upon the mountains, nor divine for omens, nor watch birds for omens. [27]You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. [28]You shall not make any gashing on your bodies for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord your God. [29]Do not defile your daughter, to cause her to commit fornication, lest the land fall into fornication, and the land become full of lawlessness.

[30]‘You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My holy things: I am the Lord. [31]You shall not follow ventriloquists, nor attach yourselves to enchanters, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God. [32]You shall rise before the gray-headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord your God. [33]And if a resident alien dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. [34]The resident alien who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. [35]You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or balances. [36]You shall have honest scales, honest weights, and honest measures: I am the Lord your God, who brings you out of the land of Egypt.

[37]‘Therefore you shall keep all My law and all My ordinances, and perform them: I am the Lord your God.’ ”

Penalties for Lawbreakers

20 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Again, you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the resident aliens dwelling in Israel, gives any of his children to worship a ruler, let him be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.[†] [3]I will set My face against that man and will destroy him from among his people, because he gave his children to a ruler, to defile My holy things and profane the name of those sanctified for Me.[†] [4]But if the natives of the land disregard that man, taking no notice of him when he gives his children to a ruler, and they do not kill him, [5]then I will set My face against that man and those of his kind. For since he and those in agreement with him prostituted themselves to rulers, I will destroy them from among their people. [6]Also the soul who follows ventriloquists and charmers, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that soul and destroy him from among his people. [7]Therefore, you shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. [8]You shall keep My ordinances and perform them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you. [9]Whatever man curses his father or mother shall surely be put to death. He cursed his father or mother. Thus he shall be guilty.[†]

[10]‘The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, or who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death. [11]The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both shall surely be put to death, for they are guilty. [12]If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both shall surely be put to death. They are impious, and therefore guilty. [13]If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both committed an abomination. They shall be put to death, for they are guilty. [14]If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. [15]If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. [16]If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death, for they are guilty.

[17]‘If a man takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a reproach. They shall be

utterly destroyed in the presence of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness. They shall bear their guilt. [18]If a man lies with a woman during her menstrual period and uncovers her nakedness, he has exposed her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both shall be utterly destroyed from among their people. [19]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister, nor your mother's sister, for that would uncover his near of kin. They shall bear their guilt. [20]If a man lies with his close relative, he has uncovered his relative's nakedness. They shall die childless. [21]If a man takes his brother's wife, it is uncleanness. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless.

[22]'You shall therefore keep all My ordinances and all My judgments and perform them, that the land to which I am bringing you to dwell in not be provoked at you. [23]Also, you shall not walk in the ordinances of the nations I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. [24]But I said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the Lord your God, who separated you from all peoples.[†] [25]You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make your souls abominable by animals or birds, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I separated from you as unclean.[†] [26]You shall be holy to Me, for I, the Lord your God, who separated you from all peoples for Myself, am holy.

[27]'A man or a woman who is a ventriloquist or a charmer shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones, for they are guilty.' "

Conduct for Priests

21 Now the Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and s to them, ‘They shall not be defiled by the dead among their people,[†] [2]except for their nearest relatives: their father, mother, sons, daughters, brother, [3]and virgin sister near to him and having no husband; for these he may be defiled. [†] [4]Otherwise, he shall not be unexpectedly defiled and profaned among his people. [5]You shall not shave a bald spot on your head for the dead, nor shall they shave the edges of their beard, nor make any cuttings on their flesh. [6]They shall be holy to their God, and not defile the name of their God, for they offer the sacrifices of the Lord as the gifts of their God; therefore, they shall be holy. [7]They shall not take a wife who is a prostitute and defiled, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for a priest is holy to the Lord his God. [8]Therefore you shall sanctify him, for he offers the gifts of the Lord your God. He shall be holy to you, for I the Lord, who sanctifies them, am holy. [9]The daughter of any priest, if she defiles herself by playing the harlot, she defiles the name of her father. She shall be burned with fire. [10]The high priest who is great among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who was consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; [11]nor shall he go near any soul who died, nor defile himself for his father or mother; [12]nor shall he go out of the holy places, nor defile the sanctified place of his God; for the consecration of God's holy anointing oil is upon him: I am the Lord. [13]Moreover, he shall take a wife in her virginity. [14]But a widow, a divorced woman, a defiled woman, or a prostitute—these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife.[†] [15]Nor shall he defile his seed among his people, for I the Lord sanctify him.’ ”

[16]Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [17]“Speak to Aaron, saying, ‘No man of your descendants in succeeding generations who has any defect may approach to offer the gifts of his God.[†] [18]For any man who has a defect shall

not approach: a man lame or blind, who has a slit nose or ear, [19]a man who has a broken hand or foot, [20]or is a hunchback or has a defect in his eye, or an inflammation with respect to the eyes, or a man who has a severe itch or a single testicle. [21]No man of the seed of Aaron the priest who has a defect shall come near to offer the sacrifices to your God. He has a defect; he shall not come near to offer the gifts of your God. [22]The gifts of his God are most holy, and he may eat only the holy things; [23]but he shall not go near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a defect, lest he defile the holy place of his God; for I the Lord sanctify them.' " [24]Thus Moses told this to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel.

22 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]"Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful for the holy things of the children of Israel, in what is sanctified to Me, so as not to defile My holy name: I am the Lord. [3]Say to them, 'Throughout your generations, whoever of your seed goes near the holy things the children of Israel sanctify to the Lord while his uncleanness is upon him, that soul shall be utterly destroyed by Me: I am the Lord your God. [4]Whatever man of the seed of Aaron who is a leper or has an involuntary discharge of semen shall not eat the holy offerings until he is clean. Also whoever touches any impurity of a soul who had an emission of semen while asleep on his bed, [5]or whoever touches any unclean creeping thing by which he would be defiled, or anyone by whom he would be defiled, whatever his uncleanness may be—[6]the soul who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he washes his body with water. [7]Thus when the sun goes down, he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat of the holy things, because it is his food. [8]Whatever dies naturally or is torn by wild animals he shall not eat, to defile himself with it: I am the Lord. [9]They shall therefore keep My ordinances, lest they bear sin for it and die thereby, if they defile these. I the Lord God sanctify them. [10]No foreigner shall eat the holy things; one who sojourns with the priest or a hired servant shall not eat the holy things. [11]But if the priest buys a soul with his money, this one may eat the priest's food; and one who is born in his house may eat his food. [12]If the priest's daughter is married to a foreigner, she may not eat of the holy offerings. [13]But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced and has no child, and has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food; but no foreigner shall eat it. [14]Also, if a man eats the holy things in ignorance, then he shall restore the holy thing to the priest and add one-fifth to it. [15]They shall not defile the holy things of the children of Israel, which they offer to the Lord, [16]or allow them to bear the guilt of trespass when they eat their holy things; for I the Lord sanctify them.' ”

Acceptable and Unacceptable Offerings

[17]Again, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [18]“Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the congregation of Israel, and say to them, ‘Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the resident aliens dwelling among them in Israel, who offers his gifts in accord with any agreed-on offering or any offering of choice which they offer to God as a whole burnt offering— [19]to be acceptable on your behalf, they must be males without blemish from the cattle, the sheep, or the goats. [20]Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer it to the Lord, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. [21]And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord from the cattle or the sheep, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering, or in your feasts, it must be without blemish to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. [22]Those blind, broken, or with a cut tongue, or afflicted with warts, or having a bad itch or a skin disease, you shall not offer to the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the Lord. [23]Either a bull or a

sheep that has any ears cut off or a shortened tail, you may offer for yourself, but for a vow of yours it shall not be accepted. [24]You shall not offer to the Lord what is castrated by crushing, bruising, tearing, or extracting; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land. [25]Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the gifts of your God, because their corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf.' "

[26]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [27]"When a young bull, a sheep, or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as a gift made by fire to the Lord. [28]Whether it is a young bull or a sheep, do not kill both her and her young on the same day. [29]Now if you offer a sacrifice, a vow of rejoicing to the Lord, you shall offer it so as to be acceptable for you. [30]On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of its flesh until morning: I am the Lord. [31]Therefore you shall keep My commandments and do them. [32]You shall not defile My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the children of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctifies you, [33]who brings you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord."

The Feasts of the Lord

23 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. [3]Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath rest, a holy convocation to the Lord. You shall do no work on it; it is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwellings.

THE FEAST OF WEEKS—PENTECOST

The Feast of Weeks was the festival celebrated at the beginning of the grain harvest (Ex 34:22). This was the feast at which the Hebrews offered their firstfruits of the harvest to the Lord at the tabernacle. It was one of the three major Jewish feasts, along with the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles (see Ex 23:14–17; 34:18–23; Dt 16:1–17).

According to Leviticus 23:15, 16, the Feast was celebrated for seven consecutive weeks beginning "the morning following the Sabbath day" of Passover. Thus comes its title, the "Feast of Weeks." Later in the Old Testament this feast became known as "Pentecost" ("fiftieth"), since it was celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover (see Tb 2:1; 2Mc 12:32).

PENTECOST: A FULFILLMENT OF THE JEWISH FEAST

The Jewish Feast of Pentecost was fulfilled as described in Acts 2. On this Day of Pentecost came the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Christ, as Christ Himself had promised (Jn 14:16, 17). The descent of the Holy Spirit fulfills the Jewish Feast of Pentecost in a number of ways.

1 The reaping of the firstfruits of the grain harvest is fulfilled by the first harvest on the Day of Pentecost, which consisted of the Jews who believed and were baptized. St. John Chrysostom says the Holy Spirit "came down as the keen-edged sickle."

2 The offering of the two "deposit loaves" of leavened bread (Lv 23:17, 18) is prophetic of the ingathering of both Jews and Gentiles (Bede). St. John Cassian says the preaching of the apostles on the Day of Pentecost was "the true bread of the first fruits . . . when five thousand men were filled with the gift of its food" (Acts 4:4).

3 The fiftieth day—seven consecutive weeks following Pascha plus one day—indicates the fullness of time in a mystery, similar to the Christian understanding of the eighth day.

4 The giving of the Law to Moses by the Son of God is brought to completion by the giving of the Spirit (see Rom 8:3–11; Gal 5:3–6; Eph 2:13–18) to the Church.

THE SERVICES FOR PENTECOST

The Orthodox services for Pentecost place their emphasis on the descent of the Holy Spirit in all His fullness. His descent means that the Mosaic Law, given by the Lawgiver and honored on the Jewish feast day of Pentecost, is now transcended: “The All-Holy Spirit, who freely distributes gifts to all, has descended and come to earth; not as He formerly had in the Law’s dark shadow, shining in the Prophets, but now in very truth, He is bestowed in us through Christ” (Vespers, Thursday after Pentecost).

The worship services for Pentecost repeatedly emphasize how Old Testament prophecies of the Holy Spirit are fulfilled on this day. Two of the greatest of these prophecies are found in the Old Testament readings for this Feast—Ezekiel 36:24–28 and Joel 2:23–32. St. Peter directly quotes the passage from Joel in his exhortation to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16–21). A third reading—Numbers 11:16–17, 24–29—relates how the Lord commands Moses to select seventy of the elders of Israel, who, when the Spirit comes upon them, prophesy at the tabernacle. The comment of Moses regarding this event, “Would that all the Lord’s people might be prophets when the Lord would put His Spirit upon them” (Nm 11:29), is prophetic of the Day of Pentecost.

A hymn for the Feast of Pentecost declares, “Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations [Gn 11:1–9]; and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity; and with one accord we glorify the All-holy Spirit.”

Pascha and Unleavened Bread

[4]‘These are the feasts to the Lord, holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. [5]On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Pascha to the Lord.[†] [6]Then on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. [7]On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no service work on it. [8]But you shall offer a whole burnt offering to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no ser-vice work.’ ”

Harvest

[9]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [10]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘When you come into the land I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits from your harvest to the priest. [11]He shall offer the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the morning after the first day the priest shall offer it. [12]Then you shall offer on that day on which you offer the sheaf a sheep of the first year, without blemish, as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. [13]Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a sacrifice to the Lord, for a sweet aroma to the Lord; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. [14]You shall eat neither bread nor roasted fresh ears until the same day you have offered gifts to your God; it shall be an ordinance forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

[15]‘Then you shall count for yourselves from the morning following the Sabbath day, from the day you brought the sheaf of the deposit, seven full weeks.[†] [16]Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. [17]You shall bring from your dwellings two deposit loaves of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour. They shall be baked with leaven. They are firstfruits to the Lord. [18]Then you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year without blemish, one young bull, and two rams without blemish. They shall be a whole burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and drink offerings, a sacrifice for a sweet aroma to the Lord. [19]After this, you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering, with the loaves of the firstfruits. [20]The priest shall deposit them with the loaves of the firstfruits as a deposit offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy things to the Lord; and for the priest who presented them, his shall they be. [21]Then you shall proclaim the same day as a holy convocation for you. You shall do no service work on it. It shall be an ordinance forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. [22]When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the resident alien: I am the Lord your God.’ ”

Trumpets: The New Year

[23]Again, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [24]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a rest, a memorial of trumpets, a holy convocation for you. [25]You shall do no service work on it, and you shall offer a whole burnt offering to the Lord.’ ”

Day of Atonement

[26]Moreover, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [27]“Also, the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall humble your souls and offer a whole burnt offering to the Lord. [28]And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. [29]For any soul who is not humbled on that same day shall be utterly destroyed from among his people. [30]Any soul who does any work on that same day, that soul shall be destroyed from among his people. [31]You shall not do any work; this is an ordinance forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. [32]It shall be a Sabbath of Sabbaths for you, and you shall humble your souls; from the ninth day of the month, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your Sabbaths.”

Feast of Tabernacles

[33]Again, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [34]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. [35]On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no service work on it. [36]For seven days you shall offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord. Then on the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord. It is the final day of the festival for you, and you shall do no service work on it.

[37]‘These are the feasts to the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord, whole burnt offerings and their grain and drink offerings, everything on its day— [38]besides the Sabbaths of the Lord, and besides your gifts, all your vows, and all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord.

[39]‘Also on the fifteenth day of this seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast to the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a rest, and on the eighth day a rest.[†] [40]And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the ripe fruit of a tree, leaves of palm trees, the branches of leafy trees, and the pure willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. [41]You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be an ordinance forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. [42]You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, [43]that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.’ ”

[44]So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.

Caring for the Lamps

24 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Command the children of Israel to bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. [3]Outside the veil in the tabernacle of testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it burning from evening until morning before the Lord continually; it shall be an ordinance forever in your generations. [4]Upon the pure lampstand, you shall burn the lamps before the Lord until morning.

Preparing the Bread

[5]“You shall also take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. [6]You shall set them as two deposits, six loaves in each deposit, on the pure table before the Lord. [7]Then you shall put pure frankincense and salt on each deposit, that it may be on the bread for a

memorial offering to the Lord. [8]Every Sabbath day it shall be placed before the Lord continually, in the presence of the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. [9]It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat these things in a holy place; for this is most holy to him from the things sacrificed to the Lord, as a perpetual ordinance."

Punishment for Sin

[10]Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp.[†] [11]Then the Israelite woman's son, by pronouncing the Name, cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) [12]Then they placed him in custody, to make a decision regarding him through an ordinance of the Lord. [13]Thus the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [14]"Take the one who cursed outside the camp; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. [15]Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'Whoever curses God shall bear his guilt. [16]Let him who pronounces the Lord's name be surely put to death. Let all the congregation of Israel stone him with stones, the resident alien as well as the native. Let him die when he pronounces the Lord's name. [17]Whoever strikes a man and he dies, let him surely be put to death. [18]Whoever strikes an animal and it dies, let him compensate life for life. [19]If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him— [20]fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. [21]Whoever strikes a man and he dies, let him surely be put to death. [22]You shall have the same judgment for what is right both for the resident alien and the native; for I am the Lord your God.' " [23]Then Moses spoke to the children of

Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Seventh Year

25 Now the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying,[†] [2]“Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land I give you, then the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. [3]Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather its fruit; [4]but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. [5]What grows by itself in your field you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of the vines you dedicated, for it is a year of rest for the land. [6]So the products of the land during the Sabbath year shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the alien who dwells with you, [7]and for your cattle and the wild animals in your land—all its produce shall be for food.

The Year of Remission (Jubilee)

[8]‘You shall also count seven years of rest for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years.[†] [9]Then you shall sound the trumpet throughout your land on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.[†] [10]Then you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim remission throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall signal the Year of Remission for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his homeland. [11]That fiftieth year shall be the Signal of Remission for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows by

itself, nor gather its sanctified things. [12]For it is the Signal of Remission; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

[13]‘In this Year of Remission, each shall return to his possession. [14]Also, if you should make a sale of land to your neighbor or buy it from him, let a man not oppress his neighbor. [15]According to the number of years after the Signal, you shall buy land tenure from your neighbor, and he shall sell tenure to you according to the number of years of crops. [16]According to the increase in years, his acquisition price for tenure should be increased, and according to the fewer number of years his price should be diminished; for he sells to you according to the number of the crops. [17]Therefore, let not a man oppress his neighbor, but you shall fear the Lord your God; for I am the Lord your God.

Food for the Seventh Year

[18]‘So you shall do all My ordinances and keep My judgments, and do them; then you will dwell in the land in confidence. [19]Then the land will yield its produce, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in confidence. [20]But if you should say, “What shall we eat in this seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?” [21]Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. [22]And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat from the old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest.

Redemption of Property

[23]‘The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine; for in my sight you are resident aliens and sojourners. [24]According to all the land of your possession, you shall grant a ransom of the land. [25]If your brother with you

becomes poor and has sold some of his possession, and his closest relative comes, then he may redeem what his brother sold. [26]Or if the poor man has no close relative to redeem it, but he himself becomes prosperous enough to redeem it, [27]then let him compute the years since its sale and return the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. [28]But if he does not become prosperous enough to return to it himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Remission; and in the Remission it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

[29]‘If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; within a full year he may redeem it. [30]But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong legally to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Remission. [31]However, the houses of unwalled villages shall be counted as belonging to the open country. They may be redeemed and released at any time during the Remission. [32]Nevertheless, the cities of the Levites, and the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. [33]Even whoever purchases a house from the Levites, the house that was sold in the city of their possession shall be released in the Remission; for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. [34]But the fields set apart for their cities may not be sold, for this is their perpetual possession.

Lending to the Poor

[35]‘If your brother becomes poor and weak in strength among you, then you shall help him, like a resident alien or a sojourner, that he may live with you. [36]Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God—I am the Lord—that

your brother may live with you. [37]You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. [38]I am the Lord your God, who brings you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, so as to be your God.

Relating to Slaves

[39]‘Now if your brother with you becomes poor and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. [40]But as a hired servant or a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall work for you until the Year of Remission. [41]Then in the Remission he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. [42]For they are My personal servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold with the sale of a household servant. [43]You shall not overwork him with labor, but you shall fear the Lord your God. [44]As for the male and female servants you may have from the Gentiles around you, from them you may buy male and female servants. [45]Moreover you may buy some of the children of sojourners dwelling among you, and some of their families with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your possession. [46]You may also distribute them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a permanent possession. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not overwork him with labor.

[47]‘Now if a resident alien or sojourner with you prospers, and your brother becomes poor and sells himself to the resident alien or sojourner with you, or to a member of the resident alien's family, [48]after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; [49]or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. [50]Thus he shall compute the years with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number

of years from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Remission; it shall be according to the time he was a hired servant for him. [51]If there are still more years remaining to someone, he shall pay his ransom from the money of his sale. [52]Now if there remain but a few years until the Year of Remission, then he shall compute with him, and according to his years, he shall repay his ransom. [53]He shall be with him as a hired servant year by year, and you shall not allow someone to overwork him with labor in your sight. [54]But if he is not redeemed in these years he shall be released in the Year of Remission—he and his children with him. [55]For the children of Israel are personal servants to Me; they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Blessing for Obedience

26 ‘Now you shall not make handcrafted objects for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up a distinctive stone in your land, to worship it; for I am the Lord your God. [2]You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My holy things: I am the Lord.

[3]‘If you walk in My ordinances and keep My commandments, and do them,[†] [4]then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. [5]Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. [6]War shall not pass through your land, and I will give peace in the land; and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; and I will utterly destroy the bad wild animals from the land. [7]You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by slaughter before you. [8]Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. [9]For I will look upon

you and make you fruitful, and multiply and establish My covenant with you. [10]You shall eat the old harvest of the past two years, and clear out the old because of the new. [11]I will establish My covenant among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. [12]I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. [13]I am the Lord your God, who brings you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their servants; I broke the bands of your yoke and made you walk with confidence.

Punishment for Disobedience

[14]‘Now if you do not obey Me, neither do all these ordinances, [15]but your soul disobeys them and despises My judgments, so as not to do all My commandments but to shatter My covenant, [16]I also will do thus to you: I will bring difficulty upon you, both the itch, the jaundice, the gangrenous eyes, and the withering away of your life. You shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. [17]I will set My face against you, and you shall fall before your enemies. Those who hate you shall pursue you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.

[18]‘Then after all this, if you do not obey Me, I will increase your punishment seven times more for your sins. [19]I will crush your excessive arrogance; I will make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. [20]Your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit. [21]Then if after this, you walk contrariwise and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins. [22]I will also send among you the wild animals of the land; and they will eat you, and utterly destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate.

[23]‘Then if by these things you are not corrected by Me, but walk contrary to Me, [24]then I also will walk in hostility to you, and I will strike you yet seven times for your sins. [25]I will also strike you with the sword, exacting the vengeance of the covenant; and you will flee for refuge to your cities. I will also send forth death among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of enemies. [26]When you are afflicted by want of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven; and they shall dole out your bread by measure, and you shall eat and still be hungry.

[27]‘Now if after all this, you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, [28]then I also will walk in hostility to you; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. [29]Then you shall eat the flesh of your sons and daughters. [30]I will make desolate your pillars, and will utterly destroy your wooden handcrafted objects; and I will put your carcasses on the carcasses of your idols, and My soul shall abhor you. [31]I will lay your cities waste, and bring your holy things to desolation; and I will not smell the odor of your sacrifices. [32]I will bring your land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. [33]I will scatter you among the Gentiles, and the sword shall suddenly destroy you. Then your land shall be a desert and your cities deserts. [34]Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, and you are in your enemies’ land. Thus the land shall rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. [35]As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your Sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

[36]‘Now as for those of you remaining in the land, I will send faintness into their heart in the land of their enemies; and the sound of the shaking leaf shall chase them. Then they shall flee as though fleeing from a battle, and shall fall when no one pursues. [37]Brother shall disregard brother as in warfare though no

one is in pursuit; and you will be unable to withstand your enemies. [38]You shall perish among the Gentiles, and the land of your enemies shall devour you. [39]Now those of you who are left shall be destroyed because of their sins, and waste away in their enemies’ land.

[40]‘But if they confess their sins and the sins of their fathers, that they transgressed and disregarded Me and walked contrary to Me, [41]and that I also have walked in hostility to them and destroyed them in the land of their enemies, then their uncircumcised heart will feel ashamed, and they will render satisfaction for their guilt. [42]Then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; and I will remember the land. [43]The land also shall be deserted by them; and the land will enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate because of them. Then they must take responsibility for their lawless acts, because they disregarded My judgments, and their soul abhorred My ordinances. [44]Yet for all that, when they were in the land of their enemies, I did not neglect them nor treat them with contempt, so as to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. [45]But I will remember their former covenant when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, in the sight of the Gentiles, to be their God: I am the Lord.’ ”

[46]These are the judgments, the ordinances, and the law which the Lord made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

Laws Concerning Gifts Dedicated to God

27 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Speak to the children of Is-rael, and say to them, ‘When a man vows a vow to the Lord equivalent to the value of his soul, [3]and if your valuation is of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old, his valuation shall be fifty didrachm of silver, according to the pure measure. [4]But if it is of a female, your valuation shall be thirty didrachm; [5]and if from five years old up to twenty years old, your valuation for a male shall be twenty didrachm, and for a female ten didrachm; [6]and if from a month old up to five years old, your valuation for a male shall be five didrachm of silver, and for a female, three didrachm of silver; [7]and if from sixty years old and above, if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen didrachm, and for a female ten didrachm. [8]But if he is too poor to pay your valuation, he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall set a value for him; according to the ability of him who vowed, the priest shall value him. [9]If they bring from the cattle a gift to the Lord, whoever gives from these to the Lord, his gift shall be holy. [10]He shall not change it, good for bad or bad for good; and if he changes it at all, cattle for cattle, then both it and that which is changed shall be holy. [11]But if it is any unclean animal which they do not offer as a gift to the Lord, he shall present the animal before the priest; [12]and the priest shall set a value for it, whether good or bad; and as the priest values it, so it shall stand. [13]But if he wants at all to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to his valuation. [14]And when a man sanctifies his house to be holy to the Lord, then the priest shall set a value for it, whether good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. [15]If he who sanctified his house wants to redeem it, he must add one-fifth of the silver of its valuation, and it shall be his. [16]Now if a man sanctifies part of the field of his possession to the Lord, then the valuation shall be according to the seed required for it: a cor of barley for fifty didrachm of silver. [17]If he sanctifies part of his field from the Year of Remission, according to his valuation it shall stand. [18]But if he sanctifies his field subsequently after the Jubilee, the priest shall reckon to him the silver due according to the years that remain till the Year of Remission, and it shall be deducted from his valuation. [19]And if he who sanctifies the field ever wishes to redeem it, he must add one-fifth of the silver to his valuation, and it shall belong to him. [20]But if he does not want to redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore; [21]but the field, when it is released in the Remission, shall be holy to the Lord, as a field set apart; it shall be the possession of the priest. [22]But if a man sanctifies to the Lord part of a field he bought which is not the field of his possession, [23]then the priest shall reckon to him its full assessment from the Year of Remission, and he shall pay its valuation on that day as holy to the Lord. [24]Then in the Year of Remission, the field shall return to the man from whom he bought it, to the one who owned the land as a possession. [25]Now all your valuations shall be according to the pure measures: twenty obols to the didrachm. [26]But the firstborn of your cattle, which shall be the Lord's firstborn, no man shall sanctify, whether a young calf or sheep; it is the Lord's. [27]Now if it is an unclean four-footed animal, he shall change it according to his valuation; and he shall add one-fifth to it, and it will be his. But if it is not redeemed, it shall be sold according to his valuation. [28]Nevertheless, any devoted thing a man may devote to the Lord of anything he has, man or animal, or part of the field of his possession, shall not be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord. [29]Furthermore, people devoted to the Lord shall not be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death. [30]Now all the tithe of the land, whether seed of the land or fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord. [31]If a man wants at all to redeem his tithe, he shall add one-fifth to it, and it will be his. [32]Now concerning the tithe of the oxen or the sheep, of whatever passes in the numbering under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord. [33]You shall not change good for bad; but if he changes it at all, both it and that which is changed shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.’ ”

[34]These are the commandments the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.

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The Book of Numbers

Author—Moses is the author of this fourth book of the Pentateuch (Dt 31:9). He kept a list of the stopping places on the journey from Egypt through the wilderness (Dt 33:2).

Date—After the Exodus from Egypt.

Major Theme—*God dwells among His people*, instructing, sustaining, and guiding them. He never abandons them, in spite of their disobedience. He is setting His chosen people apart from the ungodly nations that surround them.

Background—The journey from Egypt to the promised land was 40 years long. During that time the older people passed away, replaced by a new generation. Though under the able leadership of Moses, they continually grumbled against him. Even his own brother, Aaron, and his sister, Miriam, turned against him. Moses was preparing the Israelites for what they would encounter when they crossed over the Jordan to claim the land God promised them.

Outline

I. Preparation for the Journey from Sinai to Canaan (1:1–10:10)

  A. The first census (1:1–54)

  B. Position of the tribes in the camp and on the march (2:1–34)

  C. The census and duties of the Levites (3:1–4:49)

  D. Regulations of the Nazirites and the priestly blessing (5:1–6:26)

  E. The offerings of the leaders and consecration of priests (7:1–8:26)

  F. The supplementary Passover (9:1–14)

    - G. The fiery cloud and the silver trumpets (9:15–10:10)
- II. The Journey from Sinai to the Plains of Moab (10:11–22:1)
    - A. Departure (10:11–36)
    - B. Rebellion (11:1–35)
    - C. Miriam and Aaron rebel against Moses (12:1–16)
    - D. Twelve scouts (13:1–33)
    - E. The rebellion of priests, Levites, and people (14:1–17:28)
    - F. Duties and dues of the priests and Levites (18:1–19:22)
    - G. Final events at Kadesh (20:1–22:1)
- III. On the Plains of Moab (22:2–36:13)
    - A. Balak and Balaam (22:2–24:25)
    - B. Apostasy at Peor (25:1–18)
    - C. The second census (26:1–27:11)
    - D. Joshua succeeds Moses (27:12–30:17)
    - E. The holy war against Midian (31:1–54)
    - F. Settlement of two and a half tribes in Transjordan (32:1–42)
    - G. Forty stages on the journey (33:1–56)
    - H. Tribal boundaries; cities for the Levites (34:1–36:13)

First Census of Israel

1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai in the tabernacle of testimony, on the first day of the second month in the second year after they came out of the land of Egypt, saying,[†] [2]“Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, and according to their families by their fathers’ houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male[†] [3]from twenty years old and above—all who go out with the army of Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies. [4]With you there shall be each man according to the tribe of each ruler and their fathers’ houses. [5]These are the names of the men who shall stand with you: from Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; [6]from Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; [7]from Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; [8]from Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; [9]from Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; [10]from the sons of Joseph: from Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; [11]from Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; [12]from Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; [13]from Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran; [14]from Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; [15]from Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan.” [16]These were chosen from the congregation, rulers of their fathers’ tribes and chiliarchs in Israel.

[17]Then Moses and Aaron took these men who had been mentioned by name, [18]and they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month in the second year; and they registered their ancestry by families, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, every male according to their head count, [19]in the manner the Lord commanded Moses. So he numbered them in the Wilderness of Sinai.

[20]Now there were the children of Reuben, Israel's firstborn son, and their families according to their tribes by their fathers’ houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [21]Their census from the tribe of Reuben was forty-six thousand five hundred. [22]There were the children of Simeon, and their families according to their tribes by their fathers’ houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [23]Their census from the tribe of Simeon was fifty-nine thousand three hundred. [24]There were the children of Judah, and their families by their fathers’ houses, and according

to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [25]Their census from the tribe of Judah was seventy-four thousand six hundred. [26]There were the children of Issachar, and their families by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [27]Their census from the tribe of Issachar was fifty-four thousand four hundred. [28]There were the children of Zebulun, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [29]Their census from the tribe of Zebulun was fifty-seven thousand four hundred. [30]There were the children of Joseph: the children of Ephraim, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [31]Their census from the tribe of Ephraim was forty thousand five hundred; [32]and the children of Manasseh, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [33]Their census from the tribe of Manasseh was thirty-two thousand two hundred. [34]There were the children of Benjamin, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [35]Their census from the tribe of Benjamin was thirty-five thousand four hundred. [36]There were the children of Gad, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [37]Their census from the tribe of Gad was forty-five thousand six hundred fifty. [38]There were the children of Dan, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [39]Their census from the tribe of Dan was sixty two thousand seven hundred. [40]There were the children of Asher, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [41]Their census from the tribe of Asher was forty-one thousand five hundred. [42]There were the children of Naphtali, and their families by their fathers' houses, and according to the number of names by their head count, every male from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out with the army. [43]Their census from the tribe of Naphtali was fifty-three thousand four hundred. [44]This is the census taken by Moses and Aaron, along with the twelve rulers of Israel and their paternal households, each man according to his tribe. [45]So the entire census of the children of Israel, with their armies, and from twenty years old and above—all who were able to go out to war in Israel— [46]was six hundred three thousand five hundred fifty.

[47]But the Levites from their father's tribe were not numbered with the children of Israel,[†] [48]for the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [49]"See to it that the tribe of Levi is not numbered, nor take a census of them among the children of Israel; [50]but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall minister liturgically in the tabernacle and camp around it.[†] [51]When the tabernacle is to move, the Levites shall dismantle it; and when the tabernacle is to make camp, the Levites shall set it up. The foreigner who comes near, let him be put to death. [52]But the children of Israel shall make camp with their armies, each man according to his own rank, and each man according to his own regiment. [53]However, the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of testimony in the Lord's presence, so there may be

no sin among the children of Israel; and the Levites themselves shall guard the tabernacle of testimony."[†] [54]Thus the children of Israel did according to all the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

The Leadership and Tribes in Camp

2 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [2]"Let the children of Israel—each man according to his division and military standard—camp according to their fathers' houses, around and facing the tabernacle of testimony.[†] [3]Those camping first and on the east side shall be the division of Judah with their army; and the ruler of the children of Judah shall be Nahshon the son of Amminadab."[†] [4]His army was numbered at seventy-four thousand six hundred. [5]"Those camping next to Judah shall be the tribe of Issachar; and the ruler of the children of Issachar shall be Nethanel the son of Zuar." [6]His army was numbered at fifty-four thousand four hundred. [7]"Also camping next to Judah shall be the tribe of Zebulun; and the ruler of the children of Zebulun shall be Eliab the son of Helon." [8]His army was numbered at fifty-seven thousand four hundred. [9]"All those numbered in the armies from the camp of Judah were one hundred eighty-six thousand four hundred—these shall break camp first.

[10]"On the south side shall be the division of the camp of Reuben with their army; and the ruler of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur." [11]His army was numbered at forty-six thousand five hundred. [12]"Those camping next to Reuben shall be the tribe of Simeon; and the ruler of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai." [13]His army was numbered at fifty-nine thousand three hundred. [14]"Also camping next to Reuben shall be the tribe of Gad; and the ruler of the children of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel." [15]His army was numbered at forty-five thousand six hundred fifty. [16]"All those numbered in the armies from the camp of Reuben

were one hundred fifty-one thousand four hundred fifty—they shall be the second to break camp. [17]Then the tabernacle of testimony shall move out with the camp of the Levites in the middle of the camps; as they camp, so they shall break camp, each one next by regiment.

[18]“On the west side shall be the division of the camp of Ephraim with their army; and the ruler of the children of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud.” [19]His army was numbered at forty thousand five hundred. [20]“Those camping next to Ephraim shall be the tribe of Manasseh; and the ruler of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.” [21]His army was numbered at thirty-two thousand two hundred. [22]“Also camping next to Ephraim shall be the tribe of Benjamin; and the ruler of the children of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni.” [23]His army was numbered at thirty-five thousand four hundred. [24]“All those numbered in their armies from the camp of Ephraim were one hundred eight thousand one hundred—they shall be the third to break camp. [25]On the north side shall be the division of the camp of Dan with their army; and the ruler of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.” [26]His army was numbered at sixty-two thousand seven hundred. [27]“Those camping next to Dan shall be the tribe of Asher; and the ruler of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ocran.” [28]His army was numbered at forty-one thousand five hundred. [29]“Also camping next to Dan shall be the tribe of Naphtali; and the ruler of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan.” [30]His army was numbered at fifty-three thousand four hundred. [31]“All those numbered in the armies with Dan were one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred—they shall break camp last, with their divisions.”

[32]This numbering of the children of Israel was according to their fathers' houses. All the numbering of the camps with their armies was six hundred three thousand five hundred fifty. [33]But the Levites were not numbered with them, as the Lord commanded Moses. [34]Thus the children of Israel did all the Lord commanded Moses; so they camped according to their divisions. Thus they broke camp, each one by his family, according to their fathers' houses.

Sons of Aaron

3 Now these are the genealogies of Aaron and Moses when the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. [2]These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [3]These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests. [4]Nadab and Abihu had died before the Lord when they offered strange fire before the Lord in the Wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests with Aaron their father.

Levites Serve in the Tabernacle

[5]Again, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [6]"Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, so they may minister liturgically with him.[†] [7]They shall perform duties for him and for the children of Israel before the tabernacle of testimony, according to all the works of the tabernacle. [8]They shall also perform duties for all the furnishings of the tabernacle of testimony, and for all the children of Israel, according to all the works of the tabernacle. [9]Thus you shall assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons the priests; they are given entirely to Me from the children of Israel. [10]And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons over the tabernacle of testimony, and they shall guard their

priesthood and all the things related to the altar and within the veil; but the foreigner who touches these things shall be put to death.”

[11]Moreover, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [12]“Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. The Levites shall be a ransom from them; therefore, they shall be Mine, [13]because all the firstborn are Mine. On the day I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to cattle. They shall be Mine; I am the Lord.”

Census of the Levites

[14]Furthermore, the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying, [15]“Number the children of Levi by their fathers’ houses, by their tribes, and by their families; you shall number every male from a month old and above.” [16]So Moses and Aaron numbered them according to the voice of the Lord, in the manner the Lord commanded them. [17]These are the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. [18]These are the names of the sons of Gershon by their tribes: Libni and Shimei; [19]and the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel; [20]and the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the tribes of the Levites by their fathers’ houses.

[21]From Gershon came the tribe of the Libnites and the Shimites; these are the families of the Gershonites. [22]Their census, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above, was seven thousand five hundred. [23]The children of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle along the west side, [24]and the ruler of the father's house of the tribe of Gershon was Eliasaph

the son of Lael. [25]The charge of the children of Gershon in the tabernacle of testimony included the overall covering of the tabernacle and the screen for the door of the tabernacle of testimony, [26]and the curtains of the court, and the screen for the gate of the court by the tabernacle, and the rest of all its works.

[27]From Kohath came the tribes of the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites; these are the tribes of the Kohathites. [28]Their census, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above, was eight thousand six hundred, keeping charge of the holy things. [29]The tribes of the children of Kohath were to camp along the south side of the tabernacle, [30]and the ruler of the house of the families of the Kohathite tribes was Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. [31]Their charge included the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the holy place with which they ministered liturgically, the screen, and all their works. [32]Now the ruler over the rulers of the Levites was Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest. He was appointed to be in charge of those responsible for the holy things.

[33]From Merari came the tribe of the Mahlites and the tribe of the Mushites; these were the tribes of Merari. [34]Their census, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above, was six thousand five hundred, [35]and the ruler of the house of the families of the Merari tribe was Zuriel the son of Abihail. These were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. [36]The appointed duty of the children of Merari included the pillars of the tabernacle, and the bars, the columns, and the bases, and all their furnishings and works, [37]and the pillars of the court all around, with their bases, pegs, and cords.

[38]Those camped in front of the tabernacle of testimony on the east were Moses, Aaron, and his sons, performing the guard duties of the holy place on

behalf of the children of Israel; but the foreigner who touches these things shall be put to death.

[39]The entire census of the Levites whom Moses and Aaron numbered by the voice of the Lord, by their tribes, all the males from a month old and above, was twenty-two thousand.

Levites Dedicated, Replacing the Firstborn

[40]Again, the Lord said to Moses, “Take a census of all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above, and take the number of their names. [41]You shall take the Levites for Me—I am the Lord—instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn cattle among the children of Israel.” [42]So Moses took a census of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, in the manner the Lord commanded him. [43]Thus all the firstborn males, according to the number of names from a month old and above from the census, were twenty-two thousand two hundred seventy-three.

[44]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [45]“Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle. The Levites shall be Mine: I am the Lord. [46]But for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three firstborn from the children of Israel who are more in number than the Levites, [47]you shall take five shekels for each one individually; you shall take them according to the holy didrachm, the twenty obols of the shekel. [48]Then you shall give the silver with which the excess number of them is redeemed to Aaron and his sons.” [49]So Moses took the silver, the redemption of those who exceeded the number, for the redemption of the Levites. [50]From the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the silver, one

thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels, according to the holy shekel. [51]Then Moses gave their redemption money for those in excess to Aaron and his sons, according to the voice of the Lord, in the manner the Lord commanded Moses.

The Service of the Sons of Kohath

4 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,[†] [2]“Take a sum total of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their tribes and the houses of their families, [3]from twenty-five years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter liturgical service to do all the works in the tabernacle of testimony. [4]These are the works, the most holy things, of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of testimony: [5]When the camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall enter, and take down the overshadowing veil and cover the ark of the testimony with it.[†] [6]Then they shall put on it a blue leather covering; and on top of this they shall spread an entirely blue cloth, and then insert the carrying-poles. [7]On the table of presentation they shall spread a cloth all of purple and put on it the dishes, the censers, the cups, and the bowls for pouring the drink-offerings; and the perpetual loaves shall be on it.[†] [8]They shall spread over it a scarlet cloth; and they shall cover it with a blue leather covering and then insert its carrying-poles. [9]Then they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand of the light with its lamps, its wick-trimmers, its funnels, and all its oil vessels with which they minister liturgically. [10]Then they shall put it with all its vessels in a covering of blue leather, and put it on a carrying-pole. [11]Over the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth; and they shall cover it with a covering of blue leather and then insert its carrying-poles. [12]Then they shall take all the vessels for liturgical service with which they minister liturgically in the holy things, put them in a blue cloth, cover them with blue leather covering, and put them on carrying-poles. [13]Also they shall put the covering on the altar and spread a cloth entirely of purple over it. [14]They shall put on it all its vessels with which they minister liturgically there—the fire pans, the forks, the bowls, the cover, and all the vessels of the altar—and they shall spread on it a covering of blue leather and insert its carrying-poles. Then they shall spread on it a blue leather cover, and insert its carrying-poles. After this, they shall take a purple cloth to cover the laver and its base, and put them into a blue leather cover, and then put them on carrying-poles. [15]Then after Aaron and his sons finish covering the holy things and all the holy vessels, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall enter to carry them; but they shall not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things in the tabernacle of testimony the sons of Kohath are to carry: [16](the overseer is Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest) the oil for the light, the incense compound, the daily grain offering, the anointing oil, the oversight of all the tabernacle, and whatever is in it, in the holy place with all its works.” [17]Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [18]“Do not destroy the tribe of the Kohathite families from among the Levites; [19]but do this in regard to them, so they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them according to his transport duty. [20]But they shall not go in unexpectedly to watch the holy things, lest they die.”

Service of the Sons of Gershon

[21]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [22]“Also take a census of the sons of Gershon, by their fathers’ houses according to their tribes. [23]From twenty-five years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall take a census of them, all who enter to minister liturgically, to do its works in the tabernacle of testimony. [24]This is the liturgical service of the tribe of the Gershonites, in serving liturgically and in carrying: [25]They shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and

the tabernacle of testimony with its covering, the covering of blue leather over it, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of testimony, [26]the curtains of the court, which are around the tabernacle of testimony, and all the abundance of liturgical vessels, with which they minister liturgically: so shall they do. [27]Aaron and his sons shall assign all the liturgical service of the sons of the Gershonites, according to all their liturgical service and all the things to be carried by them. You shall assign them by name with all the matters to be carried by them. [28]This is the liturgical service of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of testimony, and their duties shall be under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Service of the Sons of Merari

[29]“As for the sons of Merari, you shall number them by their tribes and their fathers’ houses. [30]From twenty-five years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, everyone who enters the liturgical service to do the work of the tabernacle of testimony. [31]These things to be carried by them are their duties relative to all their works in the tabernacle of testimony: the capitals of the tabernacle, and its bars, pillars, bases, and the screen. They shall also carry the bases, the pillars, and the screen of the door of the tabernacle, [32]and the pillars around the court with their bases, and the pillars of the screen of the courtyard gate, and their bases, pegs, and cords, with all their vessels and liturgical things; and you shall assign them by name all the vessels they are responsible to carry. [33]This is the liturgical service of the tribe of the sons of Merari, in all their works for the tabernacle of testimony, under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.”

Census of the Levites

[34]Thus Moses, Aaron, and the rulers of the congregation took a census of the sons of the Kohathites by their tribes and their fathers' houses, [35]from twenty-five years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the liturgical service for work in the tabernacle of testimony. [36]Their numbering according to their tribes was two thousand seven hundred fifty. [37]This is the numbering of the tribe of the Kohathites, all who were serving liturgically in the tabernacle of testimony, whom Moses and Aaron numbered by the voice of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

[38]Those numbered of the sons of Gershon, by their tribes and their fathers' houses, [39]from twenty-five years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone entering the liturgical service to do the works in the tabernacle of testimony— [40]those numbered by their tribes and their fathers' houses, were two thousand six hundred thirty. [41]This was the census of the tribe of the sons of Gershon, everyone serving in the tabernacle of testimony, whom Moses and Aaron numbered by the voice of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

[42]Those numbered of the tribe of the sons of Merari, who were numbered by their tribes and their fathers' houses, [43]from twenty-five years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone entering the liturgical service for the works in the tabernacle of testimony— [44]those numbered by their tribes and their fathers' houses were three thousand two hundred. [45]This was the census of the tribe of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered by the voice of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

[46]All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses, Aaron, and the rulers of Israel numbered, by their tribes and their fathers' houses, [47]from twenty-five years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone entering for the task of works and the works of carrying the things in the tabernacle of testimony—

[48]those numbered were eight thousand five hundred eighty. [49]By the voice of the Lord by the hand of Moses they were numbered, each man according to his works and according to his task; thus were they numbered by him, in the manner the Lord commanded Moses.

The Unclean Are Isolated

5 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Command the children of Israel to put out of the camp every leper, everyone who has an involuntary discharge of semen, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse.[†] [3]You shall put out both male and female; you shall put them outside the camp, so they may not defile their camps, in the midst of which I dwell.” [4]So the children of Israel did so, and sent them outside the camp; as the Lord spoke to Moses, so the children of Israel did.

Confession and Restitution

[5]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [6]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘When a man or woman commits one of the sins that humans commit, and actually disregards a neighbor, that soul has committed a trespass. [7]Then he shall confess openly the sin he committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in the capital amount, plus one-fifth of it, and repay the one he wronged.[†] [8]But if the man has no close relative to make restitution on his behalf for the trespass, the restitution for the wrong shall go to the Lord for the priest, in addition to the ram of the atonement with which atonement is made for him. [9]Every offering that is sanctified among the children of Israel, which they bring to the Lord for the priest, shall be his. [10]So the sanctified offerings of each man shall be his; whatever any man gives the priest shall be his.’ ”

Unfaithful Wives

[11]Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [12]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘If any man's wife commits transgression and disregards and despises him, [13]and someone has sexual intercourse with her, and she conceals it from her husband and keeps it hidden, but she is defiled, and there was no witness against her, nor was she caught— [14]and if a spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he becomes jealous of his wife, who is defiled; or if a spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she is not defiled— [15]then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring the gift required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil on it, and put no frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of jealousy, an offering for remembering, for bringing sin to remembrance.

[16]‘Then the priest shall bring her near and set her before the Lord. [17]The priest shall take clean running water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust on the floor of the tabernacle of testimony and throw it into the water. [18]Then the priest shall stand the woman before the Lord, uncover the woman's head, and put the sacrifice for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy; and the priest shall have in his hand the water of conviction that brings a curse. [19]Then the priest shall put her under oath, and say to the woman, “If no man has lain with you, and if you have not committed transgression to be defiled while under your husband's jurisdiction, be innocent from this water of conviction that brings a curse. [20]But if you committed transgression and defiled yourself under your husband's jurisdiction, and some man other than your husband had sexual relations with you”— [21]then the priest shall put the woman under oath by the words of the oath of this curse; and the priest shall say to the woman, “the Lord make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the Lord makes your thigh rot and your belly swell; [22]and

may this water that causes this curse go into your stomach, and make your belly swell and your thigh rot.” Then the woman shall say, “May it be so.”

[23]‘Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and wipe them off into the water of conviction that brings a curse. [24]Then he shall give the woman a drink of this water of conviction that brings a curse, and it shall enter her. [25]Then the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, put the sacrifice before the Lord, and bring it to the altar; [26]and the priest shall take a handful of the sacrifice as its memorial portion, offer it on the altar, and afterward give the woman the water to drink. [27]So it shall be, if she is defiled but kept it hidden from her husband, then the water of conviction that brings a curse will enter her, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman will become a curse among her people. [28]But if the woman is not defiled, but is clean, then she shall be innocent and may conceive children.

[29]‘This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband's jurisdiction, transgresses and defiles herself, [30]or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, and he becomes jealous of his wife; then he shall stand the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute all this law upon her. [31]Then the man shall be innocent of guilt, but that woman shall bear her guilt.’ ”

Law Concerning Vows

6 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘When either a man or woman vows an extraordinary vow to sanctify himself as one of purity to the Lord,[†] [3]he shall separate himself from wine and intoxicants, and shall not drink any wine and vinegar made from wine, and any vinegar made from intoxicants; neither shall he drink anything made from grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. [4]All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin. [5]All the days of his vow of purification no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he vowed to the Lord; he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. [6]All the days of his vow to the Lord he shall not go near a dead body. [7]He shall not defile himself even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because the vow of his God is on his head. [8]All the days of his vow he shall be holy to the Lord. [9]But if anyone dies very suddenly near him on the spot, the head of his vow shall be defiled; and he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. [10]Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [11]Then the priest shall make one a sin offering and the other a whole burnt offering and make atonement for him, concerning which he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that day. [12]He shall sanctify to the Lord the days of his vow, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be null and void, because the head of his vow was defiled.

[13]‘Now this is the law of vowing: When the days of his vow are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the doors of the tabernacle of testimony. [14]Then he shall offer his gift to the Lord: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a whole burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, [15]a basket of unleavened bread of fine flour, prepared with oil, and unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offering. [16]Then the priest shall bring these things before the Lord and offer his sin offering and his whole burnt offering; [17]and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord, with the

basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer his grain offering and his drink offering. [18]Then the one vowing shall shave the head of his vow at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony; and he shall put his hair on the fire, which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. [19]Then the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened loaf from the basket, and one unleavened cake, and put these upon the hands of the one vowing after he has shaved the head of his vow; [20]and the priest shall bring these things as a deposit offering before the Lord; they are holy for the priest, together with the breast of the deposit offering and the thigh of the choice portion. After that, the one vowing may drink wine.’ [21]This is the law of the one vowing, who vows to the Lord his gift to the Lord concerning his vow; and the force of his vow is not limited to what he could afford regarding his vow, which he vows according to the law of purity.”

The Priest's Blessing

[22]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [23]“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them (My name shall be put on the children of Israel, and I the Lord shall bless them):

[24] “The Lord bless you and keep you;
[25] the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be merciful to you;
[26] the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” ’ ”

The Leaders’ Offerings

7 Now it came to pass, on the day Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed and sanctified it and all its vessels, and the altar and all its vessels; thus he anointed and sanctified these things. [2]Then the rulers of Israel, the twelve rulers of their fathers’ houses who were the rulers of the tribes and were in charge of the census, brought gifts.[†] [3]They brought their gifts before the

Lord: six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two of the rulers, and for each one a young bull; and they presented them before the tabernacle. [4]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [5]“Receive these things from them so they may be used in doing the works of liturgical service in the tabernacle of testimony; and you shall give these things to the Levites, to every man according to his liturgical service.” [6]Thus Moses took the carts and the oxen and gave these things to the Levites. [7]Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their liturgical service; [8]and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their liturgical service, under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. [9]But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because their liturgical service had to do with the holy place, which they carried on their shoulders.

The Order of the Offerings

[10]Now the rulers brought their gifts for the dedication of the altar on the day it was anointed; so the rulers brought their gift before the altar. [11]For the Lord said to Moses, “They shall bring their gifts, one ruler each day, for the dedication of the altar.”

[12]So the one who brought his gift on the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, ruler of the tribe of Judah. [13]The gift he brought was one silver bowl; its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [14]one gold censer of ten shekels full of incense; [15]one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [16]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [17]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five

male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

[18]On the second day, Nethanel the son of Zuar, ruler of Issachar, brought his gift. [19]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [20]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [21]one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [22]and one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [23]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

[24]On the third day, Eliab the son of Helon, ruler of the children of Zebulun, brought his gift. [25]The gift he brought was one silver bowl; its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [26]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [27]one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [28]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [29]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Eliab the son of Helon.

[30]On the fourth day, Elizur the son of Shedeur, ruler of the children of Reuben, brought his gift. [31]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [32]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [33]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering;

[34]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [35]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

[36]On the fifth day, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, ruler of the children of Simeon, brought his gift. [37]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [38]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [39]one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [40]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [41]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

[42]On the sixth day, Eliasaph the son of Deuel, ruler of the children of Gad, brought his gift. [43]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [44]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [45]one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [46]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [47]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

[48]On the seventh day, Elishama the son of Ammihud, ruler of the children of Ephraim, brought his gift. [49]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for

a grain offering; [50]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [51]one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [52]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [53]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

[54]On the eighth day, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, ruler of the children of Manasseh, brought his gift. [55]The gift he brought was one silver bowl; its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [56]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [57]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [58]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [59]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

[60]On the ninth day, Abidan the son of Gideoni, ruler of the children of Benjamin, brought his gift. [61]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [62]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [63]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [64]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [65]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

[66]On the tenth day, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, ruler of the children of Dan, brought his gift. [67]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [68]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [69]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [70]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [71]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

[72]On the eleventh day, Pagiel the son of Ocran, ruler of the children of Asher, brought his gift. [73]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [74]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [75]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [76]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [77]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the gift of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

[78]On the twelfth day, Ahira the son of Enan, ruler of the children of Naphtali, brought his gift. [79]The gift he brought was one silver bowl, its weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver cup of seventy shekels, according to the holy shekel, both of them full of fine flour prepared with oil for a grain offering; [80]one gold censer of ten shekels, full of incense; [81]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year for a whole burnt offering; [82]one male kid from the goats for a sin offering; [83]and for the sacrifice of peace

offerings: two young heifers, five rams, five male goats, and five ewe lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

[84]This was the dedication gift for the altar from the rulers of Israel, the day it was anointed: twelve silver bowls, twelve silver cups, and twelve gold censers. [85]Each silver bowl weighed one hundred and thirty shekels and each cup seventy shekels. All the silver of the vessels weighed two thousand four hundred shekels, according to the holy shekel. [86]The twelve gold censers, full of incense, weighed ten shekels apiece, according to the holy shekel; all the gold of the censers weighed one hundred and twenty shekels. [87]All the oxen for the whole burnt offering were twelve young bulls, the rams twelve, the male lambs in their first year twelve, with their grain offering, and the male kids from the goats for a sin offering twelve. [88]So all the oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings were twenty-four young heifers, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, and the ewe lambs in their first year sixty. This was the dedication gift for the altar after it was consecrated and anointed. [89]Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of testimony to speak with Him, he heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him from above the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.

Arranging the Lamps

8 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Speak to Aaron, and say to him, ‘When you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.’ ” [3]Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, and lit its lamps, as the Lord commanded Moses. [4]Now this construction of the lampstand was solid gold; its stem and corolla were solid throughout, according to the form the Lord showed Moses; thus he made the lampstand.

Cleansing and Consecrating the Levites

[5]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [6]“Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and consecrate them.[†] [7]Thus you shall do to them for their purification: Sprinkle water of purification on them, and a razor shall shave all their body; and they shall wash their clothes; then they shall be clean. [8]After this, they shall take a young bull from the oxen, with its grain offering of fine flour prepared with oil, and you shall take a young bull one year old from the oxen for a sin offering. [9]Then you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of testimony, and gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel. [10]So you shall bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall put their hands on the Levites; [11]and Aaron shall set apart the Levites before the Lord as a restitution offering from among the children of Israel, so they may do the works of the Lord. [12]Then the Levites shall put their hands on the heads of the young bulls, and you shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a whole burnt offering to the Lord, to make atonement for them.

[13]“Then you shall stand the Levites before the Lord and before Aaron and his sons, and offer them as a restitution offering to the Lord. [14]Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and they shall be Mine. [15]After that, the Levites shall go in to do the works of the tabernacle of testimony. Thus you shall cleanse them and offer them as a restitution offering before the Lord. [16]For they are Mine as a restitution offering from among the children of Israel; I have taken them for Myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn from all the children of Israel. [17]For all the firstborn among the children of Israel are Mine, from man to cattle; on the day I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them to Myself. [18]I have taken the

Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel. [19]I have also given the Levites as a restitution offering to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the works of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of testimony, and to make atonement for the children of Israel. Thus there shall be no drawing near of the holy things among the children of Israel.”

[20]So Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel did to the Levites as the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites; thus the children of Israel did to them. [21]Then the Levites sanctified themselves and washed their clothes; and Aaron presented them before the Lord as a restitution offering; and Aaron made atonement for them to consecrate them. [22]After that, the Levites went in to minister in their liturgical service in the tabernacle of testimony before Aaron and his sons; as the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

[23]Moreover, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [24]“This is what pertains to the Levites: From twenty-five years old and above they shall enter to work in the tabernacle of testimony; [25]and at the age of fifty years they shall cease doing liturgical service. They shall work no more. [26]His brother shall minister liturgically in the tabernacle of testimony, to do guard duties, but he shall not do the works. Thus you shall do to the Levites regarding their duties.”

The Second Passover

9 Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the first month of the second year, after they came out of the land of Egypt, saying, [2]“Speak, and let the children of Israel keep Pascha at its appointed time. [3]On the fourteenth day of this month, at eventide, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to its rule and practice you shall keep it.”[†] [†] [4]So Moses told the children of

Israel to keep Pascha. [5]Thus they kept Pascha beginning on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the Sinai Desert; as the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.

[6]Now there were men who were unclean on account of a dead man, and so were unable to keep Pascha on that day; therefore, they came before Moses and Aaron that day.[†] [7]So those men said to him, “We are unclean on account of a dead man. Why then are we prevented from presenting the Lord's gift at its appointed time among the children of Israel?” [8]Moses then said to them, “Stand here, and I will hear what the Lord commands concerning you.” [9]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [10]“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘If anyone of you becomes unclean on account of a dead man, or is on a distant journey, or is among your families, he shall keep the Lord's Pascha. [11]On the fourteenth day of the second month, at eventide, they shall keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. [12]They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the rule of Pascha, they shall keep it. [13]But the man who is clean and is not on a distant journey, but fails to keep Pascha, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from among his people, because he did not bring his gift to the Lord at its appointed time; that man shall bear his guilt. [14]But if a resident alien dwells with you in your land, he shall also keep the Lord's Pascha, according to the rule and regulation of Pascha; you shall have one rule, both for the resident alien and the native of the land.’ ”

The Cloud and Fire

[15]Now on the day the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the house of the testimony; from eventide until morning it was on the tabernacle, like the form of fire. [16]So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the form of fire by night. [17]Whenever the cloud ascended from the

tabernacle, after that the children of Israel broke camp; and in the place where the cloud stood, there the children of Israel made camp. [18]At the command of the Lord the children of Israel would make camp, and at the command of the Lord they would break camp. All the days the cloud overshadowed the tabernacle, the children of Israel would encamp. [19]Even when the cloud would continue many days on the tabernacle, the children of Israel would obey God's orders, and not break camp. [20]So it would be, whenever the cloud would overshadow the tabernacle a number of days, at the voice of the Lord they would encamp, and at the command of the Lord they would break camp. [21]So it would be, when the cloud wou.ld continue from eventide until morning, and the cloud would ascend in the morning, then they would break camp; and if the cloud would continue a day or a night,[†] [22]or a month, or an abundance of days overshadowing it, the children of Israel would encamp and not break camp. [23]At the command of the Lord they would break camp, and at the command of the Lord by the hand of Moses they would obey the Lord's orders.

The Two Silver Trumpets

10 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them to call the congregation and to break the camps. [3]You shall blow the trumpets among them, and all the congregation shall be gathered at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [4]But if they blow one trumpet, all the rulers, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. [5]Then you shall blow the trumpet signal, and the camps camping on the east side shall break camp. [6]Again, you shall blow the trumpet signal a second time, and the camps camping on the south side shall break camp; and you shall blow the trumpet signal a third time, and the camps camping on the west side shall break camp; and you shall blow the trumpet signal a fourth time, and the camps camping on the north side shall break camp. They shall blow the trumpet signal when they break camp. [7]Then when you have gathered the congregation together, you shall blow the trumpet, but not the trumpet signal. [8]The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be your custom perpetually throughout your generations. [9]If you should go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, you shall sound the trumpet signal, and you will be remembered before the Lord, and you will be saved from your enemies. [10]Also in the days of your gladness, and in your feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your whole burnt offerings and the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a remembrance for you before your God: I am the Lord your God.”[†]

Moving On from the Camp

[11]Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud ascended from the tabernacle of the testimony. [12]Then the children of Israel broke camp with their household goods in the Sinai Desert; and the cloud stood in the Desert of Paran. [13]So the first ones broke camp at the Lord's voice by the hand of Moses. [14]The division of the camp of the children of Judah was the first to break camp with their army; and over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. [15]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. [16]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon. [17]Then the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari took down the tabernacle and broke camp, carrying the tabernacle. [18]After this, the division of the camp of Reuben broke camp with their army; and over their army was Elizur the son of Shedeur. [19]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. [20]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph

the son of Deuel. [21]Then the sons of Kohath broke camp, carrying the holy things (and they would set up the tabernacle, before their arrival). [22]After this, the division of the camp of the children of Ephraim broke camp with their army; and over their army was Elishama the son of Ammihud. [23]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. [24]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni. [25]Then the division of the camp of the children of Dan (the last of all the camps with their army) broke camp; and over their army was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. [26]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher was Pagiel the son of Ocran. [27]Over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan. [28]These were the armies of the children of Israel, and they broke camp with their army.

[29]Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, “We are breaking camp for the place the Lord spoke of, saying, ‘I will give it to you.’ Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the Lord spoke good things concerning Israel.”[†] [30]However, he said to him, “I will not go, but I will depart to my land and to my relatives.” [31]But he replied, “Do not leave us, because you were with us in the desert, and you would be an elder among us. [32]It would also be, if you should go with us, that the good things whatsoever the Lord will do for us, the same we will do for you.”

[33]So they broke camp at the mountain of the Lord for a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.[†] [34]Now it came to pass that when they broke camp with the ark, Moses said, “Rise up, O Lord! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let all who hate You flee.” [35]And when the ark rested,

he said, “Return, O Lord, to the many thousands in Israel!” [36]The cloud also overshadowed them by day when they broke camp.

The People Grumble

11 Now the people were grumbling evilly before the Lord, and the Lord heard them and was provoked to anger. So the fire of the Lord burned among them and utterly destroyed part of the camp.[†] [2]Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the Lord; and the fire was quenched. [3]So he called the name of the place Burning, because fire from the Lord burned among them.

[4]Now the mixed multitude among them hungered exceedingly; and sitting down, the children of Israel were also weeping, and said, “Who will give us meat to eat?[†] [5]We remember the fish we ate freely in Egypt, and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; [6]but now our soul is dried up; there is nothing before our eyes except this manna.” [7]Now the manna is like coriander seed, and its form is like the form of ice pellets. [8]The people would go about and gather it, and grind it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, then cook it in pots, and make cakes of it; and its flavor was like the taste of a pastry prepared with oil and honey. [9]And when the dew descended on the camp in the night, the manna descended upon it.

Seventy Elders

[10]Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their tribes, everyone at his door; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. [11]So Moses said to the Lord, “Why have You maltreated Your servant? Why have I not found grace in Your sight, that You lay the wrath of this people on me? [12]Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing

child,' to the land You swore to their fathers? [13]Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' [14]I am not able to bear this people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. [15]If You treat me like this, kill me here and now—if I find mercy in Your sight—and do not let me see my maltreatment."

[16]So the Lord said to Moses, "Gather to Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you yourself know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of testimony, so they may stand there with you.[†] [17]Then I will descend and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit upon you and put Him upon them; and they shall help you bear the wrath of the people, that you yourself may not bear them alone.[†] [18]Then you shall say to the people, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept before the Lord, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt." Therefore the Lord will give you meat to eat, and you shall eat. [19]You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, [20]but for a whole month you shall eat, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you disobeyed the Lord, who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?" ' "

[21]Then Moses said, "The people I am among are six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You are saying, 'I will give them meat, so they may eat for a whole month.' [22]Shall sheep and oxen be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?"

[23]Then the Lord said to Moses, "Is the Lord's hand unable to provide for them? Now you shall know whether or not My word will overtake you." [24]So

Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. [25]Then the Lord descended in the cloud and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit upon him, and put Him upon the seventy men of the elders; and when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, although they never did so again. [26]But two men remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other, Medad, and the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those registered, but had not come to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. [27]So a young man ran and told Moses, and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” [28]Then Joshua the son of Nun, who was near Moses, one of his choice men, answered and said, “Lord Moses, forbid them.” [29]Then Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people might be prophets, when the Lord would put His Spirit upon them.” [30]So Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel.

The Quail

[31]Now a wind went out from the Lord and brought birds from the sea that migrate together with quail, and cast them upon the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. [32]Then the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the birds (he who gathered least gathered ten cors); and they spread the meat out to dry for themselves all around the camp. [33]But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the Lord's anger was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague. [34]So he called the name of that place Graves of Lust, because there they buried the people who lusted. [35]Then the people broke camp to go to Hazeroth, and they camped at Hazeroth.

Miriam Is Disciplined

12 Now Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he married; for he married an Ethiopian woman. [2]So they said, “Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” But the Lord heard it. [3](Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men on the face of the earth.) [4]Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of testimony.” So the three came out to the tabernacle of testimony. [5]Then the Lord descended in the pillar of cloud, and stood upon the door of the tabernacle of testimony; and He called Aaron and Miriam, and both went forward.[†] [6]Then He said, “Hear now My words: Should a prophet of yours belong to the Lord, I would make Myself known to him in a vision; I would speak to him in a dream. [7]Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. [8]I speak with him face to face, even in visible form, and not in obscure sayings; and he saw the Lord's glory. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?” [9]So the Lord's anger was aroused against them, and He departed.

[10]But when the cloud departed from the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.[†] [11]So Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not lay an extra charge of sin on us, because we were ignorant, and did not know we sinned. [12]Do not let her be as one dead, like a miscarriage with its flesh half consumed.” [13]So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “Heal her, I beg you, O God.” [14]Then the Lord said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward let her enter.” [15]So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not break camp till Miriam was cleansed.

[16]After this, the people broke camp at Hazeroth, and camped in the Desert of Paran.

The Spies

13 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a ruler among them.” [3]So Moses sent them from the Desert of Paran at the Lord's voice, and all the men were rulers of the children of Israel. [4]Now these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur;[†] [5]from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; [6]from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; [7]from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; [8]from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; [9]from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; [10]from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; [11]from the tribe of Joseph, that is, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; [12]from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; [13]from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; [14]from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; [15]from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. [16]These are the names of the men Moses sent to spy out the land. Now Moses called Hoshea, the son of Nun, Joshua.

[17]Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them, “Go up to this desert, and go up to the mountain;[†] [18]and you will see the land, and the people who dwell upon it. What are they? Are they strong or weak, few or many? [19]Also, what is the land they dwell in? Is it good or bad? Then too, what about the cities they inhabit? Are they walled or unwalled? [20]Then again, what about the ground? Is it fertile or neglected? Are there trees on it? Persevere, and you shall receive some of the fruits of the land.” Now the days were the days of

spring, the forerunner of the grapes. [21]So they went up and spied out the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath. [22]Then they went up through the desert and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) [23]Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol and surveyed it, and cut down a branch there with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs. [24]The place was called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster the sons of Israel cut down there.

[25]Then they returned from spying out the land after forty days. [26]Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Desert of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.[†] [27]Then they told him and said, “We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. [28]Nevertheless, the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. [29]The Amalekites dwell in the land toward the south; the Hittites, the Evites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.” [30]Then Caleb quieted the people towards Moses, and said to him, “No, but let us go up at once and take possession of it, for we are well able to overcome them.” [31]But the men who went up with him said, “We are not going up, for we are unable to go up against them, because they are stronger than we.” [32]So they instilled a terror for the land which they spied out among the children of Israel, saying, “The land through which we went as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people we saw in it are men of great stature.

[33]There we saw the giants; and we seemed like grasshoppers to them, but so we actually were.”

The People Murmur

14 Now all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.[†] [2]All the children of Israel were murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “Would we had died in the land of Egypt, or in this desert. [3]Why did the Lord bring us to this land to fall in war? Our wives and children shall be plundered. It is better for us to return to Egypt.” [4]So they said to one another, “Let us select a ruler and return to Egypt.”

[5]Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the congregation of the children of Israel. [6]But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who spied out the land, tore their clothes;[†] [7]and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, “The land we passed through to spy out is an extremely good land. [8]Since the Lord chooses us, He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land that flows with milk and honey.’ [9]But do not apostatize from the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our food; their time has come and gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.” [10]Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud upon the tabernacle of testimony before all the children of Israel.

Moses Intercedes

[11]Then the Lord said to Moses, “How long will these people provoke Me? How long will they not believe Me, with all the signs I performed among them?[†] [12]I will strike them with death and destroy them, and I will make you and

your father's house into a great and more numerous nation than this one.”[†] [13]Then Moses said to the Lord, “But the Egyptians will hear it for by Your might You brought these people up from among them,[†] [14]and all the inhabitants of this land heard that You are the Lord among these people, who is seen plainly with the eyes, O Lord; and Your cloud stands upon them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. [15]Now You would wipe out this people as one man, and the nations that heard Your name will speak, saying, [16]‘Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore to give them, therefore He spread them out in the desert.’ [17]Now then, let Your strength, O Lord, be exalted in the manner You spoke, saying, [18]‘The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth, taking away lawlessness, wrongdoings, and sins; but He would not cleanse the guilty by repaying the sins of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.’ [19]Remit the sin of this people according to Your great mercy, as You were merciful to them from Egypt even until now.”

[20]Again the Lord said to Moses, “I am merciful to them according to your word; [21]but truly, as I live, and My name lives, and all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord;[†] [22]assuredly, all the men who are seeing My glory and signs, which I did in Egypt and in this desert, and put Me to the test now these ten times, and did not heed My voice,[†] [23]they certainly shall not see the land I swore to their fathers; but their children who are here with Me and do not know good nor evil, every inexperienced youngster, to these I shall give the land; however, all those who provoked Me shall not see it. [24]Now My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and followed Me fully, I will bring him into the land where he went, and his seed shall inherit it. [25]Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow, turn and depart for the desert by the way of the Red Sea.”

The Murmurers Are Punished

26Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who murmur against Me? I heard the murmuring the children of Israel make against Me. 28Say to them, ‘As I live, says the Lord, surely in the manner you spoke in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29your bodies shall fall in this desert, and all your census, who were numbered from twenty years old and above, as many as murmured against Me; 30and you shall not enter the land upon which I stretched out My hand that you might settle upon it, except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun; 31but your children, whom you said would be plunder, I will bring them into the land, and they shall inherit the land from which you apostatized. 32But your bodies shall fall in this desert; 33however, your sons shall be shepherds in the desert forty years, and shall bear your fornication until your bodies are consumed in the desert. 34According to the number of the days you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My fierce anger. 35I the Lord have spoken; surely I will do so to all this evil congregation gathered together against Me. In this desert they shall be utterly destroyed, and there they shall die.’ ” 36Now the men Moses sent to spy out the land, and who when they returned murmured against him to the congregation by bringing an evil report of the land, 37those very men who spoke evil words against the land died by the plague before the Lord. 38But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

The First Invasion Fails

39Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned exceedingly.† 40But they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, “Here we are, and we will go up to the place the Lord spoke about, for we sinned.” [41]So Moses said, “Now why do you transgress the word of the Lord? For this will not be easy for you. [42]Do not go up, for the Lord is not with you, and you shall fall before the face of your enemies. [43]For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from and disobeyed the Lord, the Lord will not be among you.” [44]But they rebelled and went up to the mountaintop; nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses moved from the camp. [45]Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and turned them back and cut them down as far as Hormah. Then they returned to the camp.

Laws Surrounding Grain and Drink Offerings

15 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you, [3]and you make a whole burnt offering to the Lord, a whole burnt offering or a sacrifice, to make a great vow or a freewill offering, or in your feasts, to make a sweet aroma to the Lord, from the oxen or the sheep,[†] [4]then he who brings his gifts to the Lord shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour prepared with one-fourth of a hin of oil; [5]and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall offer with the whole burnt offering or the sacrifice, and for each male lamb you shall offer the same amounts, a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the Lord. [6]Or for a ram, when you offer it either as a whole burnt offering or a sacrifice, you shall offer with it a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour prepared with one-third of a hin of oil; [7]and as a drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a sweet aroma to the Lord. [8]Now if from the oxen you offer a whole burnt offering or a sacrifice, to make a great vow or a peace offering to the Lord, [9]then one shall offer with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, prepared with half a hin of oil; [10]and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin of wine as a burnt offering, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

[11]‘Thus you shall do for each young bull, for each ram, or for each male lamb from the sheep or the goats. [12]According to the number you offer, so you shall do with each one according to their number. [13]All native-born shall do these things in this manner in presenting a burnt offering for a sweet aroma to the Lord. [14]Now if a resident alien should come in among you in your land, or whoever may be among you in your generations, and he would offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the Lord, thus in the manner you offer, so shall the congregation offer to the Lord. [15]There shall be one law for you and for the resident alien who dwells among you, a perpetual law throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the resident alien be before the Lord. [16]There shall be one law and one ordinance for you and for the resident alien who dwells among you.’ ”

[17]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [18]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘When you come into the land into which I bring you, [19]then it will be, when you eat from the bread of the land, that you shall take away the choice portion for the Lord. [20]You shall separate the choice portion of your bread as the firstfruits of the dough, as a choice portion from the threshing floor; thus you shall separate it [21]as the firstfruits of your dough, and you shall give to the Lord the choice portion throughout your generations.

Laws for Unintentional Sin

[22]‘Now when you utterly fail, and do not do all these commandments the Lord spoke to Moses— [23]as the Lord ordered you by the hand of Moses, from the day the Lord ordered you and onward throughout your generations— [24]then it will be, if it happened involuntarily out of sight of the congregation, the whole congregation shall offer one young bull without blemish from the oxen for a whole burnt offering, for a sweet aroma to the Lord, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male kid from the goats for a sin offering. [25]So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be remitted them, for it was involuntary; they shall bring their gift, a burnt offering to the Lord, as their sin offering before the Lord concerning their involuntary sin. [26]So it shall be remitted for the whole congregation of the children of Israel and the resident alien who dwells among them, because all the people did it involuntarily. [27]Now if a soul should sin involuntarily, he shall bring a female goat in its first year for a sin offering. [28]So the priest shall make atonement for the soul who acts involuntarily and sins involuntarily before the Lord, to make atonement for him. [29]As for anyone who may have acted involuntarily, there shall be one law both for the native-born among the children of Israel and for the resident alien who dwells among them.

[30]‘But the soul who may do something with a hand of arrogance, whether he is native-born or a resident alien, that one is provoking God; and he shall be utterly destroyed from among His people. [31]Because he despised the word of the Lord and broke His commandments, that soul shall be destroyed; his guilt shall be upon him.’ ”

Penalty for Sabbath-breaking

[32]Now while the children of Israel were in the desert, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. [33]So those who found him gathering wood on the Sabbath day brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel. [34]They put him under guard because they had not decided what to do with him. [35]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Let the man be surely put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones.” [36]So, as the Lord ordered Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones.

Tassels on Vestments

[37]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [38]“Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them to make tassels for themselves on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. [39]Then it shall be, you shall have the tassels; and you shall look upon these, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them; and you shall not turn aside after your minds and your eyes by which you prostitute yourselves, [40]and may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. [41]I am the Lord your God, who brings you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God.”

Rebellion against Moses and Aaron

16 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, spoke;[†] [2]and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred fifty men of the children of Israel, rulers of the congregation, chosen members of the council and men of note. [3]They gathered together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “Let it be understood by you that all the congregation are holy ones, and the Lord is in them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?”[†]

[4]So when Moses heard this, he fell on his face; [5]and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, “God examines and knows those who are His and who are His holy ones, and He brings them to Himself; and those He chooses for Himself He brings to Himself. [6]Do this: Take censers, Korah and all his company; [7]put fire and incense in them before the Lord tomorrow, and it shall be that the man the Lord chooses, this is the holy one; and let this be sufficient for you, O sons of Levi.”

[8]Then Moses said to Korah, “Hear me, you sons of Levi: [9]Is this a small thing to you, that the God of Israel separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you near to Himself, to serve the liturgies of the Lord's tabernacle and to stand before the congregation to serve them; [10]and that He brought you near, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi with you? Are you seeking the priesthood also? [11]Thus you and all your company brought together are against God. Furthermore, who is Aaron, that you murmur against him?” [12]Then Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, “We will not come up. [13]Is this a small thing, that you brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert, and set yourself over us as a ruler? [14]Even if you should bring us into a land flowing with milk and honey, and give us an inheritance of field and vineyards, you would put out the eyes of these men. We will not come up.”

[15]Then Moses was very heavy of spirit and said to the Lord, “May You pay no attention to their sacrifice. I have not taken a desirable object from any of them, nor have I harmed any of them.” [16]Then Moses said to Korah, “Sanctify your company and be ready tomorrow before the Lord, you and they, as well as

Aaron. [17]Let each take his censer, put incense in it, and bring his censer before the Lord, two hundred fifty censers; both you and Aaron, each with his censer.” [18]So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony with Moses and Aaron. [19]Thus Korah gathered all his company against them at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation.

[20]The Lord then spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [21]“Separate yourselves from among this congregation, and I will utterly destroy them at once.” [22]Then they fell on their faces, and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, if one man sinned, will the Lord's anger be on all the congregation?”[†] [23]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [24]“Speak to the congregation, saying, ‘Withdraw from around Korah's company.’ ” [25]Moses then rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel went together with him. [26]Then he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Get away from the tents of these callous men. Touch nothing of theirs, lest you perish together with them in all their sin.” [27]So they got away from around Korah's tent; and Dathan and Abiram went and stood at the doors of their tents, with their wives, their children, and their little ones. [28]Then Moses said, “By this you shall know the Lord sent me to do all these works, and they are not from myself. [29]If these men should die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common visitation of all men, then the Lord has not sent me. [30]But the Lord will show by a sign from heaven that opening its mouth the earth shall swallow them down with their houses, their tents, and everything belonging to them; and they shall go down alive into Hades. Then you shall know these men provoked the Lord.”

[31]Now as he finished speaking all these words, the ground split apart under them, [32]and the earth opened and swallowed them down with their houses, and

all the men with Korah, and all their tents. [33]So they and all with them went down alive into Hades, and the earth covered them; and they perished from the midst of the congregation. [34]Then all Israel around them fled at their cry, for they were saying, “Lest the earth also swallow us down.” [35]Fire also came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred fifty men offering incense.

The Copper Censers

17 Now the Lord spoke to Moses [2]and to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, “Take up the copper censers out of the midst of those burned up, and scatter the strange fire there, so as to sanctify[†] [3]the censers of those sinners—even the censers of the men who sinned at the cost of their lives—and make them into beaten plates, as a covering for the altar; so they might be brought before the Lord and sanctified, to become a sign to the children of Israel.”[†] [4]And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest took the copper censers which those burned up had brought, and they added these as a covering for the altar, [5]as a memorial to the children of Israel, that no outsider who is not of Aaron's seed should put incense before the Lord and be like Korah and his insurrection, as the Lord said by the hand of Moses.

[6]The next day the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You killed the people of the Lord.”[†] [7]Now it happened, when the congregation regrouped itself against Moses and Aaron, they hastened to the tabernacle of testimony; and the cloud covered it, and the Lord's glory was seen. [8]Then Moses and Aaron entered the front of the tabernacle of testimony, [9]and the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [10]“Get away from the midst of this congregation, and I will utterly destroy them at once.” So they fell on their faces. [11]Then Moses said to Aaron, “Take the censer, put fire in it from the altar, throw incense on it, and carry it quickly to the camp, and make atonement for

them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord's face, and is beginning to strike the people.” [12]So Aaron took it as Moses told him, and ran into the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he threw in the incense, and made atonement for the people; [13]and he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague ceased. [14]Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died because of Korah. [15]Then Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of testimony, and the plague ceased.

Aaron's Rod That Budded

[16]After this, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [17]“Speak to the children of Israel and get a rod from them, a rod from each of their fathers’ houses, from all their rulers according to their fathers’ houses—twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod. [18]You shall also write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi, for there is one rod that shall be given according to the tribe of their fathers’ houses. [19]Then you shall put them in the tabernacle of testimony before the ark of the testimony, where I will be known to you. [20]So it shall be, the man I choose, his rod will blossom; thus I will remove the murmurings of the children of Israel which they murmur against you.”

[21]Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their rulers gave him a rod apiece, for each ruler according to their fathers’ houses, twelve rods; and Aaron's rod was in the midst of their rods. [22]Moses then put the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of testimony. [23]Now it came to pass on the next day, Moses entered the tabernacle of testimony, and behold, Aaron's rod for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds, and had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. [24]Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod. [25]The Lord

then said to Moses, “Bring Aaron's rod back before the testimonies, as a sign to the sons of the disobedient, and let their murmurings cease from before Me, lest they die.” [26]Thus did Moses; as the Lord ordered him, so he did.

[27]So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, “Behold, we are utterly destroyed, we are ruined, we are consumed. [28]Whoever touches the tabernacle of the Lord dies. Shall we utterly die?”

Duties of Priests and Levites

18 Now the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying, “You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the sins of the holy things, and you and your sons with you shall bear the sins of your priesthood. [2]You shall also bring your brethren, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, to yourself, and they shall be joined and added to you, and minister liturgically with you and your sons with you before the tabernacle of testimony. [3]They shall perform your guard duties and the duties of the tabernacle, but they shall not come near the holy vessels and the altar, lest they die—they and you also. [4]They shall be joined to you and perform the guard duties of the tabernacle of testimony, and all the liturgical services of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you. [5]Thus you shall perform the guard duties of the holy things and the altar, so there may be no more wrath on the children of Israel. [6]Behold, I took your brethren the Levites from the midst of the children of Israel, as a gift given to the Lord, to minister liturgically in the tabernacle of testimony. [7]Therefore you and your sons with you shall take care of your priesthood according to all the manner of the altar and within the veil; and you shall minister liturgically as the gift of your priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.”

Offerings to Support the Priests

[8]Again the Lord spoke to Aaron, “I give you charge over the firstfruits from all the things sanctified to Me by the children of Israel; and I give these things to you and your sons with you as your share. This shall be an eternal ordinance. [9]So let this be yours from the sanctified holy things of the offerings: from all their gifts, from all their sacrifices, from all their trespass offerings, and from all their sin offerings, and from whatever they return to Me—let all these holy things belong to you and your sons. [10]In a most holy place you shall eat these things; every male shall eat these things. It shall be holy to you.

[11]“This also shall be a firstfruit for you from their gifts—from all the deposit offerings of the children of Israel—I give these things to you, and to your sons and daughters with you. This shall be an eternal ordinance. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat these things. [12]The firstfruits of oil, wine, and grain, all their firstfruits, whatever they may offer to the Lord, I give these things to you. [13]Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land which they bring to the Lord shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat these things. [14]Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

[15]“Everything that first opens the womb of all flesh which they bring to the Lord, from man to cattle, shall be yours; nevertheless, the firstborn of men you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean cattle you shall redeem. [16]Now as for its redemption at the age of one month, the rate is five shekels according to the holy shekel (that is, twenty obols). [17]But the firstborn of young bulls, the firstborn of sheep, or the firstborn of goats you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall pour out their blood towards the altar, and offer their fat as a burnt offering for a sweet aroma to the Lord. [18]Their meat shall also be yours, just as the breast of the deposit offering and the right shoulder are yours. [19]Every choice part of the holy things which the children of Israel offer to the Lord, I

give to you and your sons and daughters with you as an eternal ordinance; it is an eternal covenant of salt before the Lord with you and your seed with you."

Tithes to Support the Levites

[20]Moreover the Lord said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel. [21]Behold, I give the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for their liturgical service, whatever they minister liturgically in the tabernacle of testimony. [22]Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of testimony, lest they bear guilt and die. [23]But the Levite himself shall minister liturgically in the tabernacle of testimony, and they shall bear their sins; it shall be an eternal ordinance throughout your generations, that in the midst of the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. [24]For the tithes of the children of Israel, whatever they may offer as a choice portion to the Lord, I give to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I say to them, 'In the midst of the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.' "

The Levites' Tithe

[25]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [26]"Speak thus to the Levites and say to them, 'If you receive from the children of Israel the tithe which I give you from them as your inheritance, then you shall remove from it the Lord's choice portion, a tenth of the tithe. [27]Now your choice portions shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor and as the choice portion of the winepress. [28]Thus you shall then remove the Lord's choice portions from all your tithes, whatever you might receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give from them the Lord's choice portion to Aaron the priest. [29]From all your gifts you shall remove the choice portion for the Lord, or from all the

firstfruits that which is sanctified from it.’ [30]Therefore you shall say to them, ‘When you remove the firstfruit from it, then all the rest shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress. [31]You may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward for your liturgical service in the tabernacle of testimony. [32]Now you shall bear no guilt because of it, for you removed the firstfruit from it. But you shall not defile the holy things of the children of Israel, lest you die.’ ”

Laws Concerning Purification

19 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,[†] [2]“This is the injunction of the law, whatever the Lord ordered, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and let them bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and upon which a yoke has never been placed. [3]You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and he shall take it outside the camp to a clean place, and they shall slaughter it before him; [4]and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood and sprinkle it seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of testimony. [5]Then it shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, and its blood with its dung shall be burned. [6]The priest shall then take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the red heifer. [7]After this, the priest shall wash his clothes, bathe his body in water, and come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. [8]Also the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe his body in water, and be unclean until evening. [9]Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the red heifer and put them away outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept in reserve for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of sprinkling; it is for purification.[†] [10]Then the one who gathers the ashes of the red heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It shall be an eternal ordinance to the children of Israel and to the resident alien who dwells among them.

[11]‘He who touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean seven days. [12]He shall cleanse himself on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. [13]Whoever touches the dead body of any person who has died and does not purify himself defiles the tabernacle of the Lord. That soul shall be destroyed from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of sprinkling was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him.

[14]‘Now this is the law if a man dies in a house: Everyone who comes into the house and whoever is in the house shall be unclean seven days; [15]and every open vessel which has no cover fastened on it is unclean. [16]Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died a natural death, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. [17]So for the unclean, they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt offering of purification, put them in a vessel, and pour running water on them. [18]Then a clean man shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the house and upon all the vessels and the souls who were there, and upon the one who touched the human bone, or the one slain by the sword, or the one who died a natural death, or the grave. [19]The clean shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and he shall be unclean until evening. [20]But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from among the congregation, because he defiled the holy things of the Lord, and the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; he is unclean. [21]This shall be an eternal ordinance for you: He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening; [22]and whatever the unclean one touches shall be unclean; and the soul who touches it shall be unclean until evening.’ ”

Contention at Kadesh

20 Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Desert
of Sin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam
died and was buried there.[†] [2]But there was no water for the congregation; so
they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. [3]So the people scoffed at
Moses and spoke, saying, “Would we had died in the destruction of our brethren
before the Lord. [4]Why have you brought up the Lord's congregation into this
desert to kill us and our cattle? [5]Why did you also bring us up out of Egypt, to
bring us to this evil place?—a place where nothing is sown, neither figs nor
vines nor pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink.” [6]So Moses and Aaron
went from the presence of the congregation to the door of the tabernacle of
testimony and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to them.

[7]The Lord then spoke to Moses, saying, [8]“Take the rod; and you and your
brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before them,
and it will give its waters; thus you shall bring them water out of the rock, and
give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” [9]So Moses took the rod from
before the Lord as the Lord ordered him. [10]Then Moses and Aaron gathered the
congregation together before the rock; and he said to them, “Hear me, you
disobedient ones. Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” [11]Moses then
lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out
abundantly, and the congregation and their cattle drank.[†] [12]But the Lord spoke
to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to sanctify Me before
the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the
land I am giving them.” [13]This was the Water of Contention, because the
children of Israel scoffed before the Lord, and He was sanctified among them.[†]

Rejection at Edom

[14]Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying, “Thus says your brother Israel, ‘You know all the hardship that befell us, [15]how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. [16]But we cried out to the Lord; and the Lord heard our voice, and sent His Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city just outside your borders.[†] [17]Let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we pass through your borders.’ ” [18]Then Edom said to him, “You shall not pass through me, lest I come out against you in war.” [19]So the children of Israel said to him, “We would go along the mountainous area, but if I or my cattle should drink any of your water, I would pay you. But the matter is nothing; let us pass along the mountainous area.” [20]But he replied, “You shall not pass through me.” So Edom came out against him with a heavily armed multitude and with a strong hand. [21]Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his borders; and Israel turned away from him.

The Death of Aaron

[22]So the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. [23]Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the borders of the land of Edom, saying, [24]“Let Aaron be added to his people, for he shall not enter the land I am giving to the children of Israel, because you provoked Me at the Water of Controversy. [25]Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor before all the congregation; [26]and strip Aaron of his robe, and put it on Eleazar his son; and let Aaron die

there and be added to his people.” [27]So Moses did as the Lord ordered, and took him up to Mount Hor before all the congregation. [28]Then Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain, and afterward Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.[†] [29]Now all the congregation saw Aaron was dead, and all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

Defeating the Canaanites

21 Now the Canaanite king of Arad, who was dwelling in the desert, heard the news—for Israel came by way of Atharim—therefore, he made war against Israel; and they carried off captives from them as booty. [2]Then Israel made a vow to the Lord, and said, “If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, I will anathematize him and his cities.” [3]So the Lord listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites; and they anathematized him and his cities. Therefore, they called the name of that place Anathema.

The Copper Serpent

[4]Then they departed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea; and they went around the land of Edom, and the people became discouraged on the way. [5]So the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to kill us in the desert? For there is no bread nor water, and our soul is weary of this worthless bread.” [6]So the Lord sent venomous serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the children of Israel died. [7]Then the people came to Moses, and were saying, “We sinned, for we spoke against the Lord and against you; therefore, pray to the Lord, and let Him take away the serpent from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. [8]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a serpent for yourself and put it on a signal pole; and it shall be, if a serpent should bite someone, when the one bitten looks at it, he shall live.” [9]So Moses made a copper serpent and put it on a signal pole; and it happened, when a serpent bit anyone, and he looked at the copper serpent, he lived.[†]

From Mount Hor to Moab

[10]After this the children of Israel broke camp and camped in Oboth. From there they broke camp and camped on the other side of the Ar Oboth. [11]Then they broke camp at Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, which is on the other side in the desert, that is, over against Moab, toward the sunrise. [12]From there they broke camp and camped in the Valley of Zered. [13]From there they broke camp and camped on the other side of the Arnon, in the desert which runs along the border of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. [14]Therefore it is said in the book:

“The War of the Lord:

He set on fire Zoob and the brooks of the Arnon,

[15] And He established the brooks

For Er to inhabit near the borders of Moab.”

[16]Then from there they went to the Well, which is the well where the Lord said to Moses, “Gather the people together, and I will give them water to drink.” [17]Then Israel sang this song about the well:

“Begin the song—

[18] As for the well, rulers dug it;

Kings of nations hewed it in stone,

In their kingly rule, when they were the lords.”

Then from the Well they went to Mattanah, [19]and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, [20]and from Bamoth to the valley, that is, the plain of Moab, which, from the top of the quarried rock, looks out over against the desert.

Defeat of King Sihon and King Og

[21]Then Moses sent ambassadors to Sihon king of the Amorites with peaceful words, saying, [22]“Let us pass through your land. We will journey on the road, and not turn aside either into a field or a vineyard; we will not drink water from your well. We will journey on the King's Highway until we pass beyond your borders.” [23]But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his borders. So Sihon gathered all his people together and went out to engage Israel in battle in the desert; so he came to Jahaz and engaged Israel in battle. [24]Then Israel struck him with slaughter by the sword and gained dominion over his land, from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for Jazer is the border of the sons of Ammon. [25]So Israel took all these cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its villages. [26]For Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who fought against the former king of Moab and took all his land from Aroer to the Arnon. [27]Therefore those who speak in riddles say:

TYPOLOGY

Typology is the interpretation of certain historical events occurring in the Old Testament as “types” that prefigure events to be fulfilled through the Incarnation of the Son of God, and in His life and ministry as confirmed in the New Testament. In each case, the type—the first event—is linked to its corresponding future event, called the “antitype.” It is a relationship that begins with a promise and ends with a fulfillment in Christ.

St. John Chrysostom explains, “The types, like patterns, anticipated and sketched out beforehand the dispensations [the order of things] which would be accomplished under the new covenant.” Types are in action what prophecy is in words: through them both, truths about Christ, His Mother, the Church, the Sacraments, and the Kingdom of Heaven are revealed.

THE OLD TESTAMENT, LOOKING FORWARD

Typology was the primary lens used by the Church through which the Old Testament was read and interpreted. St. Irenaeus writes concerning the Old Testament, “If anyone, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling. . . . The treasure hidden in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and prophecies.” Christ indeed came to fulfill in reality what had been in the Old Testament but “a shadow of the good things to come” (Heb 10:1). Jesus told His apostles, “All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me” (Lk 24:44, 45; see also 24:27; Jn 5:38, 46).

Sometimes Old Testament prophecies refer to past events as types—for example, the reference in Psalm 109:4 to Melchizedek, and in Jeremiah 38:31–34 to the Old Covenant. Yet it is the New Testament which confirms typology as the key to understanding the Old Testament. This is evident in the famous exclamation by St. John the Baptist when Jesus approached him at the Jordan: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29). Here John not only is asserting that Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy (Is 53:7), but he is also making the first recorded public declaration linking the Person of Jesus with an Old Testament event—the sacrifice of the lamb at Passover (Ex 12:1–11; see also 1Co 5:7; 1Pt 1:18, 19). The ultimate sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God was also foreshadowed in type by Abraham’s offering of his son, Isaac (Gn 22:1–14).

THE NEW TESTAMENT, LOOKING BACK

In the Gospels, Christ sometimes refers to Old Testament events that typologically pointed forward to Himself, such as the serpent in the wilderness (Nm 21:4–9; Jn 3:14, 15), the manna in the wilderness (Ex 16:11–36; Jn 6:30–35, 47–51), and Jonah’s three days and nights in the belly of the great fish (Jon 2:1–11; Mt 12:39, 40). Saints Paul and Peter, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also reveal truths found in Old Testament types, such as Adam/Christ (Gn 2:7–9, 15–17; 1Co 15:20–22), Melchizedek/Christ (Gn 14:18–20; Heb 6:19, 20) and Noah and the Flood/Baptism (Gn 7:1—8:19; 1Pt 3:20, 21).

Typological revelation further plays an important role in the hymns of the Church. For example:

> The bush on the mountain that was not consumed by fire (Ex 3:1–6), and the Chaldean furnace that brought refreshment as the dew (Dan 3:19–50), plainly prefigured thee, O Bride of God. For in a material womb, unconsumed thou hast received the divine and immaterial Fire (Matins, Nativity of the Theotokos).

With the Old Testament looking forward to the New through types, theophanies, and prophecies, and the New, in antitypes and fulfillment, pointing back to the Old, the essential unity of the two Testaments within one comprehensive Testament is revealed. As St. Maximus observes, “The Old and New Testaments together form a single mystery.”

“Come to Heshbon,

So the city of Sihon may be built and made ready.

[28] For fire went out from Heshbon,

A flame from the city of Sihon;

It consumed as far as Moab,

And swallowed up the pillars of the Arnon.

[29] Woe to you, Moab! You were destroyed,

O people of Chemosh!

Their sons were sold to be kept alive,

And their daughters are captives to Sihon king of the Amorites.

[30] Their seed shall perish from Heshbon to Dibon,

And their women again stirred up fire over Moab.”

[31]Now Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites. [32]Then Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took it and its villages, and cast out the Amorites dwelling there. [33]After this, they turned and went up the road to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan and all his people came to meet them in battle at Edrei. [34]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon.” [35]So they struck him, his sons, and all his people until there was no survivor left him; and they inherited their land.

Balak Seeks Out Balaam

22 Now the children of Israel broke camp and camped west of Moab, by the Jordan across from Jericho. [2]So when Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel did to the Amorites, [3]and Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people, because they were many, and Moab was irritated because of the children of Israel, [4]then Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this congregation will lick up everything around us, as a young bull licks up the grass of the field.” Now Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. [5]Then he sent ambassadors to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the river in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, “Look, a people came from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth and are settling next to me. [6]Therefore, come at once, and curse this people for me, for they are stronger than we. If we would be able to strike some of them, then I could drive them out of the land, for I know he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

[7]So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with their divinations in their hand; and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. [8]Then he said to them, “Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back to you whatever words the Lord may speak to me.” So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. [9]God then came to Balaam and said to him, “Who are these men with you?” [10]So Balaam said to God, “Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent to me, saying, [11]‘Look, a people came out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth and are settling next to me. Therefore, come at once, and curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to strike them and drive them from the land.’ ” [12]Then God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them; neither shall you curse the people, for they are blessed.” [13]So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the rulers of Balak, “Return to your lord, for God is not allowing me to go with you.” [14]Therefore, the rulers of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, “Balaam is unwilling to come with us.”

[15]Balak yet again sent rulers, more numerous and more honorable than these. [16]When they came to Balaam, they said to him, “Thus says Balak the

son of Zippor, ‘I beg of you not to hesitate in coming to me; [17]for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say. Therefore come and curse this people for me.’ ” [18]Then Balaam answered and said to the rulers of Balak, “Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord God, to make it little or great in my mind. [19]Now therefore, stay here tonight, so I may know what more the Lord will say to me.”

Balaam and His Donkey

[20]Thus God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If these men are present to summon you, rise and follow them; but the word I speak to you—that you shall do.” [21]So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the rulers of Moab. [22]Then God was very angry because he went, and the Angel of God stationed Himself to divert him from his purpose. Now he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.[†] [23]When the donkey saw the Angel of God standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, the donkey turned aside out of the way, and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey with his staff to turn her back onto the road. [24]Then the Angel of God stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. [25]Now when the donkey saw the Angel of God, she pushed herself against the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot; so he struck her again. [26]Then the Angel of God went and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. [27]So when the donkey saw the Angel of God, she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam became angry, and struck the donkey with his staff. [†]

[28]Then God opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you struck me this third time?”

[29]Balaam then said to the donkey, “Because you abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!” [30]So the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey, on which you rode from your youth to this very day? Did I ever show such utter disregard for you?” He replied, “No.”

[31]Then God opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed and worshiped. [32]The Angel of God then said to him, “Why did you strike your donkey a third time? Behold, I came out as your adversary, because your way was not acceptable before Me. [33]So when the donkey saw Me, she turned aside from Me this third time. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would have killed you by now, and let her live.” [34]Then Balaam said to the Angel of the Lord, “I sinned, for I did not know You met me as an adversary on the road. Now therefore, if my way is not acceptable to You, I will turn back.” [35]The Angel of God then said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but only the word I may speak to you, this you must be careful to speak.” So Balaam went with the rulers of Balak.

Balak Receives Balaam

[36]Now when Balak heard Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the borders of the Arnon, the boundaries of his territory. [37]Then Balak said to Balaam, “Did I not earnestly send to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not actually able to honor you?” [38]Balaam then said to Balak, “Look, I did come to you. Shall I now be able

to say anything? Whatever word God may put in my mouth, this I must speak.” [39]So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to unwalled encampments. [40]Then Balak sacrificed sheep and young bulls, and he sent some to Balaam and to the rulers with him.

Balaam's First Prophecy

[41]When morning came, Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the pillar of Baal; and he showed him part of the people from there.

23 Now Balaam said to Balak, “Build seven altars for me here, and prepare for me here seven young bulls and seven rams.” [2]So Balak did just as Balaam had spoken, and he offered a young bull and a ram on each altar. [3]Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stand alongside your sacrifice, and I will go; perhaps God will reveal Himself to me in a meeting, and I will tell you whatever word He shows me.” So Balak stood alongside his sacrifice, and Balaam went on a direct road to inquire of God. [4]Thus God revealed Himself to Balaam, and Balaam said to Him, “I prepared seven altars, and offered on each altar a young bull and a ram.” [5]Then God put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, “Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak.”[†] [6]So he returned to him, and there he was, standing alongside his burnt offerings, he and all the rulers of Moab with him. [7]Then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his parable and said:

“Balak the king of Moab summoned me from Mesopotamia,

From the mountains of the east, saying,

Come, curse Jacob for me, and come,

Call down a curse upon Israel.[†]

[8] How shall I curse whom the Lord did not curse?

Or how shall I call down a curse upon whom God did not curse?

[9] For from the top of the mountains I see him,

And from the hills I envision him.

Behold, the people shall dwell alone,

And they shall not be reckoned among the nations.

[10] Who can examine accurately the seed of Jacob,

And number the tribes of Israel?

May my soul die with the souls of the righteous,

And may my seed be as their seed."[†]

[11]But Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I summoned you to curse my enemies, and look, you have blessed them bountifully." [12]Then Balaam said to Balak, "Should I not be careful to speak whatever God may put into my mouth?"

Balaam's Second Prophecy

[13]So Balak said to him, "Yet come with me to another place, from which vantage points you may not see him. You will see only a part, but not all, of him; then curse him for me from there." [14]Then he took him along to a lookout point over the land, upon the summit of a hewn rock, and built seven altars there; and he offered a young bull and a ram on each altar. [15]Balaam then said to Balak, "Stand alongside your sacrifice, while I go and enquire of God." [16]Then God met Balaam and put a word in his mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." [17]So he returned to him, and there he was, standing alongside his whole burnt offering, and all the rulers of Moab were with him. Balak then said to him, "What did the Lord say?" [18]Then he took up his parable and said:

“Rise up, Balak, and hear.

Give ear as a witness, son of Zippor.

[19] God is not like a man, to be deceived,

Nor like a son of man, to be threatened.

Would He, having spoken, not act?

Or shall He speak, and not stand by it?

[20] Behold, I receive to bless,

And I shall bless, and not reverse it.

[21] There shall be no trouble in Jacob,

Nor shall distress be seen in Israel,

For the Lord his God is with him,

And the glorious acts of rulers are in him.

[22] God brings them out of Egypt,

Like the glory of the unicorn for him.

[23] For there is no portent in Jacob,

Nor any divination in Israel.

In due time it will be told to Jacob

And Israel what God will accomplish.

[24] Behold, a people like a lion's cub will rise up

And will exult like a lion.

It shall not lie down until it eats the prey

And drinks the blood of the slain.”

[25]Then Balak said to Balaam, “Neither curse him with curses for me, nor actually bless him.” [26]So Balaam answered and said to Balak, “Did I not tell you, saying, ‘The word God may speak, that I shall do’?”

Balaam's Third Prophecy

[27]Then Balak said to Balaam, “Come, I will take you along to another place, if it will please God to curse him for me from there.” [28]So Balak took Balaam along to the top of Peor, which extends into the desert. [29]Then Balaam said to Balak, “Build seven altars for me here, and prepare for me here seven young bulls and seven rams.” [30]So Balak did as Balaam told him, and he offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

24 Now when Balaam saw it was good before the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go as he was accustomed to do, to seek and find omens; but he turned and set his face toward the desert. [2]Then Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.[†] [3]Then he took up his parable and said:

“Balaam the son of Beor declares;

The man who truly sees declares;

[4] The one who hears the sayings of God declares;

The one who saw the vision of God in a dream,

A revelation seen by him:

[5] How beautiful are your dwellings, O Jacob,

Your tents, O Israel.

[6] Like wooded valleys offering shade,

And like gardens by the rivers,

Like tents the Lord pitched,

Like cedars beside the waters.

[7] A Man shall come forth from his seed,

And He shall rule many nations;

And His kingdom shall be more exalted than Gog,

And His kingdom shall increase.[†]

[8] God led Him out of Egypt,

And He has the glorious appearance of a unicorn.

He shall consume the nations of his enemies

And deprive them of their strength.

He shall shoot the enemy with His missiles.

[9] He lies down and rests like a lion,

And like a lion's cub, who shall rouse Him?

Those who bless You are blessed,

And those who curse You are cursed.”[†]

[10]Then Balak was angry with Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, “I summoned you to curse my enemy, and look, you actually blessed him for a third time. [11]Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would honor you, but in fact, the Lord deprived you of glory.” [12]So Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not also tell your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, [13]‘If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the Lord's word, to do good or evil of my own will. Whatever the Lord may say, this I shall speak’? [14]So now, indeed, I am going to my place. Come, I will counsel you as to what this people will do to your people in the latter days.”

Balaam's Fourth Prophecy

[15]So he took up his parable and said:

“Balaam the son of Beor declares;

The man who truly sees declares;

[16] The one who hears the sayings of God declares;

And the one who knows the knowledge of the Most High, And who saw the vision of God in a dream, a revelation seen by him:

17 I will show Him, but not now;

I bless Him, but He is not near.

A Star shall rise out of Jacob;

And a Man shall rise out of Israel.

He shall break in pieces the rulers of Moab

And plunder all the sons of Seth.[†]

18 Edom shall be His inheritance,

And also His enemy shall be His inheritance;

But Israel acts with strength.

19 He shall rise up out of Jacob,

And destroy the survivors of the city.”

20Then seeing Amalek, he took up his parable and said:

“Amalek was first of the nations,

But their seed shall perish.”

21Then seeing the Kenites, he took up his parable and said:

“Your dwelling is strong;

And if you should put your nest in a rock,

22 And become dwellings of craftiness for Beor,

Nevertheless the Assyrians shall take you captive.”

23Then seeing Og, he took up his parable and said:

“Oh! Oh! Who shall live whenever God may bring these things to pass?

24 Now these things shall come to pass from the hand of the Kittians,

And they shall also maltreat Asshur and the Hebrews,

But they themselves with one accord shall perish.”

[25]So Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; Balak also went to his own place.[†]

Israel's Sin at Moab

25 Now Israel remained in Sattin, and the people were defiled by committing fornication with the daughters of Moab.[†] [2]They invited them to the sacrifices of their idols; and the people ate their sacrifices and worshiped their idols. [3]So Israel consecrated themselves to Baal of Peor; and the Lord was very angry with Israel. [4]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Take all the rulers of the people and make a public example of them for the Lord, that the anger of the Lord's wrath may be turned away from Israel.” [5]So Moses said to the tribes of Israel, “Each one of you kill any member of his household who was consecrated to Baal of Peor.”

[6]Now behold, a man of the children of Israel came and brought his brother to a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and all the congregation of the children of Israel; and they were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. [7]Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he rose from among the congregation; and taking a spear in his hand,[†] [8]he went after the man of Israel into the chambers and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her womb. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. [9]But those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

[10]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [11]“Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, stopped My wrath from among the children of Israel when he was zealous with My zeal among them. So I did not utterly

destroy the children of Israel in My zeal. [12]Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; [13]and there shall be to him and his seed after him a covenant of an eternal priesthood; because he was zealous for his God and made atonement for the children of Israel.’ ” [14]Now the name of the man of Israel who was struck down together with the Midianite woman was Zimri the son of Salu, the ruler of a house of a Simeonite family. [15]The name of the Midianite woman who was struck down was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, the ruler of the nation of Ommoth, of the house of a Midianite family.

[16]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [17]“Be at enmity with the Midianites and strike them; [18]for they themselves are at enmity with you in their deceit, inasmuch as they dealt treacherously with you in the matter of Peor and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a ruler of Midian, their sister, who was struck down in the day of the plague because of Peor.”

The Second Census of Israel

26 Now it came to pass after the plague that the Lord spoke to Moses and Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saying, [2]“Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers’ houses, all able to go to war in Israel.” [3]So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the Araboth of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying, [4]“Take a census from twenty years old and above, in the manner the Lord commanded Moses.” Now the sons of Israel who came out of Egypt were:

[5]Reuben the firstborn of Israel. The sons of Reuben were Enoch and the tribe of Enochites; Pallu and the tribe of the Palluites; [6]Hezron and the tribe

of the Hezronites; Carmi and the tribe of the Carmiites. [7]These are the tribes of Reuben, and their census was forty-three thousand seven hundred thirty. [8]Now the son of Pallu was Eliab. [9]The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These were the ones chosen by the congregation to form a coalition against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, in their revolt against the Lord; [10]and the earth opening its mouth swallowed them and Korah in the death of his company, when fire devoured two hundred fifty men; and they became a sign. [11]But the sons of Korah did not die.

[12]The sons of Simeon and the tribe of the sons of Simeon were: Nemuel and the tribe of the Nemuelites; and Jamin and the tribe of the Jaminites; and Jachin and the tribe of the Jachinites; [13]and Zerah and the tribe of the Zerahites; and Shaul, the tribe of the Shaulites. [14]These are the tribes of the Simeonites, and their census was twenty-two thousand two hundred.

[15]The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. [16]After these, Judah's sons according to their tribes were Shelah and the tribe of the Shelahites; and Perez and the tribe of the Perezites; and Zerah and the tribe of the Zerahites. [17]Now the sons of Perez were Hezron and the tribe of the Hezronites; and Hamul and the tribe of the Hamulites. [18]These are the tribes of Judah according to their census: seventy-six thousand five hundred.

[19]The sons of Issachar according to their tribes were: Tola and the tribe of the Tolaites; and Puah and the tribe of the Puahites; [20]and Jashub and the tribe of the Jashubites; and Shimron and the tribe of the Shimronites. [21]These are the tribes of Issachar from their census: sixty-four thousand three hundred.

[22]The sons of Zebulun according to their tribes were: Sered and the tribe of the Seredites; and Elon and the tribe of the Elonites; and Jahleel and the tribe of the Jahleelites. [23]These are the tribes of Zebulun from their census: sixty thousand five hundred.

[24]The sons of Gad according to their tribes were Zephon and the tribe of the Zephonites; and Haggi and the tribe of the Haggiites; and Shuni and the tribe of the Shuniites; [25]and Ozni and the tribe of the Ozniites; and Addi and the tribe of the Addiites; [26]and Arod and the tribe of the Arodites; and Areli and the tribe of the Areliites. [27]These are the tribes of the sons of Gad from their census: forty thousand five hundred.

[28]The sons of Asher according to their tribes were Jimna and the tribe of the Jimnaites; Jesui and the tribe of the Jesuiites; and Beriah and the tribe of the Beriahites; [29]and Heber and the tribe of the Heberites; and Malchiel and the tribe of the Malchielites. [30]Now the name of Asher's daughter was Sara. [31]These are the tribes of Asher from their census: fifty-three thousand four hundred.

[32]The sons of Joseph according to their tribes were Manasseh and Ephraim. [33]The son of Manasseh was Machir and the tribe of the Machirites; and Machir begot Gilead and by Gilead the tribe of the Gileadites. [34]Now these are the sons of Gilead: Jeezer and the tribe of the Jeezerites; and Helek and the family of the Helekites; [35]and Asriel and the tribe of the Asrielites; and Shechem and the tribe of the Shechemites; [36]and Shemida and the tribe of the Shemi-daites; and Hepher and the tribe of the Hepherites. [37]Now Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of

the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. [38]These are the tribes of Manasseh from their census: fifty-two thousand seven hundred.

[39]Now these are the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah and the tribe of the Shuthelahites; and Tahan and the tribe of the Tahanites. [40]Now these are the sons of Shuthelah: Eran and the tribe of the Eranites. [41]These are the tribes of the of sons of Ephraim from their census: thirty-two thousand five hundred. These tribes are the sons of Joseph according to their tribes.

[42]The sons of Benjamin according to their tribes were: Bela and the tribe of the Belaites; and Ashbel and the tribe of the Ashbelites; and Ahiram and the family of the Ahiramites; [43]and Shupham and the tribe of the Shuphamites. [44]Now the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: Ard and the tribe of the Ardites; and Naaman and the tribe of the Naamanites. [45]These are the sons of Benjamin according to their tribes from their census: forty-five thousand six hundred.

[46]This is the son of Dan according to his tribe: Shuham and the tribe of the Shuha-mites. This is the tribe of Dan according to Shuham's tribe. [47]The entire tribe of the Shuhamites from their census was sixty-four thousand four hundred.

[48]The sons of Naphtali according to their tribes were: Jahzeel and the tribe of the Jahzeelites; and Guni and the tribe of the Guniites; [49]and Jezer and the tribe of the Jezerites; and Shillem and the family of the Shillemites. [50]These are the tribes of Naphtali from their census: forty-five thousand four hundred.

[51]This is the census of the sons of Israel: six hundred one thousand seven hundred thirty.

[52]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [53]“To these the land shall be divided as an inheritance based on the number of names. [54]To a large tribe you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance based on its census. [55]But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. [56]By allotment their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller.”

[57]Now the sons of Levi according to their tribes were: Gershon and the tribe of the Gershonites; and Kohath and the tribe of the Kohathites; and Merari and the tribe of the Merariites. [58]These are the tribes of the sons of Levi: the tribe of the Libniites, the tribe of the Hebronites, the tribe of the Korahites, and the tribe of the Mushites. Now Kohath begot Amram. [59]The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. [60]To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. [61]But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord in the Sinai Desert. [62]Now based on their census they numbered twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; for a census was not taken of them among the other sons of Israel, because there was no allotment given to them among the sons of Israel.

[63]This is the census of Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in Araboth of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho. [64]But among these, there was not a man numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest

when they took a census of the sons of Israel in the Sinai Desert.[†] [65]For the Lord said of them, “They shall surely die in the desert.” So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

Laws of Inheritance

27 Now came the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. [2]So they stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the rulers and all the congregation by the door of the tabernacle of testimony, saying, [3]“Our father died in the desert; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the Lord, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin, and had no sons. [4]Do not let the name of our father be wiped out from among his tribe, because he had no son. Give us a possession among our father's brothers.” [5]So Moses brought their case before the Lord.[†] [6]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [7]“The daughters of Zelophehad speak correctly; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and assign the allotment of their father to them. [8]Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘If a man dies and has no son, you shall assign his inheritance to his daughter. [9]But if he has no daughter, you shall give the inheritance to his brother. [10]But if he has no brothers, you shall give his inheritance to his father's brother. [11]But if his father has no brothers, you shall give his inheritance to the relative closest to him in his tribe; and he shall inherit his possessions.’ ” So this shall be an ordinance of judgment to the children of Israel, as the Lord ordered Moses.

Joshua Succeeds Moses

[12]Now the Lord said to Moses, “Go up into the mountain beyond the Jordan (this is Mount Nebo), and see the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel for a possession.[†] [13]Then you shall see it and be added to your people, even you, as Aaron your brother was added on Mount Hor, [14]because you transgressed My word in the Desert of Sin, when the congregation was failing to sanctify Me, you did not sanctify Me before them.” (This was the Water of Contention, at Kadesh in the Desert of Sin.)[†] [15]Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, [16]“Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation,[†] [17]who will go in and out before their face, and lead them out and bring them in; then the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”[†]

[18]Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man who has the Spirit in himself, and put your hand on him;[†] [19]and stand him before Eleazar the priest and give orders to him before all the congregation, and give orders concerning him before them. [20]You shall then give some of your glory to him, that the children of Israel may obey him. [21]So he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, and they shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel in one accord, even all the congregation.” [22]So Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and taking Joshua, he stood him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. [23]Then he put his hands on him and appointed him, as the Lord commanded Moses.

Daily Offerings

28 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Command the children of Israel and say to them, ‘My gifts, My presents, My burnt offerings, you shall take care to offer to Me as a sweet aroma in My feasts.’[†] [3]So you shall say to them, ‘These are My burnt offerings you shall offer daily to the Lord: two unblemished male lambs in their first year, as a whole burnt offering perpetually. [4]The one male lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other male lamb you shall offer in the evening; [5]and you shall offer one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil. [6]This shall be a perpetual whole burnt offering, which came into being at Mount Sinai, as a sweet aroma to the Lord. [7]Its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each male lamb; in the holy place you shall pour out the intoxicant as a drink offering to the Lord.

[8]The second male lamb you shall offer toward evening; and you shall offer it according to its grain offering and drink offering, as a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Sabbath Offerings

[9]‘Then on the Sabbath day you shall offer two unblemished male lambs in their first year, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, with its drink offering. [10]This is the whole burnt offering for each and every Sabbath, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering with its drink offering.

Monthly Offerings

[11]‘On the first of every month, you shall offer a whole burnt offering to the Lord: two young bulls from the oxen, one ram, and seven unblemished male lambs in their first year, [12]and a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for each young bull, and a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for the one ram, [13]and a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for each male lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma to the Lord. [14]Their drink offering shall be half a hin of wine for each young bull, one-third of a hin for the one ram, and one-fourth of a hin for each male lamb. This is the whole burnt offering for the first of every month throughout the months of each year. [15]Also one young male of the goats as a sin offering to the Lord shall be offered, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering with its drink offering.

Paschal Offerings

[16]‘Then on the fourteenth day of the first month is the Lord's Pascha. [17]Then on the fifteenth day of this month is a feast: unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; [18]and the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no service work. [19]So you shall offer whole burnt offerings: two young bulls from the oxen, one ram, and seven male lambs—be sure they are unblemished—as burnt offerings to the Lord. [20]Now you shall offer their grain offering of fine flour, mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [21]and one-tenth for each of the seven male lambs. [22]You shall also offer one young male goat as a sin offering, to make atonement for you. [23]You shall offer these in addition to the regular whole burnt offering of the morning, which is the perpetual whole burnt

offering. [24]You shall make these offerings according to these directions each day for seven days, as a gift and as a burnt offering for a sweet aroma to the Lord; and in addition to the regular whole burnt offering you shall offer its drink offering. [25]Then on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no service work on it.

Feast of Weeks Offerings

[26]‘Then on the day of new grain, when you bring a new grain offering to the Lord at your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no service work. [27]You shall offer whole burnt offerings as a sweet aroma to the Lord: two young bulls from the oxen, one ram, and seven unblemished male lambs in their first year, [28]with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [29]and one-tenth for each of the seven male lambs; [30]also one young male of the goats, to make atonement for you. [31]In addition to the regular whole burnt offering—be sure they are unblemished—you shall offer to Me their grain offering with their drink offerings.

Holy Convocations

29 ‘Now in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no service work. It shall be a signal day for you. [2]You shall offer a whole burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the Lord: one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and seven unblemished male lambs in their first year, [3]with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each young bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [4]and one-tenth for each of the seven male lambs, [5]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering to make atonement for you, [6]in addition to the whole burnt offerings for the first day of the month, with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings, according to their interpretation, as a sweet aroma to the Lord.

[7]‘On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; and you shall not do any work. [8]You shall offer whole burnt offerings, burnt offerings as a sweet aroma to the Lord: one young bull from the oxen, one ram, and seven male lambs in their first year—be sure they are unblemished, [9]with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each young bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [10]and one-tenth for each of the seven male lambs, [11]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering to make atonement for you, in addition to the sin offering of atonement and the regular whole burnt offering, with its grain offering and drink offering, according to the interpretation, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma to the Lord.

[12]‘Then on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no service work, and you shall keep a feast to the Lord seven days. [13]You shall offer whole burnt offerings, burnt offerings as a sweet aroma to the Lord.

‘On the first day offer thirteen young bulls from the oxen, two rams, and fourteen male lambs in their first year—they shall be unblemished, [14]with their grain offerings of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, [15]and one-tenth for each of the fourteen male lambs, [16]and one young male kid from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[17]‘On the second day you shall offer twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen unblemished male lambs in their first year, [18]with their grain offering and drink offering for the young bulls, the rams, and the male lambs, according to their number, according to their interpretation, [19]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[20]‘On the third day you shall offer eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen unblemished male lambs in their first year, [21]with their grain offering and drink offering for the young bulls, the rams, and the male lambs, according to their number, according to their interpretation, [22]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[23]‘On the fourth day you shall offer ten young bulls, two rams, and fourteen unblemished male lambs in their first year, [24]with their grain offerings and drink offerings for the young bulls, the rams, and the male lambs, according to their number, according to their interpretation, [25]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[26]‘On the fifth day you shall offer nine young bulls, two rams, and fourteen unblemished male lambs in their first year, [27]with their grain offerings and drink offerings for the young bulls, the rams, and the male lambs, according to their number, according to their interpretation; [28]and one

young male from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[29]‘On the sixth day you shall offer eight young bulls, two rams, and fourteen unblemished male lambs in their first year, [30]with their grain offerings and drink offerings for the young bulls, the rams, and the male lambs, according to their number, according to their interpretation, [31]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[32]‘On the seventh day you shall offer seven bulls, two rams, and fourteen unblemished male lambs in their first year, [33]with their grain offerings and drink offerings for the bulls, the rams, and the male lambs, according to their number, according to their interpretation, [34]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular whole burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[35]‘On the eighth day you shall have the final day of the festival. You shall do no service work on it. [36]You shall present whole burnt offerings, burnt offerings as a sweet aroma to the Lord: one young bull, one ram, seven unblemished male lambs in their first year, [37]with their grain offerings and drink offerings for the bull, the ram, and the male lambs, according to their number, according to their interpretation, [38]and one young male from the goats as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering, with their grain offerings and drink offerings.

[39]‘These you shall offer to the Lord at your appointed feasts, in addition to your vows and voluntary offerings, as well as your whole burnt offerings,

your grain offerings, your drink offerings, and your peace offerings.’ ”

Laws Concerning Vows

30 Now Moses told the children of Israel everything, as the Lord commanded Moses.[†]

[2]Then Moses spoke to the rulers of the tribes of Israel, saying, “This is the word the Lord commanded: [3]If any man should vow a vow to the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with an obligation, he may not defile his word; he shall do everything that proceeds out of his mouth. [4]But if a woman should vow a vow to the Lord and bind herself with an obligation while in her father's house in her youth, [5]and her father should hear her vows and obligations with which she bound her soul, and her father should pass over it in silence, then all her vows and every obligation with which she bound her soul shall stand, and remain in force for her. [6]But if on the day her father should hear and disapprove all her vows and obligations with which she bound her soul, then her vows shall not stand; therefore the Lord will consider her blameless, because her father disapproved.

[7]“But if she should actually be married, and she binds her soul with vows made by an explicit statement of her own lips, [8]and her husband should hear and pass over it in silence the day he hears, then all her vows and obligations with which she bound her soul shall stand. [9]But if her husband should disapprove on the day he hears, then all her vows and obligations with which she bound her soul shall not remain in force, because her husband disapproved of her; therefore the Lord will consider her blameless. [10]Also any vow of a widow or a divorced woman, whatever she should vow

concerning her soul, shall remain in force for her. [11]But if her vow should be made in her husband's house, or if her obligation concerning her soul should be made with an oath, [12]and her husband should hear and pass over it in silence and not disapprove her, then all her vows shall stand, and every obligation with which she bound her soul shall stand. [13]But if her husband should cancel them on the day he hears, then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or obligations binding her soul, they shall not remain in force; for her husband canceled them; therefore the Lord will consider her blameless. [14]Every vow and binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband shall establish, or her husband shall cancel. [15]But if her husband should remain silent for more than a single day, then he shall establish all her vows for her; and he shall establish for her the obligations binding her, because he remained silent regarding her on the day he heard them. [16]But if he should cancel them the day after he heard them, then he shall bear her guilt.” [17]These are the ordinances the Lord commanded Moses between a husband and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father's house.

The War against the Midianites

31 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Exact vengeance from the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be added to your people.” [3]So Moses spoke to the people, saying, “Arm some of your men to stand in battle array before the Lord against Midian, to repay vengeance from the Lord on Midian. [4]From all the tribes of Israel you shall send a thousand from each tribe to stand in battle array.”

[5]So from the thousands of Israel they counted a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for the battle line. [6]Then Moses sent them, a thousand from each tribe with their army, and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest with the holy vessels and the trumpets for signaling in his hands. [7]So they arrayed themselves in battle against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses, and they killed every male. [8]They killed the kings of Midian, together with their slain people: Evi, Zur, Rekem, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword, along with their slain people.[†] [9]They also took as plunder the women of Midian, with their households, their cattle, all their possessions; and they plundered their army. [10]They also set on fire all the cities where they dwelt and all their unwalled villages. [11]They took as well all their booty and spoils from man to cattle. [12]Then they brought the captives, the spoils, and the booty to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, to the camp in the Araboth of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho.

The Winning Army Returns

[13]Then Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the rulers of the congregation went to meet them outside the camp. [14]But Moses was angry with the overseers of the army, with the captains over thousands and rulers over hundreds, who were coming from the battle line of the war. [15]So Moses said to them, “Why did you take every female alive? [16]For on account of Balaam's counsel, they were with the sons of Israel and caused them to depart from and despise the Lord's word in the incident at Peor, when there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. [17]Now therefore, kill every male

among all the little ones, and every woman who slept with a man. [18]But keep alive for yourselves all the young girls who have not slept with a man. [19]But you remain outside the camp seven days, and everyone who killed or touched someone killed, both you and your captives, shall be purified on the third day and the seventh day. [20]Purify every garment, everything made of leather, everything woven of goats’ hair, and everything made of wood.”

[21]Then Eleazar the priest said to the men in the army who came from the battle lines of the war, “This is the ordinance of the law, which the Lord commanded Moses:[†] [22]Besides the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, the lead, and the tin, [23]everything that can pass through fire shall be purified; otherwise, it shall be purified with the water of purification. Therefore whatever cannot pass through the fire shall pass through the water. [24]You shall also wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may come into the camp.”

Division of the Spoils

[25]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [26]“Take the sum of the spoils of the captives, from man to cattle, you and Eleazar the priest and the rulers of the families in the congregation; [27]and divide the spoils between the warriors who went out into the battle lines and all the congregation. [28]And levy a tribute for the Lord on the men of war who went out to the battle lines, one soul of every five hundred men, and of the cattle, the oxen, the sheep, and the goats. [29]Then you shall take their tribute and give it to Eleazar the priest as a firstfruits to the Lord. [30]But from the children of Israel's half you shall take one of every fifty of the men, the oxen, the sheep, the donkeys, and from all the cattle, and give them to the Levites who keep charge in the tabernacle of

the Lord.” [31]So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses.

[32]The booty remaining from the plunder which the men of war took was six hundred seventy-five thousand sheep, [33]seventy-two thousand oxen, [34]sixty-one thousand donkeys, [35]and thirty-two thousand human souls, that is, the women who had not slept with a man. [36]And the half, the portion for those who had gone out to war, was in number three hundred thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep; [37]and the Lord's tribute of the sheep was six hundred seventy-five. [38]The oxen were thirty-six thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was seventy-two. [39]The donkeys were thirty thousand five hundred, of which the Lord's tribute was sixty-one. [40]The human souls were sixteen thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was thirty-two souls. [41]So Moses gave the Lord's tribute, God's choice portion, to Eleazar the priest, as the Lord commanded Moses. [42]Then from the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men of war— [43]that is, the half belonging to the congregation, was three hundred thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, [44]thirty-six thousand oxen, [45]thirty thousand five hundred donkeys, [46]and sixteen thousand human souls— [47]and from the children of Israel's half Moses took one of every fifty, from men to cattle, and gave them to the Levites who kept charge of the tabernacle of the Lord, in the manner the Lord commanded Moses.

[48]Then all those established in positions as commanders in the army, the captains over thousands and rulers over hundreds, came near to Moses; [49]and they said to Moses, “Your servants took the sum of the men of war with us, and not a man of us is missing. [50]Therefore we have brought a gift to the

Lord, what every man found of articles of gold: bracelets, rings, armlets, and hair-clasps, to make atonement for us before the Lord.” [51]So Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, every crafted article. [52]So every choice portion of gold which they dedicated to the Lord, from the captains over thousands and rulers over hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred fifty shekels. [53](Now each of the men of war had taken plunder for himself.) [54]So Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the captains over thousands and rulers over hundreds and brought these into the tabernacle of testimony, as a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord.

The Tribes East of the Jordan River

32 Now the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle, and they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead; and they saw the place was a place for cattle. [2]So the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the rulers of the congregation, saying, [3]“Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, [4]the country the Lord delivered over to the children of Israel, is a land appropriate for feeding cattle; and your servants have cattle.” [5]Therefore they said, “If we have found grace in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not make us cross over the Jordan.”[†] [6]Then Moses said to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, “Your brothers go to war, and shall you sit here? [7]Now why do you pervert the minds of the children of Israel from crossing over into the land the Lord gives to them? [8]Did not your fathers act in this way when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land? [9]For they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and spied out the land; and they turned aside the heart of the children of Israel so they would not enter the land the Lord gave them. [10]So the Lord was very angry that day, and swore an oath, saying, [11]‘Surely these men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above and who know good and evil, shall not see the land I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for they did not follow after Me, [12]except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who separated himself, and Joshua the son of Nun; for they followed after the Lord.’ [13]So the Lord was very angry with Israel; and He made them wander in the desert forty years, until all the generation that did evil before the Lord was utterly destroyed. [14]Behold, You rose up in your fathers’ place, a body of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the Lord against Israel. [15]For you will turn away from Him by again leaving Him in the desert, and you will act lawlessly against this entire congregation.”

[16]They came to Moses and said, “We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our children; [17]but we will arm ourselves as the advance guard before the sons of Israel until we bring them to their own place; and our children will dwell in the fortified cities because of the land's inhabitants. [18]Let us not return to our homes until each of the sons of Israel should be distributed to his inheritance. [19]Therefore, let us not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because we are receiving in full our portions on this eastern side of the Jordan.”

[20]Then Moses said to them, “If you do according to this word, if you arm yourselves before the Lord for the war, [21]and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until His enemy is destroyed before His face; [22]and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you shall return,

and be blameless before the Lord and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. [23]But if you should not do so, you shall be guilty before the Lord; and you will know your sin when evils overtake you. [24]So you shall build cities for yourselves and for your children, and walled enclosures for your cattle, and do what proceeded out of your mouth.” [25]Then the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, “Your servants will do as our Lord commands. [26]Our children, our wives, and all our cattle will be there in the cities of Gilead; [27]but your servants will cross over, all armed and arrayed for battle before the Lord into the war, in the manner our lord says.”

[28]So Moses appointed for them Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and rulers of families in the tribes of Israel. [29]Again Moses said to them, “If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for war before the Lord, and you subdue the land before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. [30]But if they do not cross over with you armed for war, you shall carry across their children, their wives, and their cattle before you into the land of Canaan.” [31]Then the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, “Whatever our Lord says to your servants, so we will do. [32]We will cross over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan, but you shall give us our possession on the other side of the Jordan.” [33]So Moses gave to the sons of Gad, the sons of Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land and its cities with its borders, the cities of the surrounding country.

[34]Then the sons of Gad built Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, [35]Shophan, and Jazer, which they raised up, [36]along with Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, fortified cities and walled enclosures for sheep. [37]The sons of Reuben built Heshbon, Elealeh, Kirjathaim, [38]and Baal Meon, encircled with walls, and Shibmah; and they named the cities they built after their names. [39]Then the son of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and destroyed the Amorites dwelling in it. [40]So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt there. [41]Also Jair the son of Manasseh went and took their farming villages, and named them Havoth Jair. [42]Then Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he named them Nobah, after his own name.

Israel's Journey from Egypt to Moab

33 Now these are the stages in the journeys of the children of Israel who went out from the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.[†] [2]So Moses wrote their departures and the stages in their journeys by the word of the Lord.[†]

[3]They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after Pascha, the children of Israel went out with a high hand before all the Egyptians. [4]But the Egyptians were burying from among themselves all who died, whom the Lord struck down, every firstborn in the land of Egypt; and the Lord executed vengeance on their gods. [5]Then the children of Israel departed from Rameses and camped in Succoth. [6]They departed from Succoth and camped in Etham, which is part of the desert. [7]They departed from Etham and camped at the mouth of Hahiroth, which is

opposite Baal Zephon; and they camped opposite Migdol. [8]They departed opposite Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the desert; and they went three days’ journey through the desert and camped at Marah.[†] [9]They departed from Marah and came to Elim. At Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the water. [10]They departed from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. [11]They departed from the Red Sea and camped in the Desert of Sin. [12]They departed from the Desert of Sin and camped at Dophkah. [13]They departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. [14]They departed from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.[†]

[15]They departed from Rephidim and camped in the Sinai Desert. [16]They moved from the Sinai Desert and camped at Graves of Lust. [17]They departed from Graves of Lust and camped at Hazeroth. [18]They departed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. [19]They departed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez. [20]They departed from Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah. [21]They departed from Libnah and camped at Rissah. [22]They departed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. [23]They departed from Kehelathah and camped at Shepher. [24]They departed from Shepher and camped at Haradah. [25]They departed from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. [26]They departed from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. [27]They departed from Tahath and camped at Terah. [28]They departed from Terah and camped at Mithkah. [29]They departed from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. [30]They departed from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth. [31]They departed from Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan. [32]They departed from Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Hagidgad. [33]They departed

from Hor Hagidgad and camped at Jotbathah. [34]They departed from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. [35]They departed from Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber. [36]They departed from Ezion Geber and camped in the Desert of Sin; and they departed from the Desert of Sin and camped in the Desert of Paran (this is Kadesh). [37]They departed from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, near the land of Edom.

[38]Then Aaron the priest went up at the command of the Lord and died there, in the fortieth year of the exodus of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on the first day of the month. [39]Aaron was one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor. [40]Now this was the time when the Canaanite king of Arad (and this man dwelt in the land of Canaan) heard the children of Israel were coming.

[41]Then they departed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah. [42]They departed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon. [43]They departed from Punon and camped at Oboth. [44]They departed from Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, at the borders of Moab. [45]They departed from Ije Abarim and camped at Dibon Gad. [46]They departed from Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim. [47]They departed from Almon Diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. [48]They departed from the mountains of Abarim and camped west of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho. [49]They camped by the Jordan between Beth Jesimoth as far as the Abel Acacia Grove, west of Moab.

Instructions on Crossing the Jordan, Entering Canaan

[50]Now the Lord spoke to Moses west of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, [51]“Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘You are crossing over the Jordan into the land of Canaan. [52]Then you shall destroy all the inhabitants of the land before your face; and you shall remove their high places, and as for all their molten idols, you shall destroy these; and you shall remove all their pillars. [53]You shall also destroy all the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I give you their land as an inheritance. [54]Therefore you shall inherit their land by lot among your tribes; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone's inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. [55]But if you do not destroy the inhabitants of the land from before your face, it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be thorns in your eyes and arrows in your sides; and they shall be at enmity with you in the land where you dwell. [56]Moreover, it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them.’ ”

The Boundaries of Canaan

34 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2]“Command the children of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall come into the land of Canaan, and it shall be your inheritance, the land of Canaan with its borders.

[3]‘Your southern border shall be from the Desert of Sin to the border of Edom; so your southern border shall extend eastward to the end of the Salt Sea; [4]and your borders shall go around from the southern side of the Ascent of Akrabbim, continue to Sin, and be on the south of Kadesh Barnea; then it shall go on to Hazar Addar, and continue to Azmon; [5]and the border shall go

around from Azmon to the Brook of Egypt, and its termination shall be the sea.

[6]'As for the western borders, you shall have the Great Sea for a border; this shall be your western border.[†]

[7]'Now this shall be your northern border: from the Great Sea you shall measure your border along the mountain range; [8]and from the mountain range you shall measure your border to Hamath; and its termination shall be the borders of Zedad; [9]and the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and its termination shall be Hazar Enan. This shall be your northern border.

[10]'You shall measure your eastern borders from Hazar Enan to Shepham; [11]and the borders shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the borders shall go down to Bela behind the Sea of Chinnereth from the east; [12]and the borders shall go down along the Jordan, and its termination shall be the Salt Sea. This shall be your land with its surrounding borders.' " [13]Then Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, "This is the land you shall inherit by lot, in the manner the Lord ordered Moses to give it to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe of Manasseh. [14]For the tribe of the sons of Reuben and the tribe of the sons of Gad according to the houses of their fathers and the half-tribe of Manasseh received their allotments. [15]The two tribes and the half-tribe received their allotments beyond the Jordan, opposite Jericho from the south towards the east."

The Leaders Divide the Land

[16]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [17]"These are the names of the men who shall divide the land among you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest

and Joshua the son of Nun. [18]You shall take rulers, one from every tribe, to divide the land for the inheritance. [19]Now these are the names of the men: from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; [20]from the tribe of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud; [21]from the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon; [22]from the tribe of Dan a ruler, Bukki the son of Jogli; [23]from the sons of Joseph's tribe: a ruler from the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod, [24]a ruler from the tribe of the sons of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan; [25]a ruler from the tribe of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach; [26]a ruler from the tribe of the sons of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan; [27]a ruler from the tribe of the sons of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi; [28]a ruler from the tribe of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud.” [29]These are the ones the Lord commanded to divide the inheritance among the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

Cities Assigned to the Levites

35 Now the Lord spoke to Moses west of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying,[†] [2]“Order the children of Israel to give the Levites cities to dwell in from the allotment of their possession, and to give the Levites the grazing lands around their cities. [3]They shall have cities to dwell in and grazing lands for their cattle and for all their four-footed animals. [4]The grazing lands of the cities which you shall give the Levites shall extend from the walls of the city outward two thousand cubits all around. [5]So you shall measure outside the city: on the east side two thousand cubits, on the south side two thousand cubits, on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city in the middle of this shall be for you, and the contiguous areas of the cities. [6]You shall also give the Levites six cities of refuge, which you will give them for a manslayer to flee there; and you shall also give them forty-two cities in addition to these. [7]So all the cities you shall give the Levites shall be forty-eight, along with their grazing lands. [8]Now concerning the cities you shall give the Levites from the possession of the children of Israel: from the larger tribes you shall give many cities, and from the smaller ones you shall give fewer. In proportion to its inheritance, each tribe shall give from its inheritance some of its cities to the Levites.”

Cities of Refuge

[9]Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [10]“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘You shall cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, [11]and you shall separate cities for yourselves to be cities of refuge, for any manslayer who kills someone involuntarily to flee there. [12]These shall be cities of refuge for you from the avenger of blood, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment. [13]So the cities you give shall be six cities of refuge for you. [14]You shall designate three cities beyond the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan. [15]These cities shall be places of refuge for the children of Israel, and for the resident alien and the sojourner among you, that anyone who kills someone involuntarily may flee there as a place of refuge. [16]But if anyone should strike someone with an iron tool, and that one dies, he is a murderer; so let the murderer be put to death. [17]Also if anyone should strike someone with a stone from his hand by which that one could die, and that one does die, he is a murderer; so let the murderer be put to death. [18]Or if anyone should strike someone with a wooden tool by which that one could die, and that one does die, he is a murderer; so let the murderer be put to death. [19]The avenger of blood

himself shall kill the murderer; and whenever he meets him, he shall kill him. [20]Or if anyone should shove someone because of enmity, or should throw any tool at him from an ambush, and that one dies, [21]or if anyone should strike someone in anger with his hand, and that one dies, let the one who killed him be put to death. He is a murderer. So let the murderer be put to death. The avenger of blood shall kill the murderer when he meets him.

[22]‘However, if anyone should shove someone unexpectedly, but not because of enmity, or throw any tool at him, but not from an ambush, [23]or is working with any stone by which that one could die, and he threw it at him unknowingly, and that one dies, but he was not his enemy, nor was he seeking to harm him, [24]then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood based on these judgments. [25]So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he fled; and he shall live there until the high priest whom they anointed with the holy oil should die. [26]But if the manslayer should go outside the boundaries of the city where he fled, [27]and the avenger of blood should find him outside the boundaries of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he is not liable. [28]So let him live in his city of refuge until the high priest should die; then after the death of the high priest the manslayer shall return to the land of his possession. [29]So these things shall be ordinances of judgment for you throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

[30]‘Whoever takes a life, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but a single witness is not sufficient testimony for the death penalty. [31]Moreover, you shall accept no ransom for the life of a

murderer subject to the death penalty, for he shall be put to death. [32]Also you shall accept no ransom from one who fled to one of the cities of refuge, that he may again return to dwell in the land before the death of the high priest. [33]So you shall not defile with murder the land in which you dwell; for blood defiles the land, and there is no atonement for the land from the blood shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. [34]Therefore do not defile the land on which you dwell and on which I shall pitch My tabernacle among you; for I am the Lord who tabernacles among the children of Israel.' "

Inheritance Laws for Women

36 Now the rulers from the tribe of the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the tribe of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and Eleazar the priest and before the rulers of the paternal houses of the children of Israel. [2]So they said, "The Lord commanded our lord to give the land of the inheritance by lot to the sons of Israel, and the Lord ordered our lord to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. [3]Now if they should marry someone from the tribes of the sons of Israel, their allotment would be taken from the possession of our fathers, and be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so it would be taken from the portion of our inheritance. [4]But if the Remission of the children of Israel should come, their inheritance would be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; and their inheritance would be taken away from the inheritance of our father's tribe."

[5]Then Moses commanded the children of Israel through the ordinance of the Lord, saying, "Thus speaks the tribe of the sons of Joseph. [6]This is the

word the Lord orders concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, ‘Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within their father's tribe.’ [7]So the inheritance for the children of Israel shall not go around from tribe to tribe, because each of the sons of Israel shall be attached to the inheritance of his father's tribe. [8]And every daughter who enters upon an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall marry someone from her father's tribe, that each of the sons of Israel may possess his paternal inheritance. [9]Thus no inheritance shall go around from one tribe to another, but each of the sons of Israel shall be attached to his own inheritance.” [10]So in the manner the Lord ordered Moses, the daughters of Zelophehad did; [11]and Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, Noah, and Mahlah, the daughters of Zelophehad, married their cousins. [12]They were married into the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.

[13]These are the commandments, the ordinances, and the judgments the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, west of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho.

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The Book of Deuteronomy

Author—Moses is the author, by the testimony of the book itself (1:5; 31:9, 22, 24) and by the tradition and consensus of Israel and the Church.

Date—This book is dated near the end of Moses’ life, before the entrance into Canaan.

Major Theme—*Loving God with all our heart and strength* (see 6:5). This is a call to commitment to the Lord in worship and obedience. Moses’ second address (chs. 4–26) is the heart of this message. Another emphasis that is first introduced in this book is the specific location, Jerusalem, in which worship of the Lord is to take place. Moses frequently repeats the theme of reward for keeping the covenant and punishment for ignoring it.

Background—The book was written in the territory of Moab where the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea. The end of Moses’ life is imminent. He has given his final addresses, transferred his authority to Joshua, and is sending the Israelites into the promised land. Their nomadic lifestyle is about to end, and Moses has prepared them for life in Canaan. The narrative of Moses to the people of Israel has a different tenor now; the Book of Deuteronomy, which means the “second lawgiving,” comes from Moses’ heart in a warm, personal, homiletic form as compared to his other books.

Outline

- I. Introduction (1:1–5)
- II. The First Address (1:6–4:49)
    - A. Historical prologue (1:6–3:29)
    - B. A call to obedience (4:1–40)
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- III. The Second Address (5:1–26:19)
    - A. The stipulations of the covenant (5:1–33)
    - B. Posterity to be instructed in the Horeb revelation (6:1–25)
    - C. Exhortations to fidelity and obedience (7:1–11:32)
    - D. Statutes governing worship and holiness (12:1–14:29)
    - E. Laws relating to specific domestic, moral, and religious situations (15:1–26:15)
    - F. Concluding exhortation (26:16–19)
- IV. The Third Address (27:1–31:8)
    - A. The law inscribed and obedience commanded (27:1–10)
    - B. Curses (27:11–26)
    - C. Blessings (28:1–14)
    - D. Solemn curses (28:15–68)
    - E. Stipulations (28:69–31:8)
- V. Leadership Succession under the Covenant (31:9–34:12)
    - A. Change of leadership (31:9–29)
    - B. Song of Moses (31:30–32:52)
    - C. Moses’ testamental blessing on the tribes (33:1–29)
    - D. Death of Moses and succession of Joshua (34:1–12)

Moses’ Instructions

1 Now these are the words Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the desert, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.[†] [2]It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.

[3]Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, Moses spoke to the sons of Israel according to all the Lord gave him as commandments to them,[†] [4]after he killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei. [5]Beyond the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying,[†] [6]"The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying, 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. [7]Turn and take your journey and go to the mountain of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the Arabah, in the mountains and in the plain, to the south and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites, and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. [8]Behold, I am delivering the land in your presence; go in and inherit the land I swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give it to them and their seed after them.'

Judges Appointed

[9]"So I spoke to you at that time, saying, 'I alone am not able to bear you. [10]The Lord your God multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. [11]May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you, just as He said. [12]How can I alone bear your labors, your burdens, and your lawsuits? [13]Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them leaders over you.'[†]

[14]“Then you answered me and said, ‘The thing you told us to do is good.’ [15]So I took from you wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men and made them leaders over you: leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens; judges to interpret the law for you.

[16]“Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the resident alien with him.[†] [17]You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall judge the small and the great; you shall not shrink before any man's presence, for the judgment is God's. The case too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.’ [18]So I commanded you at that time all the words you should do.

Spies Sent Out

[19]“So we departed from Horeb, and went through all that great and fearful desert you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorite, as the Lord our God commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea. [20]Then I said to you, ‘You have come to the mountains of the Amorite, which the Lord our God is giving us. [21]Behold, the Lord your God is delivering the land to you in your presence; go up and take it as an inheritance, in the manner the Lord God of your fathers spoke to you; do not fear or be afraid.’ [22]Then every one of you came near me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, and let them spy out the land for us and report back to us the way we should go up in it, and the cities into which we should come.’

[23]“The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe. [24]Then they departed and went up into the mountain, and

came to the Valley of Eshcol, and surveyed it. [25]They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and said, ‘The land the Lord our God gives us is good.’

[26]“Nevertheless you would not go up, but disobeyed the word of the Lord your God;[†] [27]and you murmured in your tents, and said, ‘Because the Lord hates us, He brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us. [28]Where can we go up? Our brethren caused our heart to revolt, saying, “The people are great and tall and stronger than we; and the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover, we saw the sons of giants there.” ’

[29]“Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified or afraid of them.[†] [30]The Lord your God, who goes before your face, He will fight them with you in all things, as He did for you in Egypt [31]and in this desert, where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way you went until you came to this place.’ [32]Yet, in all this matter, you did not believe the Lord your God, [33]who went in the way before you to choose a place for you, leading you with the fire by night and the cloud by day and showing you the road, that you might travel it.

Israel's Rebellion Is Punished

[34]“So the Lord heard the sound of your words and was provoked to wrath, and took an oath, saying, [35]‘Not one of these men shall see this good land I swore to give their fathers [36]except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he will see it, and to him and his sons I give the land on which he walked, because he is attached to the things of the Lord.’ [37]The Lord was also

angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not enter there. [38]Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he will enter there. Encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it. [39]Thus every young child who today has no knowledge of good or evil, they will enter there; to them I will give it, and they will have it as an inheritance. [40]But as for you, turn and camp in the desert road towards the Red Sea.'

[41]"Then you answered and said to me, 'We sinned before the Lord our God; we will go up and fight, just as the Lord our God commanded us.' So when every one of you girded on his weapons of war and assembled together, you went up into the mountain.[†]

[42]"Then the Lord said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up or fight, for I am not with you; lest you be crushed before your enemies." ' [43]So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but transgressed the word of the Lord and presumptuously went up into the mountain. [44]Then the Amorite who dwelt in that mountain came out against you, and chased you as bees do, and wounded you from Seir to Hormah. [45]Then you sat down and wept before the Lord, but the Lord would not listen to your voice nor pay attention to you. [46]So you encamped in Kadesh many days, according to the days you spent there.

The Years in the Desert

2 "So we turned and journeyed on the desert road along the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and we encircled Mount Seir for many days. [2]Then the Lord spoke to me, saying, [3]'Let your encircling of this mountain be sufficient; therefore, turn northward. [4]Also command the people, saying, “You are about to pass through the boundaries of your brethren, the sons of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you and will be in exceeding dread of you.[†] [5]Do not engage them in war, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I gave Mount Seir to the sons of Esau as an inheritance. [6]You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water by the measure from them with money, that you may drink. [7]For the Lord your God blessed you in all the work of your hands. Consider how you crossed that great and fearful desert. Behold, these forty years the Lord your God was with you, and you lacked nothing.” ’[†]

[8]“Then we passed beyond our brethren the sons of Esau, who dwell in Seir, along the road of the Arabah from Elath and Ezion Geber; and we turned and passed along the desert road toward Moab. [9]Then the Lord said to me, ‘Do not be at enmity with Moab, or wage war with them, for I will not give you any of their land as an inheritance, because I gave Ar to the sons of Lot to inherit.’ ” [10](The Emim dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and strong as the Anakim. [11]They were also regarded as Raphain, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. [12]The Horite formerly dwelt in Seir, but the sons of Esau rooted them out and destroyed them from before their face, and dwelt in their place, in the manner Israel did in the land of their inheritance, which the Lord gave them.) [13]“ ‘Now rise, break camp and cross over the Valley of Zered.’ So we crossed over the Valley of Zered. [14]So the days we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of Zered were thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war died out of the camp, as the

Lord swore to them. [15]For the hand of the Lord was on them, to destroy them out of the camp until they were consumed.

[16]“So it was, when all the men of war died from the midst of the people, [17]then the Lord spoke to me, saying, [18]‘Today you shall pass by the borders of Moab at Seir, [19]and you shall draw near the sons of Ammon, but do not be at enmity with them or wage war with them, for I will not give you any land of the sons of Ammon as an inheritance, because I gave it to the sons of Lot as an inheritance.’ ” [20](Formerly, it was also regarded as the land of the Raphain, for the Raphain dwelt upon it. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, [21]a people great and numerous and stronger than you, just as the Anakim. But the Lord destroyed them before their face; and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place to this day; [22]just as they did for the sons of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when they destroyed the Horites from before their face. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place to this day. [23]Also the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—the Cappadocians, who came from Cappadocia, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)

[24]“ ‘Now therefore, rise, break camp, and travel along the Arnon Valley. Behold, I give into your hands Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Enter your inheritance and engage him in war. [25]On this day, begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the face of all nations under heaven, who when they hear the report of you, they will tremble and be in anguish because of your presence.’

Israel Victorious over King Sihon

[26]“So I sent ambassadors from the Kedemoth Desert to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, [27]‘Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. [28]You shall sell me food for money so I may eat, and sell me water for money so I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, [29]just as the sons of Esau, who dwell in Seir, and the Moabites, who dwell in Ar, did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land the Lord our God is giving us.’ [30]But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the Lord our God hardened his spirit and made his heart stubborn, that He might deliver him into your hands, as on this day. [31]Then the Lord said to me, ‘Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to inherit his land.’ [32]So Sihon and all his people came out to engage us in war at Jahaz. [33]But the Lord our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. [34]We conquered all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed every city, one after the other, and we did not leave their women and children alive. [35]We took only the cattle as plunder for ourselves, along with the spoil of the cities. [36]From Aroer on the bank of the Arnon River, and from the city in the ravine, as far as the mountain of Gilead, there was not one city that escaped us; the Lord our God delivered them all into our hands. [37]Only we did not go into the land of the sons of Ammon—anywhere along the Jabbok River, or to the cities of the mountains, as the Lord our God commanded us.

Israel Defeats King Og

3 “Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

[2]And the Lord said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I delivered him and all his people and all his land into your hands; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.’ [3]So the Lord our God delivered Og king of Bashan into our hands and all his people, and we struck him until none of his seed remained. [4]Also at that time we conquered all his cities; there was not a city we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. [5]All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many cities of the Perizzites. [6]We utterly destroyed them, as we did Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every city, one after the other, and the women and children. [7]But all the cattle and spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves.

[8]“At that time we also took the land from the hands of the two kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan, from the Arnon River to Mount Hermon [9](the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorite calls it Senir); [10]all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. [11]For only Og king of Bashan remained of the Rephaim. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. Behold, it is in the citadel of the sons of Ammon. Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, measured by the forearm of a man.

The Tribes East of Jordan

[12]“So we inherited this land at that time, from Aroer, by the Arnon River, and half the mountain of Gilead; and I gave his cities to Reuben and Gad. [13]The rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half

the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, all that Bashan, will be reckoned as the land of the Rephaim. [14]Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, as far as the borders of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and called Bashan after his own name, Havoth Jair, to this day.)

[15]“Also I gave Gilead to Machir. [16]Now to Reuben and Gad I gave from Gilead as far as the Arnon River, the middle of the river as the border, and as far as the Jabbok River, the border of the sons of Ammon; [17]and the Arabah and the Jordan are the border stretching from Machanarath down to the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, to Pisgah in the east.

[18]“Then I commanded you at that time, saying, ‘The Lord your God gave you this land as an inheritance. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the sons of Israel. [19]But your wives, your children, and your cattle (I know you have much cattle) will stay in the cities I gave you, [20]until the Lord your God gives rest to your brethren as to you, and they also inherit the land the Lord our God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each may return to the inheritance I gave you.’

Moses Cannot Enter the Land

[21]“Then I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes saw all the Lord our God did to these two kings; so will the Lord our God do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. [22]You must not fear them, for the Lord our God Himself fights for you.’ [23]Then I pleaded with the Lord at that time, saying, [24]‘O Lord, O Lord, You have begun to show Your servant Your strength and power and Your mighty hand and outstretched arm, for

what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? [25]Let me cross over and see this good land, this good mountain, and Antilebanon.'

[26]"But the Lord disregarded me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me, 'Enough of that. Speak no more to Me of this matter. [27]Go up to the top of the stony mountain and lift your eyes toward the sea, the north wind, the south wind, and the sunrise; behold it with your eyes, for you will not cross over this Jordan. [28]But command Joshua, strengthen him and encourage him; for he will go over before this people, and he will cause them to inherit the land you see.'[†] [29]So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.

Moses Urges Israel to Obey

4 "Now, O Israel, listen to the ordinances and judgments I teach you today to observe, that you may live and become numerous and inherit the land the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. [2]You shall not add to the word I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, all that I command you today.[†] [3]Your eyes saw all the things the Lord our God did at Baal Peor; for the Lord your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. [4]But you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you.

[5]"Surely I taught you ordinances and judgments, as the Lord commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land you go to inherit.[†] [6]Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the Gentiles, who will hear all these

ordinances and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’† [7]For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?†

[8]“Also, what great nation is there that has such ordinances and righteous judgments as are in all this law I set before you today? [9]Only take heed to yourself and diligently guard your soul, lest you forget all the things your eyes saw, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; and you shall teach them to your sons and the sons of your sons,† [10]especially concerning the day you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of assembly, when the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me and let them hear My words, so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and may teach their sons.’ [11]Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, gloom, storm, and a great voice. [12]The Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice.† [13]So He declared to you His covenant, the Ten Commandments, which He commanded you to perform; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.†

Avoid Idolatry

[14]“Then the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you ordinances and judgments, so you might observe them in the land you are crossing over to inherit. [15]So be careful to guard your souls, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb on the mountain from the midst of the fire. [16]Do not act lawlessly and make for yourselves a carved form of any

image: the likeness of male or female, [17]the likeness of any cattle on the earth, or the likeness of any winged bird that flies under heaven, [18]the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, or the likeness of any fish in the waters beneath the earth.

[19]“Also do not act lawlessly when you lift your eyes to heaven and see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the adornment of heaven, and you thus go astray and worship and serve them, which the Lord your God assigned to all the nations under heaven.[†] [20]But the Lord took you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. [21]Furthermore, the Lord was angry with me about what you said, and swore I would not cross over the Jordan and enter the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance. [22]But I am going to die in this land, thus I am not going to cross over this Jordan; but you will cross over and inherit this good land. [23]Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant the Lord your God made with you and make for yourselves a carved form of anything, concerning which the Lord your God forbade you. [24]For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.[†]

[25]“If you beget sons and the sons of sons and dwell a long time in the land, and act lawlessly and make a carved form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the Lord your God to provoke Him to anger, [26]I call heaven and earth to witness to you today that you will be utterly destroyed from the land you are crossing over the Jordan to inherit. You will not live long on it, but will be utterly annihilated.[†] [27]Then the Lord will scatter you among all the nations, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will bring you. [28]There you will serve different gods, the works of

men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, hear, eat, nor smell. [29]But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him when you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul in your tribulation; [30]and all these words will find you at the end of days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice; [31]for the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not forsake you nor annihilate you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers, which He swore to them.

[32]“For ask now concerning former days, before your day, in which God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other whether any great thing like this has happened, or anything like it has been heard. [33]Did any people ever hear the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, in the manner you heard, and live? [34]Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, in testing, signs, wonders, and war, and by a mighty hand and outstretched arm, and by great visions, according to all the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? [35]To you it was shown that you might know the Lord your God is God; there is none other besides Him.[†] [36]Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; and on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. [37]Because He loved your fathers, therefore, He chose you their seed after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His great strength, [38]destroying from before your face nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as you have it today. [39]Therefore know today and bear in mind, the Lord your God, this God, is in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no

other besides Him.[†] [40]You shall therefore guard His ordinances and His commandments I command you today that it may be well with you and with your sons after you, and may prolong your days in the land the Lord your God is giving you to guard all the time.”

Cities of Refuge

[41]Then Moses set apart three cities beyond the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, [42]so the manslayer who kills his neighbor without foreknowledge, without hating him previously, might flee into one of these cities and live there: [43]Bezer in the desert on the plateau for Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead for Gad, and Golan in Bashan for Manasseh.

The Law of Moses

[44]Now this is the law Moses set before the sons of Israel. [45]These are the testimonies, the ordinances, and the judgments Moses spoke to the sons of Israel in the desert after they came out of Egypt, [46]beyond the Jordan, in the valley near Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt. [47]So they inherited his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, beyond the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, [48]from Aroer, which is on the bank of the Arnon River, even to Mount Sion (that is, Hermon), [49]and all the Arabah beyond the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, below Asedoth hewn in the rock.

The Ten Commandments

5 Now Moses called all Israel, and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the ordinances and the judgments I speak in your hearing on this day, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. [2]The Lord our God made a covenant with you in Horeb. [3]The Lord did not make this covenant with your fathers, but with you, all of you alive here today. [4]The Lord spoke to you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. [5]I stood between the Lord and you at that time to declare to you the words of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. And He said,[†]

[6]‘I am the Lord your God who brings you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.[†] [7]There shall be no different gods before My face. [8]You shall not make for yourself an image, neither any likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; [9]you shall not bow down to them nor serve them, because I am the Lord your God, a jealous God, repaying the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me,[†] [10]but showing mercy to thousands who love Me and keep My commandments.

[11]‘You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not cleanse him who takes His name in vain.

[12]‘Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.[†] [13]Six days you shall labor and do all your works, [14]but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work—you, your son and your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your ox, your donkey, and all of your cattle, and your resident alien

dwelling among you; that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. [15]Remember, you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore, the Lord your God ordered you to guard the Sabbath day and to sanctify it.

[16]‘Honor your father and mother in the manner the Lord your God commanded you, that it may be well with you, and you may be a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

[17]‘You shall not murder.

[18]‘You shall not commit adultery.

[19]‘You shall not steal.

THE SABBATH DAY, SUNDAY, AND THE EIGHTH DAY

THE SABBATH DAY

When the Lord commanded the Hebrews, in the fourth of the Ten Commandments, to “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” He also gave them the reason: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Ex 20:8, 11; cf. Gn 2:1–3). When Moses restated the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, he added another reason: “Remember, you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore, the Lord your God ordered you to guard the Sabbath day and to sanctify it” (5:15).

The Hebrews were called to “remember” (Ex 20:8), to “keep” (Lv 19:3, 30), and to “hallow” or “sanctify” (Jer 17:19–27; Ezk 20:19, 20; Neh 13:15–22) the Sabbath by resting from almost every kind of work. God provided them this sacred time each week to help them contemplate His awesome work in creation and their miraculous deliverance from Egypt. Stipulating the faithful observance of the Sabbath was one of the main ways God ordained to reinforce the people’s covenant with Him (Ex 31:12–17; cf. Lv 24:8). Originally, communal worship was not linked with Sabbath observance; but with the development of the synagogue, probably during the Hebrews’ exile in Babylon (sixth century BC), the Sabbath naturally became the day for synagogue worship, as it is for the Jews today.

SUNDAY, THE DAY OF WORSHIP

At first, early Jewish Christians continued to observe Sabbath regulations and to worship on the Sabbath (Acts 13:13–15, 42–44; 18:1–4). But they also met for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1Co 16:1–2), called “the Lord’s Day” (Rev 1:10), since Jesus rose on a Sunday. St. Ignatius of Antioch, in about AD 107, confirms that Sunday was the main day of worship for the early Church: “They have given up keeping the Sabbath, and now order their lives by the Lord’s Day instead—the Day when life first dawned for us, thanks to Him and His death.”

St. Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, honored the Church’s practice of celebrating the Lord’s Resurrection every Sunday by decreeing, in AD 321, that every Sunday would be a holy day. For Orthodox Christians, Saturday is still the Sabbath, the day on which the Church especially remembers the departed, since Christ rested in the tomb on Great and Holy Saturday.

SUNDAY, THE EIGHTH DAY

As the day after the seventh day (when God rested from His six days of creation) and as the day of Christ’s Resurrection, Sunday early on came to be understood in a mystical way among Christians as the “Eighth Day.” It was the day “beyond nature and time” (MaxCon), “the beginning of another world” (Barn). “Whether you call it day, or whether you call it eternity, you express the same idea” (BasilG).

Fittingly, during the week after Pascha (Easter), called Bright Week, the Church celebrates Pascha for eight days, almost as though it were one continuous day. By tradition, babies are named on the eighth day after birth. And from ancient times, Christian baptisteries and fonts have been built with eight sides, indicating the newly baptized are entering the realm of the Eighth Day, the day of eternal rest (Heb 4:1–11) in Christ’s Heavenly Kingdom.

[20]‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

[21]‘You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not covet your neighbor's house, neither his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or his cattle, or anything belonging to your neighbor.’

The People Fear God's Presence

[22]“The Lord spoke these words to all your assembly in the mountain from the midst of the fire; there was darkness, gloom, storm, and a loud voice, and He added no more. Then He wrote them on two tablets of stone, and gave them to me. [23]So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the fire, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near me, all the leaders of your tribes and your elders. [24]Then you said, ‘Surely the Lord our God showed us His glory and His greatness, and we heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We saw this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives. [25]Now therefore, let us not die, because this great fire will destroy us; and if we continue to hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. [26]For who of flesh heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? [27]You go near and hear whatever the Lord our God may say, and tell us whatever the Lord our God says to you, and we will hear and do it.’

[28]“Then the Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me, ‘I heard the voice of this people, whatever words they spoke to you. They are right in whatever they said. [29]Would they had such a heart in them so as to fear Me and guard My commandments all the time, that it might be well with them and their sons forever.[†] [30]Go and say to them, “Return to your houses.” [31]But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the ordinances, and the judgments you are to teach them, so they may do them in the land I give them as an inheritance.’ [32]Therefore you shall be careful to do in the manner the Lord your God commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. [33]You shall walk in every way the Lord your God commanded you,

that He may give you rest, and it be well with you, and you prolong your days in the land you are to inherit.

The Great Commandment

6 “Now these are the commandments, the ordinances, and the judgments the Lord our God commanded to teach you, that you may do them in the land you are crossing over to inherit, [2]and may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His ordinances and commandments I command you today, you and your sons and the sons of your sons, all the days of your life, so your days may be prolonged. [3]Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you, and you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers told you—‘to give you a land flowing with milk and honey.’ ”

[4]These are the ordinances and the judgments the Lord commanded the children of Israel in the desert, when they came from the land of Egypt: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.[†] [5]You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, from your whole soul, and from your whole power. [6]So these words I command you today shall be in your heart and in your soul. [7]You shall teach them to your sons, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. [8]You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and it shall be immovable before your eyes; [9]and you shall write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

Do Not Disobey

10“So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities you did not build, 11and houses full of all good things you did not fill, and hewn-out wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—and when you have eaten and are full— 12then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brings you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.† 13You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and you shall cling to Him and take oaths in His name. 14You shall not go after different gods, the gods of the nations around you,† 15because the Lord your God is a jealous God among you, lest the anger of the Lord your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

16“You shall not tempt the Lord your God, as you tempted Him in the Temptation.† 17You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, His testimonies, and the ordinances He commanded you. 18So you shall do what is pleasing and good before the Lord your God, that it may be well with you, and you may go in and inherit the good land the Lord swore to your fathers, 19to chase out all your enemies from before your face, as He said.

20“Then it shall be when your son asks you tomorrow, saying, ‘What are the testimonies, the ordinances, and the judgments the Lord our God commanded you?’ 21you shall say to your son, ‘We were servants of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; 22and the Lord set great and evil signs affecting Egypt, Pharaoh, and his house before us. 23Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in to give us this land He swore to give our fathers.[†] [24]So the Lord commanded us to do all these ordinances, to fear the Lord our God, that it may be well with us all our days, and we may live as today. [25]Then we shall have mercy, if we are careful to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as the Lord commanded us.’

The Chosen People

7 “Now if the Lord your God brings you into the land you go to inherit, and casts out great nations before your face, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,[†] [2]and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands, you shall strike and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show them mercy. [3]Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for your son. [4]For she will turn your son away from Me, and he will serve other gods; so the Lord will be very angry with you and destroy you suddenly. [5]But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their pillars, and cut down their groves, and burn the carved images of their gods with fire.

[6]“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God chose you to be a people for Himself, special above all the nations on the face of the earth. [7]The Lord did not prefer nor choose you because you were more in number than all the nations, for you are the least of all the nations;[†] [8]but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath He swore to your fathers, the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh

king of Egypt.[†] [9]Therefore know, the Lord your God, this God, is a faithful God, who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; [10]and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with those who hate Him; He will repay them to their face. [11]Therefore, you shall keep the commandments, the ordinances, and these judgments I command you today to do them.

Obedience Brings Blessing

[12]“Then it shall come to pass, when you listen to all these ordinances and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy He swore to your fathers; [13]and He will love you and bless and multiply you; He will also bless the offspring of your womb, and the fruit of your land: your grain, wine, and olive oil, and the herds of your oxen, and the flocks of your sheep, in the land the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. [14]You shall be blessed more than all the nations; there shall not be a childless male or a barren female among you or your cattle. [15]And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and He will not put on you the evil diseases you saw and knew in Egypt, but will put them on all who hate you. [16]Also you shall eat all the spoils of the nations the Lord your God gives you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

[17]“If you should say in your mind, ‘This nation is greater than I; how will I be able to destroy them?’ [18]you shall not be afraid of them, but shall remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all the

Egyptians: [19]the great trials your eyes saw, those great signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. So shall the Lord our God do to all the nations of whose face you are afraid. [20]Moreover the Lord your God will send hornets among them, until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. [21]You shall not be terrified of their face; for the Lord your God is among you, a great and powerful God;[†] [22]and the Lord your God will consume those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the land become a desert and the wild animals increase against you. [23]But the Lord your God will deliver them into your hands and destroy them with a great destruction, until they are destroyed. [24]So He will deliver their kings into your hands, and will destroy their name from that place; no one shall be able to stand against your presence until you destroy them. [25]You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not desire the silver or gold of theirs, nor take it for yourselves, lest you stumble because of it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. [26]Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.

Keeping the Commandments

8 “Every commandment I command you today you must be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and inherit the land the Lord swore to your fathers.[†] [2]Now you shall remember the whole way the Lord your God led you in the desert, to deal harshly with you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.[†] [3]So He dealt harshly with you and weakened you with hunger, and fed you with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding from the mouth of God man shall live.[†] [4]Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your feet become callused these forty years.[†] [5]You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you. [6]Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him. [7]For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good and great land, where torrents of waters and springs of bottomless depths flow through the plains and through the mountains; [8]a land of wheat and barley, of vines, fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; [9]a land where you will not eat your bread in poverty, and in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you can dig copper. [10]Thus you shall eat and be full and bless the Lord your God for the good land He gave you.

[11]“Watch yourself, that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, judgments, and ordinances I command you today, [12]lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them, [13]and when your cattle and sheep multiply, and your silver and gold are multiplied, and all you have is multiplied, [14]when your heart is lifted up and you forget the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, [15]who led you through that great and fearful desert, with its biting serpent and scorpion and thirst, where there was no water, who brought a spring of water for you out of the sharp-edged rock,[†] [16]who fed you in the desert with manna your

fathers did not know, that He might deal harshly with you and might test you, to do you good in the end of your days— [17]then do not say in your heart, ‘My strength and the might of my hand gained me this great power.’[†] [18]Then you shall remember the Lord your God, for He it is who gives you strength, that you may gain power, and He may establish His covenant the Lord swore to your fathers, as it is today. [19]Thus it shall be, if you forget the Lord your God, and follow after different gods and serve and worship them, I testify against you today, you shall surely perish. [20]As the remaining nations the Lord destroys before your face, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God.

Israel's Rebellion

9 “Hear, O Israel, You are to cross over the Jordan today and go in to inherit nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven,[†] [2]a people, great and large and tall, the sons of Anak, whom you know and of whom you heard it said, ‘Who can stand against the face of the sons of Anak?’ [3]Therefore understand today, the Lord your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and turn them from your face; and you will destroy them, as the Lord said to you. [4]Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God consumes these nations before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the Lord brought me in to inherit this good land’; but because of the ungodliness of these nations, the Lord will destroy them before your face.[†] [5]It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you are going in to inherit their land, but because of the ungodliness of these nations, the Lord will destroy them before your face, that He may establish His covenant He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [6]Thus you will know today, the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to inherit because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people. [7]Remember, do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the desert. From the day you came out of Egypt until you came into this land, you continued being disobedient to the Lord. [8]Also in Horeb you provoked the Lord, and the Lord was angry enough with you to destroy you, [9]when I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant the Lord established with you; and I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. [10]Then the Lord delivered two tablets of stone to me, written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words the Lord spoke to you on the mountain, in the day of the assembly. [11]And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

[12]“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people you brought out of Egypt have acted lawlessly; they turned aside quickly from the way I commanded them; they made themselves a molten image.’ [13]Furthermore, the Lord spoke to me, saying, ‘I told you once and twice, I see this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. [14]Let Me destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation greater and stronger and larger than they.’

[15]“So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets were in my two hands. [16]Then I looked, and you had sinned against the Lord your God and made for

yourselves a molten image. You turned aside quickly from the way the Lord commanded you. [17]Then I took the two tablets and threw them down with my two hands, and broke them before you. [18]And I prayed before the Lord a second time, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sins you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord your God to provoke Him. [19]For I was afraid because of the anger and the wrath, for the Lord was provoked by you to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me at this time also. [20]The Lord was also very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him; so I also prayed for Aaron at that time. [21]Then I took the sin you committed, the calf you made, and burned it with fire, and crushed it, and ground it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.

[22]“Also at the Burning and the Temptation and the Graves of Lust, you provoked the Lord your God to wrath.[†] [23]Likewise, when the Lord sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, ‘Go up and inherit the land I give you,’ then you disobeyed the word of the Lord your God, and you did not believe Him nor listen to His voice. [24]You were disobedient to the Lord from the day He became known to you.

[25]“Thus I prayed before the Lord; forty days and forty nights I kept praying, because the Lord said He would destroy you. [26]Therefore, I prayed to God, and said, ‘O Lord, O Lord, O King of the gods, do not destroy Your people and Your portion You redeemed through Your great strength, whom You brought from the land of Egypt with Your great strength, Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm. [27]Remember

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself; do not look on the hardness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sins, [28]lest those who inhabit the land You brought us from should say, “Because the Lord was unable to bring them to the land He promised them, and because He hated them, He brought them out to kill them in the desert.” [29]Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and outstretched arm.’

The Second Set of Tablets

10 “At that time the Lord said to me, ‘Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain, and make yourself an ark of wood. [2]And I will write on these tablets the words of the first tablets you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.’ [3]So I made an ark of wood not liable to decay, and hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, with the two tablets in my hands. [4]Then He wrote the Ten Commandments on the tablets according to the first writing which the Lord spoke to you in the mountain, from the midst of the fire; and the Lord gave them to me. [5]Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I made; and they were there, as the Lord commanded me.”

[6](Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died and was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. [7]From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land with rivers of water. [8]At that time, the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord, to minister to Him, and to bless in His name, to this

day. [9]Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance, as He said to him.) [10]“I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the Lord also heard me at that time, and the Lord chose not to destroy you. [11]Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go, and lead this people, so they may go in and inherit the land I swore to their fathers to give them.’

The Lord's Requirements

[12]“So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,[†] [13]and to keep the commandments of the Lord your God and His ordinances I command you today for your good? [14]Indeed, heaven and heaven of heaven belong to the Lord your God, also the earth and everything in it. [15]The Lord chose your fathers to love them; and He chose their seed after them, you above all nations, as it is this day. [16]Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. [17]For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. [18]He administers justice for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing. [19]Therefore, love the resident aliens, for you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt. [20]You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him, and hold fast to Him, and take oaths in His name.[†] [21]He is your boast and your God, who did these great and glorious things for you, the things you saw with your own eyes. [22]Your fathers went down to Egypt

with seventy-five souls, and now, the Lord your God made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

God's Greatness

11 “Therefore, you shall love the Lord your God, and always keep His commandments, His ordinances, and His judgments. [2]Know today, I do not speak with your children, who have not known and seen the chastening of the Lord your God, nor His greatness and mighty hand and outstretched arm— [3]the signs and wonders He did in the midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land; [4]what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horse and chariots; how He made the water of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you, and how the Lord destroyed them to this day; [5]what He did for you in the desert until you came to this place; [6]and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up in the midst of Israel, along with their households, tents, and all the substance in their possession— [7]but your eyes saw all the great works the Lord did for you today.

Inherit the Land

[8]“Therefore, you shall keep all His commandments I command you today, that you may live and increase and go in and inherit the land you are crossing the Jordan to inherit,[†] [9]and may prolong your days in the land the Lord swore to give your fathers, to them and their seed after them, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ [10]For the land you go to inherit is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you sowed your seed and

watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden; [11]but the land you are crossing over to inherit is a land of hills and plains, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, [12]a land the Lord your God looks upon; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.

[13]“So if you earnestly obey all His commandments I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, [14]then He will give you rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, wine, and olive oil. [15]I will also send grass in your fields for your cattle, that you may eat and be filled. [16]Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you transgress and serve other gods and worship them, [17]lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you and He shut up heaven, so there may be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land the Lord gave you.

[18]“Therefore, you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be immovable before your eyes. [19]You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house and walk by the way, when you lie down and rise up. [20]You shall also write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates, [21]that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied in the land the Lord swore to give your fathers, like days of heaven on earth. [22]For if you carefully keep all these commandments I command you today—to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him— [23]then the Lord will cast out all these nations

from before your face, and you will inherit greater and mightier nations than yourselves. [24]Every place the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the desert and Antilebanon, and from the great Euphrates River, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory. [25]No man shall be able to stand against your face; the Lord your God will put the dread and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, in the manner the Lord said to you.

[26]“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: [27]the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God I command you today; [28]and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but go astray from the way I command you today, to go after different gods you have not known. [29]Now it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land you are to inherit, you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. [30]Indeed are they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of Canaan, the area that lies to the west near Gilgal, beside the lofty oak? [31]For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to inherit the land the Lord your God is giving you; and you will inherit it all your days and dwell in it. [32]Therefore, you shall be careful to do all the ordinances and judgments I set before you today.

The Place of Worship

12 “These are the ordinances and judgments you shall be careful to observe in the land the Lord God of your fathers is giving you to inherit, all the days you live on the earth. [2]You shall utterly destroy all the places the nations you will inherit served their gods: on the high mountains, on the hills, and under the tree of the grove. [3]So you shall destroy their altars, break their pillars, cut down their groves, burn the carved images of their gods with fire, and destroy their name from that place. [4]You shall not do thus with the Lord your God. [5]But you shall seek the place the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name and to be called on there; and you shall go and seek Him there. [6]There you shall bring your whole burnt offerings, sacrifices, firstfruits, prayers, voluntary offerings, and the firstborn of your oxen and sheep. [7]There you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you put your hand, you and your households, as the Lord your God blessed you.

[8]“You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes— [9]for as yet, you have not come to the rest and the inheritance the Lord your God gives you. [10]But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, and you dwell in safety, [11]then there will be the place the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all I command you today: your whole burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, the first fruits of your hands, and all your gifts and all your choice gifts you vow to the Lord.[†] [12]And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. [13]Take heed to yourself, do not offer your whole burnt offerings in every place you see;[†] [14]but in the place the Lord chooses, in one of your tribes; there you shall offer your whole burnt offerings, and there you shall do all I command you today.

[15]“However, according to your every desire, you may slaughter and eat meat, according to the blessing the Lord your God gave you in each city; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. [16]Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water. [17]You may not eat the tithe in your cities: of your grain, wine, or olive oil, of the firstborn of your oxen or sheep, of any of your offerings you vow, of your agreements, or of the firstfruits of your hands. [18]But you must eat them before the Lord your God in the place the Lord your God chooses, you and your son and daughter, your male and female servant, and the resident alien in your cities; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all to which you put your hand. [19]Take heed to yourself, do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

[20]“Now if the Lord your God enlarges your borders, as He told you, and you say, ‘I will eat meat,’ because you desire to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your soul desires. [21]But if the place the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter from your oxen and sheep the Lord gave you in the manner I commanded you, and may eat in your cities according to your soul's desire. [22]Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. [23]Only be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life; the life will not be eaten with the meat. [24]You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. [25]You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your sons after you, if you do what is good and pleasing before the Lord your God. [26]Only the holy things you have and your vowed offerings you shall take and go to the place the Lord your God

chooses for His name to be called upon there. [27]You shall offer your whole burnt offerings; you shall offer the meat upon the altar of the Lord your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God; and you shall eat the meat. [28]Keep, obey, and do all these words I command you, that it may go well with you and your sons forever, if you do what is good and pleasing in the sight of the Lord your God.

Beware of Idolatry

[29]“If the Lord your God destroys before your face the nations whose land you go to inherit, and you inherit them and dwell in their land, [30]take heed to yourself that you not seek to follow them after they are destroyed from before your face, and do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ [31]You shall not do thus with the Lord your God; for every abomination the Lord hates they have done with their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

13 “Every word I command you today, be careful to observe; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.[†]

[2]“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you, and he gives you a sign or a wonder today, [3]and the sign or the wonder he spoke to you comes to pass, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ you have not known, [4]you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. [5]You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and

obey His voice; you shall hold fast to Him. [6]But that prophet or dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken to lead you astray from the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from bondage, to entice you from the way the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

[7]“If your brother, the son of your father or mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve different gods’ you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, [8]of the gods of the nations around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, [9]you shall not consent to him nor listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; [10]but you shall make a report about him; your hands shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. [11]So they shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. [12]So all Israel will hear and fear, and not again continue to do according to the word of this evil among you.

[13]“If you hear someone in one of your cities the Lord your God gives you to dwell in saying, [14]‘Lawless men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve different gods” ’ you have not known, [15]then you shall inquire and search diligently. So if the report is indeed true and certain that this abomination was committed among you, [16]you shall surely strike all the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it and everything therein.

[17]You shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn the city and all its plunder with fire before the Lord your God. It shall be uninhabited forever; it shall never be built again. [18]Thus none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, so the Lord may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, and have compassion on you and multiply you in the manner the Lord swore to your fathers, [19]if you listen to the voice of the Lord your God to keep all His commandments I command you today, to do what is good and pleasing before the Lord your God.

A Holy People

14 "You are the children of the Lord your God; you shall not engage in purificatory rites, nor shave your head between your eyes for the dead.[†] [2]For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord chose you to be a people for Himself, a special people above all the nations on the face of the earth.[†]

Clean and Unclean Meat

[3]"You shall not eat any abomination. [4]These are the cattle you may eat: the young bull of the oxen, the male lamb of the sheep, and the young male of the goats; [5]and you may also eat the deer, the gazelle, the antelope, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the gazelle, and the mountain sheep. [6]You may also eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, and that chews the cud among the animals. [7]Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat such as these: the camel, the hare, and the rabbit; for they chew the cud but do not

have cloven hooves; they are unclean for you. [8]Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses.

[9]“These you may eat of all in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales. [10]But whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you. [11]All clean birds you may eat. [12]But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, [13]the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; [14]every raven after its kind; [15]the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the seagull, and the hawk after their kinds; [16]the heron, the swan, and the ibis; [17]the cormorant, the hawk, the hoopoe, and the owl; [18]the pelican, the plover after their kind, and the purple coot and the bat. [19]Also every creeping thing that flies is unclean for you; they shall not be eaten. [20]You may eat all clean birds. [21]You shall not eat anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the alien in your cities that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you are a holy people to the Lord your God. You shall not boil a lamb in its mother's milk.

Tithing

[22]“You shall tithe all the increase of your grain the field produces year by year. [23]You shall eat before the Lord your God in the place He chooses to have His name called upon there; you will bring in the tithe of your grain, wine, and olive oil, of the firstborn of your oxen and sheep, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God all your days. [24]But if the journey is too long for you, so you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the Lord

your God has blessed you, [25]then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hands, and go to the place the Lord your God chooses. [26]Then you shall spend that money for whatever your soul desires; for oxen or sheep, for wine or strong drink, for whatever your soul desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household, [27]and the Levite who is within your cities, for he has no part or inheritance with you.

[28]“At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce. [29]Then the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the resident alien and the fatherless and the widow who are within your cities may come and eat and be satisfied, so the Lord your God may bless you in all the works you do.

Debts Released after Seven Years

15 “At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts.[†] [2]So the order of the remission is as follows: every debt your neighbor owes you, you shall remit; you shall not demand it back from your brother, because a remission is proclaimed for the Lord your God. [3]You may demand it back from a foreigner, but you shall grant remission of your brother's debt, [4]except when there may be no poor among you; for the Lord your God will greatly bless you in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance— [5]only if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe with care all these commandments I command you today. [6]For the Lord your God blessed you in the manner He told you;

you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.

Care for the Poor

[7]“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren within any of the cities in your land the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother; [8]but you shall surely open your hands to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. [9]Beware lest there be a hidden thought in your heart, a transgression of the law, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is at hand,’ and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it be a great sin among you. [10]You shall surely give him and loan him as much as he needs, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in everything to which you put your hand. [11]For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore, I command you to do this word which says, ‘You shall surely open your hands to your brother, to your poor and needy in your land.’

Bondservants

[12]“If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. [13]But when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; [14]you shall supply him liberally from your sheep, wheat, and winepress. From what the Lord has blessed you with you shall give to him. [15]For you shall remember you were a servant in the land

of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from that place; therefore, I command you this thing. [16]But if he says to you, ‘I will not go away from you,’ because he loves you and your house, because he is well off with you, [17]then you shall take a small awl and pierce his ear at the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. [18]It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has worked the yearly wage of a hired servant in serving you six years. Then the Lord your God will bless you in all you do.

Firstborn Animals

[19]“All the firstborn males that come from your oxen and sheep you shall sanctify to the Lord your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn young bull, nor shear the firstborn of your sheep. [20]You and your household shall eat it before the Lord year by year in the place the Lord your God chooses. [21]But if there is a defect in it, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God. [22]You may eat it within your cities; the unclean and the clean person alike may eat it, as if it were a gazelle or a deer. [23]Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

Pascha

16 “Observe the month of new corn, and keep Pascha to the Lord your God, for in the month of new corn He brought you out of Egypt by night.[†] [2]Therefore you shall sacrifice Pascha to the Lord your God from the sheep and oxen, in the place the Lord chooses for His name to be called upon there. [3]You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. [4]And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your borders for seven days, nor shall any of the meat you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain until morning. [5]You may not sacrifice Pascha within any of your cities the Lord your God gives you; [6]but at the place the Lord your God chooses for His name to be called upon there, there you shall sacrifice Pascha at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt. [7]You shall roast and eat it in the place the Lord your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your houses. [8]Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh and final day, there shall be a feast to the Lord your God. You shall do no work on it except what must be done for life.[†]

The Feast of Weeks

[9]"You shall count seven complete weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain. [10]Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God, and according to your ability you may offer whatever you wish, as the Lord your God blessed you.[†] [11]You shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and daughter, your male servant and female servant, the Levite who is within your cities, the resident alien and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the Lord your God chooses for His name to be called upon there. [12]And you shall remember you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these commandments.

The Feast of Tabernacles

[13]“You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and winepress. [14]You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and daughter, your male servant and female servant, the Levite, the resident alien, the fatherless and the widow who are within your cities. [15]Seven days you shall keep a feast to the Lord your God in the place the Lord your God chooses for Himself, and if the Lord your God should bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, you will be rejoicing. [16]Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place the Lord chooses; at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord your God empty-handed. [17]Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing the Lord your God gave you.

Appointing Judges

[18]“You shall appoint judges and teachers in all the cities the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. [19]They shall not pervert judgment; they shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe; for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. [20]You shall pursue what is altogether just, that you may live and go in and inherit the land the Lord your God gives you.

[21]“You shall not plant for yourself any grove or any tree near the altar of the Lord your God which you build for yourself. [22]You shall not set up a pillar the Lord your God hates.

17 “You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God a young bull or sheep having any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the Lord your God.[†]

[2]“If there is found among you, within any of your cities the Lord your God gives you, a man or a woman who does evil before the Lord your God in transgressing His covenant, [3]and who went and served and worshiped different gods, either the sun, moon, or any ornamentation of heaven, which He did not command, [4]and it is told you, then you shall inquire diligently; and if it is indeed true that such an abomination happened in Israel, [5]then you shall bring out that man or woman; and you shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. [6]Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. [7]The hand of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall put away their evil from among you.[†]

[8]“If there is some matter you are unable to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy in your cities, then you shall arise and go up to the place the Lord your God chooses for His name to be called upon there. [9]So you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge there in those days and inquire of them; and they shall pronounce the judgment for you. [10]You shall do according to the sentence they pronounce upon you in that place the Lord your God chooses for His name to be called upon there. Thus you shall be very careful to do according to all they order you. [11]According to the law and the judgment in which they instruct you,

you shall do; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence they pronounce upon you. [12]Now the man who acts arrogantly and will not obey the priest or the judge who may be there in those days, and who stands to minister in the name of the Lord your God, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. [13]Then all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act impiously.

Setting Up Rulers

[14]"If you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you inherit it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a ruler over me like the remaining nations around me,' [15]you shall surely set a ruler over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as a ruler over yourself; you cannot set a foreigner over yourself, because he is not your brother. [16]Wherefore he shall not multiply a cavalry for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt; for the Lord said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' [17]Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart be changed; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. [18]Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his rule, that he shall write for himself a copy of this second law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. [19]It shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all these commandments and ordinances, [20]that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left and may prolong his rule, he and his sons among the sons of Israel.

Caring for the Priests

18 “The priests, the Levites—all the tribe of Levi—shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel; the burnt offerings of the Lord shall be their portion; these they shall eat. [2]Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance, as He said to them. [3]Now this shall be the judgment concerning the priests from the people, from those who offer sacrifices, whether it is a young bull or sheep: one shall give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. [4]The firstfruits of your grain, wine, and olive oil, and the firstfruit of the sheep's fleece you shall give to him. [5]For the Lord your God chose him out of all your tribes to stand before the Lord your God, to minister and to bless in His name, he and his sons forever among the children of Israel. [6]So if a Levite comes from one of your cities, from where he dwells among all the children of Israel, as his soul desires, to the place the Lord chooses, [7]then he may minister in the name of the Lord his God, as do all his brethren the Levites who stand before the Lord. [8]They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what comes from the sale of his paternal inheritance.

Avoiding Wickedness

[9]“Now if you enter the land the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do the abominations of those nations. [10]There shall not be found among you anyone who purifies his son or daughter in the fire, or one who practices divination, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, [11]or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. [12]For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord your God, and because of these abominations the Lord your God

will destroy them before you. [13]You shall be perfect before the Lord your God. [14]For all these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.

The Promise of a Prophet

[15]“The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear,[†] [16]according to all you asked from the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let us not hear again the voice of the Lord our God, nor let us see this great fire any more, lest we die.’ [17]Then the Lord said to me, ‘What they have spoken is good.[†] [18]I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and I will put My word in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all I command Him.[†] [19]Therefore, whatever man will not listen to whatever the Prophet speaks in My name, I will require it of him.[†] [20]But whatever prophet speaks impiously in My name a word I have not ordered him to speak, or who speaks in the name of different gods, that prophet shall die.’ [21]Now if you should say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word the Lord has not spoken?’— [22]whatever word a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing the Lord has not spoken; the prophet spoke that word impiously; you shall stay away from him.

JESUS CHRIST:
PROPHET, PRIEST,
AND KING

Throughout the Old Testament, God raised up prophets, priests, and kings from among His chosen people to serve and lead Israel. Not only did these servants minister in their own right, many prefigured the coming of Christ our God, the promised Prophet, Priest, and King.

PROPHET

Deuteronomy 18:15–19 foreshadows Christ as the promised Prophet. The Lord speaks to Moses: “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and I will put My word in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all I command Him” (v. 18). The words, “like you” and “from among their brethren” speak of the preincarnate Word taking on human nature to become the promised Prophet.

The New Testament reveals several instances when Jesus is recognized and proclaimed as this Prophet of whom Moses wrote. For example, after witnessing Jesus’ miracle of feeding the five thousand, those present said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” (Jn 6:14; see also Jn 7:40). Later St. Peter, while preaching to the Jews, quotes from Deuteronomy 18:18, 19, showing Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Prophet, the fulfillment of God’s promise (Acts 3:22, 23).

PRIEST

Psalm 109:1–4 foreshadows Christ as the great High Priest: “The Lord said to my Lord . . . ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ ” The Book of Hebrews leaves no doubt as to whom this passage envisions: “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ” (Heb 3:1). And, “We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb 8:1). This long-awaited High Priest is our Lord Jesus Christ. See also Hebrews 6:20.

A priest is one "appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices" (Heb 8:3). As our eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ freely offers Himself by willingly dying on the Cross for us. He did so as the perfect sacrifice, fulfilling the requirements of atonement through the remission of sins. By this gift, the promise of resurrection is offered, paradise is reopened, the Comforter is sent, and the hope of eternal life is given. As High Priest, Jesus is both the offerer and the offering.

KING

The Prophet Jeremiah records God's promise of a coming King. The Lord says, "Behold, days are coming when I will raise up for David the Righteous Orient, and a King shall reign. He will understand, and bring about judgment and righteousness on the earth" (Jer 23:5).

Isaiah promises His government will be not temporal, but eternal, ruling from the throne of David (Is 9:6, 7). In Zechariah 6:13, a priest on His throne is foreshadowed.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus enters Jerusalem as a humble servant-King on the foal of a donkey (see Zec 9:9 and Mt 21:1–7). He willingly and without hesitation, doubt, or fear accepts the extreme humiliation of the Cross. Above His head is written, "King of the Jews" (Jn 19:12–22).

At His Second Coming, foretold in Old Testament prophecy, Christ will come as the all-conquering King of kings to execute judgment, destroy the forces of evil, and establish an everlasting peace. Psalm 2:6 tells us the

Father established His Son over the holy hill of Zion. In Psalm 21:28, the kingdom belongs to the Lord, and He will rule over all nations. Isaiah reveals the Gentiles as being included in His kingdom (Is 62:2, 3). Jesus Himself promised the day when people "see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Mt 16:28). In the apocalyptic vision of the Apostle John, Christ's title is: "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev 19:16).

We have a Prophet who is the Truth, a Priest whose eternal offering is accepted by the Father and received by us, and a King who will rule and reign forever over His Kingdom.

Cities of Refuge

19 "Now if the Lord your God removes the nations whose land the Lord your God is giving you, and you inherit them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, [2]you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of the land the Lord your God gives you. [3]You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the boundaries of your land the Lord your God divides into sections for you, that any manslayer may flee there. [4]Now this shall be the ordinance of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever strikes his neighbor involuntarily, not having hated him hitherto up until now— [5]as when a man goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor, that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; [6]lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and strikes this soul, and he dies, though there was no judgment rendered that he should die, because he had not hated the victim hitherto up until now. [7]Therefore I command you this word, saying, ‘You shall separate three cities for yourself.’

[8]“But if the Lord your God enlarges your territory in the manner He swore to your fathers, and the Lord gives you the land He promised to give to your fathers, [9]and if you hear and do all these commandments I command you today, to love the Lord your God and walk in all His ways all your days, then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three, [10]lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and thus the guilt of bloodshed be upon you. [11]But if there should be a man that hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and rises against him, and strikes this soul, and he dies, and then this man flees to one of these cities, [12]then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hands of the avenger of blood, that he may die. [13]Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall cleanse the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may be well with you.

Property Lines

[14]“You shall not remove your neighbor's boundaries your fathers established in your inheritance, which you will inherit in the land the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance.

Witnesses

[15]“One witness shall not rise against a man about any injustice or offense or sin concerning which he may be guilty; by the mouth of two or three

witnesses the matter shall be established.[†] [16]If an unjust witness rises against any man accusing him of impiety, [17]then both men in the controversy shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. [18]Thus the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is an unjust witness who has testified unjustly against his brother, [19]then you shall do to him in the manner he maliciously intended to do to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. [20]Then those who remain shall hear and be afraid, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. [21]Your eye shall not pity him: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Concerning Warfare

20 “Now if you go out to war against your enemies and see horse and rider and a people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God is with you who brought you up from the land of Egypt. [2]So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, the priest shall approach and speak to the people, [3]and he shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, today you are going out to war against your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of their face; [4]for the Lord your God is He who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.’ [5]Then the scribes shall speak to the people, saying, ‘What man is there who built a new house, but has not consecrated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the war, and a different man consecrate it. [6]Also what man is there who planted a vineyard, but has not enjoyed it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the war, and a different man enjoy it. [7]Then too, what man is there who is betrothed to a woman, but has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the war, and a different man marry her.’ [8]Now the scribes shall speak further to the people and say, ‘What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.’[†] [9]So it shall be, when the scribes finish speaking to the people, they shall establish rulers of the army to lead the people.

[10]“If you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. [11]If indeed they accept your offer of peace and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you

and obey you. [12]But if the city will not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. [13]Then the Lord your God will deliver it into your hands, and you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. [14]Besides the women, the household, all the cattle, and whatever is in the city, and all its spoil, you shall capture for yourself; and you shall eat all your enemies' booty, which the Lord your God gives you. [15]Thus you shall do to all the cities very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations. [16]But indeed, of the cities of these nations which the Lord your God gives you to inherit their land, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive; [17]but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite, in the manner the Lord your God commanded you; [18]lest they teach you to do all the abominations they did for their gods; and you sin against the Lord your God.

[19]"Now if you besiege a city for many days to make war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; but if you can eat from it, do not cut it down. Should a man use this tree in the field to go before you as a battering ram? [20]But the tree you know is not a tree for food, this you may destroy and cut down to build a bulwark against the city that makes war with you, until it is delivered over.

Unsolved Murders

21 "If anyone is found slain in the land the Lord your God gives you to inherit, and is fallen in the open field, and it is not known who killed him, [2]then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure the distance from the slain man to the surrounding cities. [3]Then it shall be the elder of the city nearest to the slain man will take a heifer from the oxen which has not been worked and pulled with a yoke. [4]The elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a rocky valley, neither plowed nor sown, and they shall hamstring the heifer there in the valley. [5]Then the priests, the Levites, shall come near, for the Lord your God chose them to be present for Him and to bless in His name; by their word every controversy and every assault shall be settled. [6]After this, all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer which was hamstrung in the valley. [7]Then they shall answer and say, ‘Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it. [8]Be merciful, O Lord, to Your people Israel, whom You redeemed from the land of Egypt, so there may be no bloodguiltiness among Your people Israel.’ Thus the blood shall atone for them. [9]And you shall put away the guilt of their innocent blood from among you, if you do what is good and pleasing before the Lord your God.

Women Captives

[10]“Now if you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands, and you take them captive, [11]and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, [12]then you shall bring her home to your house, and you shall shave her head and trim her nails. [13]You shall take the clothes of her captivity from her; and she shall remain in your house and mourn her father and mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and dwell with her, and she shall be your wife. [14]But it shall be, if you do not want her, then

you shall send her away free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you humbled her.

Firstborn Rights of Inheritance

[15]“Now if a man is married to two wives, one loved and the other hated, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the hated, and the firstborn son is of her who is hated,[†] [16]then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the true firstborn. [17]But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

A Rebellious Son

[18]“Now if a man should have a disobedient and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they chastened him, will not heed them, [19]then his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. [20]So they shall say to the men of his city, ‘This son of ours is disobedient and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ [21]Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones, and he shall die; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and the rest shall hear and be afraid.

[22]“Now if a man committed a crime under the sentence of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree,[†] [23]his body shall not remain

overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day; for he who is hanged on a tree is accursed of God; that you do not defile the land the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance.

22

“When you see your brother's young bull or his sheep wandering on the road, you should not ignore them; you shall certainly return them to your brother and restore them to him.[†] [2]But if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring them to your own house, and they shall remain with you until your brother seeks them; then you shall restore them to him. [3]You shall do the same with his donkey, or with his garment, or with any lost thing of your brother's which he lost and you found; you should not ignore them. [4]You shall not see your brother's donkey or his young bull fall down on the road, and ignore them; you shall surely help him lift them up again.

[5]“A woman shall not wear a man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God.[†]

[6]“If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young;[†] [7]you shall surely let the mother go and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and you prolong your days.

[8]“If you should build a new house, then you shall make a railing for your house, that you may not be guilty of manslaughter in your own house, if anyone happen to fall from it.[†]

[9]“You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield and the seed you sow and the fruit of your vineyard become unholy.[†] [10]You shall not plow with a young bull and a donkey together. [11]You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.

[12]“You shall make tassels on the corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself.[†]

Maintaining Sexual Purity

[13]“If any man takes a wife and dwells with her, and hates her,[†] [14]and lays reproachful words upon her, and brings a bad name on her, and says, ‘I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found she was not a virgin,’ [15]then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out the evidence of the young woman's virginity to the elders at the gate. [16]So the young woman's father shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he hates her. [17]Now he is laying reproachful words upon her, saying, “I found your daughter was not a virgin,” and yet these are the evidences of my daughter's virginity.’ And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. [18]Then the elders of that city shall take that man and discipline him; [19]and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days. [20]But if his word is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman, [21]then they shall bring out the young woman to the doors of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to

death with stones, and she shall die, because she did a foolish thing among the children of Israel, to commit fornication in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

[22]“If a man is found lying with a married woman, then you shall kill both of them—the man that lay with the woman and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel.

[23]“If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, [24]then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you. [25]But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then you shall kill only the man who lay with her. [26]But you shall do nothing to the young woman; there is in the young woman no sin deserving of death; for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and murders him, even so is this matter. [27]For he found her in the countryside, and the betrothed young woman cried out, but there was no one to come to her aid.

[28]“If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, [29]then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty silver two-drachma coins, and she shall be his wife, because he humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.

Exclusion from God's People

23 “A man shall not take his father's wife, nor uncover what is covered of his father's.

[2]“The eunuch and the castrated man shall not enter the assembly of the Lord. [3]The child of a prostitute shall not enter the assembly of the Lord.

[4]“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever,[†] [5]because they did not meet you with bread and water when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Mesopotamia to curse you. [6]Nevertheless, the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loved you. [7]You shall not address them with peaceful words and good wishes all your days forever.[†] [8]You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. [9]The sons of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord.

Guarding the Campsite

[10]“If you should go out to encamp against your enemies, then keep yourself from every evil thing. [11]If there should be any man among you who is not clean from a flow in the night, then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp. [12]But it shall be, when evening comes, he shall wash his body with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp. [13]Also there shall be a place outside the camp, and you shall

defecate there; [14]and you shall have a spike on your belt, and when you defecate outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your excrement. [15]For the Lord your God walks about in the midst of your camp to save you and to deliver up your enemy to you; therefore, your camp shall be holy, and no shameful matter shall be seen among you, and He turn away from you.

Other Laws

[16]“You shall not deliver to his lord the slave who fled from his lord to you. [17]He may dwell with you in the very place pleasing to him; you shall not afflict him. [18]There shall be no female prostitute among the daughters of Israel, or a male prostitute among the sons of Israel; there shall be no female temple prostitute among the daughters of Israel, and there shall be no male temple prostitute among the sons of Israel. [19]You shall not bring the wages of a prostitute or the price of a dog into the house of the Lord your God for any vowed offering, for both are an abomination to the Lord your God.

[20]“You shall not charge interest to your brother—interest on money or food or anything you lend out.[†] [21]You may charge interest to a foreigner, but you shall not charge interest to your brother, that the Lord your God may bless you in all your works in the land you are entering to inherit.

[22]“If you should make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. [23]But if you should abstain from vowing, it is not a sin to you. [24]That which proceeds from your lips you shall keep and do in the

manner you vowed your gift to the Lord your God; that which you spoke with your mouth.

[25]“If you enter into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hands, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain. [26]Now if you enter into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put any in your container.

Divorce and Remarriage

24 “If a man takes a wife and marries her, and it should be she finds no favor before him, because he found something shameful in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hands, and sends her out of his house,[†] [2]and she departs from his house and marries a different man, [3]and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce, and puts it in her hands, and sends her out of his house, or the latter man dies who took her as his wife, [4]then her former husband who divorced her cannot take her back to be his wife after she was defiled; because that is an abomination before the Lord your God; and you shall not defile the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Other Laws

[5]“If a man should take a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year and bring happiness to his wife whom he took.

[6]“No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge, for he takes one's living in pledge.

[7]“If a man should kidnap any of his brethren of the sons of Israel and mistreats him or sells him, then that kidnapper shall die; and you shall put away the evil from among you.

[8]“Take heed to yourself in an outbreak of leprosy that you carefully keep and do according to all the law, whatever the priests and Levites may proclaim to you, in the manner I commanded them; so you shall keep and do. [9]Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam on the way when you proceeded out of Egypt.

[10]“If you should lend your neighbor anything, you shall not enter his house to get his pledge. [11]You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. [12]Now if the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight. [13]You shall return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you; and it shall be for you an alms before the Lord your God.

[14]“You shall not withhold wrongfully the wage of the poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the resident aliens in your cities. [15]Each day you shall pay him his wage and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his hope on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you.

[16]“Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; each shall be put to death for his own sin.[†]

[17]“You shall not pervert judgment due the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge. [18]But you shall remember you were a servant in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore, I command you to do this thing.

[19]“If you should reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the poor and the resident alien and the fatherless and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the works of your hands. [20]If you pick olives, you shall not go back to glean what you left behind you; it shall be for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow; and remember, you were a servant in Egypt; therefore, I command you to do this. [21]Now if you should gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow. [22]So remember, you were a servant in the land of Egypt; therefore, I command you to do this thing.

25 “Now if there should be a dispute between men, and they come to judgment, and they judge and justify the one in the right but condemn the impious one, [2]then it shall be, if the impious man should deserve to be beaten, you shall set him before the judges, and one shall beat him before them, according to his impiety, with a certain number of blows. [3]Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be disgraced before you.

[4]“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.[†]

A Departed Brother

[5]“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and dwell with her.[†] [6]Then it shall be, the firstborn son she bears shall be named by the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. [7]But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, ‘My husband's brother does not want to raise up the name of his brother in Israel; my husband's brother did not wish to do so.’ [8]Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, ‘I do not want to take her,’ [9]then his brother's wife shall come before the elders, remove his brother's sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, ‘So they shall do to the man who will not build up his brother's house.’ [10]And his name shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal removed.’

The Enemy Amalek

[11]“If two men fight together, a man with his brother, and the wife of one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of the one attacking him and puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals, [12]then you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall not pity her.

[13]“You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. [14]You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. [15]You shall have a true and just weight and a true and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land the Lord your God is giving you as

an inheritance. [16]For all who do such things, all who behave unjustly, are an abomination to the Lord your God.

[17]“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt,[†] [18]how he met you on the way and cut off your rear guard, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God. [19]Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your God gives you rest from your enemies all around in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you will blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.

Offerings at Harvest

26 “And it shall be, when you come into the land the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, and you inherit it and dwell in it, [2]you shall take some of the first of all the produce of your land which the Lord your God gives you and put it in a basket, and go to the place the Lord your God will choose for His name to be called upon there. [3]Then you shall go to the one who is priest in those days and say to him, ‘I declare today to the Lord my God, I have come to the country the Lord swore to our fathers to give us.’ [4]Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hands and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. [5]So you shall answer and say before the Lord your God, ‘My father left Syria, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. [6]But the Egyptians maltreated us, humbled us, and laid hard tasks on us. [7]Then we cried out to the Lord God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and looked on our humility, our labor and our affliction. [8]So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great spectacles and with signs and wonders. [9]He brought us to this place and gave us this land, “a land flowing with milk and honey”; [10]and now, behold, I brought the firstfruits of the produce of the land You, O Lord, gave me.’ Then you shall set it before the Lord your God and worship there before the Lord your God. [11]So you shall rejoice in every good thing the Lord your God gave you and your house, you and the Levite and the resident alien among you.

[12]“Now if you should finish tithing all the tithe of the produce of your land in the third year, you shall give the second tithe to the Levite, the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow; and they shall eat within your cities and be filled. [13]Then you shall say before the Lord your God, ‘I cleared out the holy things from my house and also gave them to the Levite, the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments You commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. [14]I have not eaten any of them when in mourning, nor have I cleared out any of them for an unclean use, nor given any of them for the dead. I obeyed the voice of the Lord my God, and did according to all You commanded me. [15]Look down from Your holy habitation from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land You gave them, just as You swore to give our fathers, “a land flowing with milk and honey.” ’

The People of God

[16]“This day the Lord your God commands you to observe these ordinances and judgments; therefore, you shall be careful to do them with

all your heart and with all your soul.[†] [17]Today, you proclaimed God to be your God, and to walk in His ways, to keep His ordinances and judgments, and to obey His voice. [18]Also today, the Lord proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He said to you, that you should keep all His commandments, [19]and to set you high over all the nations; how He made you a name, a pride, and glorious, that you might be a holy people to the Lord your God, just as He said.”

Commandments Set in Stone

27 Now Moses with the elders of Israel ordered the people, saying, “Keep all these commandments I command you today. [2]Then it shall be, on the day you cross over the Jordan to the land the Lord your God gives you, you shall set up for yourselves large stones and plaster them with lime. [3]You shall write on the stones all the words of this law when you cross over the Jordan, at the time you enter the land the Lord God of your fathers is giving you, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey,’ in the manner the Lord God of your fathers told you. [4]Therefore it shall be, when you cross over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones on Mount Ebal, which I command you today, and you shall plaster them with lime. [5]Now there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them.[†] [6]You shall build with whole stones the altar of the Lord your God, and offer whole burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God. [7]You shall sacrifice peace offerings there, and shall eat and be filled and rejoice before the Lord your God. [8]Then you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law.”

[9]Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, “Be silent and listen, O Israel: This day you became the people of the Lord your God. [10]Therefore you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God, and do all His commandments and ordinances I command you today.”

Curses on Disobedience

[11]Then Moses commanded the people on that day, saying, [12]“These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people when you cross over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; [13]and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

[14]Then the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all Israel:

[15]‘Cursed is the man who makes a carved or molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.’ Then all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen!’

[16]‘Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[17]‘Cursed is he who changes his neighbor's boundaries.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[18]‘Cursed is he who makes the blind wander on a road.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[19]‘Cursed is he who perverts the judgment of a resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[20]‘Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife, because he uncovered what is covered of his father's.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[21]‘Cursed is he who lies with any cattle.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[22]‘Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[23]‘Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’ ‘Cursed is he who lies with the sister of his wife.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[24]‘Cursed is he who strikes his neighbor deceitfully.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[25]‘Cursed is he who takes a bribe to slay the innocent blood of a soul.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

[26]‘Cursed is every man who does not abide in all the words of this law to do them.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’[†]

The Blessings of Obedience

28 “Now it shall come to pass, as you cross the Jordan to the land the Lord your God gives you, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God to be careful and do all His commandments I command you today, then the Lord your God will set you high over all nations of the earth.[†] [2]Then all these blessings shall come upon you and find you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God: [3]Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. [4]Blessed shall be the offspring of your womb, the produce of your ground and the herds of your oxen, and the flocks of your sheep. [5]Blessed shall be your storehouses and your reserves. [6]Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. [7]May the Lord your God deliver your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. [8]The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand in the land the Lord your God gives you.

[9]“The Lord your God will establish you as a holy people to Himself, in the manner He swore to your fathers, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, and walk in His ways. [10]Then all nations of the earth shall see you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. [11]So the Lord your God shall increase you in good things: in the fruit of your womb, in the produce of your ground, and in the offspring of your cattle in the land the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. [12]The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heaven, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the works of your hands. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; and you shall rule over many nations, and they shall not rule over you. [13]So the Lord your God will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only and not beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God I command you today to keep and do

them. [14]You shall not transgress any of the words I command you this day to the right or the left, to go after different gods to serve them.

[15]“But it shall be, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God to keep and do all His commandments I command you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: [16]Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. [17]Cursed shall be your storehouses and your reserves. [18]Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the produce of your land, and the herds of your oxen and the flocks of your sheep. [19]Cursed shall you be when you go out, and cursed shall you be when you come in.

[20]“The Lord will send on you poverty, hunger, and consumption in all you set your hand to do, until He destroys you and lays you waste quickly, because of your evil habits in which you forsook Me. [21]The Lord will make death cling to you, until He consumes you from the land to which you are going as an inheritance. [22]The Lord will strike you with perplexity, fever, shivering, irritation, murder, blight, and mildew; these things shall pursue you until you perish. [23]The heaven over your head shall be brass, and the earth under you shall be iron. [24]May the Lord give dust as the rain of your land; and from heaven dirt shall come down on you until it wears you out and destroys you.

[25]“May the Lord give you over to slaughter before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and you shall be in dispersion among all the kingdoms of the earth. [26]Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of heaven and the beasts of the

earth, and no one shall frighten them away. [27]The Lord will strike you with the sores of Egypt on the buttocks, with furious itching and scratching from which you cannot be healed. [28]The Lord will strike you with madness, blindness, and confusion of mind. [29]You shall grope at noonday as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered all your days, and no one shall help you.

[30]“You shall take a wife, but a different man shall have her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. [31]Your young bull shall be slaughtered before you, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to help you. [32]Your sons and your daughters shall be given to a different nation, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no strength in your hand. [33]A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be oppressed and crushed all the days. [34]So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. [35]The Lord will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe sores which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

[36]“The Lord will bring you and the rulers whom you set over you to a nation neither you nor your fathers knew, and there you shall serve different gods of wood and stone. [37]There you shall become an obscure saying, a proverb, and a tale among all nations where the Lord will bring you.

[38]“You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. [39]You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor enjoy it; for the worm shall eat it. [40]You shall have olive trees throughout all your borders, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. [41]You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. [42]Blight shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land. [43]The resident alien among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. [44]He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

[45]“Moreover all these curses shall come upon and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed and wasted, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and ordinances which He commanded you. [46]So they shall be upon you as signs and wonders, and among your seed forever. [47]Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and a good heart, for the abundance of everything;[†] [48]therefore, you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He destroys you. [49]The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, [50]a nation ruthless in appearance which does not respect the elderly, nor is merciful to the young. [51]They shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the produce of your land; so as not to leave you grain, wine, or olive oil, or the herds of your oxen, or the flocks of your sheep, until they destroy you [52]and wipe

you out in all your cities, until your high and fortified walls in which you trust come down throughout all your land; and He will afflict you in all your cities the Lord your God gave you.

[53]“You shall eat the offspring of your womb, the flesh of your sons and your daughters the Lord your God gave you, in the distress and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. [54]The tender and very refined man among you will turn a grudging eye toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, [55]so as not to give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in your siege and desperate straits in which your enemies shall distress you in all your cities. [56]The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will turn a grudging eye toward the husband in her bosom, and upon her son and daughter, [57]and toward her placenta which came out from between her thighs and her child whom she might bear; for she will eat these secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you in all your cities.

[58]“If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law written in this book, to fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God,[†] [59]then the Lord will bring upon you and your seed extraordinary plagues—great and marvelous plagues—and evil and chronic diseases. [60]Moreover He will bring back on you all the evil pain of Egypt of which you were in dread, and they shall cling to you. [61]Also every sickness and every plague not written in this book of the law will the Lord bring upon you, until He

destroys you. [62]You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

[63]“Thus it shall be, in the manner the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be taken from off the land you go to inherit. [64]Then the Lord your God will scatter you among all the nations, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve different gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers knew. [65]But even among those nations He shall give you no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. [66]Your Life shall hang before your eyes; and you shall fear day and night, and you will not believe in your Life.[†] [67]In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’ because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight your eyes see. [68]Then the Lord will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, ‘You shall never see it again.’ There you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female servants, but no one will buy you.”

[69]These are the words of the covenant the Lord commanded Moses to establish with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

The Covenant in Moab

Now Moses called all the children of Israel and said to them, “You saw all the Lord did before you in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his

29 servants and to all his land—[†] [2]the great trials your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. [3]Yet the Lord your God has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day. [4]He also led you forty years in the desert. Your clothes did not grow old on you, and your sandals did not wear out on your feet.[†] [5]You did not eat bread, nor did you drink wine or strong drink, that you may know He is the Lord your God. [6]Then you came to this place; and Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us in war, and we struck them. [7]We took their land, and gave it as an inheritance to Reuben, to Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh. [8]Therefore heed all the words of this covenant, to do them, that you may understand all these things you are doing.

[9]“All of you stand today before the Lord your God: your chiefs, your elders, your judges and your teachers, all the men of Israel, [10]your wives and your offspring and the resident alien in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water, [11]that you may enter into the covenant of the Lord your God and into His oath the Lord your God makes with you today, [12]that He may establish you today as a people for Himself and be God to you, in the manner He told you, and in the manner He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [13]I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, [14]but with those with us here today before the Lord your God, as well as with those not with us here today [15](for you know we dwelt in the land of Egypt, and came through the

nations you passed by; [16]and you saw their abominations and idols among them—wood, stone, silver, and gold).

[17]“Surely there is not among you man, woman, family, or tribe whose mind turns away today from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations? And surely there is not among you a root bearing gall and bitterness?[†] [18]So it shall be, if one should hear the words of this curse and flatter himself in his heart, saying, ‘May holy things happen for me, even though I go in the wanderings of my heart’ —lest the sinner destroy the sinless along with him— [19]God will not be merciful to him; for then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse written in this book will cling to him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven.

[20]“So the Lord will separate him from all the children of Israel for evils, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this book of this law. [21]They will say, that is, the coming generation of your sons who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, and they see the plagues of that land and its diseases which the Lord sent upon it, [22]‘The whole land will be brimstone and burning salt; it will not be sown, nor will it bear, nor will any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and His wrath.’ [23]They and all the nations will say, ‘Why has the Lord done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?’ [24]Then they will say, ‘Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with their fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; [25]for they went and served different gods and worshiped

them, which they did not know, nor had He allotted to them. [26]Then the Lord was aroused in anger against that land, to bring on it all the curses written in the book of this law; [27]and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation and cast them into another land, as it is this day.' [28]The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.[†]

The Blessings of Repentance

30 "Now it shall be, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I set before you, and you will reflect in your heart among all the nations where the Lord your God scatters you, [2]and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice from your whole heart and from your whole soul, according to all I command you today, [3]that the Lord will heal your sins, have mercy on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God scattered you. [4]If any of you are scattered from one end of heaven to the other end, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there the Lord your God will bring you. [5]Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land your fathers inherited, and you shall have it as an inheritance. He will prosper and multiply you more than your fathers. [6]The Lord your God will purify your heart and the heart of your seed to love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul, that you may live.

[7]"Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. [8]As for you, you will once

again obey the voice of the Lord your God and do His commandments, whatever I command you today. [9]The Lord your God will take great care of you in all the work of your hands, in the offspring of your womb, in the produce of your land, and in the offspring of your cattle. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your fathers, [10]if you obey the voice of the Lord your God to keep and do all His commandments, ordinances, and judgments written in this book of the law, and if you return to the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul.

[11]“For this commandment I command you today is not too burdensome for you, nor is it far off.[†] [12]It is not in heaven above, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?’ [13]Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?’ [†][14]But the word is very near you, in your mouth, in your heart, and in your hands, that you may do it.[†]

[15]“See, I set before you today life and death, good and evil. [16]If you hear the commandments of the Lord your God I command you today, to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His ordinances and judgments, then you shall live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you go to inherit. [17]But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but go astray and worship different gods and serve them, [18]I announce to you today, you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land the Lord your God is giving you, into which you are crossing over the Jordan to inherit. [19]I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you: I set before you life and death, blessing and

cursing. Therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live [20]and love the Lord your God, obey His voice, and cling to Him. For this is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell in the land the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Joshua Leads the People

31 Now Moses finished speaking these words to the children of Israel. [2]Then he said to them, “I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the Lord said to me, ‘You shall not cross over this Jordan.’ [3]The Lord your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself is also crossing over before you, as the Lord said. [4]Then the Lord will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, and their land, when He destroyed them. [5]The Lord gave them over to you, and you will do to them as I commanded you. [6]Be valiant and strong, do not fear nor be afraid of them, nor be terrified before them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes before you and with you and among you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”[†]

[7]Then Moses called Joshua and said to him before all Israel, “Be valiant and strong, for you must go before this people to the land the Lord swore to their fathers to give them; and you shall cause them to inherit it. [8]But the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not be afraid, nor be terrified.”

Read the Law Every Seven Years

[9]So Moses wrote the words of this law in a book and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the Lord's covenant, and to the elders of the sons of Israel. [10]Then Moses commanded them on that day, saying, “At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the Year of Remission, at the Feast of Tabernacles, [11]when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place the Lord chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. [12]Gather the people together, men and women and offspring, and the resident alien within your cities, so they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and may hear and do all the words of this law; [13]and their sons who have not known it may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as they live in the land you cross over the Jordan to inherit.”

Final Word to Moses

[14]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, the day of your death is near; call Joshua, and stand at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony, and I shall give him My commandments.” So Moses and Joshua went to the tabernacle of testimony and stood at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony. [15]Now the Lord came down in a cloud and stood at the doors of the tabernacle of testimony; and the pillar of cloud stood at the doors of the tabernacle. [16]Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, you will sleep with your fathers; and this people will rise and commit fornication with the gods of the foreigners of the land where they go to be among them; and they will forsake Me and break My covenant I made with them.[†] [17]Then I shall be aroused in anger against them in that day; and I will forsake them and turn My face from them. So he shall be a prey, and many evils and troubles shall

find him; and he will say in that day, ‘These evils found me because the Lord my God is not with me.’ [18]So I will surely turn My face from them in that day because of all the evil they did, and because they turned to foreign gods.

[19]“Now therefore, write the words of this ode and teach it to the children of Israel, and put it in their mouths, that this song may be a testimony for Me among the children of Israel. [20]For I shall bring them to this good land I swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; and they shall eat and be satisfied. Then they will turn to foreign gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. [21]Then this ode will rise up and testify against them; for it will not be forgotten from their mouth, nor from the mouth of their seed, for I know the wickedness they do today, even before I brought them to the land I swore to give them.” [22]Therefore Moses wrote this ode on that day and taught it to the children of Israel. [23]Then Moses commanded Joshua the son of Nun and said, “Be valiant and strong; for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land the Lord swore to them; and He shall be with you.”

[24]So it was, when Moses completed writing all the words of this law in a book, and when they were finished, [25]he commanded the Levites who carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, [26]“Take the book of this law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and it shall be there as a testimony against you; [27]for I know your rebellion and stiff neck. For if while I am yet alive with you today, you have been rebellious against God, then how much more after my death? [28]Gather to me your chiefs, your elders, your judges, and your teachers, that I may speak these

words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to testify against them. [29]For I know that after my death you will become utterly lawless and turn aside from the way I commanded you. Then evil shall befall you in the latter days because you will do evil before the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the works of your hands.”

The Song of Moses

[30]So Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this ode, until they were ended:

32 “Take heed, O heaven, and I will speak;

And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

[2] Let my proverbial saying be awaited as the rain,

And let my words come down

As raindrops on the wild grass,

And as snowfall on the sown grass.

[3] For I invoke the Lord's name:

Ascribe greatness to our God.

[4] He is God, His works are true;

And all His ways are judgment,

A faithful God and without injustice;

Righteous and holy is the Lord.[†]

[5] “They sinned; the blameworthy children are not His,

A generation twisted and perverse.[†]

[6] Is this how you repay the Lord,

O foolish and unwise people?

Is He not your Father, who acquired you?

Has He not made and created you?[†]

7 “Remember the days of old,

Consider the years of many generations.

Ask your father, and he will tell you;

Your elders, and they will tell you:[†]

8 When the Most High divided the nations,

When He scattered the sons of Adam,

He set the boundaries of the nations

By the number of God's angels.

9 For the Lord's portion became the people of Jacob;

The allotment of His inheritance is Israel.

10 “He provided for him in the desert,

In thirst of heat in a waterless place.

He encircled him; He instructed him;

He guarded him carefully as the apple of His eye.

11 As an eagle covers its nest,

Yearns after its young,

Spreading out its wings, taking them up,

Carrying them on its back,

12 So the Lord alone led them,

And there was no foreign god with them.[†]

13 “He raised them on the strength of the land;

He fed them on the produce of the fields;

He suckled them on honey from the rock

And oil from the solid rock,[†]

14 Butter of oxen and milk of sheep,

With fat of lambs and goats,

Of sons of bulls and goats,

With the choicest wheat;

And you drank wine, the blood of grapes.

15 “So Jacob ate and was filled, and the beloved kicked;

He grew fat, he grew thick, he is obese.

Then he forsook God who made him

And stood back from God his Savior.

16 They provoked Me to wrath against foreign gods;

With their abominations they embittered Me.

17 They sacrificed to demons, and not to God,

To gods they did not know;

New ones, recent gods arrived,

Which their fathers did not know.[†]

18 You abandoned the God who begot you,

And forgot the God who nourished you.

19 “So the Lord saw it, and was jealous;

And He was provoked to anger by His sons and daughters.

20 Then He said, ‘I will turn My face from them,

And I will make known what their end will be;

For they are a perverse generation,

Sons in whom is no faith.[†]

21 They provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God;

They moved Me to anger by their idols;

But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation;

I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.[†]

22 For a fire is kindled in My anger,

And shall burn to the lowest Hades;

It shall consume the land with its produce

And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

23 ‘I will gather evils on them;

I will spend My arrows on them.

24 They shall be wasted with hunger,

Devoured by birds and incurable disease;

I will also send against them the teeth of wild animals

With the anger of things crawling on the earth.

25 The sword shall make them childless outside,

And fear from the inner chambers,

For the young man and virgin,

The nursing child with the elder of gray hairs.

26 I said, “I will scatter them;

I will make their memory cease from among men,”

27 But for the wrath of the enemy, lest they live long,

Lest their adversary make a joint attack,

Lest they should say, “Our hand is high;

And it is not the Lord who did all this.” ’

28 “For they are a nation void of counsel,

Nor is there understanding in them.

29 They were not wise to understand these things;

Let them be concerned for the coming time.

30 How could one chase a thousand

And two put ten thousand to flight

Unless God had sold them,

And the Lord delivered them up?[†]

31 For our God is not like their gods,

But our enemies are foolish.

32 For their vineyard is of the vineyard of Sodom,

And their vine is of Gomorrah;

Their grapes are grapes of gall;

Their clusters are bitter.

33 Their wine is the wrath of serpents,

And the incurable wrath of asps.

34 ‘Behold, is this not laid up in store with Me,

Sealed up among My treasures?

35 I shall repay on the day of vengeance;

In time, when their foot shall slip;

For the day of their calamity is at hand,

And is waiting, ready for them.’

36 “For the Lord will judge His people,

And have compassion on His servants;

For He sees them disabled

And left in distress and weakened.

37 The Lord said,

‘Where are their gods in which they trusted?

38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,

And drank the wine of their drink offerings?

Let them rise and help you

And be your defender.

39 ‘Now see, I, even I, am He,

And there is no God besides Me;

I kill and I make alive;

I wound and I heal;

Nor is there any who can deliver from My hands.[†]

[40] For I raise My hand to heaven,

And I swear by My right hand, and say,

“As I live forever,

[41] for I whet My sword like lightning;

And My hand takes hold on judgment.

I will render vengeance on My enemies,

And repay those who hate Me.

[42] I will make My arrows drunk from blood;

And My sword shall devour flesh

From the blood of the slain and the captives,

From the heads of the leaders of the enemy.” ’

[43] “Rejoice, O Heavens, together with Him,

And worship Him, all the sons of God;

Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people;

And let all the angels of God be strong with Him;

For He will avenge the blood of His sons

And render vengeance to His adversaries;

And the Lord will purify His people's land.”[†]

Moses’ Last Instructions

[44]So Moses wrote this ode on that day and taught it to the children of Israel. Then Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this law in the hearing of the people. [45]Now Moses finished speaking to all Israel; [46]and he said to them, “Take heed in your heart to all these words I testify among you today, which you shall command your sons to be careful to do—all the words of this law. [47]For it is not an empty word

for you, because it is your life; and because of this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you are crossing over the Jordan to inherit.”

[48]Then the Lord spoke to Moses on that day, saying, [49]“Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession;[†] [50]and die on the mountain you ascend and be added to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was added to his people; [51]because you disobeyed My word among the children of Israel during the Water of Contention at Kadesh in the Desert of Sin, and because you did not sanctify Me in the midst of the children of Israel. [52]Yet you shall see the land at a distance, though you shall not go there.”

The Last Blessing of Moses

33 Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death. [2]Thus he said:

“The Lord came down from Sinai
And appeared to us from Seir;
He hastened from Mount Paran
Along with myriads at Kadesh,
angels with Him at His right hand;[†]
[3] And He spared His people
And all the sanctified ones under Your hands;
And these are under You,
And received the law from His words[†]
[4] Which Moses commanded us,

A heritage of the congregations of Jacob.

[5] And there shall be a Ruler among the beloved people

When the rulers of the people are gathered,

Together with the tribes of Israel.[†]

[6] “Let Reuben live, and not die,

And let him be many in number.”

[7]This he said of Judah:

“Hear, O Lord, the voice of Judah,

And let him visit his people;

His hands will judge for him,

And may You be a help against his enemies.”[†]

[8]To Levi he said:

“Give to Levi, to the holy man, his Urim and Thummim,

Him whom they tested with testing,

Whom they reviled at the Water of Contention,

[9] Who says to his father and mother, ‘I have not seen you’;

Nor did he know his brothers or his own children;

They guarded Your oracles

And kept Your covenant.[†]

[10] They shall manifest Your judgments to Jacob

And Your law to Israel.

They shall lay incense when You are angry

Continually on Your altar.

[11] Bless his strength, O Lord,

And accept the works of his hands;

Bring down the loins of those who rise against him

And of those who hate him, so they rise not again."

12 To Benjamin he said:

"Beloved by the Lord, he shall dwell in hope,

And God shall overshadow him all his days;

And he rested between his shoulders."

13 To Joseph he said:

"Blessed of the Lord is his land,

Of the seasons of heaven, of the dew

And of the deep springs lying beneath,

14 And in due season of the produce of the solar cycle

And of the conjunction of the months,

15 Both from the top of the ancient mountains

And from the top of the everlasting hills;

16 And in due season of the fullness of the land

And the things acceptable to the One revealed in the Bush.

May these things come 'upon the head of Joseph,

And on the crown of the one glorified among his brothers.'[†]

17 His beauty is like the firstborn of a bull

And his horns like the horns of the unicorn;

With them He will gore nations together

Even to the ends of the earth.

They are the ten thousands of Ephraim,

And they are the thousands of Manasseh."

18 To Zebulun he said:

"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,

And Issachar in his tents.

[19] They shall annihilate nations,

And there you will call upon the Lord

And sacrifice a sacrifice of righteousness,

For the wealth of the sea shall suckle you,

And the trade of those dwelling by the sea.”

20To Gad he said:

“Blessed is He who enlarges Gad;

He rested as a lion

And crushed the arm and the head.

[21] He saw his firstfruit,

Because the land of the rulers was apportioned there,

When the rulers were gathered together

With the rulers of the people.

The Lord administered righteousness

And His judgments with Israel.”

22To Dan he said:

“Dan is a lion's cub,

And he shall leap from Bashan.”

23To Naphtali he said:

“Naphtali has an abundance of acceptable things,

And let him be full of blessing from the Lord.

He shall inherit the sea and the south.”

24To Asher he said:

“Blessed is Asher beyond sons,

And let him be acceptable to his brothers.

He shall dip his foot in olive oil.

25 His sandals shall be iron and bronze;

And as your days, so shall your strength be.

26 There is no one like the God of the Beloved,

Who rides upon heaven and who is your help,

And the Magnificent One of the firmament,[†]

27 And the Protection of the rule of God,

And who is under the strength of the everlasting arms.

He will cast out the enemy from before your face,

Saying, ‘Destroy.’

28 Then Israel shall dwell in hope,

Alone in the land of Jacob,

With grain and wine;

And heaven is cloudy with dew for him.

29 Blessed are you, O Israel.

Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord.

Your Helper will defend you as with a shield;

And the sword shall be your boast.

Your enemies shall speak falsely to you,

And you shall tread on their neck.”[†]

Moses’ Death on Mount Nebo

34 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho; and the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, 2 and all the land of Naphtali, and all the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the

Western Sea, [3]and the desert, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. [4]Then the Lord said to Moses, “This is the land I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your seed.’ I show it to your eyes, but you shall not go in there.”[†]

[5]So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab by the word of the Lord. [6]Then He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. [7]Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. [8]Then the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab at the Jordan near Jericho thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended.

[9]Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of understanding, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the sons of Israel heeded him and did as the Lord commanded Moses.[†] [10]Now there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,[†] [11]in all the signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, [12]and by all those great wonders and the mighty hand which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

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The Book of Joshua

Author—Traditionally ascribed to Joshua, whose name means “salvation.”

Date—Although the initial writing was done after entering Canaan, likely the work as is comes down to us from sixth-century BC sources.

Major Theme—*God is faithful to fulfill His promise to the children of Israel.* The Israelites will inherit the land of promise through (1) obedience to God's Law and His commands, and (2) Joshua's leadership and God's intervention. The failures are the result of Israel's disobedience.

Background—Under Joshua's leadership, the Israelites are poised to enter the promised land from the east side of the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea. Upon entering the land they would meet Canaannites and Amorites, who had settled there some 500 years previously and had an established system of city-states. The geography the Israelites would encounter consisted of both rugged, barren mountains and fertile farmland. The pagan religion of the Canaanites consisted of numerous gods and goddesses.

Outline

I. Conquest of the Promised Land (1:1–12:24)

    A. Command and preparation for the crossing of the Jordan (1:1–18)

    B. Reconnoiter of Jericho (2:1–24)

    C. Israel crosses the Jordan (3:1–17)

D. Reaffirmation of the Mosaic Covenant (4:1–5:16)

E. Defeat of many kings and cities (6:1–11:23)

F. Summary of Israel's conquests (12:1–24)

II. Division of the Land of Promise among the Israelites (13:1–22:34)

A. Command and God's promise regarding territory not yet conquered (13:1–14)

B. Territories of the Trans-Jordanian tribes (13:15–32)

C. Division of the territories west of the Jordan (14:1–22:34)

III. Settlement and Conclusion of Joshua's Ministry (23:1–24:33)

God's Command to Conquer Canaan

1 After the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, saying,[†] [2]“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, you and all this people, and cross over Jordan into the land I will give them.[†] [3]Every place on which you tread with your feet, I will give it to you, as I said to Moses.[†] [4]Your territories shall be the desert and Lebanon as far as the great river, the Euphrates River; and from the setting of the sun to the farthest sea. [5]No man shall be able to oppose you all the days of your life, and as I was with Moses, thus I will be also with you. I will not forsake you nor disregard you.

[6]“Be strong and courageous, for you will divide this land which I swore to your fathers to give them.[†] [7]Be strong, therefore, and courageous to guard yourself and to do as Moses My servant commanded you; then you will not turn away from them, to the right nor to the left. In this way, you will have understanding in whatever you do. [8]The book of this law shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may have the understanding to do all the things written therein. Then you will

both prosper, make your ways prosperous, and have understanding. [9]Behold, I have commanded you. Be strong and courageous. Do not be cowardly or fearful, for the Lord your God is with you in all things, wherever you go.”

Cross the River Jordan

[10]Then Joshua commanded the scribes of the people, saying,[†] [11]“Enter the midst of the people's camp and command the people, saying, ‘Prepare the supply of food, for yet three days you shall cross this Jordan and enter the land to possess what the Lord God of your fathers will give you.’ ”[†] [12]Then to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,[†] [13]“Remember the word of the Lord which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, ‘The Lord your God has caused you to rest and has given you this land.’ [14]Your wives, your children and your cattle shall dwell in the land He has given you; but you shall cross over well-armed before your brethren, everyone who is strong, and you shall fight by their side; [15]until the Lord your God has caused your brethren to rest, and you as well, and they have taken possession of the land which the Lord your God has given them. Then each of you shall depart to his inheritance which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan eastward.”

[16]Then they answered Joshua and said, “We will do all you command us to do, and we will go everywhere you send us. [17]We will heed you as we heeded Moses; only let the Lord our God be with you as He was with Moses. [18]But whatever man disobeys you and does not heed your words as you command him, let him die; but you be strong and courageous.”

The Two Spies

2 After this, Joshua the son of Nun sent out two young men from Acacia Grove to spy out the land, saying, "Go and see the land and Jericho." So the two young men went and entered Jericho; and they went into the house of a harlot named Rahab and lodged there.[†] [2]This was reported to the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come to spy on the land." [3]So the king of Jericho sent and spoke to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who came into your house last night; for they are here to spy on the land."[†]

[4]But the woman took the men and hid them, and she spoke to them, saying, "The men came to me; [5]but as the gate was being shut in the darkness, the men went out. I do not know where they went. Pursue them, if indeed you may overtake them." [6]But she led them to the roof and hid them in the stalk of flax she had piled together on the roof.

[7]So the men searched for them along the road to the Jordan, to the fords, and the gate was closed. Then it came to pass, when the men who pursued them went after them [8]and before the spies went to sleep, that she went to them on the roof [9]and said, "I know that the Lord gave you the land, for fear of you has fallen upon us. [10]For we heard that the Lord God dried up the Red Sea before you when you came out of the land of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and to Og, whom you utterly destroyed. [11]So when we heard it, we were amazed in our heart, and there was no longer any spirit in any of us because of your presence, for your God is in heaven above and on earth below.[†] [12]Now therefore, swear to me by the Lord God that as I showed you mercy, you shall also be merciful to me in my father's house,[†] [13]and capture alive

all my house: my father and mother, and my brothers, and everything they have, and deliver my soul from death.”[†]

The Oath

[14]Then the men said to her, “Our life for your life, even to death.” She then said, “When the Lord shall deliver the city to you, deal with me in mercy and truth.” [15]After this, she let them down through the window [16]and said to them, “Go away to the hill country, lest the pursuers happen to find you. Hide there for three days until your pursuers return from their search for you. Afterwards, you shall depart and go your way.”

[17]So the men said to her, “We will be without fault regarding this oath of yours. [18]For behold, we will come into a part of the city, and you will set a sign; you shall hang this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down. Then you shall gather yourself and your father and mother and your brothers into your father's house.[†] [19]Whoever shall go outside the door of your house, his guilt shall be upon him, and we will be free of this oath of yours. But we will be responsible for whoever is with you in your house. [20]But if anyone injures us or reveals these words of ours, we shall be free from this oath of yours.” [21]Then she said to them, “Let it be so according to your word.” So she sent them away.

[22]They departed and went to the hill country and remained there for three days; and the pursuers searched all the roads, but did not find them. [23]So the two young men returned and came down from the mountain. They crossed over to Joshua the son of Nun and told him everything that happened to

them. [24]They said to Joshua, “The Lord will deliver all the land into our hand, for everyone who inhabits that land cowers in fear because of us.”

Crossing the Jordan

3 Then Joshua rose early in the morning and departed from Acacia Grove; and he came to the Jordan and lodged there before crossing over.[†] [2]After three days, it came to pass that the scribes went through the camp [3]and commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord our God, and our priests and Levites who carry it, then you shall depart from your places; and you shall go after it;[†] [4]but there shall be a distance between you and it. You shall stand as much as two thousand cubits from it, and do not come near it, that you may understand the way you are to go; for you have not gone this way before.” [5]Joshua then said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” [6]Joshua also said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and go before the people.” So the priests took up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and went before the people.

[7]Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I shall begin to exalt you in the sight of all the children of Israel, so they will know that I shall be with you as I was with Moses.[ω] [8]Therefore now, command the priests who carry the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘As soon as you enter a part of the water of the Jordan, then you shall stand in the Jordan.’ ” [9]Joshua then said to the children of Israel, “Come here and hear the word of the Lord our God. [10]Hereby you shall know that the living God is among you and will utterly destroy before our face the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. [11]Behold the ark of

the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing the Jordan. [12]Choose for yourselves twelve men from the sons of Israel, one from each tribe. [13]Then it shall come to pass that when the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth rest in the water of the Jordan, the water of the Jordan will cease to flow, for the upstream water will stand still.”

[14]So the people left their tents to cross over the Jordan, and the priests carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord before the people. [15]Now when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord dipped in part of the water of the Jordan (now the Jordan overflowed all its banks about the time of wheat harvest), [16]then the upstream waters stopped flowing downstream, and a solid wall of water formed over a very great distance, as far as the region of Adam. The lower part came down to the Sea of Araba, the Salt Sea, until it came to a complete stop; and the people stood opposite Jericho.[†] [17]So the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all the children of Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the people crossed the Jordan.[†]

Memorial Stones

4 Now when all the people finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying,[†] [2]“Take men from the people, one from each tribe, [3]and command them, saying, ‘Take twelve prepared stones from the midst of the Jordan and carry these together with you. Put them in your encampment where you will set up camp tonight.’ ” [4]So among the sons of Israel, Joshua called twelve men of high repute, one from each tribe. [5]He said to them, “Draw near in front of me in the Lord's presence into the midst of the Jordan, and let each take up a stone and carry it on his shoulders, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, [6]so these might be an appointed sign for you continually, that when your son asks you tomorrow, saying, ‘What are these stones to you?’ [7]then you will declare to your son, saying, ‘The Jordan River dried up before the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth when it crossed over’; and these stones shall be a memorial for you, for the sons of Israel forever.”

[8]So the sons of Israel did as the Lord commanded Joshua; and they took twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the Lord directed Joshua, when the children of Israel had completely crossed over, and carried these stones with them into the encampment and set them there. [9]Then Joshua also set another twelve stones in the Jordan itself, in the place walked on by the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord. They are there to this day. [10]The priests who carried the ark of the covenant stood in the Jordan until Joshua had completed all the Lord commanded him to proclaim to the people; and the people hastened and crossed over.

[11]Then it came to pass, when all the people finished crossing over, that the ark of the covenant of the Lord crossed over, and the stones before them. [12]The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh also crossed over, well-armed before the sons of Israel, as Moses commanded them. [13]Forty thousand men armed for war crossed before the Lord for battle against the city of Jericho. [14]On that day, the Lord magnified Joshua before all the nation of Israel, and they feared him as long as he lived, as they did Moses.[†]

[15]Then the Lord spoke to Joshua saying, [16]“Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant of the testimony of the Lord to come up from the Jordan.” [17]So Joshua commanded the priests, saying, “Go out from the Jordan.” [18]Then it came to pass, when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stepped out from the Jordan and set their feet on land, the water of the Jordan returned to its place, and went as before over all its banks.

[19]Now the people went up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and the children of Israel camped at Gilgal in the region eastward from Jericho.[†] [20]Then Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones he took from the Jordan, [21]saying, “When your children ask you, ‘What are these stones?’ [22]then tell your children that Israel crossed the Jordan on dry land; [23]that the Lord our God dried up the water of the Jordan from before them until they all crossed over, as the Lord our God did to the Red Sea, which the Lord our God dried up before us until we crossed over; [24]that all the nations of the land might know that the power of the Lord is mighty; and that you might worship the Lord your God in every age.”

5 Then it came to pass, when the kings of the Amorites on the other side of the Jordan and the kings of the Phoenicians near the sea heard that the Lord God had dried up the Jordan River before the children of Israel when they crossed over, their minds fainted, they were panic-stricken, and there was no more sense left in them because of the presence of the children of Israel.

Circumcision at Gilgal

[2]At about this time, the Lord said to Joshua, “Make stone knives for yourself from a sharp rock, and sit down and circumcise the sons of Israel.”[†] [3]So Joshua made sharp stone knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at the place called the Hill of Foreskins. [4]In this manner, Joshua completely purified the sons of Israel, as many as were born at any time along the way and as many as were uncircumcised after they came out of Egypt. [5]Joshua circumcised all these. [6]For Israel lived in the Madbarite desert for forty-two years; therefore, most of their fighting men who came out of Egypt and who disobeyed the commandments of God were uncircumcised. Concerning these, He also determined that they would not see the land which the Lord swore to give to their fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey. [7]But in their place, He raised up their sons, whom Joshua circumcised because they were born during the journey and thus were uncircumcised. [8]So when they were circumcised, they rested there and stayed in the camp until they were healed. [9]Then the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, “Today I have removed the disgrace of Egypt from you.” Thus he called the name of that place Gilgal.[†]

[10]Then the children of Israel kept Pascha on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, to the west of Jericho, across the Jordan in the plain.[†ω] [11]They ate of the unleavened and new wheat of the land. [12]On this day, the manna ceased, after they ate from the wheat of the land. Thus, the children of Israel no longer had manna, for they enjoyed the fruits in the land of the Phoenicians in that year.

Captain of the Lord's Hosts

[13]Then it came to pass, when Joshua was at Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a sword drawn in his hand. So Joshua came near and said to him, "Are you for us or on the side of our adversaries?"[†] [14]He said to him, "I am now come, the chief captain of the host of the Lord." Then Joshua fell on his face upon the earth and said to him, "O Master, what do you command your servant?" [15]The chief captain of the Lord said to Joshua, "Loose the shoe from your feet; for the place on which you stand is holy."

The Defeat of Jericho

6 Jericho was enclosed and fortified, and no one went out of or into it. [2]Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Behold, I will deliver Jericho into your hand, its king and its army of soldiers who are mighty. [3]But place your soldiers around it, [4]and it shall come to pass that when you sound with the trumpet, let all the people shout together, and when they shout, the walls of the city shall fall by themselves; and all the people will enter, each rushing throughout the entire area of the city."

[5]So Joshua the son of Nun went to the priests[†] [6]and he spoke to them, saying, "Command the people to go around and surround the city, and let the men of war pass on armed before the Lord. [7]Let seven priests holding seven holy trumpets likewise pass by before the Lord, and let them signal vigorously; and let the ark of the covenant of the Lord follow after them.[†] [8]Let the men of war go in front; and let the priests be the rear guard behind the ark of the covenant of the Lord as they proceed, and sound the trumpets."

[9]Now Joshua gave a command to the people, saying, “Do not shout, nor let anyone hear your voice, until the day I myself tell you to shout, and then shout.” [10]So when the ark of the covenant of God went around the city, it immediately returned into the camp and lodged there. [11]Then on the second day, Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the covenant of the Lord. [12]Seven priests carried seven trumpets and went on before the Lord. The armed men followed after with the rest of the multitude behind the ark of the covenant of the Lord. Then the priests sounded the trumpets, and all the rest of the multitude encircled the city from close by, [13]then again went back to the camp. They did this for six days.

[14]On the seventh day, they rose early in the morning and went around the city six times.[†] [15]Then it came to pass that as they marched around the seventh time, the priests blew the trumpets, and Joshua said to the sons of Israel, “Shout, for indeed the Lord has handed over the city to you. [16]For the city shall be accursed by the Lord, it and whatever is in it. However, preserve Rahab the harlot and whatever is in her house. [17]But be very careful to keep yourself from what is accursed, lest you yourself consider to take from it what is accursed, and then you shall make the camp of the children of Israel a curse and destroy us. [18]But all the silver, the gold, the bronze or the iron shall be holy to the Lord and brought in to the treasury of the Lord.” [19]So the priests sounded the trumpets, and when the people heard the sound of the trumpets, all the people shouted together with a great and mighty shout. Then the entire wall fell round about, and all the people went into the city.

[20]Joshua put the city under a curse with the edge of the sword, and whatever was in it: from man to woman, from young man to old man, and

from calf to donkey. [21]Then Joshua said to the two young men who acted as spies, “Go into the house of the woman, and bring her out from there, and whatever she has.” [22]So the two young men who had spied out the city went into the house of the woman and brought out Rahab the harlot, her father and mother, and her brothers and kindred, and all she possessed. They set her outside the camp of Israel,[†] [23]and the city, with everyone in it, was set on fire; but the silver, the gold, the bronze, and the iron they brought into the treasury of the Lord.

[24]Thus Joshua kept alive Rahab the harlot and all the house of her father, and caused her to dwell in Israel to this very day, because she hid the spies Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.[†] [25]Joshua adjured Israel on that day before the Lord, saying, “Cursed be the man who rebuilds that city. He shall lay its foundation in his firstborn son, and he shall set up its gates with his youngest son.” Thus did Hiel from Bethel. He laid its foundation in Abiram, his firstborn son, and he set up its gates with Segub, his youngest surviving son.

[26]So the Lord was with Joshua, and his name was known throughout all the land.

The Defeat at Ai

7 But the children of Israel committed a great offense, for they kept back for themselves something from what was accursed. Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took something from what was accursed, and the Lord was very angry with the sons of Israel.[†] [2]Then Joshua sent men into Ai, which is near Bethel, saying, “Spy out Ai.” So the men went up, and spied out Ai. [3]After this, they

returned to Joshua and said to him, “Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and force the city to surrender. Do not lead all the people there, for they are few in number.” [4]Thus, about three thousand men went up, but they fled from the face of the men of Ai. [5]The men of Ai killed thirty-six of them and pursued them from the gate; and they crushed them on the steep slope. So the hearts of the people were terrified and became as water.

[6]Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the ground before the face of the Lord until evening, both he and the elders of Israel, and they put dust on their heads.[†] [7]Joshua said, “I beseech You, O Lord. Why did Your servant lead this people over Jordan to deliver them to the Amorite to destroy us? If only we had remained and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan. [8]What shall I say, since Israel turned his back before his enemy? [9]When the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land hear this, they will surround us and destroy us from off the land. Then what will You do for Your great name?”

Achan's Sin

[10]So the Lord said to Joshua, “Rise up. Why have you fallen upon your face? [11]The people sinned and transgressed the covenant I made with them; for they stole something from what was accursed and put it among their goods. [12]So the sons of Israel will be unable to stand against the face of their enemies. They will turn their backs before their enemies, because they are accursed; and I will not be with you until you remove the accursed thing from among you. [13]Rise up and sanctify the people; and tell them to be sanctified for tomorrow. Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘The accursed thing is among you. You shall not be able to stand against your enemies until

you remove the accursed thing from among you. [14]In the morning you shall all be gathered together by your tribes, and it shall come to pass that the tribe the Lord points out, you shall bring forward family by family. Then the family the Lord points out, you shall bring household by household. After this, the household the Lord points out, you shall bring man by man.[†] [15]So whoever is pointed out, he shall be burned with fire along with whatever he has, because he transgressed the covenant of the Lord and brought lawlessness in Israel.' "

[16]Now Joshua arose early in the morning and gathered the people tribe by tribe; and the tribe of Judah was pointed out. [17]Then he brought family by family, and the family of Zara was pointed out. After this, he brought man by man, [18]and Achan, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, was pointed out. [19]Thus, Joshua said to Achan, "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel today and make confession. Tell me what you did and hide nothing from me."

[20]So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. Thus and thus I did:[†] [21]I saw a beautiful, multicolored garment in the spoil and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of fifty shekels of gold. I desired them and took them. Behold, they are hidden in the ground in my tent, and the silver is concealed under them."[†] [22]Then Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent in the camp. These things were hidden in the tent, with the silver under them. [23]They carried them from the tent; and they brought them to Joshua and the elders of Israel and placed them before the Lord.

[24]After this, Joshua took Achan the son of Zerah and led him up to the Valley of Achor, along with his sons and daughters, and his calves, and all

his donkeys and sheep, and his tent and all his belongings. Thus he led them all to the Valley of Achor.[†] [25]And Joshua said to Achan, “Why did you destroy us? May the Lord destroy you this very day.” Then all Israel stoned him with stones; [26]and they put over him a great heap of stones, and the Lord ceased from the wrath of his anger. Therefore and to this day, the place is named the Valley of Achor.

The Destruction of Ai

8 The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid, nor be cowardly. Take all the men of war with you and arise, go up to Ai. Behold, I have given the king of Ai and his land into your hands. [2]You shall do to Ai as you did to Jericho and its king, and you will plunder for yourself the spoil of its cattle. Prepare for yourself an ambush from behind the city.”

[3]So Joshua arose along with all the people of war to go up to Ai. Then Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men and sent them by night. [4]He commanded them, saying, “You shall lie in ambush behind the city. Do not be far from the city, and all of you be ready. [5]But I and everyone with me will approach the city, and it shall come to pass that as the inhabitants of Ai come out to meet us, we at first shall flee from their face. [6]Then as they come out after us, we will draw them away from the city. They will say, ‘They are fleeing from us as before.’ [7]Then you shall rise up from the ambush and go into the city. [8]You shall do according to this word. Behold, I have commanded you.” [9]So Joshua sent them out; and they went to the ambush site and waited between Bethel and Ai, westward of Ai.

[10]Then Joshua rose early in the morning and visited the people; and he and the elders went up before the people to Ai. [11]All the men of war also went up with him; and they proceeded and came opposite the city eastward. [12]But the ambush was on the west side of the city.

[13]Then it came to pass that when the king of Ai saw it, he hurried out and immediately went to meet them in battle, he and all the people with him. But he did not know that an ambush was set against him behind the city. [14]So Joshua and Israel saw and retreated from before them. [15]They pursued after the sons of Israel, but were drawn further away from the city. [16]There was no one left in Ai who did not pursue after Israel. They left the city open and pursued after them.

[17]Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Stretch out your hand with the spear in your hand toward the city, for I have given it into your hands; and the ambush will rise up quickly from their place.” So Joshua stretched out his hand with the spear toward the city,[†] [18]and when he stretched out his hand, those in ambush rose up quickly from their place and went into the city. They seized it and quickly set the city on fire. [19]Then the inhabitants of Ai turned to look behind them and saw smoke rising from the city toward heaven. They no longer had any place to flee this way or that way. [20]Then Joshua and all Israel saw that the men in ambush took the city, and that smoke from the city went up toward heaven; and they turned and struck down the men of Ai. [21]These came out from the city to meet them, and they were in the midst of this army, some on this side and some on that side. The army struck them down until there was not one of them left who survived and escaped.[†] [22]But they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua. [23]Thus, when the

sons of Israel ceased killing all those in Ai who were in the plains and in the mountain on the slope, where they pursued them to the end, then Joshua returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.

[24]Those who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand—all the inhabitants of Ai. [25]But the cattle and the spoils in the city, everything which the sons of Israel took as spoils, they did according to the ordinance of the Lord, in the manner the Lord commanded Joshua. [26]Then Joshua burned the city with fire; he made it an uninhabited heap forever, even to this day. [27]The king of Ai was hanged on a forked tree, and he remained on the tree until evening. When the sun went down, Joshua gave orders, and they took down the body from the tree and cast it into a pit. Then they heaped a pile of stones over him that remains to this day.

9 When the kings of the Amorites on the other side of the Jordan, and those in the hills and in the lowland, and in all the coasts of the Great Sea, and those near Lebanon, and the Hittites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Amorites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites heard what happened, [2]they all came together in one place to war against Joshua and Israel.

Israel Reaffirms the Covenant

[3]Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal,[†] [4]which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the sons of Israel as written in the Law of Moses concerning an altar of whole stones, upon which an iron tool should not be laid. There they offered whole burnt offerings to the Lord, and a sacrifice of peace offering. [5]Joshua also wrote on

stones the second law of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the sons of Israel.[†] [6]All Israel and their elders and judges and their scribes also passed by on each side of the ark. Then the priests and the Levites took up the ark of the covenant of the Lord. The resident aliens and those born among them, half of them stood near Mount Gerizim, and half of them near Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded when he blessed the people the first time. [7]Thus after this, Joshua read all the words of this law, the blessings and the curses, according to everything written in the Law of Moses. [8]There was not a word from everything Moses commanded Joshua that Joshua did not read in the ears of all the assembly of the children of Israel, to the men, women, and children, and to the resident aliens who came with Israel.

Deception of the Gibeonites

[9]When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard everything the Lord did to Jericho and Ai,[†] [10]indeed they also devised a crafty plan. So they went and supplied themselves with provisions and prepared themselves. They took old sacks on their shoulders and old, torn, and patched bottles of wine. [11]The upper part of their shoes and sandals were old and crudely patched on their feet; and the clothing they wore was worn out. The bread of their provision was dry, dirty, and moldy. [12]Then they came to Joshua at Israel's camp in Gilgal and said to Joshua and Israel, “We have come from a far land. Now then, make a covenant with us.” [13]The children of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you live among us. How then can I make a covenant with you?‘ [14]So they replied to Joshua, “We are your servants.” Joshua then said to them, “Who are you, and where do you come from?” [15]So they said, “Your servants have come from a very distant land in the name of the Lord your God; for we

heard of His name, and everything He did in Egypt, [16]and everything He did to the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon and to Og the king of Bashan, who dwelled in Ashtaroth and Edrei.

[17]“So when we heard this, our elders and all those who inhabited our land spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions for yourselves for the road, and go to meet them and say to them, “We are your servants. Now then, make a covenant with us.’ ” [18]These are the loaves of bread, and we took them hot for our journey on the day we left to come to you; but now they are dried and have become moldy. [19]These are the wineskins we filled when new; but they are torn, and our clothing and shoes are old because of the very long journey.” [20]Then the rulers took some of their provisions, but they did not inquire of the Lord. [21]Joshua then made peace with them and established a covenant to keep them safe; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

[22]Now it came to pass that three days after they made a covenant with them, they heard that they were near neighbors and that they dwelt among them. [23]Then the children of Israel departed and came to their cities. Their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth, and the city of Kirjathjearim. [24]The sons of Israel did not fight with them, because all the rulers had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; but all the congregation complained against the rulers. [25]So the rulers said to all the congregation, “We swore an oath to them by the Lord God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. [26]This is what we will do. We will capture them alive and keep them safe, so no wrath will come upon us because of the oath we swore to them. [27]They

shall live, but they shall be woodcutters and water-carriers for the entire congregation, as the rulers direct them."

[28]Thus Joshua summoned them together and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived me, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are fellow-countrymen of those who dwell among us? [29]Now therefore, you are cursed, and there shall not fail to be a servant nor a woodcutter among you to serve me and my God." [30]So they answered Joshua, saying, "It was reported to us what the Lord your God ordered His servant Moses, to give you this land and to destroy us and all who dwell in it from before you. Thus we did this thing, because we feared greatly for our lives before you. [31]Now behold, we are in your hands, do to us as it is pleases you and as it seems good to you."

[32]So they did this to them in this way, and Joshua delivered them on that day from the hands of the children of Israel; and they did not kill them. [33]On that day, Joshua appointed them to be woodcutters and water-carriers for the entire congregation and for the altar of God. Therefore, the inhabitants of Gibeon became woodcutters and water-carriers for the altar of God until this very day, and for the place the Lord chose for Himself.[†]

Defeat of the Amorites

10 When Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and utterly destroyed it; and that as he had done to Jericho and its king, he did also to Ai and its king; and that the inhabitants of Gibeon by their own accord had come over to Joshua and Israel, [2]then they feared greatly for themselves, for the king knew that Gibeon was a great city, as one of the mother-cities, and that all her men were mighty.

[3]So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, [4]“Come up to me and help me; and we will go to war against Gibeon, for they went over of their own accord to Joshua and the children of Israel.” [5]The five kings of the Jebusites: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, they and all their people, went up and besieged Gibeon and forced it to surrender. [6]Then the inhabitants of Gibeon sent to Joshua in the camp of Israel at Gilgal, saying, “Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly. Help us and rescue us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered together against us.”[†]

[7]So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all his men of war, everyone mighty in strength. [8]For the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hands. Not one of them shall remain before you.” [9]Then Joshua came upon them suddenly, for he had marched all night from Gilgal. [10]The Lord routed them from the face of the sons of Israel, and the Lord crushed them with a great destruction at Gibeon. They pursued them on the road heading to Beth Horon and slew them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. [11]But as they fled from the face of the sons of Israel, on the descent of Beth Horon, the Lord cast down hailstones on them from heaven as far as Azekah. More died from the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword in the battle.[†]

The Sun Stands Still

[12]Then Joshua spoke to the Lord on the day God delivered the Amorites into the hands of Israel, when he crushed them in Gibeon. They were crushed before the face of the sons of Israel, for Joshua said:

“Let the sun stand still over Gibeon,

And the moon over the valley of Ajalon.”[†]

[13] So the sun and moon stood still

Until God brought vengeance against their enemies.

The sun stood still in the midst of heaven

And did not set in the west until the end of one day.

[14]There was no day like that day either before or after, that God should hear a man, because the Lord joined in war with Israel.[†]

[15]Then those five kings fled, and hid in the cave at Makkedah. [16]So it was reported to Joshua, saying, “The five kings were found hiding in the cave in Makkedah.” [17]Joshua said, “Roll stones against the mouth of the cave and set men to guard them. [18]As for you, do not stay there; but pursue your enemies and attack their rear guard. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the Lord our God will deliver them into our hands.” [19]Thus it came to pass that when Joshua and the sons of Israel ceased to strike them in an overwhelming slaughter, those who escaped took refuge in the fortified cities. [20]Then all the people returned safely to Joshua at Makkedah, and not one of the sons of Israel grumbled with his tongue.

[21]Then Joshua said, “Unblock the cave and bring out these five kings from the cave.” [22]So they brought out the five kings from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish,

and the king of Eglon. [23]When they brought them to Joshua, he called together all Israel and the leaders of the army who went with him, saying, “Come forward and put your feet on their necks.” So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks. [24]Then Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid of them, nor be fearful. Be courageous, for the Lord will do thus to all your enemies against whom you wage war.” [25]After this, Joshua put them to death and hanged them on five trees. They hung on the trees until evening. [26]Then it came to pass that towards sunset Joshua gave orders, and they took them down from the trees and cast them into the cave where they had fled for refuge. They rolled stones over the cave which remain to this day.

[27]Then they took Makkedah that day and struck it with the edge of the sword. They utterly destroyed every living thing in it. No one was spared or allowed to escape. So they did to the king of Makkedah as they had done to the king of Jericho.

Victory in the Southland

[28]Then Joshua and all Israel with him departed from Makkedah to Libnah and besieged Libnah. [29]The Lord gave it into the hands of Israel. They took it and its king and destroyed it with the edge of the sword, along with every living thing in it. Nothing was spared or allowed to escape. So they did to its king as they had done to the king of Jericho.

[30]After this, Joshua and all Israel with him departed from Libnah to Lachish, and encamped around it and besieged it. [31]The Lord also gave Lachish into the hands of Israel. On the second day, they took it and destroyed it with the edge of the sword. They utterly destroyed it, as they had

done to Libnah. [32]Then Horam the king of Gezer marched up to help Lachish, but Joshua smote him and his people with the edge of the sword, until not one of them was spared or allowed to escape.

[33]Then Joshua and all Israel with him departed from Lachish to Eglon, and encamped around it and besieged it. [34]So the Lord gave it into Israel's hand; and they took it on that day and destroyed it with the edge of the sword. They utterly destroyed every living thing in it, as they had done to Lachish.

[35]After this, Joshua and all Israel with him departed to Hebron and encamped around it. [36]He struck it with the edge of the sword, along with every living thing in it. No one was spared. They destroyed it and everything in it, as they had done to Eglon.

[37]Then Joshua and all Israel returned to Debir and encamped around it. [38]They took it, its king, and its villages, and struck it with the edge of the sword. They utterly destroyed it, along with every living thing in it. They spared nothing in it, and as they had done to Hebron and its king, so they did to Debir and its king.

[39]After this, Joshua smote all the land of the hill country, and the South, and the plains of the land, and Asedoth, and her kings; and not one of them was spared. They utterly destroyed every living thing, as the Lord God of Israel commanded: [40]from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza, and all of Goshen, as far as Gibeon. [41]Joshua smote their kings and their land once for all, because the Lord God of Israel was fighting for Israel.

Victory in the North

11 But when Jabin the king of Hazor heard this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, [2]to the kings from the north in the mountains, and in the plain south of Chinneroth in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, [3]to the Canaanites in the east and the west: the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. [4]They and their kings with them, as many in number as the sand of the sea, went out with a great many horses and chariots. [5]All these kings came together to meet and camp together by the waters of Merom to war against Israel.

[6]Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Fear not before their presence, for tomorrow at this hour, I will deliver them to you and put them to flight in the sight of Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.”[†] [7]So Joshua and all the people of war went against them suddenly at the waters of Merom and attacked them in the hill country. [8]The Lord delivered them into the hands of Israel, and they defeated and chased them to Sidon, the Great Sidon, to Brook Misrephoth, and eastward to the Valley of Mizpah. They attacked them until there were no survivors. [9]Thus Joshua did to them as the Lord commanded him. He hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

[10]At that time, Joshua returned and seized Hazor and its king; for Hazor ruled over all these kingdoms in previous times. [11]They put to death every living thing in it with the sword. They utterly destroyed them all, leaving no one alive, and set Hazor on fire. [12]Joshua captured all the cities of their kingdoms and their kings, and put them to death by the edge of the sword. They utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord ordered them.

[13]But Israel did not burn any of the fortified cities. Joshua only burned down Hazor. [14]The children of Israel took all its spoils for themselves, and they completely destroyed everyone with the edge of the sword, until there were no survivors. [15]As the Lord ordered his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He did not deviate from all that Moses commanded him.

A Summary of Conquest

[16]After this, Joshua took all the hill country of the land, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the plains of the land, the land to the west, the mountain of Israel, the low country [17]toward the mountain, from Mount Halak to the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad and the plains of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He seized all their kings, took them away, and put them to death. [18]Joshua waged war with these kings for many days, [19]and there was not a city Israel did not take. They took them all in battle. [20]For it was of the Lord to harden their heart to wage war against Israel, that they might be utterly destroyed and be shown no mercy, but that they might be utterly destroyed, as the Lord said to Moses.[†]

[21]At that time, Joshua came and utterly destroyed the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the nation of Israel, and from all the mountains of Judah, including their cities. Joshua utterly destroyed them. [22]No Anakim remained in the midst of the children of Israel, but only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod. [23]So Joshua took all the land, as the Lord commanded Moses, and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel by division, according to their tribes. Then the land rested from war.[†]

The Victories of Moses

12 Now these are the kings of the land whom the sons of Israel put to death, and whose land they inherited beyond the Jordan in the east, from the valley Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the land of Araba in the east.[†] [2]These kings were Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon and ruled from Aroer, which is in the valley, over part of the valley and half of Gilead toward Jabok, the border of the sons of Ammon, [3]and Araba towards the sea of Chinneroth to the east, and as far as the Sea of Araba (the Salt Sea) from the east, the way toward Beth Jeshimoth, and from Teman below Ashdoth Pisgah; [4]and Og, king of Bashan, who remained from the giants who dwelt in Ashtaroth and Edrei, [5]and who ruled from Mount Hermon and from Salcah, and all Bashan as far as the borders of the Geshurites, and the Maachathites and half of Gilead, to the borders of Sihon the king of Heshbon. [6]Moses the servant of the Lord and the sons of Israel struck them down, and Moses gave them as a possession to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

The Victories of Joshua

[7]Now these are the kings of the Amorites whom Joshua and the sons of Israel put to death on the other side of the Jordan by the sea of Baal Gad in the plain of Lebanon, and as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir; and Joshua gave this to the tribes of Israel to inherit according to their portion, [8]in the mountain and in the plain, in Araba and in Ashdoth, in the desert and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. [9]The kings of these were the king of Jericho, the king of Ai, which is near Bethel, [10]the king of Jerusalem, the king of

Hebron, [11]the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, [12]the king of Eglon, the king of Gezer, [13]the king of Debir, the king of Geder, [14]the king of Hormah, the king of Arad, [15]the king of Libna, the king of Adullam, [16]the king of Makkedah, the king of Bethel, [17]the king of Tappuah, the king of Hepher, [18]the king of Aphek, the king of Lasharon, [19]the king of Madon, the king of Hazor, [20]the king of Shimron Meron, the king of Achshaph, [21]the king of Taanach, the king of Megiddo, [22]the king of Kedesh, the king of Jokneam in Carmel, [23]the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, the king of the people of Gilgal, [24]and the king of Tirzah—all these kings equaled thirty-one.

The Remaining Inheritance

13 Now Joshua was old and advanced in days, and the Lord said to Joshua, “You are advanced in days, and much land remains to inherit.[†] [2]The remaining land is the territories of the Philistines, the Geshurites, and the Canaanites; [3]from Sihor, east of Egypt, as far as the borders of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, the Ekronites; and also the Avites; [4]from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorites; [5]the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; [6]all the inhabitants of the mountains, from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth, and all the Sidonians—them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. [7]Now therefore divide this land by lot to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe of Manasseh; from the Jordan as far as the Great Sea westward, you will give this to them, with the Great Sea as the boundary.”

Land East of the Jordan

[8]But to the two tribes, the Reubenites and the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Moses gave an inheritance beyond the Jordan. Moses the servant of the Lord gave it to them eastward, [9]from Aroer which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the city in the midst of the valley, and the town in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon; [10]all the cities of Sihon, the king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; [11]Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites or the Maachathites, all Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salcah; [12]all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for Moses had defeated and cast out these. [13]Nevertheless, the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day. [14]Only the tribe of Levi he had given no inheritance, because their inheritance is the Lord God of Israel, as the Lord said to them. So this was the division Moses distributed to the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab, on the other side of the Jordan towards Jericho.

Land of Reuben

[15]Now Moses had given an inheritance to the tribe of Reuben according to their families. [16]Their territories were from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the city in the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba;

[17]Heshbon and all the cities in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, and Beth Baal Meon, [18]Jahaza and Kedemoth, Mephaath, [19]Karjathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the mountain of the valley, [20]and Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth— [21]and all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses had struck with the princes of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who were princes of Sihon dwelling in the country. [22]The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. [23]The border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities, and their villages.

Land of Gad

[24]Moses also had given an inheritance to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. [25]Their boundary lines were Jazer, all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which is before Rabbah, [26]and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, [27]and in the valley Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as its border, as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward. [28]This is the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities, and their villages.

Land of (East) Manasseh

[29]Moses had also given an inheritance to the half tribe of Manasseh according to their families. [30]Their boundary was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities; [31]half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families.

[32]These are the areas Moses had distributed as an inheritance beyond the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward.

Land Divided West of Jordan

14 These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. [2]Their inheritance was by lot, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Joshua for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. [3]For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. [4]For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim; and they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with common-lands for their livestock and their property. [5]As the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

Hebron Given to Caleb

[6]Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said to him, “You know what the Lord said to

Moses the man of God concerning myself and you in Kadesh Barnea. [7]For I was forty years old when Moses the servant of God sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as he wished,[†] [8]but my brothers who went up with me turned aside the heart of the people, while I continued to follow the Lord my God. [9]So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘The land on which you set foot shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you continued to follow the Lord our God.’ [10]Now the Lord has sustained me, as He said, these forty-five years, since the Lord spoke this word to Moses, and Israel wandered in the desert; and now behold I am eighty-five years old today. [11]I am still as strong today as when Moses sent me, as strong now to go out and come in for war. [12]Now therefore, I ask you for this mountain, as the Lord said in that day, since you heard this word in that day. For now the Anakim are there with large and fortified cities; therefore, if the Lord is with me, I will utterly destroy them, as the Lord said to me.”

[13]So Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the Son of Jephunneh, the son of Kenez, as an inheritance. [14]Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite to this day, because he followed the command of the Lord God of Israel. [15]But the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba, the capital of the Anakim. Then the land rested from war.

The Land for Judah

15 So this was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families: The border of Edom at the Desert of Zin southward was the extreme southern boundary. [2]Their southern border began at the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. [3]Then it went out to the southern side of the Ascent of Akrabbim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa. [4]From there it passed toward Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This is their southern border.

[5]The east border was the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan, and the border on the northern quarter began at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. [6]The border went up to Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. [7]Then the border went up toward Debir from the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at En Rogel. [8]The border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the Jebusite city (which is Jerusalem). The border went up to the top of the mountain that lies before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the Valley of Rephaim northward. [9]Then the border went around from the top of the hill to the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and extended to the cities of Mount Ephron. Then the border went around to Baalah (which is Kirjath Jearim). [10]Then the border turned from Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (which is Chesalon), went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed on to Timnah. [11]The border went out to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border went around to Shicron, passed along to Mount Baalah, and extended to Jabneel; and the border ended at the sea.

[12]The west border was the coastline of the Great Sea. This is the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families.

Caleb Occupies Hebron and Debir

[13]Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, namely, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak).[†] [14]Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. [15]Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher). [16]Then Caleb said, “He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife.” [17]So Othniel the son of Kenez, the younger brother of Caleb, took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. [18]Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you wish?” [19]She answered, “Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water.” So he gave her the upper spring and the lower springs.

Cities of Judah

[20]This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families. [21]The cities at the limits of the tribe of the children of Judah, toward the border of Edom in the South, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, [22]Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, [23]Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, [24]Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, [25]Hazor, Hadattah, Kerioth, Hezron (which is Hazor), [26]Amam, Shema, Moladah, [27]Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, [28]Hazar, Shual,

Beersheba, Bizjothjah, [29]Baalah, Ijim, Ezem, [30]Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, [31]Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, [32]Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: twenty-nine cities with their villages.

[33]In the lowland: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, [34]Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, [35]Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, [36]Sharaim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages; [37]Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, [38]Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, [39]Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, [40]Cabbon, Lahmas, Kithlish, [41]Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages; [42]Libnah, Ether, Ashan, [43]Jiphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, [44]Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages; [45]Ekron, with its towns and villages; [46]from Ekron to the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages; [47]Ashdod with its towns and villages, Gaza with its town and villages—as far as the Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea with its coastline.

[48]In the mountain country: Shamir, Jattir, Sochoh, [49]Dannah, Kirjath Sannah (which is Debir), [50]Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, [51]Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages; [52]Arab, Dumah, Eshean, [53]Janum, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, [54]Humtah, Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their villages; [55]Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, [56]Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, [57]Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages; [58]Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, [59]Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages; [60]Theco and Ephratha (which is Bethlehem), and Phagor and Aetan and Culon and Tatam and Thobes and Carem and Galem and Thether and Manocho: eleven cities and their villages; [61]Kirjath Baal (which is Kirjath Jearim) and Rabbah: two cities with their villages.

[62]In the desert: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, [63]Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En Gedi: six cities with their villages.

[64]As for the Jebusites who dwelled in Jerusalem, the sons of Judah were not able to destroy them. So the Jebusites dwell in Jerusalem until this day.

The Land of Ephraim and (West) Manasseh

16 The lot fell to the children of Joseph from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the desert that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel, [2]then went out from Bethel to Luz, passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, [3]and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to Gezer; and it ended at the sea. [4]So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

Ephraim

[5]The border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was thus: The border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper Beth Horon. [6]The border went out toward the sea on the north side of Michmethath; then the border went around eastward to Taanath Shiloh, and passed by it on the east of Janohah. [7]Then it went down from Janohah to Ataroth and Naarah, reached to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan. [8]The border went out from Tappuah westward to the Brook Kanah, and it ended at the sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families. [9]The separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the

cities with their villages. [10]But Ephraim did not destroy the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer, and the Canaanites dwell among Ephraim to this day, until Pharaoh the king of the Egyptians came and took it and burned it with fire. They massacred the Canaanites and the Perizzites and those who dwelt in Gezer, and Pharaoh gave it to his daughter as a dowry.[†]

West Manasseh

17 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph: namely for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore, he was given Gilead and Bashan. [2]There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families; for the children of Abiezer, the children of Helek, the children of Asriel, the children of Shechem, the children of Hepher, and the children of Shemida; these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families.

[3]But Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. [4]They came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, “The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.” Therefore, according to the commandment of the Lord, he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers. [5]Ten shares fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side of the Jordan, [6]because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

[7]Now the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, which lies east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah. [8]Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim. [9]The border descended to the Brook Kanah, southward to the brook. These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook; and it ended at the sea. [10]Southward it was Ephraim's, northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea was its border. Manasseh's territory was adjoining Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. [11]In Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions. [12]Now the sons of Manasseh were not able to destroy these cities completely. So the Canaanites came to dwell in that land. [13]Thus when the sons of Israel grew strong, they subjected the Canaanites, but did not utterly destroy them.

Ephraim and West Manasseh Want More Land

[14]Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, “Why did you give us only one lot and one share to inherit? For I am a great many people, and God has blessed me.”[†] [15]So Joshua answered them, “If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you.” [16]But the children of Joseph said, “The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those of Beth Shean and its towns and of

the Valley of Jezreel.” [17]Then Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, “You are a great people, and have great power. You shall not have only one lot, [18]but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong.”

The Rest of the Land Divided

18 Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of testimony there; and they subdued the land.[†] [2]But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. [3]Then Joshua said to the children of Israel, “How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you? [4]Pick out from among you three men for each tribe, and I will send them. They shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come back to me. [5]They shall divide it into seven parts. Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. [6]You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts, and bring the survey here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God. [7]But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance; and Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them.”

[8]Then the men arose to go away, and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, “Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come

back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh.” [9]So the men went, passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. [10]Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions.

The Land of Benjamin

[11]Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. [12]Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the mountains westward; it ended at the Desert of Beth Aven. [13]The border went over from there toward Luz, to the side of Luz (which is Bethel) southward; and the border descended to Ataroth Addar, near the hill that lies on the south side of Lower Beth Horon. [14]Then the border extended around the west side to the south, from the hill that lies before Beth Horon southward, and it ended at Kirjath Baal (which is Kirjath Jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This was the west side. [15]The south side began at the end of Kirjath Jearim, and the border extended on the west and went out to the spring of the waters of Jephtoah. [16]Then the border came down to the end of the mountain that lies before the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is in the Valley of the Rephaim on the north, descended to the Valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite city on the south, and descended to En Rogel. [17]It went around from the north, went out to En Shemesh, and extended toward Geliloth, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. [18]Then it passed along toward the north side of Arabah, and went down to Arabah.

[19]The border passed along to the north side of Beth Hoglah; then the border ended at the north bay at the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This was the southern boundary. [20]The Jordan was its border on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its boundaries all around, according to their families.

[21]Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, [22]Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, [23]Avim, Parah, Ophrah, [24]Chephar Haammoni, Ophni, and Gaba: twelve cities with their villages; [25]Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, [26]Mizpah, Chephirah, Mozah, [27]Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, [28]Zelah, Eleph, Jebus (which is Jerusalem), Gibeath, and Kirjath, fourteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

The Land of Simeon (with Judah)

19 The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. Their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. [2]They had in their inheritance Beersheba (Sheba), Moladah, [3]Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, [4]Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, [5]Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, [6]Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhen: thirteen cities and their villages; [7]Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan: four cities and their villages; [8]and all the villages around these cities as far as Baalath Beer, Ramah of the South. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. [9]The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.[†]

The Land of Zebulun

[10]The third lot came out for the children of Zebulun according to their families, and the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid. [11]Their border went toward the west and to Maralah, went to Dabbasheth, and extended along the brook east of Jokneam. [12]Then from Sarid it went eastward toward the sunrise along the border of Chisloth Tabor, and went out toward Daberath, bypassing Japhia. [13]From there it passes along on the east of Gath Hepher, toward Eth Kazin, and extended to Rimmon, which borders on Neah. [14]Then the border went around it on the north side of Hannathon, and it ended in the Valley of Jiphthah El. [15]Included were Kattath, Nahallal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages. [16]This was the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The Land of Issachar

[17]The fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. [18]Their territory went to Jezreel, and included Chesulloth, Shunem, [19]Haphraim, Shion, Anaharath, [20]Rabbith, Kishion, Abez, [21]Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez. [22]The border reached to Tabor, Shahazimah, and Beth Shemesh; their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. [23]This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Asher

[24]The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. [25]Their territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, [26]Alammelech, Amad, and Mishal; it reached to Mount Carmel westward, along the Brook Shihor Libnath. [27]It turned toward the sunrise to Beth Dagon; and reached to Zebulun and to the Valley of Jiphthah El, then northward beyond Beth Emek and Neiel, bypassing Cabul on the left, [28]including Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon. [29]The border turned to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre; then to Hosah, and ended at the sea by the region of Achzib. [30]Also Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob were included: twenty-two cities with their villages. [31]This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Naphtali

[32]The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali according to their families. [33]Their border began at Heleph, enclosing the territory from the terebinth tree in Zaananim, Adami Nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; it ended at the Jordan. [34]From Heleph the border extended westward to Aznoth Tabor, and went out from there toward Hukkok; it adjoined Zebulun on the south side and Asher on the west side, and ended at Judah by the Jordan toward the sunrise. [35]The fortified cities are Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth, [36]Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, [37]Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, [38]Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh: nineteen cities with their villages. [39]This was the inheritance

of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Dan

[40]The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. [41]The territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, [42]Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, [43]Elon, Timnah, Ekron, [44]Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, [45]Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, [46]Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa. [47]The border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem Dan, after the name of Dan their father. [48]This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, the cities and their villages. [49]But the sons of Dan did not press the Amorites who afflicted them in the mountain; and the Amorites did not permit them to descend into the valley, but forcibly took from them the border of their possession.

The Land of Joshua

[50]Now the sons of Judah marched and fought Lachish and laid hold of it. They struck it with the edge of the sword, settled in it, and called it Lasendak. [51]Now the Amorites continued to dwell in Elom and in Salamin; but the hand of Ephraim prevailed against them, and they paid tribute to them. [52]So they proceeded to take possession of the land according to their borders, and the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them, according to the ordinance of God. [53]They gave him the

city he asked for, Timnath Serah, in the mountains of Ephraim. So he built the city and dwelt in it. [54]These were the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel divided as an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of testimony. So they made an end of dividing the country.

Cities of Refuge

20 Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying,[†] [2]"Say to the sons of Israel, 'Appoint the cities of refuge of which I spoke to you through Moses, [3]a place of refuge for a slayer who kills a soul involuntarily. The cities will be a refuge for you, and the slayer shall not die by the avenger of blood until he stands before the congregation for judgment.' " [4]So he appointed Kedesh in Galilee in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron) in the mountains of Judah. [5]On the other side of the Jordan he appointed Bezer in the desert on the plain from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan from the tribe of Manasseh. [6]These were the cities appointed for the children of Israel and for the resident alien living among them, that whoever killed a soul involuntarily should take refuge there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation for judgment.

Cities of the Levites

21 Now the heads of the fathers of the sons of Levi came to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the chiefs of the tribes of the fathers from the tribes of Israel, [2]and spoke to them in Shiloh in the land of

Canaan, saying, “The Lord commanded through the hand of Moses that we be given cities to dwell in, with the common-lands for our cattle.” [3]So the children of Israel gave the Levites a portion of their inheritance at the command of the Lord, cities and their common-lands. [4]Now the lot came out for the family of the Kohathites, and from the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Simeon, and the tribe of Benjamin, there were thirteen cities given by lot to the sons of Aaron, who were priests among the Levites. [5]For the remaining sons of Kohath, ten cities were chosen by lot from the tribe of Ephraim, the tribe of Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. [6]For the sons of Gershon, there were thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Issachar, the tribe of Asher, the tribe of Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. [7]For the sons of Merari according to their families, there were twelve cities by lot from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the tribe of Zebulun.

[8]So the children of Israel gave the Levites cities and their common-lands by lot, as the Lord commanded Moses. [9]From the tribe of the sons of Judah, and the tribe of the sons of Simeon, and the tribe of the sons of Benjamin, they gave the cities, designated by name, [10]to the sons of Aaron from the family of Kohath, who were of the sons of Levi, because the lot was theirs. [11]They gave them Kirjath Arba, the capital of the sons of Anak (which is Hebron), in the mountains of Judah, with the common-land surrounding it. [12]But the fields of the city and its villages Joshua gave to the sons of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, as their possession. [13]Thus to the sons of Aaron they gave Hebron with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Libna with its common-land, [14]Jattir with its common-land, Eshtemoa with its common-land, [15]Holon with its common-land, Debir with its common-land, [16]Ain with its common-land, Juttah with its common-land, and Beth

Shemesh with its common-land: nine cities from those two tribes; [17]and from the tribe of Benjamin: Gibeon with its common-land, Geba with its common-land, [18]Anathoth with its common-land, and Almon with its common-land: four cities. [19]All the cities of the sons of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their common-lands.

[20]Now the families of the sons of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the sons of Kohath, had cities of their lot from the tribe of Ephraim. [21]For they gave them Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer), Gezer with its common-land, [22]Kibzaim with its common-land, and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities; [23]and from the tribe of Dan: Eltekeh with its common-land, Gibbethon with its common- land, [24]Aijalon with its common-land, and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities; [25]and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land and Jebatha with its common-land: two cities. [26]All ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the sons of Kohath.

[27]To the sons of Gershon, to the Levites, from the half-tribe of Manasseh, they gave Golan in Bashan with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), and Be Eshterah with its common-land: two cities; [28]and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its common-land, Daberath with its common-land, [29]Jarmuth with its common-land, and En Gannim with its common-land: four cities; [30]and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its common-land, Abdon with its common-land, [31]Helkath with its common-land, and Rehob with its common-land: four cities; [32]and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer),

Hammoth Dor with its common-land, and Kartan with its common-land: three cities. [33]All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their common-lands.

[34]To the family of the sons of Merari, the rest of the Levites, from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its common-land, Kartah with its common-land, [35]Dimnah with its common-land, and Nahalal with its common-land: four cities; [36]and from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer in the desert of Misor with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Jahaz with its common-land, [37]Kedemoth with its common-land, and Mephaath with its common-land: four cities; [38]and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Mahanaim with its common-land, [39]Heshbon with its common-land, and Jazer with its common-land: four cities in all. [40]So all the cities for the sons of Merari according to their families, the rest of the tribe of Levi, were by their lot twelve cities.

Israel Takes the Land

[41]All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the sons of Israel were forty-eight cities with their common-lands. [42]Every one of these cities had its common-land surrounding it; thus were all these cities. [43]So Joshua finished dividing the land according to their borders, [44]and the children of Israel gave a portion to Joshua according to the Lord's command. They gave him the city he requested, which was Timnath Serah in the mountain of Ephraim, [45]and Joshua built the city and dwelt in it. [46]Then Joshua took the stone knives with which he circumcised the sons of Israel who were born on the way in the desert, and he put them in Timnath Serah.[†] [47]So the Lord

gave Israel all the land He had sworn to give to their fathers; and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. [48]The Lord gave them rest all around, as He had sworn to their fathers, and no one rose up against them from all their enemies. The Lord delivered all their enemies into their hands. [49]Not a word failed of any good thing the Lord had spoken to the children of Israel. All came to pass.

Joshua Sends the Eastern Tribes Home

22 Then Joshua called together the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh,[†] [2]and said to them, “You heard everything the servant of the Lord Moses commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in everything I commanded you. [3]You have not left your brethren these many days, for until this day you have kept the commandment of the Lord your God. [4]Now then, the Lord our God gave our brethren rest, as he said to them; now therefore, return and depart to your homes and to the land of your inheritance, which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan. [5]But be very careful to do the commandments and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you to do, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to adhere to Him, and to serve Him with all your mind and with all your soul.” [6]So Joshua blessed them and sent them forth; and they went to their homes. [7]Now to the half-tribe of Manasseh Moses gave a possession in Bashan, and to the other half, Joshua gave a possession among his brethren on the other side of the Jordan toward the sea. Indeed, when Joshua sent them forth to their homes, he blessed them, [8]and they departed with much wealth to their homes, and with a great quantity of cattle, silver, gold, and iron, and with a great quantity of clothing; and they divided the spoils of the enemy with their brethren.

[9]So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of the children of Manasseh went forth from the children of Israel at Shiloh in the land of Canaan to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they obtained through the ordinance of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

An Altar at the Jordan

[10]Then they came to Gilgal at the Jordan, which is in the land of Canaan, and the children of Gad, the children of Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan, an altar great to see.[†] [11]Now the children of Israel heard them saying, “Behold, the children of Gad, the children of Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built an altar at the borders of the land of Canaan, at Gilead by the Jordan, on the opposite side of the children of Israel.” [12]So all the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go up to war against them.

[13]Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the high priest, to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in the land of Gilead, [14]and ten rulers with him, one ruler each from the paternal house of all the tribes of Israel; and they were the rulers of the paternal houses, the heads of a thousand, of Israel. [15]They came to the children of Gad, the children of Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in the land of Gilead and spoke to them, saying, [16]“Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord, ‘What trespass have you committed against the God of Israel, turning away this day from the Lord, building an altar for yourselves, and becoming rebels against the Lord? [17]Is Peor's sin too little

for you? For we have not been cleansed from it to this day, and there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord. [18]Will you turn away from the Lord today? If you rebel against the Lord today, tomorrow there shall be wrath upon all Israel. [19]Now if the land of your possession is too small for you, cross over to the land of the Lord's possession, where the tabernacle of the Lord dwells, and take possession among us; but do not become rebels against God, and do not rebel against the Lord by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the Lord our God. [20]Behold, did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in regard to the accursed thing, and bring wrath upon all the congregation of Israel? But he was only one man, and he alone died in his sin.' "

[21]Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered and spoke to the captains of the thousands of Israel, saying, [22]"God, even God is the Lord, and God, even God the Lord Himself knows, and Israel himself shall know, that if we transgressed against the Lord in rebellion, may He not deliver us in this. [23]If we have built ourselves an altar so as to depart from the Lord our God, and to offer upon it a sacrifice of whole burnt offerings, or a sacrifice of peace offering, then the Lord will require it. [24]But we have done this thing as a matter of reverence, saying, 'Lest hereafter your children may say to our children, "What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? [25]The Lord made the Jordan a border between us and you, and there is no portion of the Lord for you." Thus your sons shall alienate our sons, so they should not worship the Lord.' [26]So we told them to build this altar, not for burnt offerings or sacrifices, [27]but as a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we do service to the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings and sacrifices, and with our

peace offerings; so your children shall not say to our children hereafter, ‘There is no portion of the Lord for you.’ [28]Therefore we said, ‘If ever it shall come to pass that they should speak to us and to our generations hereafter, they shall say, “Come and see the likeness of the Lord's altar which our fathers made, not for the sake of burnt offerings or for sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you, and between our children.” [29]May we not therefore turn away from the Lord in these days and revolt from the Lord, to build ourselves an altar for burnt offerings, for peace offerings, and for the sacrifice of peace, besides the altar of the Lord, which is before His tabernacle.’ ”

[30]Now when Phinehas the priest and all the rulers of the congregation of Israel who were with him heard the words spoken by the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, it pleased them.[†] [31]Then Phinehas the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, “Today we know that the Lord is with us, because you have not transgressed grievously against the Lord, and because you have delivered the children of Israel out of the Lord's hand.” [32]After this, Phinehas the priest and the rulers returned from the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and reported to them these words; [33]and it pleased the children of Israel. They spoke to the children of Israel and blessed the God of the children of Israel. So they spoke no more about going up against them in battle in order to utterly destroy the land where the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt. [34]Then Joshua named the altar of the children of Reuben,

of Gad, and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, and said that it is a witness in their midst, that the Lord is their God.

Joshua's Final Address

23 Now it came to pass that after many days, the Lord gave rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, and Joshua was old and advanced in years.[†] [2]So Joshua summoned all the children of Israel and their elders and leaders and their scribes and judges, and said to them, "I am old and advanced in years, [3]and you have seen everything the Lord your God did to all these nations before you, that the Lord your God is He who fought for you. [4]See, I have added to you these nations that are left to you by lots to your tribes, beginning at the Jordan and bordered by the Great Sea westward, all the nations I utterly destroyed before you. [5]For the Lord your God, He will utterly destroy them before you until they perish, and He will send wild animals against them until He utterly destroys them and their kings from before you; and you shall inherit their land as the Lord your God said to you. [6]Therefore strive diligently to keep and to do everything written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right or to the left, [7]and lest you go among these nations, those that remain among you. The names of their gods shall not be mentioned among you, and neither shall you worship them, nor serve them; [8]but you shall cleave to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day. [9]For the Lord has utterly destroyed them before you, great and mighty nations, and no one has stood against you to this day. [10]One of you has chased a thousand, for the Lord your God fought for you, as He said to you. [11]Therefore take great heed to love the Lord your God. [12]For if you turn away and attach yourselves to the remnant of these nations among you, and intermarry and become mingled with them and they with you, [13]know for certain that the Lord will no longer utterly destroy these nations before you; but they shall be snares and traps for you, and nails in your heels and darts in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

[14]“But I am going the way of all those on earth, and you shall know in your heart and soul that not one word has failed of all the words the Lord our God spoke concerning everything that pertains to you. Not one word of them has failed. [15]Therefore it shall come to pass that as all the good things came upon you which the Lord promised you, so the Lord God will bring upon you all the evil things, until He utterly destroys you from this good land which the Lord has given you, [16]when you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them.”

Covenant at Shiloh

24 Then Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel to Shiloh, and summoned their elders, scribes, and judges; and he set them before God.[†] [2]Then Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘From the beginning your fathers dwelt on the other side of the river, including Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. [3]But I took your father Abraham from the other side of the river, led him into all the land, multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac, [4]and to Isaac, Jacob and Esau. I gave Mount Seir to Esau as an inheritance, but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. There they became a great nation, both large and mighty.’ [5]But the Egyptians maltreated them, so the

Lord smote Egypt for what it did to them. [6]After that, you came out of Egypt to the Red Sea, and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horses to the Red Sea. [7]So we cried out to the Lord, and He placed a cloud and darkness between us and the Egyptians. Then He brought the sea upon them, and it covered them. Thus your eyes saw what the Lord did in the land of Egypt.

“You were in the desert for many days. [8]Then He brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you; but the Lord gave them over into your hands that you might take possession of their land, and He utterly destroyed them from before you. [9]Then Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and he sent and called Balaam to lay a curse on you. [10]But the Lord your God would not destroy you, and greatly blessed you. He delivered you from their hands and gave them over to you. [11]Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The inhabitants of Jericho fought against you—also the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, but the Lord gave them into your hands. [12]He sent hornets before you and drove them out from before you, the twelve kings of the Amorites, but not with your sword or with your bow. [13]He gave you a land for which you did not labor, and cities you did not build; and you dwelt in them. You ate from vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.

[14]“Now therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in justice and righteousness. Remove the foreign gods your fathers served on the other side of the river and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.[†] [15]But if it does not please you to serve the Lord, choose gods for yourselves today whom you will

serve, whether the gods of your fathers that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, among whom you dwell in their land. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, because He is holy."

[16]Then the people answered and said, "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord, so as to serve other gods.[†] [17]The Lord our God, He is God. He brought us and our fathers from Egypt and preserved us on the whole journey where we went, and among all the nations through whom we passed. [18]The Lord cast out before us the Amorite and all the nations that inhabited the land. But as for us, we will serve the Lord, for He is our God." [19]But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God, and He being jealous will not forgive your sins and your lawless deeds. [20]Whenever you forsake the Lord and serve other gods, then He shall come and deal harshly with you and will consume you, after He has done you good." [21]Then the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the Lord." [22]So Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord. [23]Now therefore, remove the foreign gods from among you and make your heart straight toward the Lord God of Israel."[†] [24]Again the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord, and obey His voice."

[25]So Joshua established a covenant with the people on that day, and gave them a law and judgment in Shiloh before the tabernacle of the God of Israel.[†] [26]Then he wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up under the terebinth tree before the Lord. [27]After this, Joshua said to the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness among you, because it has heard everything said to it by the Lord, whatever

He spoke to us today. This stone shall be among you as a witness in the last days, whenever you lie to the Lord my God.” † [28]So Joshua sent the people away, and they went forth, each one to his place. [29]Then Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders, as many as were with Joshua and saw all the works of the Lord which he did for Israel.†

The Death of Joshua and Eleazar

[30]Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of one hundred and ten years. [31]They buried him within the boundary lines of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, on Mount Ephraim on the north side of Mount Gaash. [32]In his grave they placed with him the stone knives with which he circumcised the sons of Israel at Gilgal, when he brought them out of Egypt, as the Lord ordered them. They remain there to this very day. [33]The children of Israel also brought up the bones of Joseph from Egypt and buried them at Shechem, in the plot of land which Jacob purchased from the Amorites who dwelled in Shechem for one hundred lambs, and which was given to Joseph as his portion.†

[34]After this, Eleazar the son of Aaron the high priest died and was buried in Gabaath, which belonged to Phinehas his son, and which he had given him on Mount Ephraim. [35]On that day the children of Israel took the ark of God and carried it about among themselves, and Phinehas held the office of priest in place of Eleazar his father, until he died and was buried in his own place at Gabaath. [36]But each of the children of Israel departed to his own place and to his own city. Then the children of Israel worshipped Astarte and Astaroth and the gods of the nations round about them. So the Lord gave them over

into the hands of Eglon the king of Moab, and he ruled over them for eighteen years.

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The Book of Judges

Author—Traditionally believed to be Samuel. The book was written in Palestine during his early ministry.

Date—Judges (meaning “rulers”) was written three centuries after the entry of the tribes of Israel into Canaan under Joshua, and covers the events of those centuries.

Major Theme—*God's continual deliverance of a people that had forgotten Him and the Law*. The book begins with compromise and ends in anarchy. It is a record of Israel's forsaking God and of His forsaking Israel because of their disobedience.

Background—The Israelites had been settled for nearly three hundred years in Canaan. This time coincides with the beginning of the Iron Age in the Middle East. The Israelites began their apostasy after the death of Joshua. They did not drive out the Canaanites as God had commanded them to do through Moses. Instead, they intermarried with their pagan neighbors and began worshipping Baal.

The book is named for the thirteen judges of Israel: twelve raised up by God, one a usurper. The judges were to bring deliverance, protection, and military leadership; to settle differences, judge lawsuits, and administer justice. Israel was a theocracy; the judges were not kings, but deputies of God sent to save the people from seven different apostasies. The office was not continual; rather, judges were raised up as oppressive circumstances required.

Outline

I. Prologue: Failure to Complete the Canaanite Conquest (1:1–3:6)

A. Israel's failure to purge the land (1:1–36)

B. God's dealings with Israel's rebellion (2:1–3:6)

II. Oppression and Deliverance: Judges vs. the Nations (3:7–16:31)

A. Othniel defeats Syria (3:7–11)

B. Ehud defeats Moab (3:12–30)

C. Exploits of Shamgar (3:31)

D. Deborah defeats Canaan (4:1–5:31)

E. Gideon defeats Midian (6:1–8:35)

F. Abimelech, the anti-judge (9:1–57)

G. Tola and Jair: minor judges (10:1–5)

H. Jephthah defeats Ammon (10:6–12:7)

I. Ibzan, Elon, Abdon: minor judges (12:8–15)

J. Exploits of Samson (13:1–16:31)

III. Religious and Moral Disorder (17:1–18:31)

A. Micah's corruption (17:1–13)

B. The Danites’ departure from their tribal territory (18:1–31)

IV. The War Against Benjamin (19:1–21:25)

A. Gibeah's corruption of morals (19:1–30)

B. The Benjamites’ removal from their tribal territory (20:1–21:25)

Ongoing Battles in Canaan

1 After Joshua died, the descendants of Israel asked of the Lord, saying, “Who shall be first to go up for us to fight against the Canaanites?”[†] 2 And the Lord said, “Judah shall go up. Indeed, I have delivered the land into his hand.”

[3]So Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me to my allotted territory, so that we can stand in battle formation against the Canaanites; and I will go with you to your allotted territory.” And Simeon went with him. [4]Then Judah went up, and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek. [5]And they overtook Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and stood in formation against him; and they slaughtered the Canaanites and the Perizzites. [6]Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. [7]And Adoni-Bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather the things under my table; God has repaid me for what I have done.” They then brought him to Jerusalem, where he died.[†]

Judah Defeats Jerusalem and Hebron

[8]Now the sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and captured it by striking it with the edge of the sword and setting the city on fire. [9]Afterward the sons of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the plains of the South. [10]Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron, and Hebron—previously called Kirjath Arba—went out against them. And they struck Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, descendants of Enak.

Othniel Captures Debir

[11]From there they went up against the inhabitants of Debir—previously called Kirjath Sepher, the City of Letters.[†] [12]Then Caleb said, “Whoever attacks the City of Letters and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife.” [13]And Othniel the younger son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother,

took it; so Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. [14]And it came to be at the reception, Othniel urged her to ask her father for a field; and she complained and cried out from her donkey, “You have delivered me into a southern land.” And Caleb responded to her, “What is your request?” [15]So Achsah said to him, “Give me a blessing; since you have delivered me into a southern land, give me the water as well.” And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs, as was the desire of her heart.

The Efforts of Judah and Benjamin

[16]Now the sons of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the sons of Judah into the desert of Judah, in the south of Judah, at the descent of Arad; and they went and dwelt with the people. [17]And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath and utterly destroyed them. So the city was called Accursed. [18]And Judah did not inherit Gaza nor her coasts, nor Ashkelon with its territory, nor Accaron nor her coasts, nor Ekron with its territory. [19]The Lord was with Judah, and he inherited the mountain; for they could not completely destroy the inhabitants of the lowland, because Rechab prevented it. [20]And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said, and after this he inherited the three cities of the sons of Anak. [21]But the sons of Benjamin did not secure the Jebusites who dwelt in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem until this day.[†]

The Conquest of Bethel

[22]And the sons of Joseph also went up to Bethel, and the Lord was with them.[†] [23]Then they set up camp and spied on Bethel—previously named

Luz. [24]And when the spies looked, they noticed a man leaving the city and they seized him and said to him, “Show us the entrance to the city and we will be merciful to you.” [25]And he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and his family leave. [26]And the man escaped to the land of the Hittites, where he built a city he called Luz. This is its name to this day.

Campaigns Left Undone

[27]However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean, a city of Scythians, nor her towns and suburbs, nor Taanach and her suburbs, nor the inhabitants of Dor and its suburbs, nor the inhabitants of Balak and its daughters, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and its suburbs and its daughters, nor the inhabitants of Jeblaham and its suburbs and its daughters; indeed, the Canaanites began to dwell in this land.[†] [28]And when Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites under forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

[29]Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in the midst of them in Gezer and paid taxes. [30]Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Domana; so the Canaanites dwelt in the midst of them and paid taxes.

[31]Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco, though they did pay taxes to them, nor the inhabitants of Dor, nor the inhabitants of Sidon, nor the inhabitants of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Nai, or Ereo. [32]So Asher dwelt in the midst of the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for he was not able to drive them out.

[33]Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but Naphtali dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath paid taxes to them.

[34]And the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley. [35]And the Amorites began to dwell in the mountain of the myrtle-grove, where there were bears and foxes; yet the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy upon the Amorite, and he came to pay tribute to them. [36]Now the boundary of the Amorites went upward from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from the Rock.

The Place of Weeping

2 Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to the place of weeping, and to Bethel and to the house of Israel, and said to them, “Thus says the Lord: I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land I promised your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you.[†] [2]And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; nor shall you worship their gods, but you will destroy their graven images and you shall tear down their altars.’ But you did not obey My voice, for you did these things. [3]Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you, and they shall become as snares, and their gods shall be a cause for stumbling for you.’ ” [4]When the Angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. [5]And they called that place the Place of Weeping; and there they made a sacrifice to the Lord.

Death of Joshua

[6]And when Joshua had dismissed the people, each man went to his inheritance to take possession of his land. [7]So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who saw every great deed the Lord did for Israel. [8]Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at one hundred and ten years old. [9]And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, on Mount Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. [10]And when all that generation were laid with their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord, nor the work He had done for Israel.

Israel Follows False Gods

[11]Then the sons of Israel did evil before the Lord and served the Baals. [12]They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they followed other gods from among the gods of the nations all around them, and they bowed down to them. They provoked the Lord to anger. [13]They forsook Him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. [14]And the Lord was enraged with anger at Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers, who ravaged them and sold them into the hands of their enemies all around. As a result they could no longer stand before their enemies. [15]Whenever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity, as the Lord had spoken, and as the Lord had sworn to them. He greatly distressed them.

[16]Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges and the Lord saved them from the hand of those who plundered them. [17]But even so, they would not listen to their judges, but instead they played the harlot with other gods and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers had

walked in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. [18]And the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved by their groaning because of those who besieged them and harassed them. [19]And when the judge was dead, they went back to their former ways and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, serving them, and bowing down to them. They did not reject their pursuits nor their stubborn ways.

[20]Then the Lord was enraged with anger at Israel; and He said, “Because this nation set aside My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, [21]therefore I will not drive away from your presence any more of the men Joshua the son of Nun left in the land.” And the Lord left them, [22]to test Israel by them, to see whether they would keep the ways of the Lord, to walk in them and keep them as their fathers did. [23]Therefore the Lord left those nations without driving them out immediately; and He did not deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

Nations Left in Canaan

3 Now these are the nations the Lord left so that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who did not experience firsthand any of the wars in Canaan[†] [2](only for the sake of the generations of Israel, to teach them warfare; only those who did not previously experience it): [3]the five provinces of the foreign nations, and every Canaanite, and the Sidonites, and the Hivites who dwelt in Lebanon, from Mount Hermon to Laboemath. [4]And it was so that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would hear the commandments of the Lord which He commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. [5]Thus the sons of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. [6]And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

Othniel

[7]In this way the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God, and served the Baals and the sacred groves.[†] [8]Therefore the Lord was enraged with anger at Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Syria of the rivers; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim for eight years. [9]When the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a savior for Israel and saved them, that is, Othniel the son of Kenaz, the younger brother of Caleb.[†] [10]And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war against Cushan-Rishathaim, and the Lord delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Syria of the rivers into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.[†] [11]Then the land remained at peace for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Ehud

[12]And the sons of Israel again did evil before the Lord. So the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.[†] [13]Then he gathered to himself all the sons of Ammon and Amalek, and went and struck Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. [14]So the sons of Israel served Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years.

[15]But when the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a savior for them, that is, Ehud the son of Gera, the son of Benjamin, a man equally adept with both of his hands. By his hand, the sons of Israel sent gifts to Eglon king of Moab. [16]Now Ehud made himself a double-edged dagger, a cubit in length, and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. [17]So he went forth and brought the gifts to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a fat man. [18]When Ehud had finished presenting the gifts, he sent away the people who had carried the gifts. [19]But he himself turned back from the carved images near Gilgal, and Ehud said, “I have a secret message for you, O king.” And Eglon said to him, “Keep silence!” And he sent away all his attendants.

[20]And Ehud went with him to the upper summer chamber, where he could sit by himself. Then Ehud said, “I have the word of God for you, O king.” So Eglon arose from his throne near him.[†] [21]At the moment he arose, Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly, [22]driving it in so the handle went in after the blade, until the fat closed over the blade. He did not draw the dagger out of his belly. [23]And Ehud left the porch and passed by the guards stationed there, having shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them. [24]After he was gone, the king's servants went in and noticed the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, “He is probably relieving himself in the summer chamber.” [25]So they waited till they were embarrassed, and he had still not opened the doors of the upper room. They took the key and entered, and there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.

[26]But Ehud had escaped while they were in confusion, and thus no one paid any attention to him. So he passed beyond the carved images and

escaped to Seirah. [27]And when Ehud came into the land of Israel, he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the sons of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he stood before them. [28]And he said to them, “Come down after me, for the Lord God has delivered our enemies the Moabites into our hand.” So they followed him and seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. [29]At that time they struck about ten thousand men of Moab, all men of strength; not a man escaped. [30]So Moab was put to shame that day under the hand of Israel. Indeed, the land remained at peace for eighty years. And Ehud judged them until he died.

Shamgar

[31]After him, Shamgar the son of Dinach rose up, and he struck six hundred men of the Philistines with the ploughshare of the oxen. He too delivered Israel.

Deborah and Barak

4 The sons of Israel continued to do evil before the Lord, and Ehud was dead,[†] [2]so the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. [3]And the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred iron chariots with him, and for twenty years he oppressed Israel with his power.

[4]Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judge of Israel at that time.[†] [5]And Deborah would sit under the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel on Mount Ephraim. And the sons of Israel came up to her for justice.

[6]Then Deborah sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, ‘Go to Mount Tabor and take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun. [7]and I will bring to you, at the brook of Kishon, the captain of the army of Jabin, with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver them into your hands’?” [8]And Barak said to her, “If you go with me, then I will go; but if you do not go with me, I will remain here, for I am unable to discern the day when the Angel of the Lord will help me.” [9]She said, “Certainly I will go with you; but know this: there will be no honor gained by you on the journey you are undertaking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.”

Then Deborah arose and went with Barak from Kedesh.[†] [10]Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali from Kedesh, and went from there with ten thousand men following him. Deborah went up with him. [11]Now Heber the Kenite, of the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, moved away from the Kenites and pitched his tent upon arriving at the oak tree of coveting, which is near Kedesh. [12]And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. [13]So Sisera called all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles to the brook of Kishon.

[14]Then Deborah said to Barak, “Rise up. For this is the day the Lord will deliver Sisera into your hand, because the Lord has gone out before you.” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. [15]And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot. [16]But Barak pursued the chariots behind the camp as far as

Harosheth of the Gentiles, and the whole camp of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

[17]But Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, his friend; for there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. [18]And Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.” And when he had turned aside with her, entering into the tent, she covered him with a blanket. [19]Then Sisera said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. [20]And Sisera said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes to you and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there a man here?’ you shall say, ‘There is not.’ ”

[21]Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and a hammer in her hand, and went quietly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground. He was asleep, lost consciousness, and died. [22]And then as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said to him, “Come, I will show you the man whom you seek.” And when he went in with her, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple. [23]So on that day God routed Jabin king of Canaan before the sons of Israel. [24]And the hand of the sons of Israel proceeded and hardened against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had utterly destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

The Song of Deborah and Barak

5 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying,[†]

[2] A revelation was made known in Israel

To the people who were willing, bless the Lord!

[3] O kings, receive the news! O princes, listen closely!

I, even I, will sing to the Lord;

I will sing a psalm to the Lord God of Israel.

[4] Lord, when You went out in Seir,

When You left from the field of Edom,

The earth trembled and the heavens poured dew,

The clouds poured water;

[5] The mountains were shaken before the Lord Eloi,

This Sinai, before the Lord God of Israel.

[6] In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael,

They deserted the main road and traveled the byways,

Corrupting the way as they went.

[7] The mighty of Israel failed, they came to an end;

Until Deborah, whom He raised;

Until a mother whom He raised in Israel.[†]

[8] They chose new gods;

Then the cities of the rulers waged war;

Not a shield or a spear was seen

Among the forty thousand in Israel.

[9] My heart is with the leaders of Israel;

To those among the people who freely sacrifice, bless the Lord![†]

[10] You who mount upon a female donkey at midday,

Sitting on the seat of judgment,

Who conduct your life on the road, mediating along the way,

[11] Turn back and shout out every detail

While drawing up water;

There, in that place, what is rightful to the Lord is given, Spreading righteousness in Israel.

Then the people of the Lord came down to the cities.

12 Awake, awake, Deborah!

Awake, awake, sing a song!

Arise, Barak, O son of Abinoam,

And lead your host of captives captive!

13 Then the remnant came down to the mighty;

The people of the Lord came down to him, to the mighty.

14 My Ephraim rooted them out in Amalek;

O Benjamin, your people were behind you.

Machir came to know more about Me,

And from Zebulun, those able to record with the pen of a scribe.

15 And the princes in Issachar were with Deborah and Barak,

So she sent Barak into the valley by foot.

Among the regions of Reuben

There were great resolves of heart.

16 Why go up to sit in the midst of the sheepfold,

To hear the trumpet of the angels?

In the divisions of Reuben

There were great searchings of heart.

17 Gilead is beyond the Jordan, where he made his dwelling;

Why did Dan remain on the ships?

Asher sat down on the seashore,

And he will dwell at his seaports.

18 The people of Zebulun reproached its soul unto death,

And Naphtali denounced the high places of the fields.

19 Kings set themselves in battle array;

Then the kings of Canaan waged war in Taanach, By the waters of Megiddo;

They took no gift of silver.

20 The stars of the heavens were arrayed for battle;

On their path they arrayed themselves to war against Sisera.

21 The brook of Kishon swept them away,

That ancient brook, the brook of Kishon;

My mighty soul will trample him down.

22 When the hooves of the horses were fettered,

In earnest his mighty ones hastened.

23 Curse Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse them,

Cursed is every one who dwells there,

Because they did not come to the help of the Lord,

To the help of the Lord against the mighty.

24 Jael is blessed among women,

The wife of Heber the Kenite;

Blessed is she from among the women in tents.

25 He requested water, she gave him milk in a dish;

Surpassing this, she offered butter.

26 She stretched her left hand to the tent peg,

Her right hand to the workmen's hammer;

She drove the nail through his head with a hammer;

She put the nail into his temple.

27 He rolled down between her feet;

He fell and lay between her feet;

He bent over and fell;

When he sat down there, he fell, departing life.

28 The mother of Sisera peered out through the archer's window;

For his chariot is not where it should be, For the feet of his chariot's horses tarry.[†]

[29] The wise of her leading ladies answered her,

And she answered to herself,

[30] Will they not find him dividing the spoil;

The merciful having compassion for the head of a man;

Spoils of the dyed garments for Sisera;

The spoils of dyed embroidery,

Embroiderer's dyes as spoils for his neck?

[31] O Lord, let all Your enemies perish in the way;

And those desiring Him, be as the coming out of His sun in power.

And let the land be at peace for forty years.[†]

The People of Midian Oppress Israel

6 Then the sons of Israel did evil before the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,[†] [2]and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. The sons of Israel made dens for themselves in the mountains and caves, and strongholds away from the presence of the Midianites. [3]So it was, whenever the sons of Israel had sown, Midianites would come up, and the Amalekites and the sons of the East would come up with them.[†] [4]Then they encamped against them and destroyed the fruits of the earth until they came to Gaza, and left no substance of life in the land of Israel, not even an ox or a donkey among the herds. [5]For they came up with their livestock and their tents, and appeared just as numerous as locusts; they and their camels were without number; and they came into the land of Israel and destroyed it. [6]And Israel was exceedingly destitute before the face of the Midianites, and the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord [7]because of the presence of the Midianites.

[8]And the Lord sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, who said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘I am He who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of your bondage; [9]and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. [10]And I said to you, I am the Lord your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But you did not obey My voice.’ ”

Gideon

[11]Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree in Ephrathah which belonged to Joash the father of Esdri, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress in order to hide from the presence of the Midianites.[†] [12]And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, mighty one of the armies!” [13]Gideon said to Him, “It is I, my Lord? If the Lord is with us, why then have these evils come upon us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has driven us out and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” [14]Then the Angel of the Lord turned to him and said, “Go with this strength of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Indeed, I have sent you.”

[15]And Gideon said to Him, “Be gracious with me, my Lord, for how can I save Israel? My thousand is weakened in Manasseh, and I am the smallest in my father's house.”[†] [16]And the Angel of the Lord said to him, “The Lord will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” [17]Then Gideon said to Him, “If now I have found mercy in Your sight, then You shall do everything for me today that You have told me. [18]Do not leave here, I pray,

until I come to You and I will bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I am. I will wait until you come back."[†] [19]So Gideon went in and prepared a goat kid, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. He put the meat in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and approached.[†]

[20]The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. [21]Then the Angel of the Lord stretched out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.

[22]Now Gideon perceived this was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, "O Lord, my Lord! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face." [23]Then the Lord said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." [24]So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it the Peace of the Lord. To this day it is still in Ephratha of the father of Esdri.

[25]Now that same night the Lord said to him, "Take your father's young bull, and the second calf of seven years old, and tear down your father's altar to Baal, and destroy the sacred grove beside it.[†] [26]Build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this stronghold in the proper arrangement, and take the second calf and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the sacred grove which you cut down." [27]So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the Lord had told him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. [28]And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, the altar of Baal was torn

down; and the sacred grove beside it was destroyed, and they saw the second bull being offered on the altar which had been built.

[29]And one man said to his neighbor, “Who did this?” Then they inquired and learned that Gideon the son of Joash had done it. [30]Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son and let him die, because he tore down the altar of Baal, and because he destroyed the sacred grove beside it.” [31]But Joash said to all the men who stood against him, “Are you now going to plead for Baal? Do you want to save him? Let the one who wants to plead for Baal be put to death by morning! If he is a god, because his altar is torn down, let him plead for himself!” [32]Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, “Let Baal plead against him, for it is his altar that is torn down.”[†]

[33]Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the sons of the East, gathered together and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. [34]But the Spirit of the Lord empowered Gideon, and he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were terrified behind him. [35]And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh and to Asher, and to Zebulun, and Naphtali; and he went up to meet them.

The Dewy Fleece

[36]So Gideon said to God, “If You save Israel by my hand as You said,[†ω] [37]then look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You said.” [38]And it was so. And he rose early the next morning and wrung the fleece and from the fleece dropped enough dew to fill a pan full of water. [39]Then Gideon said to God, “Indeed, I pray, do not let Your anger be aroused at me, and I will speak but once; I will yet make

one more trial with the fleece. This time, let it be dry on the fleece, but let there be dew all over the ground." [40]And that night God made it so; on the fleece it was completely dry, but there was dew all over the ground.

Gideon's Three Hundred Defeat the Midianites

7 Then Jerubbaal—that is, Gideon—and all the people with him rose early and encamped at the spring of Harod. To the north of him was the camp of the Midianites, stretching from Gabaath Moreh in the deep valley. [2]And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people with you are too numerous; I dare not deliver Midian into their hand, lest otherwise Israel boast against Me, saying, 'This my own hand, it saved me.'[†] [3]Now therefore, proclaim within the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' " And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

[4]But the Lord said to Gideon, "There are still too many people; bring them down to the water, and there I will purge them for you. And it will be that of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you. And of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go with you." [5]So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." [6]And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. [7]Then the Lord said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. All the other people shall go, every man to his own place." [8]So they

took the provision of the people in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent away every man of Israel, every man to his tent, and he strengthened the three hundred. And the army of Midian was below him in the deep valley.

[9]On that same night the Lord said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. [10]But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. [11]Listen to what they shall say, and afterward your hands shall be strong and you shall then go down into the camp.” And he went down with Purah his servant to the edge of the camp of the fifty. [12]And Midian and Amalek and all the sons of the East were scattered as numerous as locusts throughout the valley; and their camels were without number, as the sands on the seashore.

[13]And Gideon came, and there was a man telling his companion a dream. He said, “Behold, I had a dream. Hear me: A cake of barley bread rolling into the camp of Midian came as far as a tent and struck it so that it fell, flipped over, and collapsed.” [14]Then his companion answered and said, “This is nothing but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the entire camp.”

[15]When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped the Lord. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into our hand.”[†] [16]Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies and put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.

[17]And he said to them, “Watch me and do as I do; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp, do as I do. [18]When I blow the trumpet, I and all who

are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’ ” [19]So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, and they completely roused the guards. And they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands, [20]and the three companies sounded the trumpets and broke the pitchers and held the torches in their left hands.

In their right hands they held their trumpets to sound with, and they cried out, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” [21]And every man stood in his place round about the camp; and the entire army of men ran and sounded a warning and fled. [22]They sounded with three hundred trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword against his neighbor throughout the entire camp; and the army fled as far as Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. [23]And the men of Israel, from Naphtali, from Asher, and from all Manasseh, shouted out and pursued after the Midianites.

[24]Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying, “Come down to meet in battle with the Midianites, and take for yourselves the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the River Jordan.” And every man of Ephraim cried out, and they seized the water as far as Beth Barah and the River Jordan.[†] [25]And they captured Oreb and Zeeb, rulers in Midian. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon from the other side of the Jordan.

Israel Delivered from the Midianites

8 The men of Ephraim said to Gideon, “Why did you not tell us what you were doing when you went to war with Midian?” They reprimanded him sharply.[†] [2]So he said to them, “What could I do in comparison with what you now do? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? [3]The Lord has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what could I do in comparison with what you do?” Their spirit toward him became calm when he spoke this word.

[4]When Gideon came to the River Jordan, he and the three hundred men with him crossed over—hungry, but still pursuing.[†] [5]Then he said to the men of Succoth, “Please give bread to feed this army of men that follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.” [6]And the leaders of Succoth said, “Is the hand of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?”

[7]So Gideon said, “Therefore when the Lord has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will then tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with the brier bush!” [8]From there he went up to Penuel, requesting the same and in the same way. The men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth previously answered. [9]And Gideon said to the men of Penuel, “When I return in peace, I will tear down this tower!”

[10]Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor with their armies, about fifteen thousand, all that remained of the entire army of foreigners; they that fell were one hundred twenty thousand men who drew the sword.[†] [11]Then Gideon traveled the road eastward of Nobah and Jogbehah, to where they dwelt in tents. Here he smote the army, and the camp was surrendering.

[12]Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued them, capturing the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna. The last of the army was caught by surprise.

[13]And Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle, down from the battle line of Ares. [†] [14]And he took prisoner a young man of the men of Succoth to interrogate him; and he wrote down for Gideon the names of the leaders of Succoth and of their elders, seventy-seven men.[†] [15]Then Gideon came to the rulers of Succoth and said, “Look. Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you reproached me, saying, ‘Is the hand of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand that we should give bread to your army?’ ” [16]And he seized the elders of the city, with the thorns of the wilderness and with the sharp thorns, and with them he flailed the men of the city.[†] [17]Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

[18]And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, “Where are the men you killed at Tabor?” And they said, “As you are, so they were in the appearance of a king's son.” [19]Then Gideon said, “They were my brothers and the sons of my mother. As the Lord lives, if you had kept them alive, I would not kill you.” [20]And he said to Jether his firstborn, “Rise and kill them!” But the youth would not draw his sword, for he was afraid; for he was yet very young. [21]So Zebah and Zalmunna said, “You rise up and face us, for your strength is that of a man.” So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments from their camels’ necks.

[22]Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you and your son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.” [23]But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you.”[†] [24]Then Gideon said to them, “I would like to make a

request of you, that each man would give me an earring from his plunder.” For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites. [25]So they said, “We will gladly give them.” And he spread out his garment and each man threw down an earring from his plunder. [26]Now the weight of the gold earrings which he requested was one thousand five hundred pieces of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, garments, and purple robes worn by the kings of Midian, and the chains around the necks of their camels.

[27]Then Gideon made it into an ephod and made a memorial of it in his city of Ephratha. Hereafter, Israel indulged in all types of sinful acts because of it. And to Gideon and to his house, it became a thorn.[†] [28]Thus Midian was reduced in stature before the sons of Israel, and they lifted their heads no more. The country remained at peace for forty years in the days of Gideon. [29]Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelled in his own house.

Death of Gideon

[30]And Gideon begot seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. [31]And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whom he called Abimelech. [32]Now Gideon the son of Joash died in his city, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ephratha of the Abiezrites.

[33]So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made a covenant for themselves with Baal that he would be their god. [34]Thus the sons of Israel choose to no longer remember the Lord their God, He who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side; [35]nor did they show mercy to the house of

Jerubbaal—that is, Gideon—in accordance with all the good he accomplished for Israel.

Abimelech Seeks to Be King

9 Abimelech son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers, and he spoke to them and to everyone in the family of his mother's father, saying,[†] [2]“I pray you to ask in the hearing of all the men of Shechem, ‘Which is better for you, for all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal to reign over you, or for one to reign over you?’ Remember, I am of your own bone and flesh.” [3]And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, “He is our brother.” [4]They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the house of Baal-Berith, and Abimelech hired for himself vain and cowardly men; and they followed him. [5]Then he went into his father's house at Ephratha and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men upon one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, for he hid himself. [†]

Jotham Makes His Plea

[6]All the men of Shechem and all the house of Beth Millo gathered, and they went ahead and made Abimelech king by the oak of Sedition at Shechem. [7]It was reported to Jotham, and he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim and lifted his voice and wept, and said to them, “Hear me, you men of Shechem, and God will hear you.[†] [8]One day, the trees once went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us!’[†] [9]But the olive tree said to them, ‘Should I cease giving my richness, with

which men will glorify God, and go to be placed over the trees?’ [10]Then the trees said to the fig tree, ‘You come and reign over us!’ [11]But the fig tree said to them, ‘Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be placed over the trees?’ [12]Then the trees said to the vine, ‘You come and reign over us!’ [13]But the vine said to them, ‘Should I cease my wine, which cheers both God and men, and go to be placed over the trees?’ [14]Then all the trees said to the bramble, ‘You come and reign over us!’ [15]And the bramble said to the trees, ‘If in truth you anoint me as king over you, then come and take shelter in my shade; but if not, may fire come from me and devour the cedars of Lebanon!’

[16]“And now, if you have acted in truth and integrity, and have made Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and with his house, and if you have done to him according to the reward of his hand, [17]as my father fought in war for you, and put his life in jeopardy, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; [18]but you have risen up against my father's house today, and killed his seventy sons upon one stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his bondwoman, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother. [19]If then you have acted in truth and faithfully with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him rejoice over you as well. [20]But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and the house of Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from the house of Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!” [21]And Jotham fled and ran away. He went as far as Beer and dwelt there out of the way of his brother Abimelech.

Abimelech in Decline

[22]After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years, [23]God sent a wicked spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. And the men of Shechem rejected the house of Abimelech, [24]to bring the injustice done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, and to lay their blood upon Abimelech their brother, who killed them; and on the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brothers. [25]And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against Abimelech on the mountaintops. They robbed everyone who passed by them on the way so it would be reported to King Abimelech.[†]

[26]Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers, and they passed by Shechem, and the men of Shechem trusted him.[†] [27]And they went out into the fields and gathered their grapes, and trod them and made merry. And they went into the house of their god, and ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. [28]Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, “Who is Abimelech, and who is this son of Shechem that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his steward, his servant with the son of Hamor the father of Shechem? And why should we serve him? [29]And if it were so that this people were under my hand, then I would remove Abimelech. Indeed, I would say to him, ‘Multiply the strength of your army and come out!’ ”

[30]When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Jobel, his anger was aroused. [31]And in secret he sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, “Listen carefully! Gaal the son of Jobel and his brothers have come to Shechem; and be warned, in the area around the city they stir up trouble against you. [32]Now get up by night, you and the people with you, and lie in wait in the field. [33]And early in the morning, at the same time the sun rises, move your battle line toward the city; and behold, he and the people

with him will come out against you, and you shall do to him as much as is in your power.”

[34]So Abimelech and all the people with him rose by night, and, with four companies, they lay in wait against Shechem. [35]Gaal the son of Jobel went out and stood at the door of the gate of the city, and Abimelech and the people with him rose from the place of ambush. [36]And when Gaal the son of Jobel saw the people, he said to Zebul, “Look, a people are coming down from the top of the mountain!” But Zebul said to him, “You see the shadows of the mountains as being men.” [37]Gaal still continued to speak and said, “See, people are coming down toward the sea from the center of the land, and another company is coming from the way of Elonmaonenim.”[†]

[38]Then Zebul said to him, “Where indeed is your mouth now, for you said, ‘Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?’ Are not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with him now.” [39]So Gaal went out before the men of Shechem and warred with Abimelech. [40]But Abimelech chased him, and Gaal fled before him; and many fell wounded, even up to the door of the gate. [41]Then Abimelech went into Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so they could not dwell in Shechem.

[42]On the next day the people went out into the field and reported to Abimelech. [43]So he took the people, divided them into three companies, and placed them in ambush in the field. He looked, and there were the people coming out of the city; and he rose against them and attacked them. [44]Then Abimelech and the leaders with him charged forward and stood at the door of the city gate; and the other two companies charged forward against all those in the fields and smote them. [45]Abimelech fought against the city all that day

and took the city, killing the people in it. And he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.

[46]When all the men of the towers of Shechem heard that, they came to the meeting at Bethelberith.[†] [47]And it was reported to Abimelech that all the men of the towers of Shechem were gathered together. [48]Then Abimelech along with all his people went up to Mount Hermon. And Abimelech took the axes in his hand and cut down a branch from a tree, and took it and laid it on his shoulders. And he said to the people with him, “Quickly, do what you have seen me do.” [49]So each and every man cut down a branch and followed after Abimelech, putting the branches against the stronghold and setting them on fire, burning down the stronghold as well. And all the men of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women.

[50]Abimelech then left from Bethelberith and encamped against Thebez and overpowered it. [51]But there was a strong tower in the middle of the city, and there all the men and women of the city fled; and they locked themselves in and went up on the roof of the tower. [52]And Abimelech drew near the tower and besieged it; and Abimelech drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire. [53]But a certain woman dropped a piece of a millstone upon the head of Abimelech and broke his skull. [54]He quickly cried out to the young man, his armor bearer, and said to him, “Draw my sword and kill me, lest men say of me, ‘A woman killed him.’ ” So his young man thrust him through, and he died. [55]And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his place. [56]Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech brought against his father by killing his seventy brothers. [57]And God returned all the wickedness of the men of Shechem on their own heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came on them.

Tola and Jair, Judges of Israel

10 After Abimelech, Tola the son of Puah arose to save Israel, the son of his father's brother, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir on Mount Ephraim.[†] [2]He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir.

[3]After him arose Jair of Gilead; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. [4]He had thirty-two sons who rode on thirty-two colts, and they had thirty-two cities, which are called the villages of Jair to this day in the land of Gilead. [5]And Jair died and was buried in Ramnon.

Israel Again Afflicted

[6]Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, serving Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Arad, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the Lord and did not serve Him. [7]And the Lord was enraged with anger against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon. [8]And they afflicted and oppressed the sons of Israel for a time of eighteen years, all the children of Israel beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. [9]Moreover, the sons of Ammon crossed the Jordan to war against Judah and Benjamin, with Ephraim. The children of Israel suffered severely. [10]And the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, saying, “We have sinned against You, because we have forsaken God and have served the Baals!”

[11]So the Lord said to the sons of Israel, “Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the sons of Ammon and from the Philistines,[†] [12]from the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites who oppressed you when you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand? [13]Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more. [14]Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen for yourselves; let them deliver you in the time of your distress.” [15]And the sons of Israel said to the Lord, “We have sinned! Do to us whatever is good in Your eyes; only deliver us this day.” [16]So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the Lord alone. And His soul was grieved by the misery of Israel.

[17]Then the sons of Ammon went up and encamped in Gilead. And the sons of Israel assembled together and encamped at the lookout. [18]And each of the leaders of Gilead said to his neighbor, “Who is the man who will begin the fight against the sons of Ammon? He shall indeed be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

Jephthah Takes Command

11 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was being exalted in power, but he was the son of a harlot who bore Jephthah to Gilead.[†] [2]Gilead's wife bore sons, and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out and said to him, “You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman.” [3]Then Jephthah fled before his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and vain men banded together with Jephthah, and they went out with him.

[4]And it came to be that the sons of Ammon made war against Israel, and the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. [5]Then they said to Jephthah, “Come and be our commander so that we may fight against the sons of Ammon.” [6]So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, “Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father's house, and exile me from you? Why have you come to me now when you are in need?” [7]And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “That is why we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the sons of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.” [8]So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, “If you take me back home to fight against the sons of Ammon, and the Lord delivers them to me, I shall indeed be your head.” [9]And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “The Lord will be a witness between us, if we do not act according to your word.” [10]Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.[†]

[11]Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon, saying, “What is there between me and you, that you have come to fight against me in my land?”[†] [12]And the king of the sons of Ammon said to the messengers of Jephthah, “It is because Israel took away my land when it came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok, and to the Jordan. Now therefore, restore those lands in peace, and I will go.”

[13]So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon [14]and said to him, “Thus says Jephthah, ‘Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the sons of Ammon; [15]for when they came up from Egypt, Israel walked through the desert as far as the sea of Siph and came to

Kadesh. [16]Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, “Please let me pass through your land.” But the king of Edom would not listen. And they sent to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained in Kadesh. [17]And they went along through the desert and circled the land of Edom and the land of Moab, having come from the rising of the sun to the land of Moab, and encamped beyond the Arnon. But they did not cross the borders of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab. [18]Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, “Please let us pass through your land into our place.” [19]But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. [20]And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote him. Thus Israel inherited all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country, [21]from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the desert to the Jordan. [22]And now that the Lord God of Israel has removed the Amorites from before His people Israel, should you then inherit it? [23]Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to inherit? And we will inherit everything the Lord our God removes before us. [24]And now, are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them? [25]While they dwelt in Heshbon and in her borders, in the land of Aroer and in her borders, and in all the cities along the banks of the River Jordan, for three hundred years, why did you not deliver them within that time? [26]And I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the Lord render judgment today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon.’ ” [27]However, the king of the sons of Ammon did not heed the words Jephthah sent him.

Jephthah's Vow

[28]Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed by the lookout of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced beyond the sons of Ammon.[†] [29]And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, “If You deliver the sons of Ammon into my hand, [30]then it shall be that whoever first comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, he shall be the Lord's. I will offer him up for a whole burnt offering.” [31]So Jephthah advanced toward the sons of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hand. [32]And he struck them from Aroer until he came to Arnon, twenty cities in number, and as far as Abel Keramim, with widespread destruction everywhere. Thus the sons of Ammon were subdued before the sons of Israel.

The Daughter of Jephthah

[33]When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, behold his daughter came out to meet him with drums and dances, and she was his only child. He had no other son or daughter. [34]And when he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Ah, ah, my daughter! You have troubled me greatly! It is you who are my trouble! For I have opened my mouth against you to the Lord, and I cannot go back on it.” [35]So she said to him, “My father, if you have opened your mouth to the Lord, do to me as it came from your mouth, because the Lord has avenged you on your enemies, the sons of Ammon.”

[36]Then she said to her father, “Let my father do this one thing for me. Leave me alone for two months to wander on the mountains and bewail my

virginity along with my companions.” [37]So he said, “Go.” And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. [38]And at the end of two months she returned to her father, and he carried out the vow he vowed, and she knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel[†] [39]that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Jephthah Defeats Ephraim

12 Then the men of Ephraim cried out, went by to the north, and said to Jephthah, “Why did you pass by to fight against the sons of Ammon and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down around you with fire.”[†] [2]And Jephthah said to them, “I and my people were engaged in intense fighting with the sons of Ammon; and I called you, but you did not deliver me from their hands. [3]So when I saw that you were not a savior, I put my life in my hands and passed on to the sons of Ammon; and the Lord delivered them into my hand. Why then did you come to fight against me today?”

[4]Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and went to war against Ephraim. Gilead defeated Ephraim, since those of Ephraim who escaped said, “You of Gilead are in the midst of Ephraim and in the midst of Manasseh.” [5]Gilead seized the fords of the River Jordan needed to enter Ephraim. And those of Ephraim who escaped said to the men of Gilead, “Let us cross over.” And the men of Gilead questioned, “Are you not of Ephraim?” If one said, “No,” [†] [6]they then said to him, “Say the word ‘stachys’!” If he was unable to repeat the word in the same way, they seized him and killed

him at the ford of the River Jordan. At that time, forty-two thousand from Ephraim fell.

[7]Jephthah judged Israel sixty years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in his city in Gilead.

Other Judges

[8]After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. [9]He had thirty sons and thirty daughters, and he sent away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from without for his sons. He judged Israel seven years. [10]Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

[11]After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years. [12]And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

[13]After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. [14]He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy colts. He judged Israel eight years. [15]Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.

13 Again the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.[†]

The Birth of Samson

[2]Now there was a certain man from Zorah, from the tribe of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and could not

give birth. [3]And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, “Indeed now, you are barren and have not given birth, but you shall conceive a son.[†] [4]Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, and do not eat anything unclean.[†] [5]For behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”[†]

[6]So the woman went in and told her husband, saying, “A Man of God came to me, and His appearance was like the appearance of an Angel of God, very frightening. But I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. [7]And He said to me, ‘Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. Now drink no wine or strong drink, and do not eat anything unclean, for the child shall be holy to God from the womb to the day of his death.’ ” [8]Then Manoah prayed to the Lord and said, “Lord Adonai, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born.”

[9]And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field, but Manoah her husband was not with her. [10]Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, “Look, the Man who came to me the other day has just now appeared to me!” [11]So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, “Are You the Man who spoke to my wife?” And the Angel said, “I am.” [12]Manoah said, “Now let Your words come to pass! What is to be the decision regarding the boy and his activities?”

[13]So the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “The woman will guard herself from everything I have told her. [14]She may not eat anything that comes from the vine of wine, and let her not drink wine or similar strong drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her, let her observe.” [15]Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, “Let us delay You here, and we will prepare a young goat for You.” [16]And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Though you delay me, I will not eat your bread. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord”; for Manoah did not know he was the Angel of the Lord. [17]Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, “What is Your name, so when Your words come to pass we may honor You?” [18]And the Angel of the Lord said to him, “Why do you ask My name, is it extraordinary?”

[19]So Manoah took the young goat and the sacrifice, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And the Angel wrought a distinct work, while Manoah and his wife were looking on. [20]And it so happened when the flame went up above the altar toward heaven, that the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell upon their faces to the ground. [21]When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, Manoah knew this to be the Angel of the Lord. [22]And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!” [23]But his wife said to him, “If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a meat offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have made us hear such things as these at this time.”

[24]So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. [25]And the Spirit of the Lord began to proceed out with him at the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.[†]

Samson Takes a Philistine Wife

14 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the foreigners.[†] [2]So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife." [3]Then his father and mother said to him, "Are there not daughters of your brethren, or a woman among all my people? Must you go and get a wife from the uncircumcised foreigners?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."

[4]But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord—that He was seeking vengeance against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. [5]So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother and came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came roaring against him.[†] [6]And the Spirit of the Lord leapt upon Samson, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hands. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

[7]Then they went down and talked with the woman, and she was pleasing to Samson's eyes. [8]After a few days, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and some honey were in the mouth of the lion. [9]He took some of it in his hands and

went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the mouth of the lion.

[10]So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a party there for seven days, as young men do. [11]And when they saw him, they brought thirty guests and they were with him. [12]Then Samson said to them, “Let me tell you a riddle. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the party, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. [13]But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen cloths and thirty changes of clothing.” And they said to him, “Tell the riddle; let us hear it.”

[14]And he said to them:

“What meat comes forth from the eater,

And from the strong, sweetness?”

But three days passed by and they could not explain the riddle.

[15]But on the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, “Now trick your husband so that he explains the riddle to you, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Did you invite us to do us violence?” [16]Then Samson's wife wept before him, and said, “You hate me! You do not love me! You told the sons of my people a riddle, but you have not explained it to me.” And Samson said to her, “If I have not explained it to my father or my mother, why should I explain it to you?” [17]Now she wept before him for seven days while their wedding banquet lasted. And on the seventh day he told her, because she annoyed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to

the sons of her people. [18]And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun rose:

“What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?”

And Samson said to them:

“If you had not plowed with my heifer,
You would not have come to learn my riddle!”[†]

[19]Then the Spirit of the Lord leapt upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So Samson's anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. [20]And the wife of Samson was given to one of his companions, one whom he called friend.

15 Soon after these days, in the days of the wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, “I will go to my wife in her private chamber.” But her father would not permit him to enter.[†] [2]Her father said, “I thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to one of your friends. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead.”

Samson Decimates the Philistines

[3]And Samson said to them, “This once I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines, for I will do mischief among them!” [4]Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails, and tied it. [5]When he had set the torches on fire, he sent the foxes out into the standing grain of the Philistines,

and they burned from the threshing floor even to the standing grain, as far as the vineyard and olive groves.

[6]Then the Philistines said, “Who did this?” And they answered, “Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to one of his friends.” So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. [7]Samson said to them, “Whereas you dealt thus with her, surely I will take revenge upon you for a month and I will finally stop.” [8]So he struck them upon the thigh of the leg with a great blow. Afterward he went down and dwelt in a cave at the rock of Etam.

[9]Now the Philistines went up and encamped in Judah, and they spread out across Levi. [10]And the men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?” So the Philistines answered, “We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he has done to us.” [11]Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cave at the rock of Etam and said to Samson, “Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? Why did you do this to us?” And Sampson said to them, “As they did to me, so I have done to them.”

[12]But they said to him, “We have come down to bind you so that we may deliver you to the Philistines.” Then Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves.” [13]So they spoke to him, saying, “No, but we will bind you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not put you to death.” And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from that rock. [14]When they came to Lehi, the Philistines wailed loudly and ran to engage him. But the Spirit of the Lord leapt upon him, and the ropes on his arms became like flax burned with fire, and his bonds fell away from his hands. [15]He found the jawbone of an ass that had been cast aside,

and he reached out and took it, and struck a thousand men with it. 16Then Samson said:

“With the jawbone of an ass I utterly destroyed them,

For with the jawbone of an ass I struck down a thousand men!”

17And so when he had finished speaking, he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place the Ramath Lehi. 18Then he became exceedingly thirsty, and wept before the Lord and said, “You were well-pleased to grant this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now I shall die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised.”† 19And God broke open a hollow in the ground, and out from it water came forth, and he drank. His spirit returned and he was revived. Therefore he called it “the Spring of the One Who Called,” which is in Lehi to this day. 20And in the days of the Philistines, he judged Israel twenty years.

Samson and Delilah

16 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 2When someone told the Gazites, saying, “Samson has come here!” they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, “Let us wait until dawn, and we will kill him.”† 3Samson slept till midnight and rose up, and at midnight he took hold of the doors of the gate of the city with the two gateposts, and lifted them up with the bar, and placed them on his shoulders. He then carried them to the top of the mountain facing Hebron, and he set them there.

4Sometime thereafter, he came to love a woman in Alsorech whose name was Delilah.† 5And the leaders of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Trick him and find out where his great strength lies. Learn by what means we may overpower him, so that we may bind him and humble him. If you do, every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.” [6]So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you can be bound that you may be subdued and controlled.”

[7]And Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven damp cords, not yet spoiled, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.” [8]So the leaders of the Philistines brought her seven damp cords, not yet spoiled, and she bound him with them. [9]And with her in the private chamber, an ambush was set. And she said to him, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” But he broke the cords as if someone should break a thread of flax when it touches the fire. Thus the secret of his strength remained unknown.

[10]Then Delilah said to Samson, “Indeed! You deceived me and told me lies. Now therefore, tell me what you may be bound with.” [11]So he said to her, “If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.” [12]Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and those in ambush came out of the private chamber, and she said to him, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” But he broke them off his arms like thread. [13]And Delilah said to Samson, “Indeed! You have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me, I entreat you, with what can you be tightly bound?”

And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my head into a braid, and secure them together with a wall peg, I will be weak like any other man.” [14]And so it happened when he was asleep, Delilah braided the seven locks of his head and secured them with a wall peg, and said to him, “Samson, the

Philistines are upon you!” And he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the peg.

[15]Then Delilah said to Samson, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You deceived me a third time; and you have not yet told me where your great strength lies.” [16]And it came to pass, after she pestered him continually with her words and pressured him sorely, that his spirit failed him almost to death. [17]Then he told her everything in his heart, and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a holy one of God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like all other men.”

[18]And Delilah discerned he told her all his heart, and she sent and called for the leaders of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he told me all his heart.” So the leaders of the foreigners went to her and brought the money in their hands. [19]Delilah lulled Samson to sleep on her knees, and called for a man, and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Thus she could finally subdue and control him, for his strength departed from him. [20]And Delilah said, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” So he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as before, and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. [21]Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with fetters of bronze; and he was grinding grain in the prison house.

Death of Samson

[22]Soon the hair of his head began to grow as before it was shaven. [23]And the leaders of the Philistines met to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon and to make merry. And they said, “Our god delivered our enemy, Samson,

into our hands."[†] [24]When the people saw Samson, they praised their god; for they said, "Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, the destroyer of our land; the one who multiplied our dead." [25]And when their heart was merry, they said, "Call Samson out of the guard house, and let him play before us." So they called Samson from the prison house, and he played before them. And they slapped him and stationed him between the pillars.[†] [26]Then Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars that support the house, so that I can lean on them." [27]Now the house was full of men and women, including all the leaders of the Philistines, with about seven hundred men and women on the roof watching while Samson played.

[28]Then Samson wept before the Lord, saying, "Lord, my Lord, remember me now. O God, strengthen me just this once so I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes." [29]And Samson took hold of the two pillars of the house, the very two which held up the house, and he leaned himself against them. He grasped one with his right hand and the other with his left, [30]and then Samson said, "Let my life end with the Philistines." And with all his strength, he pushed on the pillars, and the house came crashing down on the leaders and all the people in it. In his dying, Samson caused more people to die than were brought to death in his life. [31]And his brothers and all his father's household came there and took him. They brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He judged Israel for twenty years.

The Idolatry of Micah

17 Now there was a man from Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah.[†] [2]And he said to his mother, “The eleven hundred shekels of silver you took for yourself, and about which you cursed me and spoke it in my ears, behold the silver is with me; I took it.” And his mother said, “Blessed be my son of the Lord.” [3]And he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, and his mother said, “I consecrated the silver to the Lord out of my hand, for my son to make a carved and a molten image; and now I will restore it to you.” [4]Micah returned the silver to his mother, and his mother took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to the silversmith, who made it into a carved and molten image. It was in Micah's house. [5]And to him, the house of Micah was a house of God, and he made an ephod and idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, and to him he became his priest. [6]In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

[7]There was a young man from Bethlehem of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, sojourning there.[†] [8]And the man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to journey to wherever he could find a place. As he made his way, he came as far as Mount Ephraim and to the house of Micah. [9]And Micah said to him, “Where do you come from?” So he said to him, “I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am journeying to wherever I might find a place.” [10]Micah said to him, “Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a day, a change of clothes, and all your living needs.” So the Levite entered. [11]He began to dwell with the man, and the young man became like one of his sons to him. [12]So Micah consecrated the Levite, and to him he became his priest, and he took his place in the house of Micah. [13]Then Micah said, “Now I know the Lord will be good to me, since a Levite has become my priest!”

Dan Embraces Micah's Idols

18 In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days, the tribe of Dan sought for itself an inheritance to inhabit, because no inheritance had befallen it until that day in the midst of the tribes of Israel.[†] [2]So the sons of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, sons of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy upon the land and to search it out. They said to them, “Go, search the land.” And they went as far as Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and there they lodged. [3]While at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned toward him and said to him, “Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What do you have here?”[†]

[4]He said to them, “This is what Micah did for me. He hired me and I became his priest.” [5]So they said to him, “Ask now of God, so we may know if we will be successful on our journey that we go on.”[†] [6]And the priest said to them, “Go in peace. The way in which you go is before the Lord.”[†]

[7]So the five men departed and came to Laish. Here they saw the people in the midst of it, dwelling securely, as the affairs of the Sidonians were quiet. Here no one was perverting or shaming people or events in the land. There were no heirs extorting treasures; and the land was far from the Sidonians, with no ties of mutuality between them. [8]And the five men came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol and said to their brethren, “Why do you sit, preparing for nothing?” [9]And they said, “Arise, let us go up against them, for we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good, yet you are unmotivated. Do not delay. Go and enter the land to possess it. [10]When you go, you will

meet a people at peace, and the land is extensive, for God has given it into your hands, a place where there is nothing lacking in the land.”

[11]And six hundred men of the family of Dan, armed with weapons of war, departed from Zorah and Eshtaol.[†] [12]They went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah. Therefore they call that place the camp of Dan to this day. There it is, behind Kirjath Jearim. [13]And they passed from there to Mount Ephraim and came to the house of Micah. [14]Then the five men who had spied upon the country of Laish spoke and said to their brethren, “Do you know that in this house there is an ephod, idols, and a carved and molten image? Therefore, consider what you should do.” [15]So they turned aside there and went into where the young Levite man stayed—into the house of Micah. In peace, they asked how he was. [16]The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the sons of Dan, remained standing by the door of the gate.

[17]Then the five men who had spied upon the land went up, [18]and they entered the house of Micah. The priest stood up as they took the carved image, the ephod, the idols, and the molded image, and said to them, “The priest asks what are you doing?” [19]And they said to him, “Be silent, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; and be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or to be a priest to a tribe and house for a family of Israel?”[†]

[20]The heart of the priest was glad, and he took the ephod, the idols, and the carved and molten image and came into the midst of the people. [21]Then they turned and departed, putting the children, the livestock, and the baggage in front of them. [22]When they had traveled far from the house of Micah, behold

Micah and the men in the houses near the house of Micah cried out and overtook the sons of Dan. [23]And the sons of Dan turned their face and said to Micah, “What is the matter with you that you cry out?” [24]Micah responded, “Because you took away the carved image which I made, and my priest, and left. What remains for me? How is it you can say to me, ‘Why do you cry out?’ ”

[25]And the sons of Dan said to him, “Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest men bitter in soul fall upon us and take away your life and the lives of your household!” [26]Then the sons of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw they were far stronger than himself, he turned back toward his house.[†]

[27]So the sons of Dan took what Micah had made, and the priest who was with him, and they came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure, and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. [28]There was no deliverer, for the city was far from the Sidonians, and no agreements of mutuality. It is in the valley of the house of Rahab, and they restored the city and dwelt in it. [29]And they called the city Dan, after Dan their father, who was born to Israel. Formerly, the city was named Laish.

[30]Then the sons of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of exile for the nation. [31]So they set up for themselves, for as long as the house of God was in Shiloh, the carved image Micah made.[†]

A Levite Takes a Concubine

19 And it was so in the days when there was no king in Israel, there was a certain Levite sojourning on the lower slopes of Mount Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah,[†] [2]but his concubine left him and returned to the house of her father, to Bethlehem in Judah. She remained there for four months.[†] [3]Then her husband arose and sought after her, to speak kindly to her and win her back to himself. His young servant and a pair of asses were with him. So she brought him into her father's house, and when her father saw him, he was well-pleased to meet him. [4]Now his father-in-law, the father of the young woman, delayed him, and he stayed with him for three days. And they ate and drank and lodged there.[†] [5]Then on the fourth day, they arose early in the morning to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, “Strengthen your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way.”

[6]So he sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, “Please come lodge here, and let your heart be merry.” [7]And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him, so he sat and lodged there again. [8]Then on the fifth day, he arose early in the morning to depart, but the father of the young woman said, “Please, strengthen your heart and camp here until the day starts to wane,” and the two men ate a meal together. [9]And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the father of the young woman, said to him, “Look, the day is now drawing toward evening: please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end: lodge here that your heart may be merry, and tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home.”

[10]However, the man was not willing to spend that night. So he rose and departed, and came to a place opposite Jebus—that is, Jerusalem. There with

him were the two saddled donkeys and his concubine. [11]They had come as far as Jebus, and the day was far advanced, and the young servant said to his master, “Come, let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it.”[†] [12]But his master said to him, “We will not turn aside into a foreign city where there are no sons of Israel. We will go onward as far as Gibeah.” [13]So he said to his young servant, “Come, let us draw near to one of these places and lodge in Gibeah or in Ramah.” [14]And they passed by and went on their way. The sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. [15]There they turned aside to find lodging in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, and there was not a man who would take them into his house to lodge.

[16]And behold, an old man came in from his work in the field at evening. He was from Mount Ephraim and he sojourned in Gibeah. The men of this place were sons of Benjamin. [17]And his eyes looked upward, and he saw the traveler in the street of the city. The old man said to him, “Where are you going, and where do you come from?” [18]So he said to him, “We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the lower slopes of Mount Ephraim. I am from there and I traveled as far as Bethlehem of Judah. But there is no man to take me into his house, [19]yet we have straw and food for our donkeys, and bread and wine for me and my handmaid, and for the young man with your servant. There is no lack of anything.”

[20]And the old man said, “Peace be with you. And let all your needs be upon me, only do not lodge in the open street.” [21]So he brought him into his house and made a place for the asses. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

[22]As they were comforting their heart, men of the city, sons of lawlessness, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who entered your house, that we may know him!”[†] [23]But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this foolishness. [24]Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine; I will lead them out now. Subdue and control them, do with them what is good in your eyes; but to this man do not do such a thoughtless thing!”[†]

[25]But the men were not inclined to heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when dawn came, they let her go. [26]And toward dawn, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till there was daylight. [27]When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. [28]And he said to her, “Get up and let us be going.” But she did not answer, for she was dead. He carried her upon his ass and went to his place.

[29]Then he took a sword, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces. He sent the twelve pieces throughout all the tribes of Israel. [30]And it was so, that everyone who saw it said, “A day such as this has never happened nor been seen from the day the children of Israel were brought out of the land of Egypt until this day. Take counsel amongst yourselves and proclaim your findings!”

Israel Wars with the Benjamites

20 All the children of Israel came out; all the congregation from Dan including Bersabee, and from the land of Galaad to the Lord at Mizpah, gathered as one man.[†] [2]And all the tribes of Israel stood before the Lord in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword. [3]Now the sons of Benjamin heard that the sons of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.

Then the sons of Israel came and said, “Tell us where this wicked deed happened?” [4]So the Levite man, the husband of the woman murdered, answered and said, “My concubine and I went into Gibeah of Benjamin to lodge. [5]And that night, the men of Gibeah rose against me and surrounded the house. They intended to kill me, but instead they raped my concubine, and as a result she died. [6]So I laid hold of my concubine and divided her in pieces, and because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel, I sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of the children of Israel. [7]Look! You are all children of Israel; consider and take counsel here among yourselves.”

[8]So all the people arose as one man, saying, “None of us will go back to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house.[†] [9]Instead, this is what is to be done to Gibeah: we will go up against it by lot. [10]Moreover, we will take ten men out of every hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand, to make provisions for the people to entice them to come to Gibeah in Benjamin, and then do to it all the vileness which it did in Israel.” [11]So all the men of Israel gathered in the city as one man.

[12]Then the tribes of Israel sent men throughout all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What is this wickedness that has occurred among you?[†] [13]Now therefore, deliver up the men, the sons of lawlessness in Gibeah, so that we may put them to death and put away the evil from Israel!” But the sons of Benjamin were not pleased to hear the voice of their brethren, the sons of Israel. [14]Instead, the sons of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go into battle against the sons of Israel. [15]And from their cities at that time, the sons of Benjamin numbered twenty-three thousand men who drew the sword, not including the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men [16]from all this people who could use both hands. All these could sling a stone at a hair and not miss. [17]The men of Israel, excluding Benjamin, numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these were men of war.

[18]Then the sons of Israel arose and went up to Bethel to inquire of God. They said, “Which of us shall first go up to battle against the sons of Benjamin?” The Lord said, “Judah, as leader, will go up first.”[†] [19]So the sons of Israel rose in the early morning and encamped against Gibeah. [20]And all the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and they engaged them at Gibeah. [21]Then the sons of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day in Israel Benjamin cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites.

[22]And the men of Israel regrouped and again engaged in battle at the place where they engaged on the first day. [23]Then the sons of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until evening, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, “Shall we again draw near for battle against the sons of Benjamin, our brothers?” And the Lord said, “Go up against them.”

[24]So the sons of Israel went out to wage war against the sons of Benjamin on the second day. [25]And the sons of Benjamin went out to meet those from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the sons of Israel; all these drew the sword. [26]Then all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and came to Bethel and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening, and they offered burnt offerings and pure offerings before the Lord,[†] [27]because the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days. [28]In those days, Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it. And the sons of Israel asked the Lord, saying, "Shall we yet again go out to battle against the sons of Benjamin, our brothers, or shall we cease?" And the Lord said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hands."[†]

[29]Then the sons of Israel positioned themselves for an ambush round about Gibeah. [30]And the sons of Israel went up against the sons of Benjamin on the third day, and arrayed themselves against Gibeah as before. [31]So all the sons of Benjamin went out to meet the people, leaving the city empty. As they did before, they began to strike down and kill some of the people, about thirty men of Israel—on the roads, one heading to Bethel and the other to Gibeah—and in the field. [32]And the sons of Benjamin said, "As the first time, they are falling before us."

But the sons of Israel said, "Let us flee so as to draw them out from the city onto the roads." And so they did. [33]So every man rose up from his place and united together at Baal Tamar. And the men of Israel burst forth from their position of ambush at Maaragabeh. [34]Ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. And Gibeah did not comprehend the disaster that was coming upon them. [35]The Lord struck Benjamin before the sons of Israel, and the sons of Israel destroyed twenty-five thousand one hundred men from Benjamin that day. All these drew the sword.

[36]So the sons of Benjamin saw that they were beaten, and the men of Israel gave up ground to the Benjamites, for they relied on the ambush they had prepared against Gibeah. [37]And as the sons of Israel retreated, those men in ambush rose up and quickly charged Gibeah. The entire ambush rushed forth and struck the city with the edge of the sword.

[38]And the sons of Israel used a signal of battle with those in ambush. They would send up a signal of smoke from the city. [39]And the sons of Israel saw that the ambush had seized Gibeah. So they stood in battle formation, allowing Benjamin to strike and wound about thirty of the men of Israel, for they said, “Surely again they are defeated before us, as in the first battle.” [40]But when the signal cloud began to rise as a pillar of concentrated smoke from the city, the Benjamites looked behind them, and behold the complete end of the city was rising up to heaven. [41]The men of Israel turned back, and the men of Benjamin hastened away, seeing that evil overwhelmed them. [42]Therefore they looked in the direction of the desert, away from the sons of Israel, and fled.

But the battle overtook them, and those from the cities utterly eliminated those in the midst of them. [43]They cut down the Benjamites, chased them from the foot of Nova, and easily trampled them down until they came opposite Gibeah toward the east. [44]And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell—all these were men of strength. [45]The rest turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and the sons of Israel cut down five thousand men. The sons of Israel relentlessly pursued after them as far as Gidom, and struck two thousand of their men. [46]All of Benjamin who drew the sword that day, and fell, were twenty-five thousand men. All these were men of valor.

[47]The rest turned and fled toward the desert to the rock of Rimmon, even six hundred men, and they remained at the rock of Rimmon for four months. [48]And the sons of Israel turned back against the sons of Benjamin and struck them with the edge of the sword, from the city of Methla, to the livestock, and to everything found in all the cities. And they set on fire all the cities they found.[†]

Wives for the Benjamites

21 Now the men of Israel swore an oath at Mizpah, saying, “None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife.” [2]Then the people came to Bethel, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept mightily [3]and said, “O Lord God of Israel, why has this come to pass, that today one tribe should be missing in Israel?”[†]

[4]The next morning the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. [5]The sons of Israel said, “Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the Lord?” For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the Lord at Mizpah, saying, “He shall surely be put to death.” [6]And the sons of Israel had compassion toward Benjamin their brother, and said, “One tribe is cut off from Israel today.[†] [7]What shall we do for wives for

the large number who remain, for we have sworn by the Lord not to give them our daughters as wives?”

[8]And they said, “What one tribe of Israel did not come up to Mizpah to the Lord?” And take notice, no one came to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly.[†] [9]For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead was there. [10]So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand men from the sons of valor, and commanded them, saying, “Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword. [11]And this is what you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately. But the virgins you will preserve.” And they did so. [12]So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, in the land of Canaan. [13]Then the whole congregation sent and spoke to the sons of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon, and called them to peace. [14]Benjamin came back to the sons of Israel at that time, and the sons of Israel gave them the women whom they saved alive of the daughters of Jabesh Gilead, and it was thus pleasing to them.

[15]The people had compassion for Benjamin, because the Lord brought about a rift in the tribes of Israel. [16]And the elders of the congregation said, “What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin were destroyed?” [17]And they said, “There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, so that a tribe of Israel may not be wiped out. [18]For we will not be able to give them wives from our daughters, because we swore among the sons of Israel, saying, ‘Cursed be the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.’ ”

[19]And they said, “Remember, in a few days there is the yearly feast of the Lord in Shiloh, on the north of Bethel, on the road leading eastward from Bethel to Shechem, and from the south of Lebonah.” [20]Therefore they instructed the sons of Benjamin, saying, “Go, lie in wait in the vineyards [21]and watch. And behold, if the daughters of the inhabitants of Shiloh come out to perform in their dances, then go out from the vineyards, and let every man capture a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh and return to the land of Benjamin. [22]And whenever their fathers or their brothers come to pass judgment on you, we will say to them, ‘Have compassion on them for us, since no men received from us a wife for himself in the war, because you did not give to them at the appointed time you transgressed.”

[23]And the sons of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they seized. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them. [24]At that time, the sons of Israel walked away from that place, every man to his tribe and his family. And they went out from there, every man to his inheritance. [25]In those days there was no king in Israel. A man did what was right according to his own vision.[†]

RUTH

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The Book of Ruth

Author—Unknown

Date—Traditionally believed to be written in the time of the Judges, about 1300 BC. Historically, Ruth is the great-grandmother of David.

Major Theme—*Redemption,* a word that occurs twenty-three times in the text. Boaz acts as a redeemer by buying back Naomi's land, marrying Ruth, a Moabitess, and fathering a son to keep the family line alive. Such a "kinsman-redeemer" is symbolic of the mediating work of Christ. Ruth's position as a Gentile in the ancestry of David (and thence of Christ) signifies that all nations will be represented in the Kingdom of God.

Background—As a Moabitess, Ruth was a descendant of Lot. Twice does Scripture record that Moab, situated east of the Dead Sea, and Israel warred against each other. During a time of famine in Israel, Ruth and her Israelite family moved to Moab as matter of survival. After the death of her husband and with the famine past, she and Naomi return to Israel, to the city of Bethlehem, later to become the city of David.

Outline

I. Naomi and Ruth Move from Moab to Bethlehem (1:1–22)

II. Ruth and Boaz Meet at the Threshing Floor (2:1–3:18)

III. Boaz Marries Ruth (4:1–17)

    A. Boaz confronts the unnamed kinsman (4:1–6)

B. Boaz buys Naomi's property and announces his marriage to Ruth (4:7–12)

C. Obed is born; Naomi is filled (4:13–17)

IV. Epilogue: Genealogy of David (4:18–22)

Naomi's Family in Moab

1 In the days of the judges there was a famine in the land. And a man went from Bethlehem of Judah to sojourn in the country of Moab, and his wife and his sons.[†] [2]The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites from Bethlehem of Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. [3]Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. [4]They took for themselves wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. [5]Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Naomi Returns to Judah with Ruth

[6]Then she arose with her two daughters-in-law and returned from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord was watching over His people by giving them bread.[†] [7]Therefore she and her two daughters-in-law left the place where she was and returned to the land of Judah. [8]And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each to her mother's house. May the Lord have mercy on you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. [9]The Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. [10]And they said to her, “We will return with you to

your people.” [11]But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why do you desire to go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?[†] [12]Turn back, my daughters, for I am too old to have a husband. For I say, if I married and should bear a son,[†] [13]would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out from within me!” [14]Then they lifted up their voices and again wept. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and returned to her people, but Ruth followed her.[†]

[15]And Naomi said to Ruth, “Look, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” [16]But Ruth said, “Do not ask me to leave you, or turn back from following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. [17]And wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord cause this to happen to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.” [18]When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she ended her conversation with her.

[19]Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And the whole city shouted because of them, and said, “Is this Naomi?”[†] [20]But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Bitter, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.[†] [21]I went out full and the Lord has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has humbled me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?” [22]So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabite woman returned with her, her daughter-in-law who returned from

the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.[†]

Boaz Favors Ruth

2 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.[†] [2]So Ruth the Moabite woman said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field and glean heads of grain after him in whose eyes I may find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, daughter.”[†] [3]Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. [4]Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, “The Lord be with you!” And they answered him, “The Lord bless you!” [5]Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” [6]So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, “It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. [7]And she said, ‘Let me glean and gather by handfuls after the reapers.’ So she came and continued from morning until evening, not stopping to rest in the field, not even a little.”

[8]Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Did you not hear, daughter? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women.[†] [9]Let your eyes be on the field that my men reap, and follow after them. Behold, I have commanded the young men not to touch you. And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men draw.” [10]So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to

him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a stranger?”

[11]And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done with your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know yesterday or the day before.[†] [12]May the Lord repay your work, and may a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” [13]Then she said, “Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken to the heart of your maidservant. Behold, I will be like one of your bondswomen.” [14]Now Boaz said to her, “It is already time to eat. Come here and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So Ruth sat beside the reapers, and Boaz made a pile of grain for her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.[†]

[15]And she rose up to glean, and Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not bring shame upon her.[†] [16]When you carry sheaves, carry them for her also; and when you throw them on the piles, throw them for her also; and let her gather from what has piled up, and do not rebuke her.” [17]So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat with a rod what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

[18]Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So Ruth brought forth and gave to her what she had

kept back after she had been satisfied. [19]And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.” So Ruth told her mother-in-law where she had worked and said, “The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz.” [20]Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed is he of the Lord, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!” And Naomi said to her, “This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.”[†] [21]Ruth said to her mother-in-law, “He also said to me, ‘Stay near by my young men until they finish all my reap-ing.’ ” [22]And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and thus people will not meet you in another field.”[†] [23]So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of the barley and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Boaz Pledges to Redeem Ruth

3 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “Daughter, shall I not seek rest for you, so that it will be well with you? [2]Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. [3]Therefore, wash and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go up to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished drinking and eating.[†] [4]Then, when he lies down, take notice of the place where he lies. Then you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”[†] [5]And Ruth said to her, “I will do everything you say.”

[6]So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all her mother-in-law instructed her. [7]And Boaz ate, and his heart was cheerful. He went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain, and she came softly and uncovered his feet. [8]Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled and disturbed; for there was a woman lying at his feet. [9]And he said, “Who are you?” So she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”[†]

[10]Then Boaz said, “Blessed are you of the Lord God, daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether rich or poor.[†] [11]And now, daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all you request, for the whole tribe of my people knows that you are a virtuous woman. [12]Now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.[†] [13]Stay here for the night. And in the morning, if he performs the duty of a kinsman for you, we will let him do it. But if he does not wish to perform the duty for you, then as the Lord lives, I will perform the duty for you. Lie down until morning.”

[14]So she lay at his feet until morning, and she rose before anyone could recognize another. Then Boaz said, “Do not let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.” [15]And he said to her, “Bring the apron that is around you.” And as she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.[†] [16]So when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?” Then Ruth told her all the man had done for her. [17]And she said to her, “He gave me these six ephahs of barley; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’

” [18]Then she said, “Sit still, daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter today.”

Boaz Marries Ruth

4 Boaz went up to the gate and sat there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken was passing. So Boaz said to him, “Come aside, sir, sit down here.” So he came aside and sat down. [2]And Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.

[3]Then Boaz said to the relative, “As to the field which was our brother Elimelech's, which was given to Naomi, now returning from the land of Moab;[†] [4]I said I would inform you, saying, ‘Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.’ ” And he said, “I am here, I will redeem it.” [5]Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi and from Ruth the Moabite woman, the wife of the deceased, you must take her as well, so as to raise up the name of the dead through his inheritance.” [6]And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”[†]

[7]Now, this was the legal custom in former times of Israel concerning redemption, and for a bargain, to confirm every word: A man took off his sandal and gave it to his neighbor who redeemed his right, and this was the testimony in Israel.[†] [8]And the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy my right of redemption for yourself.” So he took off his sandal and gave it to him. [9]And

Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. [10]Moreover, I bought for myself, to be my wife, Ruth the Moabite woman, the wife of Mahlon, to raise up the name of the dead through his inheritance; so the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the tribe of his people. You are witnesses today.” [11]And all the people who were at the gate said, “We are witnesses.” And the elders said, “May the Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel and wrought mightily in Ephrathah. She will have a name in Bethlehem.[†] [12]And out of the seed which the Lord will give you from this young woman, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”[†]

[13]So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. [14]Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not suffered a redeemer to fail you this day, even to make your name famous in Israel! [15]And he will be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.”[†] [16]Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse for him. [17]And the neighbors themselves gave him a name, saying, “A son is born to Naomi”; and they called his name Obed. This is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

[18]Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; [19]Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; [20]Amminadab begot Nahshon,

and Nahshon begot Salmon; [21]Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;
[22]Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

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The First Book of the Kingdoms
(First Samuel)

Author—Talmudic tradition views Samuel as the sole author.

Date—Traditionally believed to have been written in the time of Kings David and Solomon, 1070 to 970 BC.

Major Themes—*Obedience to God, punishment for disobedience*. First Kingdoms is a book of beginnings and endings in the history of the people of God. Rule by a succession of Judges (chosen from various tribes) had ended. Samuel, as a prophet, served in a monarchial role by direction of the Lord. “If only the desired whole burnt offerings and desired sacrifices were of equal value to the Lord with one who heeds the voice of the Lord. Behold! Hearing is greater than a good sacrifice, and obedience above and beyond the fat of rams” (1Kg 15:22).

A theme of God's judgment is also seen in the punishment of the priest Eli for his tolerance of his sons’ disobedience, of Saul for failure to follow God's commands, and of David for his sins. Each disobedience was punished severely. Other pertinent themes are those of God changing the natural order in His miraculous gift of a son to a barren woman, in men of lowly vocations rising to be king, and in the youngest surpassing his elders to rule over them.

Background—The time period during which the events of the First Book of the Kingdoms occurred is pivotal. Israel is moving from a theocracy governed by God-appointed judges to a monarchy ruled by a king. The next four hundred years would see kings both good and bad. This history is recorded in the four books of the Kingdoms.

Outline

- I. Eli and Samuel: Priest and Prophet (1:1–7:17)
    - A. The birth of Samuel (1:1–2:11)
    - B. Samuel and the sons of Eli (2:12–36)
    - C. Samuel's prophetic ministry begins (3:1–21)
    - D. The ark of the Lord is lost and recovered (4:1–7:1)
    - E. Israel's victory over the Philistines (7:2–17)
- II. Samuel and Saul: Establishment of Israel's Monarchy (8:1–15:35)
    - A. Israel demands a king (8:1–22)
    - B. Saul becomes king (9:1–10:27)
    - C. Israel's victory over the Ammonites (11:1–15)
    - D. Samuel's farewell address (12:1–25)
    - E. God rejects Saul (13:1–15:35)
- III. Saul and David: Conflict and Reign (16:1–31:13)
    - A. David's entrance into royal service (16:1–23)
    - B. David and Goliath (17:1–33)
    - C. David and the royal family (18:1–20:42)
    - D. David as a fugitive (21:1–31:13)

Elkanah at Shiloh

1 There was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountain of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeremeel, the son of Elihu, the son of Toke in Nasiv Ephraim.[†] [2] He had two wives. The name of

one was Hannah, and the name of the other was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah none.[†] [3]And each year the man went up from his city of Ramathaim to worship and sacrifice to Lord Sabaoth in Shiloh. Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, both priests of the Lord, went there as well.[†] [4]And on the day he came, Elkanah sacrificed and gave a portion to Peninnah his wife, and to his sons and daughters. [5]To Hannah, he gave one portion, since she was without child. However Elkanah loved Hannah more than the other one, but the Lord had closed her womb. [6]Because the Lord did not give to her a child during her tribulation, and during the discouragement of her tribulation, she was broken-hearted. The Lord had closed her womb and did not give her a child. [7]So year by year when she went up to the house of the Lord, she was broken-hearted and wept and did not eat.[†]

Hannah's Vow

[8]Then Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah.” And she said to him, “Here I am, lord.” Then he said to her, “What is the matter with you? Why do you not eat? And why are you heartsick? Am I not better for you than ten children?” [9]So Hannah arose after they had finished eating in Shiloh, and she sat down before the Lord. Eli the priest was sitting nearby on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord.[†] [10]Hannah was grieved in spirit and prayed to the Lord, lamenting and weeping. [11]She prayed a vow to the Lord God and said, “O Lord, my God of Sabaoth, if you are looking, look with favor upon the lowly state of Your handmaiden and remember me. I pray You, give Your handmaiden a seed of men, a son, and I will

dedicate him before You as a gift until the day of his death. He will not drink wine nor intoxicating drink, and no razor shall come upon his head.”[†]

[12]And as she kept praying before the Lord, Eli watched her mouth. [13]And as she spoke in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk.[†] [14]The servant of God said to her, “For how long will you remain drunk? Cast off your wine, and go out from the face of the Lord!” [15]But Hannah answered and said, “No lord, I am a woman for whom this day is difficult. I drank neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but I pour out my soul before the Lord. [16]Do not consider your handmaiden a daughter of pestilence just because of the multitude of my idle words I have put forth.”[†] [17]Then Eli answered and said to her, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you the petition you asked of Him.”[†] [18]And she said, “Your handmaiden has found favor in your sight.” So the woman went her way and came into her lodging and ate and drank with her husband. Her face was no longer fallen.[†]

Birth and Dedication of Samuel

[19]Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped the Lord and went on their way back to Elkanah's house at Ramathaim. And he knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. [20]She conceived, and it came to be at the appointed time she bore a son, and she called him Samuel and said, “Because I asked for him from the Lord God Sabaoth.”[†]

[21]Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to Shiloh to offer the yearly sacrifice, his vow, and the tenth portion of all his land. [22]But

Hannah did not go up with him, for she said to her husband, “I will not go up until our boy is weaned from me. Then he will appear in the presence of the Lord and stay there continually.”[†] [23]And Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what is good in your eyes; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord confirm as true what was coming out of your mouth.” So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she weaned him.

[24]And she went up with him to Shiloh with a calf three years old, loaves of bread, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She came to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, and the child was with them. [25]And they came before the Lord, and his father slaughtered the offering he made yearly to the Lord. He brought the child and slaughtered the calf. Then Hannah, the mother of the young boy, went to Eli. [26]And she said to him, “Lord, as your soul lives, I am the woman who was standing near you while I prayed to the Lord. [27]For this child I prayed, and the Lord gave me my request which I asked from Him. [28]And I lend him to the Lord all the days which he lives to be fruitful to the Lord.”[†]

Hannah's Prayer

2 And she said:

“My heart is strengthened in the Lord;

My horn is exalted in my God.

I smile at my enemies;

I rejoice in Your salvation.[†]

[2] Because no one is holy like the Lord,

No one is righteous like our God,

No one is holy but You.

[3] Do not boast nor speak of high things;

Let no arrogance come from your mouth,

For the Lord is the God of knowledge;

And God is preparing His actions.[†]

[4] He weakened the bow of mighty men,

And those who are weak are girded with strength.

[5] Those who were full of bread were made empty,

And the hungry have forsaken the land.

The barren woman has borne seven,

And she who has many children has become feeble.[†]

[6] The Lord kills and makes alive;

He brings down to Hades and raises up.[†]

[7] The Lord makes poor and rich;

He brings low and lifts up.

[8] He raises the poor from the earth

And lifts the needy from the dung heap,

To set them among princely people

And make them inherit a throne of glory.

[9] The One who gives a prayer to the one praying,

He blesses with righteous years;

For by strength no man can prevail.[†]

[10] The Lord makes His adversaries weak;

The Lord is holy.

Let not the man of learning boast in his understanding,

Nor let the man of might boast in his might,

Nor let the man of riches boast in his riches.

Only let the one who boasts boast in this:

To understand and to know the Lord

And to do justice and righteousness in the midst of the earth.

The Lord went up into the heaven and thundered.

The Lord judges the ends of the earth.

He gives strength to our leaders,

And He will exalt the horn of His Christ.”

[11]They left him there before the Lord and went away to Ramathaim, and the child performed the services before the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.[†]

The Sinful Sons of Eli

[12]Now the sons of Eli were sons of scoundrels, not knowing the Lord. [13]And the custom of the priest for the people who sacrificed was for the servant of the priest to come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged meat-hook in his hand. [14]He would then thrust it into either the large kettle, or the brazen vessel, or the pot; and everything the meat-hook brought up, the priest would take for himself. So in Shiloh, they did this to all the Israelites who came there to sacrifice to the Lord. [15]Also, before they burned the fat, the servant came and said to the man who sacrificed, “Give some meat to be roasted to the priest, and I will not take any of your boiled meat from out of the cauldron.”

[16]And if the man sacrificing said to him, “First he should burn the fat as fitting, then you may take as much as your soul desires.” But he would say, “No, you shall give it to me now, and if not, I will take it by force.”

[17]Therefore the sin of the servants is exceedingly great before the Lord, for they nullified the sacrifice of the Lord.

God's Servant Samuel

[18]As a young boy, Samuel was serving before the Lord wearing a linen ephod of a servant. [19]Moreover, his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him once a year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. [20]And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, “May the Lord repay you with a seed from this woman, in return for the loan you made to the Lord.” Then the man went to his place. [21]And the Lord watched over Hannah, and she bore three more sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew and matured before the Lord.[†]

A Prophecy against Eli's House

[22]Now Eli was very, very old and he heard what his sons did to the sons of Israel. [23]So he said to them, “Why are you doing what I hear from the mouth of all the people of the Lord? [24]No, my sons! For the report I hear is not good. Do not act in this manner, for the reports I hear are not good, causing the people not to serve God. [25]If one man sins against another, they will pray to the Lord for him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will pray for him?” Nevertheless they did not heed their father's voice, so the Lord desired to destroy them. [26]But the child Samuel led his life and he grew and matured and found favor both with the Lord and with men.

[27]Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the Lord, ‘I clearly revealed Myself to the house of your father when they were slaves

in Egypt in Pharaoh's house.[†] [28]I chose the house of your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to go to My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me. And I gave to the house of your father, and to the sons of Israel, food from all the offerings of fire. [29]Why do you regard My incense and My sacrifice with impudent eyes and honor your sons more than Me; to bless yourselves with the best of all the first fruits of Israel set before Me?' [30]Therefore the Lord God of Israel says, 'I said indeed that your house and your father's house would walk before Me forever.' But now the Lord says, 'Far be it from Me, for I will honor those who honor Me, and the one who despises Me shall be dishonored. [31]Behold, the days are coming that I will destroy your seed and the seed of the house of your father. [32]And there shall not be an old man descended from you in My house forever. [33]But for you—I will not destroy a man from My altar even though his eyes have failed and his life has drained away. But all the descendants of your house shall fall by men's swords.

[34]'Now this shall be the sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas. In one day both of them shall die. [35]Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do all that is in My heart and in My soul. I will build him a faithful house, and he shall walk before My Christ forever.[†] [36]And it shall come to pass that everyone who remains in your house will, for a small amount of silver, prostrate before him begging, "Place me in the priesthood, so I may eat one loaf of bread?" ' "

The Lord Speaks to Samuel

3 The boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no discerning vision.[†] [2]So on that day, while Eli was lying down in his place, his eyes were starting to grow heavy, barely able to see. [3]Before the lamp of God went out, and while Samuel was asleep in the temple where the ark of God was, [4]the Lord called, “Samuel, Samuel.” Samuel answered, “Here I am!” [5]So he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” And Eli said, “I did not call you. Return and lie down.” So he returned and lay down. [6]Then the Lord called again, “Samuel, Samuel!” So Samuel went to Eli a second time, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Eli answered, “I did not call you. Return and lie down.”

[7]Now this all happened before Samuel knew the Lord, and before the word of the Lord was revealed to him.[†] [8]And the Lord called Samuel again a third time. Then he arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy. [9]And he said, “Return, lie down, my child; and if He calls you, you must say, ‘O Lord, speak, for Your servant hears.’ ” So Samuel went and fell asleep in his place.

[10]And the Lord came, and stood and called as before. So Samuel answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears.” [11]Then the Lord said to Samuel, “Behold! I shall execute My words in Israel, and for everyone hearing them, both ears will tingle. [12]In that day, I will raise up against Eli everything I spoke concerning his house. This I will begin, and I will finish it. [13]For I announced to him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity of his sons. For his sons reviled God, and he did not correct them in any way.[†] [14]I swore to the house of Eli that the iniquity of the house of Eli shall never be atoned for with incense or with sacrifice.”

[15]So Samuel fell asleep and rose early in the morning. He opened the doors of the Lord's house. But Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. [16]Then Eli called to Samuel, “Samuel, my child!” And he answered, “Here I am.” [17]And Eli said, “What was the report the Lord spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do these things to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of what He said to you.” [18]Then Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And Eli said, “He is the Lord. He will do what seems good to Him.”[†]

[19]So Samuel grew and matured, and the Lord was with him, and not one of his words fell to the ground.[†] [20]And all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was faithful as a prophet of the Lord. [21]The Lord appeared in Shiloh again, for the Lord was revealed to Samuel. And all Israel, from one end of the land to the other, believed Samuel to be a prophet of the Lord. By now Eli was an exceedingly old man, and his sons continued living as they did. And their way was evil before the Lord.

The Ark of the Covenant Captured

4 Now in those days the Philistines gathered into battle against Israel, and Israel went out to meet them in battle and encamped beside Ebenezer. The Philistines encamped in Aphek.[†] [2]And the Philistines prepared battle plans against Israel, and the battle turned against Israel, and the men of Israel fell before the Philistines. About four thousand men were struck down in the battle lines. [3]And when the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why did the Lord cause us to be defeated today before the Philistines? Let us take the ark of our God out from Shiloh and let it proceed from the midst of us, and it will save us from the hand of our enemies.”[†] [4]So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they brought out the ark of the covenant of the Lord, who is seated between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark.

[5]And when the ark of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a loud voice, and the earth shook. [6]Now when the Philistines heard the shout, the Philistines said, “What is this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?” Then they understood that the ark of the Lord was in the camp. [7]And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “These are the gods that have come into the camp! Woe to us! Deliver us today, Lord, for such a thing has never happened before.[†] [8]Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the desert. [9]Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, so that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, even as they previously served us. Conduct yourselves like men and fight them!” [10]So they fought them, and the men of Israel were defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and thirty thousand troops of Israel fell. [11]The ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli died, Hophni and Phinehas.

The Death of Eli

[12]Then a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line, and on that day he came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. [13]Behold! When he arrived, Eli was sitting on a seat by the gate watching the road, for his heart was bewildered about the ark of God. And when the man entered the

city and reported it, the city cried out. [14]When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, “What is the sound of this outcry?” And the man came quickly and told Eli. [15]Eli was ninety years old, and his eyes looked up and he could not see. Then Eli said to the men standing around him, “What is this roaring sound?” [16]Then the man who came quickly to Eli said to him, “I am the one who came from the camp, who fled today from the battle line.” And he said, “What happened, my child?” [17]So the young man answered and said, “The men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and there was a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons died. And the ark of God was captured.”

[18]And it came to pass, as Eli remembered the ark of God, he fell backward from the seat by the side of the gate and broke his back and died, for the man was old and heavy. He judged Israel for twenty years.[†]

Ichabod

[19]Now Eli's daughter-in-law, Phinehas’ wife, was pregnant, about to give birth. When she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she crouched down and gave birth, for her labor pains came upon her. [20]And in her time of delivery, when she was at the point of death, the women standing at her side said to her, “Do not fear, you have borne a son.” But she did not answer, and her heart did not understand. [21]Woe, Ichabod, is what she named the young boy, for the sake of the ark of God, for her father-in-law, and for her husband. [22]And they said, “The glory of Israel is exiled from its home, for the ark of God is taken.”

The Philistines Take the Ark

5 The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. [2]And the Philistines took the ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of their god Dagon. They set it by Dagon.[†] [3]And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, they entered the house of Dagon, and they looked and beheld Dagon falling on its face in the presence of the ark of God. So they raised Dagon and returned it to its place. And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon Ashdod. He tormented all within her borders; He smote them in their private parts. [4]Then it came to pass, when they arose early in the morning, behold Dagon had again fallen on his face before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were broken off, each in front of the threshold, and both the wrists of his hands were leaning on the doorway; only the torso of Dagon remained.[†] [5]So to this day, the priests of Dagon and any who come into the house of Dagon do not tread on, but step over, the threshold of the house of Dagon in Ashdod because of this.

[6]But the hand of the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod. He came upon them and in their ships. He brought forth disease among them. He infested their country with mice, and there was a great calamity of death in the city. [7]And when the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, “The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh upon us and Dagon our god.” [8]Therefore they sent and brought together all the lords of the Philistines in the same place and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?”[†]

And the people of Gath said, “Let the ark of the God of Israel come to us.” So the ark of God came to Gath. [9]And it came to be, after it entered Gath, that the hand of the Lord came upon the city. An exceedingly great state of confusion struck the men of the city, both small and great. He struck them in their private parts, and they made for themselves images of these. [10]Then they sent away the ark of God to Ashkelon, and it came about, when the ark of God came to Ashkelon, the people of Ashkelon cried out, saying, “Why did you turn the ark of the God of Israel toward us to kill us and our people?” [11]So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, “Send away the ark of the God of Israel and let it return to its own place, so it does not kill us and our people,” for it came about that a widespread panic of death spread throughout the entire city.[†] [12]And the living and those not dying were struck in their private parts, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

Return of the Ark to Israel

6 For seven months the ark was in the country of the Philistines, and their land was infested with mice.[†] [2]And the Philistines called for their priests, their prophets, and their enchanters, saying, “What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Instruct us as to how we should return it to its place.”[†] [3]So they said, “If you send away the ark of the covenant of the God of Israel, do not send it away empty. Instead, give it as an offering for the plague. Then you shall be healed and be atoned for. Otherwise His hand may never be removed from you.”

[4]Then they said, “What shall we offer to Him for this torment?” They answered, “Five golden emerods for each of the number of lords of the

Philistines, since the same offense was on all of you, on your leaders and the people. [5]And for each lord, add a gold mouse that images the mice utterly ravaging your land. Then you shall give glory to the Lord; perhaps He may lighten His hand from you, from off your gods, and from off your land. [6]Why do you yet harden your hearts, as did Egypt, and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? Was it not when he mocked them that they let the people go, and they departed? [7]Now therefore, make a new wagon and take two cows with firstborn calves, and hitch the cows to the wagon. But lead the newly born calves to the pen. [8]Now take the ark and set it on the wagon, and place the offering of the golden vessels you shall render to Him in a chest next to it. And send it away and let it depart. [9]Then you shall see; if it goes through Beth Shemesh, by way of the coasts, then He brought upon us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know His hand did not touch us, but only by mere chance.” [10]And the Philistines did so.

They took two cows, each having firstborn calves, and hitched them to the wagon, putting the calves into the pen. [11]Onto the wagon they placed the ark, and the chest, and the mice made of gold. [12]The cows went straight ahead, by way of Beth-Shemesh, on the only beaten path. They proceeded and labored and did not turn aside either to the right or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed it to the border of Beth-Shemesh.

[13]Now the men of Beth-Shemesh were in the valley to reap the harvest of their wheat. They lifted up their eyes and saw the ark of the Lord, and they rejoiced to greet it. [14]The wagon came to a stop in the field of Joshua of Beth-Shemesh. And next to the wagon they set a large stone. They split the wood of the wagon and offered the cows as a whole burnt offering to

the Lord.[†] [15]The Levites took up the ark of the Lord and with it the chest and the gold vessels and put them on the large stone. And on this day the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the Lord. [16]So when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned on the same day to Ashkelon.

[17]These are the places the gold emerods were given as an offering to the Lord: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, and one for Ekron. [18]And the gold mice were according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, from the cities being fortified as far as the villages of Pherezite, and as far as the great stone where they placed the ark of the covenant of the Lord, in the field of Joshua of Beth-Shemesh.

[19]Now the sons of Jechoniah were not pleased, nor were the people of Beth-Shemesh, because as they looked at the ark of the Lord, the Lord smote fifty thousand and seventy men from among them. And the people mourned because of the people the Lord smote such a deadly blow.[†]

The Ark at Kirjath Jearim

[20]And the men of Beth-Shemesh said, “Who shall be able to come before this holy Lord? And to whom shall the ark of the Lord go up from us?” [21]So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, “The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord, so come down and take it up with you.”

7 Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill. They consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the covenant of the Lord safe.

Samuel as Judge in Israel

[2]It came to pass that from the very day the ark was in Kirjath Jearim, the days multiplied to become twenty years. And all the house of Israel watched for the Lord.[†] [3]Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, “If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, if you put away the foreign gods and the sacred groves from among you, and if you prepare your hearts for the Lord and serve Him alone, He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.”[†] [4]So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the sacred groves for Ashtoreths, and served the Lord alone. [5]And Samuel said, “Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” [6]So they gathered at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out upon the earth before the Lord. And there they fasted on that day and said, “We sinned against the Lord.” And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah.[†] [7]When the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines marched up against Israel. And when the sons of Israel heard of it, they were afraid before the Philistines. [8]So the sons of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, and He will save us from the hand of the Philistines.”[†] [9]And Samuel took one suckling lamb and offered it with all the people as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord concerning Israel, and the Lord heard him.[†] [10]Now as Samuel was offering the burnt offering, the Philistines

drew near to do battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud noise against the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. [11]And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down below Beth Car.

[12]Then Samuel took one stone and set it up between Mizpah and the older one, and called it Ebenezer, a Stone of Help, saying, “The Lord helped us here.” [13]So the Lord humbled the Philistines, and they no longer came into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. [14]And the cities which the Philistines took from the children of Israel were returned; they returned them to Israel from Ekron to Gath, and they took the coast of Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. There was peace between Israel and the Amorites. [15]And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. [16]He went yearly on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all those holy places. [17]But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there, and there he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the Lord.

Israel Wants a King

8 Now when Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel.[†] [2]And these were the names of his sons: the firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. [3]But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

[4]Then all the men of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, [5]and said to him, “Look, you have become old, and your sons do

not walk in your ways. Now establish a king for us to judge us like all the rest of the nations.” [6]But this was evil in the eyes of Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to the Lord. [7]And the Lord said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in whatever they might say to you, for they have not rejected you, but rather they have rejected Me, to bring to naught My reign over them.[†] [8]In everything they did to Me since the day I brought them up from Egypt, even to this day, they have forsaken Me and have served other gods. So too they are doing this to you. [9]Now listen to their voice; only you shall testify solemnly to them and announce to them the custom of the king who will reign over them.”[†]

[10]So Samuel spoke all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. [11]And he said, “This will be the custom of the king who shall reign over you. He will take your sons and put them in his chariots, and among his horsemen, and running before his chariots; [12]and for himself, he will appoint them as captains over his thousands, and captains over his hundreds; and to harvest his crop and gather his vintage; and to make his weapons of war and instruments for his chariots. [13]He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. [14]And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves and give them to his servants. [15]He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage and give it to his eunuchs and servants. [16]And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest cattle, and your donkeys, and take a tenth of them for his work. [17]He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. [18]Then in that day you will cry out before your king whom

you chose for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in those days, because you chose a king for yourselves.”

[19]But the people were unwilling to listen to Samuel; and they said to him, “No, rather it is that we want a king to be over us. [20]Then we will be like all the other nations, and our king will judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” [21]And Samuel heard all the words of the people and repeated them in the hearing of the Lord. [22]So the Lord said to Samuel, “Heed their voice, and make them a king.” And Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Let every man go to his city.”

Saul to Be the King

9 There was a man from the sons of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a man of power. [2]And he had a tall and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was no more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. He was a head taller than anyone else in the land.

[3]Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, “Take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys.” [4]So they passed through the mountain of Ephraim and through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them. [5]When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, “Come, let us return, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and become worried about us.”

[6]And the servant said to him, “Look now, in this city there is a man of God, and he is an honorable man. All that he says surely comes to pass. So now let us go there; perhaps he can tell us the way we should go.” [7]Then Saul said to his servants who were with him, “But look, if we go, what shall we bring the man of God? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and there is no more that belongs to us to bring to the man of God.” [8]And the servant answered Saul again and said, “Look, I have here in my hand one fourth of a shekel of silver. Give it to the man of God to tell us our way.” [9]Before this time in Israel, every one who went to inquire of God said, “Come, let us go up to the seer,” for the people previously called the prophet the seer.[†]

[10]Then Saul said to his servant, “Well said! Come, let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was. [11]As they went up the hill to the city, they found some young women going out to draw water and said to them, “Is the seer here?” [12]And the young women answered them and said, “Look! He is just ahead of you. He is here now on account of the day; he has come into the city today because there is a sacrifice for the people on the high place. [13]As soon as you enter the city, you will surely find him there before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, for he blesses the sacrifice, and afterward the guests will eat. Now go up, for about this time you will find him.” [14]So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the midst of the city, there was Samuel coming out to meet them on his way up to the high place.

[15]Now the day before Saul arrived, the Lord revealed to the ear of Samuel, saying, [16]“Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people

Israel. He will save My people from the hand of the Philistines, for I have looked upon the humiliation of My people, because their cry has come to Me.” [17]And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, “There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall rule over My people.” [18]Then Saul approached Samuel in the midst of the city, and said, “Please tell me, where is the seer's house?” [19]And Samuel answered Saul and said, “I am he. Go up before me to the high place and eat with me today, and in the morning before I send you forth, I will tell you all that is in your heart. [20]But as for your donkeys lost three days ago, do not let your heart be anxious about them, for they have been found. And to whom is the beauty of Israel? Is it not on you and on your father's house?” [21]Then Saul answered and said, “Am I not a son of Benjamin, of the smallest branch of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the tribe of the branch of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?”

[22]Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and he set a place for them among the chief of those who were called—about seventy men. [23]And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion I gave you which I told you to set beside you.” [24]So the cook lifted up the thigh and set it before Saul. Then Samuel said to Saul, “Behold! A remnant is set before you. Eat, because it is placed in front of you as a testimony to the others. Take of it.” And on that day, Saul ate with Samuel. [25]When they had come down from the high place into the city, they spread a bed for Saul on the housetop. [26]He slept.

Saul Anointed King of Israel

As the morning dawned, Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, “Rise up, that I may send you on your way.” And Saul arose, and he and Samuel went outside. [27]As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us. But you stand here today, and give heed to the word of God.”

10 Then Samuel took a vial of olive oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said to him, “Has not the Lord anointed you as ruler to His people, over Israel? You shall rule among the people of the Lord, and you shall save them from the hand of their enemies round about them. For you, this shall be the sign that the Lord anointed you as a ruler for His inheritance.[†] [2]As you depart from me today, you shall come to find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin who are jumping about ecstatically, and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys you searched for are found, but take notice, your father stopped worrying about news concerning the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, “What shall I do about my son?’ ” [3]Then you shall go on from there and come to the oak tree of Tabor. There you will find three men going up to God at Bethel, one carrying three young goats, one carrying three containers of bread, and one carrying a skin of wine. [4]And they will entreat you in peace and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall take from their hands. [5]After this, you shall come to the hill of God, which for the Philistines is the high place there. The Philistine Nasib is located there. And when you enter the city, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them. They will be prophesying. [6]Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you shall prophesy with them, and you shall be turned into another man. [7]And when these signs shall come to pass for you, do all the many things your hand finds to do, because God is with you. [8]You shall go down before me to Gilgal, and I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings. You shall wait for seven days, till I come to you and show you what to do.”

[9]So it came about that when he turned his back to depart from Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all the signs came to pass on that day.[†] [10]And he came there to the hill, and behold there was a band of prophets opposite him, and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied in the midst of them. [11]It came about that all those who had seen him previously saw it, and behold, he was in the midst of the prophets. And the people said, each one to his neighbor, “What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” [12]Then one of them answered and said, “But who is his father?” Therefore it became a proverb: “Truly, even Saul is among the prophets.” [13]And he finished prophesying and came to the hill. [14]Then his kinsman said to him and his servant, “Where did you go?” So he said, “To look for the donkeys. We saw they were lost; we went to Samuel.” [15]And the kinsman said to Saul, “What did Samuel say to you?” [16]So Saul said to his kinsman, “In his explaining, he told me the donkeys were found.” But he did not tell him about the matter of the kingdom.

Saul Proclaimed King

[17]Then Samuel proclaimed to all the people in the presence of the Lord at Mizpah, [18]and to the sons of Israel he said, “Thus says the Lord God of

Israel, ‘I brought the sons of Israel up from Egypt and delivered you from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and from all the kingdoms that oppressed you.’ [19]But today you rejected God, who Himself is your Savior from all your adversities and tribulations. And you said to Him, ‘No! Set a king over us!’ Therefore, now stand before the Lord according to your tribes and according to your families.” [20]Then Samuel brought near all the tribes of Israel, and by lot the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. [21]And he brought near the tribe of Benjamin by families, and by lot the family of Matri was chosen. And the men of the family of Matri came near, and by lot Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. But when Samuel sought him, he could not be found. [22]So Samuel asked yet again of the Lord, “Has this man come here yet?” And the Lord answered, “Look! He is there, hidden among the equipment.” [23]So they ran and brought him from there. And when Saul stood among the people, he was a head taller than all the other people. [24]Then Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen for Himself, that there is no one like him among all of you?”

All the people recognized and understood and said, “Long live the king!” [25]Then Samuel explained to the people the custom of the king, and he wrote it in a book and placed it before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, and every man went to his place. [26]And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and with Saul, the sons of valor whose hearts the Lord inspired. [27]But perverse men said, “How shall this man save us?” So they despised him and brought him no gifts.

Saul Strikes Down the Ammonites

11 It came to be, about a month later, Nahash the Ammonite marched up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite, “Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you.” [2]And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, “I will make a covenant with you on this one condition, that I should put out all your right eyes, and I will lay a reproach upon Israel.” [3]Then the men of Jabesh said to him, “Hold off seven days for us, so we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And if then there is no one to save us, we will come out to you.”

[4]So the messengers came to Saul at Gibeah, and in the hearing of the people they told the news. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept. [5]And behold, after the early morning, Saul came forth from the field and said, “What makes the people weep?” So they explained to him in detail the words of the sons of Jabesh. [6]And as Saul heard these words, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and his anger was greatly aroused. [7]Then he took two oxen and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, “Whoever does not follow Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen.”

And the fear of the Lord fell on the people of Israel, and they cried out as one man. [8]When Saul numbered them in Bezek on the high place, the men of Israel were six hundred thousand, and the men of Judah seventy thousand. [9]And they said to the messengers who came, “Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh, ‘Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have deliverance.’ ” So the messengers came into the city and reported it to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. [10]Therefore the men of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite, “Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do with us whatever seems good to you.” [11]And it came about on the next day that Saul first divided the people of the army into three companies, and then in the morning watch they entered into the midst of the camp and struck the sons of Ammon until the heat of the day. And those who survived scattered, so no two of them were left together.[†] [12]Then the people said to Samuel, “Who was saying, ‘Saul shall not reign over us’? Bring the men so we may put them to death.” [13]But Saul said, “No one shall be put to death today, for today the Lord has accomplished salvation in Israel.”

[14]Then Samuel said to the people, “Let us go to Gilgal and restore the kingdom there.” [15]So all the people went to Gilgal, and there Samuel anointed Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. And there they sacrificed the meat offering and the peace offerings before the Lord, and Samuel rejoiced, as did all Israel, exceedingly.

Samuel Speaks at Saul's Coronation

12 Now Samuel said to all the men of Israel, “Indeed! I heeded your voice in all the many things you said to me, and I appointed a king to reign for you.[†] [2]Now behold, the king goes before you, and I grow old and will rest. And behold, my sons are with you. And behold, I have walked before you from my youth to this day. [3]Behold, here I am; answer against me before my Lord and before His anointed one. Whose calf have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken? Whom of you have I oppressed, or whom have I cheated? From whose hand have I taken any bribe, even a sandal? Bear witness against me, and I will pay it back to you.” [4]And they said to Samuel, “You have not wronged us or oppressed us or crushed us, nor taken anything from anyone's hand.” [5]Then Samuel said to the people, “The Lord is witness among you, and His anointed one is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.” And they answered, “He is a witness.”

[6]Then Samuel said to the people, “It is the Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron as witnesses. It is the Lord who brought your fathers up from Egypt.[†] [7]Now, therefore, stand still and I will judge you before the Lord and relate to you all the righteous acts the Lord did for you and your fathers. [8]Thus when Jacob and his sons went into Egypt and Egypt humbled them, and our fathers cried out to the Lord and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, He brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. [9]And they forgot the Lord their God, and He delivered them over into the hands of Sisera, commander of Jabin king of Hazor, into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the king of Moab; and they waged war against them. [10]Then they cried out to the Lord and said, ‘We have sinned because we have forsaken the Lord. We served the Baals and the sacred groves; but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies and we will serve You.’ [11]And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you then dwelt in safety. [12]And you saw Nahash king of the sons of Ammon come against you, and you said, ‘No, none but a king shall reign over us’; whereas the Lord your God is your King.

[13]“Now, therefore, here is the king you have chosen, and see, the Lord has provided a king for you. [14]If you fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not resist the words of the Lord, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue to follow the Lord. [15]But if you do

not obey the voice of the Lord, but resist the words of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and against your king. [16]Now, therefore, stand and see the great thing the Lord will do before your eyes. [17]Is today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the Lord, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may know and see that you have done great wickedness before the Lord in asking a king for yourselves.” [18]So Samuel called on the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.

[19]And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, so that we do not die; for we have added to all our sins in asking for ourselves a king.” [20]Then Samuel said to the people, “Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; only do not turn away from following the Lord. Serve the Lord with all your heart. [21]And do not turn aside after empty things which cannot profit anyone or deliver them, for they are nothing. [22]For the Lord will not reject His people for the sake of His mighty name, for it pleased the Lord to accept you as His people. [23]Far be it from me to sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will serve the Lord and show you the good and the right way. [24]Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for you know what great things He has done for you. [25]But if you still do wickedly, you shall be joined together in death, both you and your king.”

Battle with the Philistines

13 Saul chose for himself three thousand men from the men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and on the mountain of

Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. He sent the rest of the people away, each man to his dwelling.

[2]And Jonathan smote Nasib the Philistine who dwelt in the hill; and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, “The servants have rejected us!” [3]All Israel heard it said that Saul smote Nasib the Philistine. Now Israel had been put to shame before the Philistines, and the people cried out after Saul at Gilgal.

[4]Then the Philistines gathered to fight with Israel. Thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen came up against Israel, and as many troops as the sand on the seashore. And they came up and encamped in Michmash opposite Beth Aven southward. [5]When the men of Israel saw they were in danger, they did not draw near. Instead the people hid in caves, in holes, in rocks, in trenches, and in pits. [6]They even crossed the River Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul's Unlawful Offering

Saul was still in Gilgal, and all the people standing with him were confused. [7]Then Saul waited, as Samuel had said, for seven days for a testimony. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and his people scattered from him. [8]So Saul said, “Bring me a sacrifice so I may offer the whole burnt offering and peace offering”; and he offered the whole burnt offering. [9]And it came to pass, when he finished presenting the burnt offering, Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him so that Samuel might bless him. [10]Then Samuel said, “What have you done?” And Saul said, “When I saw the people scatter from me, and you did not come within the days of testimony as you arranged, and the Philistines gathered at Michmash, [11]then I said, ‘The Philistines will now come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not prayed in the presence of the Lord.’ Therefore I forced myself, and I offered a burnt offering.” [12]And Samuel said to Saul, “You have rendered it vain because you did not keep my commandments which the Lord commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. [13]But now your kingdom shall not stand. The Lord will seek a man for Himself after His own heart, and the Lord will appoint him to be ruler for His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.”[†]

[14]Then Samuel arose and departed from Gilgal, and the remnant of the people followed behind Saul to join with the men of war. And when they arrived from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin, Saul numbered the people with him, about six hundred men. [15]Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people with them remained in Gibeah of Benjamin and wept. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. [16]And the troops came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies; one company turned by way of Ophrah toward the land of Shual. [17]Another company turned by way of Beth Horon, and another company turned by way of Gibeah, overlooking the Valley of Zeboim.

[18]Now there was not a blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, “Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears.” [19]Thus all Israel went down to the land of the Philistines to forge each man's ploughshare into his light armor, his tool, his ax, and his sickle. [20]It was near the time of the harvest, and three shekels is the value of a

ploughshare, and the same value for the axes and the sickles. [21]And it came about in the days of the Michmash war, there was neither sword nor spear to be found in the hand of any of the troops with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son. [22]And they went out from the land of the Philistines to the place beyond Michmash.

Jonathan Defeats the Philistines

14 Now it happened one day that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young servant carrying his armor, “Come here! Let us cross over to that other side, into the outpost of the Philistine garrison.” But he did not tell his father of this. [2]Now Saul sat on the top of the hill under a pomegranate tree on the hill in Migron. There were about six hundred men with him. [3]And Ahijah the son of Ahitub, brother of Ichabod son of Phinehas, son of Eli the priest of the Lord in Shiloh, was wearing the ephod. But the people did not know Jonathan had left.

[4]In the midst of the passage by which Jonathan sought to travel over to the encampment of the Philistines, there was a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other. The name of one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. [5]The one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah. [6]Then Jonathan said to his young servant carrying his armor, “Come, let us cross over into the outpost of these uncircumcised men, if by chance the Lord will do something for us; for the Lord is not constrained to deliver by the many or by the few.” [7]So his armor-bearer said to him, “Do everything toward which your heart inclines. Behold! I am with you as your heart is my heart.” [8]Then Jonathan said, “Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will come down over

them from the hill. [9]If they should say to us, ‘You there, withdraw until we send for you,’ then we will stand by ourselves and will not go up against them. [10]But if they say thus, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up, for the Lord has delivered them into our hands. This will be a sign to us.”

[11]When both of them went up to the Philistine garrison, the Philistines said, “Look, the Hebrews came out of the holes they dug, where they hid themselves.” [12]Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, “Come against us and we will show you something.” Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Come up after I do, for the Lord has delivered them into the hands of Israel.” [13]Then Jonathan, with his armor-bearer after him, went up on his hands and knees. They looked upon the face of Jonathan, and he struck them. Even his armor-bearer killed them. [14]This was the first slaughter Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, taking twenty men with arrows and slings and pebbles of the field. [15]Bewilderment came over the army camp and in the field. All the troops in the garrison, and those being utterly destroyed, were in a state of shock and could not act. The land was astounded, and bewilderment came from the Lord.

[16]Now the watchmen of Saul looked, and behold, from here it was seen that the opposing army was having trouble, and [17]Saul said to the people with him, “Number yourselves now and see who has gone out from us.” And they made a roll call, and Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not found. [18]And Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ephod here.” For on that day the ephod was raised up in the presence of Israel. [19]Now it happened as Saul spoke to the priest, that the noise in the camp of the Philistines became

louder. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hands.” [20]Then Saul and all the people with him cried aloud, and they went into battle. Indeed, every man's sword was against the enemy next to him. There was great confusion. [21]And the slaves who were with the Philistines before that time and went up with them to the camp changed loyalties and joined the Israelites, along with Saul and Jonathan. [22]Likewise all the men of Israel hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, when they heard the Philistines had fled, followed hard after them in battle. [23]On that day, the Lord saved Israel.

Saul's Curse

All the troops with Saul were about ten thousand men. The battle itself shifted to Beth Aven, and it extended to all the cities in the mountain of Ephraim. [24]In ignorance, Saul, unaware of the full extent of what had happened that day, placed the people under an oath, saying, “Cursed is the man who eats food until the evening, and those opposed to me, I will punish.” So none of the people tasted food. [25]Before this, all the troops had not eaten. And then they came to an oak tree with a beehive nearby on the ground. [26]As the men approached the beehive, they continued talking, and no one put his hand to his mouth, for they feared the oath to the Lord. [27]But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath. Therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb. He put his hand to his mouth and his countenance brightened. [28]Then one of the people answered and said, “Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, ‘Cursed is the man who eats food this day.’ ” But the people were growing weary, [29]and Jonathan knew it, and said, “See indeed, my father has troubled the land, but look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. [30]Truly, if the people had freely eaten today from the spoils of their enemies, the slaughter among the Philistines would have been greater.”

[31]Now on that day, Saul smote the Philistines in Michmash, but the people were extremely weary. [32]And the people turned to the spoils and took sheep, oxen, and calves. And they slaughtered them on the ground, and the people ate them with the blood. [33]This was told Saul, saying, “They have sinned against the Lord by eating with the blood!” So Saul said, “Roll a large stone to me here out of Gethem.” [34]And Saul said, “Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, ‘Everyone bring his ox and his sheep here and slaughter them here on this stone. Then eat, but do not sin against the Lord by eating with the blood.’ ” So each of the people brought what was in his hand, and they slaughtered them there. [35]Then Saul built an altar to the Lord. This was the first altar he built to the Lord.

[36]And Saul said, “Let us go down against the Philistines by night and plunder them until dawn. Let us not leave a man among them.” And they said, “Do whatever seems good to you. Then the priest said, “Come here; let us draw near to God.” [37]So Saul asked God, “Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hands of Israel?” But He did not answer him on that day. [38]And Saul said, “Bring here all the chiefs of Israel, and know and see today by whom this sin came to be. [39]As the Lord lives who saved Israel, if the answer should be against Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.” And from among all the people no answer was given by anyone. [40]Then Saul said to all Israel, “You may be bound, or I and my son

Jonathan may be bound.” And the people said to Saul, “Do what seems good to you.”

[41]Saul then said to the Lord God of Israel, “Why did you not answer your servant today? O Lord God of Israel, if there is wrongdoing in me or in Jonathan my son, give clarity. And if you say this, give mercy to your people Israel.” So Saul and Jonathan were designated by lot, and the people escaped. [42]Then Saul said, “Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. Whoever the Lord designates by lot, let him die.” But the people said to Saul, “This is not the right thing to do.” But Saul prevailed over the people, and they cast lots between him and Jonathan his son. Jonathan was appointed by lot. [43]Then Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you did.” And Jonathan told him, saying, “I was tasting a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. Behold! I must die!” [44]So Saul said to him, “May God do the same to me, and more also, for you shall die today.” [45]But the people said to Saul, “Should he who brought this great deliverance in Israel die? As the Lord lives, not one hair of his head should fall to the ground, for the people of God prevailed on that day.” In this way, the people interceded for Jonathan that day, and he did not die. [46]Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

The Royal Family

[47]Now Saul accepted his portion of the work for Israel, and waged war round about on all his enemies: against Moab, against the sons of Ammon, against the sons of Edom, against Betheor, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he was victorious. [48]And he

gathered an army and smote the Amalekites and delivered Israel from out of the hands of those despising him. [49]The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui, and Malchishua. The name of his firstborn daughter was Merab, and the name of the younger was Michal. [50]The name of his wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, of the house of Saul. [51]Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Jamin, the son of Abiel. [52]Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he gathered him for himself.

Defeat of the Amalekites

15 Samuel said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the Lord. [2]Thus says the Lord Sabaoth, ‘I will exact vengeance for what Amalek did to Israel when he met Israel on his journey coming out of Egypt. [3]Now go and strike down Amalek and Jerim and all of his things, and take nothing from him. You shall utterly destroy him. You shall curse him and everything that is his. You shall not spare anything of his. And you shall slay both man and woman, infant and nursing child, calf and sheep, and camel and donkey.’ ” [4]So Saul told the people and numbered them in Gilgal, four hundred thousand troops, and from Judah thirty thousand troops. [5]And Saul came to the cities of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. [6]Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go and depart from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed mercy to the sons of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from the midst of Amalek.

[7]Saul attacked the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is before Egypt. [8]He took captive Agag king of the Amalekites, and he killed all the people of Jerim with the edge of the sword. [9]But Saul and all the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the vineyards, and everything good. They had no desire to utterly destroy them —only every despised and worthless thing; these they destroyed.

The Lord Deposes Saul as King

[10]Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, [11]"I deeply regret I set up Saul to reign as king, for he turned back from following Me and has not kept My words." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night.[†] [12]Samuel rose early and journeyed to a meeting with Israel in the early morning. Then it was reported to Samuel, saying, "Saul has been in Carmel to gather help to himself." Samuel turned the chariot and went down to Saul in Gilgal. And behold, Saul offered the whole burnt offering to the Lord, the first of the plunder brought out of Amalek. [13]Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you by the Lord! I established all the many things the Lord said." [14]But Samuel said, "What then is the sound of the flock in my ears, and the sound of oxen which I hear?" [15]And Saul said, "I brought them from Amalek; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, in order that they may be sacrificed to the Lord your God. The rest I utterly destroyed." [16]But Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet, and I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night." And Saul said to him, "Speak on."

[17]So Samuel said to Saul, “Were you not small before Him, you who with a sceptre lead all the families of the tribes of Israel? Even so, the Lord still anointed you king over Israel.[†] [18]Now the Lord sent you off on a mission and said, ‘Go and utterly destroy the sinners for me, the Amalekites, and fight against them until you consume them.’ [19]Why did you not heed the voice of the Lord, but rushed down on the spoils and did evil before the Lord?”

[20]And Saul said to Samuel, “For the sake of the people, I listened to their voice, but I also went in the ways the Lord sent me. I brought back Agag king of Amalek and utterly destroyed the Amalekites. [21]But the people took of the plunder, the sheep and the oxen, the best of what should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice before the Lord our God in Gilgal.” [22]Then Samuel said, “If only the desired whole burnt offerings and desired sacrifices were equal to the Lord, as compared to one who heeds the voice of the Lord! Behold! Hearing is better than a good sacrifice and obedience than the fat of rams.[†] [23]That sin is one and the same as divination. Idols bring grief and pain. Because you rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord rejects you from remaining king over Israel.” [24]Then Saul said to Samuel, “I sinned because I transgressed the word of the Lord and your word; for I feared the people and heeded their voice.[†] [25]Now therefore, take away my sin and return with me, so that I can worship the Lord your God.” [26]But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, because you rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord rejects you from remaining king over Israel.”

[27]As Samuel turned his face to go away, Saul grasped the edge of his robe and tore it. [28]So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from your hand today, and He will give it to a neighbor of yours who is better than you. [29]And Israel will be divided in two, and God shall not turn back nor repent. For He is not like a man that He should repent.” [30]Then Saul said, “I have sinned, but indeed honor me before the elders of Israel and my people. Return with me, and I will worship the Lord your God.” [31]So Samuel turned back after Saul, and he worshiped the Lord.

[32]Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag king of Amalek.” So Agag came to him trembling. And Agag said, “Surely this is the bitter death.” [33]And Samuel said to Agag, “As your sword made women childless, so shall your mother be made childless among women.” So before the Lord, Samuel put Agag to death in Gilgal. [34]Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah. [35]And Samuel did not go to see Saul again until the day of his death. Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord regretted that Saul reigned over Israel.[†]

David Anointed King of Israel

16 Now the Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with olive oil and come. I will send you to Jesse in Bethlehem, for I have seen someone among his sons to reign for Me.” [2]And Samuel said, “How can I go? Saul will hear it and he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer in your arms and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ [3]Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You shall anoint the one I tell you.”

[4]So Samuel did everything the Lord said to him and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town were astonished at meeting him, and they said, “Seer, do you come in peace?” [5]And he said, “Peaceably I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves and rejoice with me today.” Then he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and he invited them to the sacrifice. [6]And it came to be when they entered that Samuel looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the anointed of the Lord is before Him.” [7]But the Lord said to Samuel, “Have no regard for his outward appearance, nor for the maturity of his stature, because I have refused him. For man does not see as God sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord sees into the heart.”[†]

[8]So Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And Samuel said, “The Lord did not choose this one either.” [9]Then Jesse brought Shammah. But Samuel said, “Nor has the Lord chosen this one.” [10]Thus Jesse brought seven of his sons before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.” [11]Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are there any other young men here?” Then Jesse said, “There remains yet the youngest, keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.” [12]So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, “Arise, anoint David; for he is good!” [13]Then Samuel took the horn of olive oil and anointed him in the midst of his

brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

David in the Court of Saul

[14]But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. [15]And Saul's servants said to him, “Behold, an evil spirit from the Lord is tormenting you. [16]Now let your servants speak before you, and let them seek for our lord a man who knows how to play the harp. And it will come to pass when the evil spirit is upon you, he will play his harp, and it will be good for you and give you rest.” [17]So Saul said to his servants, “Indeed, seek out for me a man who plays skillfully and bring him to me.” [18]Then one of his servants answered and said, “Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who understands playing on the harp, a prudent man, a man of war, wise in speech, handsome; and the Lord is with him.”

[19]Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.” [20]And Jesse took a homer of bread, a skin of wine, and one young goat, and sent them by the hand of his son David to Saul. [21]So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. [22]Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David stand here before me, for he has found favor in my sight.” [23]So whenever the evil spirit was upon Saul, David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become well refreshed, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

David and Goliath

17 Now the Philistines brought their armies together for battle, and they gathered at Sochoh of Judah. They encamped between Sochoh and Azekah in Ephes Dammim. [2]And Saul and the men of Israel gathered, and they were encamped in the valley. They were to set up in battle formation opposite the Philistines. [3]The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.

[4]And a mighty man went out from the battle line of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath. His height was four cubits and a span.[†] [5]He had a helmet on his head, and he wore a breastplate of chain mail; and the weight of his breastplate was five thousand shekels of brass and iron. [6]And he had armor made of bronze on his legs and a bronze shield between his shoulders. [7]Now the staff of his spear was like the beam of a loom, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels. A shield-bearer went before him. [8]Then he stood and shouted out to the armies of Israel and said to them, “Why have you come out to line up for battle against us? Am I not a Philistine, and you Hebrews of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. [9]If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I am able to kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.” [10]And the Philistine said, “Look! This very day I challenge the ranks of the armies of Israel. Give me a man that the two of us can fight one on one.” [11]When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

[12]But David said to Saul, “Let not the heart of my lord fall in regards to him. Your servant will go and fight with this foreigner.” [13]And Saul said to

David, “No, you are not able to go to the Philistine to fight him, since you are a young man, and he is a man of war from his youth.” [14]But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to tend the flock for his father, and when a lion or a bear came and took a sheep out of the flock, [15]I followed it and struck it, and delivered the sheep from its mouth. And as it arose against me, I caught it by its throat and struck and killed it. [16]Your servant smote both the lion and the bear; and the uncircumcised Philistine will be as one of them to me. Will I not go and kill him today, and remove the reproach of Israel? For who is this uncircumcised one who challenged the ranks of the armies of Israel? [17]The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord will be with you!”

[18]So Saul clothed David with armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head, [19]and he girded David with his sword over his armor. David made a trial walking with them a time or two. And David said to Saul, “I am not able to go with these, for I have not tested them.” So they removed them. [20]Then David took his staff in his hand, and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook. He put them in a shepherd's bag to store away, and in his hand was his sling. He then approached the Philistine.

[21]And when Goliath saw David, he disdained him; for he was a young boy, ruddy with a good countenance. [22]So the Philistine said to David, “Am I as a dog, that you come against me with a staff and stones?” Then David said, “No, worse than a dog!” And the Philistine cursed David by his

gods. [23]And the Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of heaven and the beasts of the field!”

[24]Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield. But I come to you in the name of the Lord Sabaoth, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you reproached today. [25]Today the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will kill you and take your head from you. And this day I will give your carcass and the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of heaven and the wild beasts of the earth, and all the earth will know that there is a God in Israel. [26]Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and the Lord will deliver you into our hands.”

[27]And the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David. [28]Then David put his hand in his bag and took out one stone. He slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone penetrated through his helmet and into his forehead. He fell to the ground on his face. [29]So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone. He struck the Philistine and killed him, and there was no sword in the hand of David. [30]Therefore, David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword, and killed him and cut off his head. And the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, and they fled.

[31]Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued them as far as the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ashkelon. And the wounded Philistines fell on the way to the gates, even as far as Gath and

Ashkelon. [32]Then the men of Israel returned from pursuing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. [33]And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem. He put his armor in his tent.[†]

Saul's Jealousy of David

18 From all the cities of Israel, women came out dancing with tambourines, with joy, and with cymbals to greet David. [2]And the women began a song and sang, “Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

[3]These words seemed evil in the eyes of Saul, and he said to David, “They ascribed to you ten thousands, and to me they ascribed only thousands.” [4]So from that day forward, Saul eyed David with suspicion, [5]as Saul was apprehensive of the mere presence of David, [6]and he removed David from himself. He made David his captain of a thousand, and he went out and came in before the people.[†] [7]David was prudent in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. [8]And Saul saw David to be exceedingly wise, and felt challenged by his presence. [9]But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before the people.

David Weds Michal

[10]Now Michal, daughter of Saul, loved David. And it was told to Saul, and it was pleasing in his eyes. [11]So Saul said, “I will give her to him, and she will be a stumbling-block to him.” At this same time, the hand of the Philistines was against Saul. [12]So Saul gave instruction to his servants, saying, “Speak to David secretly and say, ‘Look, the king delights in you,

and all his servants love you. Become the son-in-law of the king.’ ” [13]So Saul's servants spoke these words in the ear of David. And David said, “Is it trivial in your eyes if one becomes the son-in-law of the king when he is lowly and without honor?” [14]And the servants of Saul told him what David had said. [15]Then Saul said, “Thus you shall say to David, ‘The king desires no dowry except one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, as vengeance on the enemies of the king.’ ” However, Saul schemed to deliver David into the hands of the Philistines. [16]And the servants of Saul told David these words, and it was pleasing in the eyes of David to become the son-in-law of the king. [17]And David arose, and he and his men went and killed in battle a hundred men of the Philistines. And he brought their foreskins to the king. He became the son-in-law of the king, and Saul gave him Michal his daughter as wife. [18]Thus Saul could see the Lord was with David, and all Israel loved him. [19]Saul was now even more apprehensive about David.

Saul Seeks David's Life

19 Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to kill David. But Jonathan, son of Saul, preferred David exceedingly.[†] [2]So Jonathan spoke to David, saying, “Saul seeks to kill you. Be on your guard until tomorrow morning, and stay hidden in a secret place. [3]I will go out and stand with my father in the field. I will speak to him about you and about anything he may be thinking, and then I will tell you.”

[4]Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and his deeds are very good. [5]For he took his life in his hands

and smote the Philistine, and the Lord brought about a great deliverance. All Israel saw it and rejoiced. Why then do you sin against innocent blood, to put David to death without cause?” [6]So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, “As the Lord lives, he shall not die.” [7]Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these words. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before. [8]And the war continued to be waged against Saul; and David fought valiantly and prevailed over the Philistines. He struck them with an exceedingly great beating, and they fled from before him.

[9]An evil spirit came from God upon Saul as he was resting in his house with a spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp. [10]And Saul sought to strike David with his spear, but David slipped away from him as he drove the spear into the wall. David fled and escaped. [11]And that night Saul sent messengers to the house of David to keep careful watch over him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, the wife of David, told him, saying, “If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed.” [12]So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped. [13]And Michal took an image and placed it in the bed, put a cover of goats’ hair at the head, and covered it with clothes. [14]And Saul sent messengers to take David, and they reported, “He is sick.” [15]Then Saul sent them back to David, saying, “Bring him up to me in his bed, so I can kill him.” [16]And the messengers came, and behold, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats’ hair at the head. [17]Then Saul said to Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away, so he could escape?” And Michal answered Saul, “He said to me, ‘Send me away! Otherwise I will slay you.’ ”

[18]So David fled and escaped and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all Saul had done to him. And David and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth in Ramah.[†] [19]And it was told to Saul, saying, “Take note, David is at Naioth in Ramah!” [20]Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the assembly of prophets and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. [21]And when this was told to Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied as well. Then for a third time Saul sent messengers, and they too prophesied. [22]Now Saul was inflamed with anger, and he too went to Ramah. He came as far as the storage well of the threshing floor in Sechu and asked, saying, “Where are Samuel and David?” And someone said, “Look, they are in Naioth in Ramah.” [23]So he went onward to Naioth in Ramah. And then the Spirit of God came upon him too, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. [24]There he removed his clothes and prophesied before them, and he fell unclothed on the ground all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, “Is Saul among the prophets?”

Jonathan Is Loyal to David

20 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came before Jonathan and said, “What have I done, and what fault is mine? What is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?” [2]So Jonathan said to him, “There is no fault on your part. You shall not die. Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing? It is not so!” [3]Then David answered Jonathan and said, “Your father certainly knows I have found favor in your sight, and Saul has said, ‘Jonathan should not come to know about this. He will not want this to happen.’ But as the Lord lives and as you yourself live, so I say to you, there is only a step between me and death.” [4]So Jonathan said to David, “What does your soul desire? What shall I do for you?”

[5]And David said to Jonathan, “Indeed, tomorrow is the New Moon, and I will not sit with the king to eat. I will hide in the field until evening. [6]If your father asks about me, say, ‘David earnestly asked permission of me that he might go to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for his whole tribe.’ [7]If thus he says, ‘Peace be to your servant’; it is well. But if he answers you harshly, know that he determines to do evil. [8]Therefore you shall provide an act of mercy to your servant, for you brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you. And if there is wrongdoing in your servant, kill me yourself. Why should you bring me to your father?” [9]But Jonathan said, “By no means will I do this to you! For if I know for sure that my father intends evil against you, I will come to you. If otherwise, I will tell you in your cities.”

[10]Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me if your father should answer you harshly?” [11]And Jonathan said to David, “Go and remain in the field.” And they both went out into the field. [12]Then Jonathan said to David, “The Lord God of Israel knows that I will question my father three times, and behold, should there be good concerning David and I do not send for you in the field, [13]may the Lord do this to Jonathan and add to this even more, as also I shall discuss the evil against you. I will disclose it to your ear, and I will send you away. You shall depart in peace, for the Lord will be with you as He was with my father. [14]In return, you shall deal mercifully

with me while I still live, and if I die, [15]you shall not cut off your mercy from my house forever, even if the Lord does not cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth; [16]or removes the name of Jonathan from the house of David; or the Lord does seek out the enemies of David."

[17]And yet again, Jonathan swore to David, for he so loved him as his own soul.[†] [18]Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the first of the month, and you will be asked about, because your seat will be seen as empty. [19]You will do this for three days, and you will be looked for. So go to the place where you may be hidden in the day of the deed. You shall wait by that mound. [20]And then I will shoot three arrows, as aiming at a target. [21]And behold, I will send a lad, saying, 'Come here! Find my arrows.' If I speak to the lad saying, 'Look, the arrows are here, on this side from you, get them here. Come!'—it is well with you, and as the Lord lives there is no reason to hide. [22]But if I say this to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are there and beyond you,'—you go, for the Lord has sent you away. [23]And as for the word which you and I discussed, indeed the Lord is a witness between you and me forever."

[24]So David hid in the field, and when the first of the month came, the king sat down to the table to eat. [25]As usual, the king sat on his seat by the wall and arrived before Jonathan. Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was seen as empty. [26]Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, "Something happened so that he is not clean; he has not cleansed himself." [27]And the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was noticed as being empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of

Jesse not come to the table yesterday or today?” [28]So Jonathan answered Saul and said to him, “David earnestly asked permission of me to go to Bethlehem his city. [29]And he said, ‘Please let me go, for our tribe has a sacrifice in the city, and my brothers commanded me to be there. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me go away safely and see my brothers.’ Therefore he has not come to the king's table.”

[30]Then Saul's anger was aroused greatly against Jonathan, and he said to him, “Son of traitorous girls! Do I not know to your own shame and the shame of your mother's nakedness that you are an accomplice with the son of Jesse? [31]For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, your kingdom shall not be established. Now then, send and bring the young man, for he is a son of death.” [32]And Jonathan queried Saul, “Why should he be killed? What did he do?” [33]Then Saul lifted up a spear against Jonathan to kill him, and Jonathan knew the evil from his father to kill David. [34]So Jonathan leapt up from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month. For he was grieved for David because his father plotted against him.

[35]And so in the morning, Jonathan went out to the field at the appointed time, as a testimony for David. A lad was with him. [36]Then he said to his lad, “Run, find for me the arrows I shoot.” As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. [37]And when the lad came to the place where Jonathan shot the arrow, Jonathan cried out to the lad and said, “There is the arrow beyond you.” [38]And Jonathan cried out after his lad, “Make haste, hurry, do not delay!” So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows for his master. [39]And the lad knew nothing of what was happening. Only Jonathan and David knew

of the matter. [40]Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to the lad, “Go, enter into the city.” [41]As soon as the lad left, David arose from the mound, fell on his face, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another and wept for each other. [42]Then Jonathan said, “Go in peace, and as we both swore in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord will be a witness between you and me, and between your seed and my seed, forever.’ ”

21 So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.[†]

David and the Showbread

[2]Now David came to Nob, to Abimelech the priest. And Abimelech was astonished when he met him and said to him, “Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?” [3]So David said to the priest, “Today the king gave a command to me, saying, ‘Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you or what I command you.’ And I gave orders to the young men to go to a place called the Faithfulness of God, Phellani Alemoni. [4]Now if there are five loaves under your hand being ready, give them into my hand.” [5]And the priest answered David and said, “There are no common loaves of bread on hand. There is holy bread, but only if the young men have been keeping themselves from women will they eat.” [6]Then David answered the priest and said to him, “Truly, we have kept ourselves from women for three days, with all the young men having been purified when I came on this journey. Even so, this expedition itself is unclean; thus because of my weapons, it shall be sanctified this day.”

[7]So Abimelech the priest gave him the showbread; for there were no loaves there except the bread of the Presence which had been removed from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away. [8]Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord. His name was Doeg the Syrian, the herder of Saul's mules. [9]And David said to Abimelech, “See if there is a spear or a sword in your possession, for I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, for the message of the king required haste.” [10]So the priest said, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is there wrapped in a garment. If you take it, take it for yourself. For there is nothing else here except that.” And David said, “There is none like it. Give it to me.”

David Flees from Saul

[11]And he gave it to him. Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul. And David went to Achish the king of Gath. [12]And the servants of Achish said to him, “Is this not David, the king of the land? Is this not the one to whom the dancing women say:

‘Saul slew his thousands,

And David his ten thousands’?”[†]

[13]Now David took these words in his heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. [14]So he changed his appearance before him and pretended to be mad on that day. He pounded on the doors of the city and acted like a madman with his hands, falling down upon the door of the gate and letting his saliva drip down on his beard. [15]Then Achish said to his servants, “Look, you see the man is insane. Why did you bring him to me?

[16]Do I need madmen? Did you bring this fellow to be mad in my presence? This man will not come into the house!”

22 David therefore departed from there and escaped by going into the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. [2]And everyone in distress, and everyone in debt, and everyone grieved gathered to him. And he became captain over them. There were about four hundred men with him. [3]Then David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, “Please let my father and mother come here to be with you, till I know what God is going to do for me.” [4]So he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him as long as David was in the stronghold. [5]Now the prophet Gad said to David, “Do not stay in the stronghold; depart and go to the land of Judah.” So David departed, and went and dwelt in the city of Sarich.

Saul Slaughters the Priests

[6]Saul heard that David and the men who were with him were found. Now Saul was staying on the hill in the field in Ramah, with a spear in his hand and with all his servants standing about him. [7]Then Saul spoke to his servants who stood by him and said to them, “Hear now, you sons of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse indeed give every one of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you captains of thousands and captains of hundreds? [8]All of you conspired against me; there is not one who revealed to me that my son made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and there is not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son stirred up my servant against me to be an enemy, as it is today.” [9]Then Doeg the Syrian,

the one set over the mules of Saul, replied and said, “I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to Abimelech the son of Ahitub, the priest. [10]And the priest inquired of God for him and gave him provisions. He also gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

[11]So the king sent a message to invite Abimelech son of Ahitub and all the sons of his father, the priests who were in Nob. And they all came to the king. [12]And Saul said, “Hear now, son of Ahitub!” And he answered, “Here I am. Speak, lord.” [13]Then Saul said to him, “Why did you conspire against me, you and the son of Jesse, by giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him so he should rise against me to be an enemy, as he is today?” [14]So he answered the king and said, “And who among all your servants is as faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, who goes at your bidding and is honorable in your house? [15]Truly, did I this very day begin to entreat of God on account of him? Certainly not! Let not the king bring a charge against his servant, or against any in my father's house. For your servant knew nothing of any of this, small or great.”

[16]And King Saul said, “Abimelech, you shall surely die, you and all your father's house!” [17]Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, “Bring and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand is with David, and because they knew that he fled and did not reveal it to me.” But the servants of the king did not want to lift their hands against the priests of the Lord. [18]And the king said to Doeg, “Turn and deal with the priests!” So Doeg the Syrian turned and killed the priests of the Lord on that day, three hundred and five men who wore an ephod. [19]And he struck Nob, the city of

the priests, with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, calf and donkey and sheep.

[20]Now one of the sons of Abimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.[†] [21]And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed all the Lord's priests. [22]So David said to Abiathar, “I knew in that day, because Doeg the Syrian was being called upon, that he would tell Saul. I am responsible for the life of the house of your father. [23]Stay with me. Do not fear. For wherever I seek a place for my life, I will also seek a place for your life, for you have protection with me.”

David Saves Keilah

23 And it was told to David, saying, “Look, the Philistines are at war against Keilah. They are robbing and trampling upon the threshing floors.” [2]Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the Lord said to David, “Go and attack these Philistines and save Keilah.” [3]But David's men said to him, “Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more so if we go to Keilah, to go after the plunder of the Philistines?” [4]Then David inquired of the Lord once again. And the Lord answered him and said, “Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hands.” [5]And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, and the Philistines fled from his presence, and David carried off their livestock and struck them with a mighty blow. David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

[6]Now when Abiathar the son of Abimelech fled to David and was with David at Keilah, he went down with an ephod in his hand. [7]And Saul was

told that David went to Keilah. So Saul said, “God sold him into my hand, for he shut himself in by entering a city with gates and bars.” [8]Then Saul charged all the people to go down to war against Keilah and to hold David and his men as prisoners. [9]When David knew Saul had not kept silent about the evil against him, David said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod of the Lord.”[†] [10]Then David said, “O Lord God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city because of me. [11]Will he close in upon me? Will Saul come down now, as Your servant has heard? Lord God of Israel, tell Your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will close in upon you.” [12]So David and his men, about four hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was announced to Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

David Hides in the Desert

[13]And David stayed in the strongholds of the wilderness and remained in the mountain of Ziph, which was dry country. Saul sought him every day, but the Lord did not deliver him into his hands. [14]So David saw that Saul had come out to seek him. And David was on the arid mountain in New Ziph. [15]Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in New Ziph and strengthened his hands in the Lord. [16]And he said to him, “Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that.” [17]So the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. And David stayed in New Ziph, and Jonathan went to his own house.

[18]Then the Ziphites came up from the dry places to Saul, who was upon the hill, saying, “Behold, is David not hiding with us in Messara, in the strongholds in New Ziph, in the hill of Hachilah on the south of Jeshimon? [19]Now come down to us, according to all the desire of the king.” They cornered him in for the hands of the king. [20]And Saul said, “Blessed are you of the Lord, for you have toiled on my account. [21]Please go and make more preparations. See the place where his hideout is and tell me quickly, lest by any means he escape through cunning. [22]See therefore and know, and we will go with you. And if he is in the land, I will search for him among the thousands of Judah.” [23]So the Ziphites arose and went before Saul.

But David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the wilderness of Maon, westward and to the right of Jessaemon. [24]So Saul and his men went to seek him. It was reported to David, and he went down to the rock in the Desert of Maon. And Saul heard and pursued David in the Desert of Maon. [25]Then Saul and his men went on one side of this mountain, and David and his men on the other side of this mountain. And David was hiding himself to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them. [26]But a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Hasten and come here quickly, for the Philistines have invaded the land!” [27]Therefore Saul turned back from pursuing David and went to meet the Philistines in battle. So they called that place the Rock of Dividing.

David Spares Saul's Life

24 Then David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds at En Gedi. [2]Now when Saul returned from following the Philistines, it was reported to him, saying, “David is in the desert of En Gedi.” [3]Then he took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the face of Sadaiem. [4]On the way, he came across a flock of sheep, and nearby there was a cave. Saul entered the cave to make preparations. Now sitting in the recesses of this same cave were David and his men. [5]And David's men said to him, “Look! This is the day of which the Lord spoke to you, that He would deliver your enemy into your hands, to do to him as it seems good from your perspective.” So David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. [6]Then it happened that David's heart afflicted him afterward, because he cut the corner of his robe. [7]And David said to his men, “The Lord forbid me, that I should do this to my lord, for he is the anointed of the Lord.”[†] [8]By these words David persuaded his men not to rise up and kill Saul.

So Saul got up from the cave and went his way. [9]After Saul departed, David went out from the cave and cried out to Saul, saying, “My lord, O king!” And Saul looked back, and David, bowing to the ground, prostrated himself. [10]And David said to Saul, “Why do you listen to the words of the people who say, ‘Behold, David seeks your life’? [11]Take notice! This day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you into my hand in the cave; but I would not kill you. I spared you and said, ‘I will not put my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.’ [12]Here in my hand is the corner of your robe! I cut off the corner, but did not kill you. See and know today, there is no evil or impiety or breach of faith in my hand. I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. [13]Let the Lord pass judgment between you and me, and let the Lord vindicate me from you. But my hand shall not be against you. [14]As the ancient proverb says, ‘Out of lawlessness shall come wrongdoing, but my hand will not be against you.’ [15]Now after whom do you seek, O King of Israel? Whom do you hunt after? Are you after a dying dog or perhaps a flea? [16]Let the Lord be judge and jury, each one in my midst, and each one in your midst. And let the Lord observe and decide my judgment and vindicate me from your hand.”

[17]And it came to pass, when David finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, “Truly this is your voice, O son David.” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.[†] [18]Then he said to David, “You are more righteous than I, for you repaid me with good, but I repaid you with evil. [19]Today you make known how you dealt well with me, how when the Lord delivered me into your hand today, you did not kill me. [20]For if a man finds his enemy in distress and yet in a good way sends him out, the Lord will reward him with good, just as you did today. [21]And now behold, I know that you shall be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hands. [22]Therefore by the Lord, swear now to me that you will not cut off my seed after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house.” [23]So David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his place, but David and his men went up to the stronghold at Messara.

The Death of Samuel

25 And Samuel died, and all Israel gathered together and lamented for him, and they buried him at his home in Ramah.

David and Abigail

And David arose and went down to the Desert of Maon. [2]Now there was a man in Maon who was very notable and whose flocks were in Carmel. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was in Carmel to shear his sheep. [3]The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. She was a woman of good understanding and very beautiful in appearance; but the man was harsh and wicked in his doings, like a dog.[†]

[4]While in the desert wilderness, David heard that Nabal the Carmelite was shearing his sheep. [5]David sent ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and in my name, greet him in peace. [6]And here is what you say, ‘Peace be to you and your house and all that is yours. [7]Behold, I now hear that they shear for you. As to your shepherds, those with us in the desert wilderness, as long as they were in Carmel we did not hinder them, nor did we demand anything from them. [8]Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a good day. Please give whatever your hand finds to your son David.’ ”

[9]So when David's young men came, they told Nabal all these words in the name of David, and he leapt up. [10]Then Nabal replied to David's servants and said, “Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away, each one from his master. [11]Shall I then take my bread and my wine and my meat that I killed for my shearers of sheep, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?”

[12]So David's young men turned back and returned. They came and told him these words. [13]Then David said to his men, “Every man gird on his sword.” And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies. [14]Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, “Look, David sent messengers from the desert to bless our master, but Nabal turned away from them. [15]But the men were very good to us, and they did not hinder us, and they did not demand anything from us as long as we accompanied them when we were in the fields. [16]They were like a wall around us by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. [17]And now consider and see what you will do, for malice has been decided against our master and against all his household. For Nabal is such a son of mischief that no one can speak to him.”

[18]Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five ephahs of roasted grain, a gomer of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs and loaded them on donkeys. [19]And she said to her servants, “Go ahead of me, and behold, I will come behind you.” But she did not tell her husband. [20]And it came to pass that she was riding on her donkey and going down under the protection of the mountain; and look, David and his men were coming down toward her, and she met them. [21]Now David had said, “Perhaps I was wrong to protect everything this fellow has in the desert wilderness and to command that nothing of his be taken; yet he repaid me evil for good. [22]May God do so and more to David, if I leave even one male of all belonging to Nabal until the morning.”[†]

[23]Now when Abigail saw David, she jumped from her donkey, fell on her face before David, and prostrated herself on the ground [24]about his feet and said, “O my lord, let this unrighteousness be on me! Let your handmaiden speak in your ears, and hear the words of your handmaiden. [25]Please, let not my lord set his heart against this man of pestilence. For as his name is, so is he. His name is Nabal, and folly is with him. But I, your handmaiden, did not see the young men whom you sent. [26]Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, since the Lord held you back from coming to innocent bloodshed and from sparing your hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek malice against my lord become like Nabal. [27]And now, take this token of goodwill your handmaiden brought to my lord and give it to the servants who follow my lord. [28]I pray you will remove the trespass of your handmaiden. For the Lord will certainly make a faithful house for my lord, because my lord fights the battles of the Lord, so no evil will be found in you at any time. [29]If a man should rise up and pursue you, to seek your life, nevertheless, the life of my lord shall be so tightly bound with the Lord God, that you will sling your enemies like a stone from a sling. [30]And when the Lord has done for my lord all the good things He said concerning you, and He has appointed you ruler over Israel, [31]will this not be an abomination to my lord and an offense to my lord, to have shed innocent blood without cause, for my lord to have avenged himself? May the Lord do good to my lord, and you shall remember to do good to your handmaiden.”

[32]Then David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you to meet me this very day! [33]And blessed is your conduct and blessed are you, because today you kept me from coming to bloodshed and

from avenging myself. [34]But as the Lord God of Israel lives, who kept me from hurting you, if you had not hastened and come to meet me, surely I say that by morning light not one male would have been left to Nabal." [35]So David received from her hand everything that she had brought him and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your presence."

[36]Now Abigail returned to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. Thus, she decided to say not a word to him, not even one, until morning light. [37]In the morning, when Nabal had slept off the wine, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became like a stone. [38]And it came to pass about ten days later that the Lord struck Nabal and he died. [39]So when David heard, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, who judged my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and who saved His servant from doing evil. For the Lord returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head."

And David sent out a message concerning Abigail, to take her as his own wife. [40]So the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel and spoke to her, saying, "David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife." [41]She arose and bowed her face to the earth and said, "Behold your handmaiden, a servant to wash the feet of your servants." [42]And Abigail rose and mounted her donkey, and five of her maidens followed behind her as she followed after the servants of David, and she became his wife. [43]David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them were his wives. [44]But Saul gave Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, from Gallim.

David Again Spares Saul

26 Now the Ziphites came out of the desert country to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Look, David hides from us at the hill Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon.” [2]Then Saul arose and went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand chosen men of Israel, to seek David in the desert of Ziph. [3]And Saul encamped by the road in the hill Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon. But David stayed in the desert, and he could see that Saul was coming into the desert to pursue him. [4]And David sent out spies and learned Saul came out of Keilah well-armed. [5]So David secretly arose and came to the place where Saul lay. Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army, was there too. Now Saul lay in a covered chariot, and the people encamped round about him. [6]Then David spoke up to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother of Joab, saying, “Who will go with me to Saul in the camp?” And Abishai said, “I will go with you.”

[7]So that night, David and Abishai went in among the troops, and there lay Saul asleep in the covered chariot. His spear was jammed into the ground by his head. And Abner and the troops were sleeping all around him. [8]Then Abishai said to David, “The Lord places your enemy in your hand this very day. Once and for all, let me strike him with the spear that is in the ground. I will not strike him again.” [9]And David said to Abishai, “Do not bring him down, for who can bring his own hand against the anointed of the Lord and go unpunished?” [10]David said, “As the Lord lives, the Lord shall strike him, or his day may come to die, or he may go out to battle and be added to his fathers. [11]The Lord forbid me that I should bring my own hand against the anointed of the Lord. But indeed, take the spear from by

his head and the container of water, and let us both go.” [12]So David took the spear by Saul's head and the container of water, and they went away. No one noticed or knew what happened or even awoke. All were sleeping, because a deep sleep from the Lord fell upon them.[†]

[13]Now David went over to the other side and stood on the top of the mountain afar off. There was a great distance between them. [14]And David called out to the people and spoke to Abner, saying, “Do you not answer, Abner?” Then Abner answered and said, “Who is that calling out to me?” [15]So David said to Abner, “Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? If so, then why do you not guard your lord the king? For one of the people entered your camp to destroy your lord the king. [16]And this thing which you allowed to happen is not good. As the Lord lives, you are sons of death—you guarding the lord your king, the anointed of the Lord. Now look and tell me, where is the king's spear that was by his head, and the jug of water?”

[17]Then Saul recognized David's voice and said, “Is that truly your voice, my son David?” And David said, “It is your servant, my lord, O King.” [18]And David said, “Why is my lord pursuing his servant? How have I sinned? What wrong have you found in me? [19]Now let my lord the king hear his servant's words: If God incites you against me, let Him accept the scent of your offering. If the sons of men incite you against me, let these men be cursed before the Lord. For today by their saying, ‘Go, serve other gods,’ they show their desire to cast me out in order to prevent me from being established in the inheritance of the Lord. [20]Now do not let my blood

fall to the ground before the face of the Lord. For the king of Israel comes here to seek my life, like one who hunts a horned owl in the mountains.”

[21]Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed, I have played the fool and erred exceedingly.” [22]And David answered and said, “Behold, the spear of the king. Let one of the servants come over and receive it. [23]And the Lord shall repay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, as the Lord delivered you into my hands today, though I did not lift my hand against the Lord's anointed. [24]Indeed! As your life was exalted this day in my eyes, in this same way let my life be exalted before the Lord, and let Him shelter and deliver me from every tribulation.”

[25]Then Saul said to David, “May you be blessed, my son! You shall do great things and be mighty.” So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

David Dwells with the Philistines

27 David spoke in his heart, saying, “Now the day will come when I shall die by the hand of Saul and be added to my fathers. What is best for me is to be in the land of the Philistines where I will be safe, for Saul will stop searching for me at the borders. Then I will be delivered out of his hand.”[†] [2]Then David and the four hundred men with him arose and traveled to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. [3]And David settled in Gath with Achish, he and his men, each with his family, and David with both wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman and Abigail the widow of Nabal, the Carmelite. [4]And it was reported to Saul that David had fled to

Gath; so he no longer sought him. [5]Then David said to Achish, “If your servant has now found favor in your eyes, indeed offer to me a place in one of the cities in your country, and I will settle there. Why have your servant settle with you, here in your royal city?” [6]And that day Achish gave Ziklag to David. That is why Ziklag still belongs to the king of Judah to this very day.

[7]Now the time David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was four months. [8]And David and his men went up and attacked all the Geshurites and the Amalekites, indeed even against the tribes belonging to this area, and against the inhabited cities of Gelamp Shur, from the fortified cities as far as the land of Egypt.[†] [9]And he struck the land, and neither man nor woman was left alive. He took away the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing, and came back to Achish. [10]Then Achish said to David, “Where did you attack today?” And David said to Achish, “Upon the south of Judah, upon the south of the Jesmega, and on the south of the Kenites.”

[11]And David did not leave man or woman alive to bring news to Gath, saying, “Let them not inform on us to those in Gath by saying, ‘Thus David did.’ ” This was David's behavior as long as he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. [12]So David had the full confidence of Achish, who said, “David is now thoroughly abhorred by his own people for having put Israel to shame; he will be my servant forever.”

28 Now in those days, the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle with Israel. And Achish said to David, “Know for sure, you shall enter into battle with me, you and your men.” [2]And David said to

Achish, “Thus you know what your servant will do.” And Achish said to David, “Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever.”

Saul Consults a Medium

[3]Now it happened that Samuel had died, and all Israel lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul expelled those with divining spirits and the wizards out of the land. [4]Then the Philistines came together and encamped at Shunem. So Saul collected all the men of Israel together and encamped at Gilboa. [5]When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart was near panic. [6]For when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him by dreams, nor by clear signs, nor by the prophets.

[7]Then Saul said to his servants, “Seek for me a woman with a divining spirit; I will go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at Endor.”[†] [8]So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothing. He then went out, taking two men with him, and by night they came to the woman. And he said to her, “Indeed, by the divining spirit, tell the future to me when you bring up to me whom I tell you.” [9]Then the woman said to him, “Look, you know what Saul did, and how he cut off the diviners and the wizards from the land. Why do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to be put to death?” [10]And Saul swore to her, saying, “As the Lord lives, no injustice shall come upon you for this action.” [11]Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” And he said, “Bring up Samuel for me.”

[12]When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, “Why did you deceive me? You are Saul!” [13]But the king said to her, “Do not be afraid. What did you see?” And the woman said to him, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth.” [14]So he said to her, “What did you perceive?” And she said, “A man is coming up, standing upright, and he is covered with a mantle.” And Saul discerned it to be Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down to him.

[15]Now Samuel said to Saul, “Why did you trouble me by bringing me up?” And Saul answered, “I am deeply distressed. The Philistines are making war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me any more, neither by the hand of prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I summoned you to tell me what I should do.”

[16]Then Samuel said, “Why do you ask me, when the Lord has departed from you and is with your enemy? [17]And as the Lord spoke to you by my hand, He has done. For the Lord will rend the kingdom out of your hand and will give it to your neighbor, David. [18]For you did not heed the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek. This is why the Lord has done this to you today. [19]And the Lord shall deliver Israel, including you, into the hand of the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons with you shall fall. The Lord will deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

[20]Saul fell prostrate on the ground, for he was very afraid because of Samuel's words. He was also weak since he had not eaten any food all that

day and night. [21]Then the woman came to Saul and saw his weakened condition. So she said to him, “Behold, when your handmaiden heard the sound of your voice, I put my life at risk and I obeyed the words you spoke to me. [22]Now hear the voice of your handmaiden, and let me set a piece of bread before you. Eat and you will have strength when you go on your way.” [23]But he refused to eat. So his servants, together with the woman, urged him, and he heeded their voice. He then arose from the ground and sat on the chariot-bench. [24]Now the woman had a heifer roaming the pasture, and she hastened and killed it. Then she took flour and kneaded it, and from it she baked unleavened bread. [25]And she brought it before Saul and his servants. They ate and departed that night.

David Rejected by the Philistines

29 All the encampments of the Philistines gathered at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped in Endor in Jezreel. [2]And the captains of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands. David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. [3]Then the captains of the Philistines said, “Who are these passing by in review?” And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, “Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel? The one who has been with us daily for the last two years? I have found no fault in him from the day he defected to me until today.”

[4]But the commanders of the Philistines were grieved because of him; so they said to him, “Return the man to the place you appointed for him. Do not let him go with us to battle, for fear that he become our adversary in the battle. For what better way could he have to reconcile himself to his lord, if

not with the heads of these men? [5]Is this not David, about whom they sang in dances, saying:

‘Saul slew his thousands,

And David his ten thousands’?”

[6]Then Achish called David and said to him, “Surely, as the Lord lives, you have been upright with me in the camp and good in my sight, in both your going out and your coming in. To this very day I have found no evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless, you are not favored in the sight of the lords of the Philistines. [7]Therefore return now and go in peace; thus you shall not do evil in the sight of the lords of the Philistines.”

[8]So David said to Achish, “But what have I done to you? And from the day I came up to you to this day, what in your servant have you found, that I may not fight against the enemies of my lord the king?” [9]Then Achish answered to David, “I know that you are good in my sight; nevertheless, the commanders of the Philistines said, ‘He shall not go up with us to the battle.’[†] [10]Now rise up early in the morning, you and your servants who came with you, and go to the place I established for you. Do not keep an evil thought in your heart, because you are good in my sight. And rise early in the morning and depart at first light.”

[11]So David arose early, he and his men, to depart and to guard the land of the Philistines. The Philistines went up to battle at Jezreel.

The Battle with the Amalekites

30 Now before David and his men entered Ziklag on the third day, Amalek had entered and attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire. [2]They did not kill the women, and all who were there, from small to great, were carried away captive as they went on their way. [3]So David and his men came to the city, and it was burned with fire. Their wives, their sons, and their daughters were taken captive. [4]Then David and the people with him lifted up their voices and wept until they were too tired to weep anymore. [5]And both David's wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, were taken captive.

[6]Now David was greatly distressed, because the people spoke of stoning him, for the life of every person was grieved, each for his sons and for his daughters. But David became strong in the Lord his God. [7]And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, “Bring the ephod.”[†] [8]So David inquired of the Lord, saying, “Surely, I shall pursue after this troop, but what if I overcome them?” And the Lord answered him, “Pursue them. For in overtaking them you shall surely apprehend the troop, delivering the captives.”

[9]So David went, he and the six hundred men with him, and they came to the brook Besor. The rest of his men stayed behind. [10]David pursued them with four hundred men; two hundred men stayed behind, staying on the other side of the brook Besor. [11]They then found an Egyptian man in the field and brought him to David. They gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. [12]They also gave him a piece of fig cake. After eating, his strength came back to him, for he was without bread or water for three

days and three nights. [13]Then David said to him, “To whom do you belong, and where are you from?”

The young Egyptian man said, “I am the servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago. [14]We invaded the south of the Cholthi, and in the region of Judah, and the south area of Caleb. We burned Ziklag with fire.” [15]And David said to him, “Can you take me down to this troop?”

So the young servant said, “By God, first swear to me that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hand of my master, and then I will take you down to this troop.” [16]And when he brought him there, they were there spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and celebrating, because of all the great plunder taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. [17]Then from the morning star until the evening of the next day, David came upon them and attacked them. Not a man of them was saved, except four hundred young men who got on camels and fled. [18]So David recovered everything the Amalekites took, and David rescued his two wives. [19]And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, or sons or daughters, or plunder, or anything taken from them. David recovered it all. [20]And David took all the flocks and herds and put them ahead of the plunder. Concerning the plunder, it was said, “This is David's plunder.”

[21]Now David returned to the two hundred men, the ones too weary to follow after David, whom he made stay there at the brook Besor. Upon his return, they went out to meet David and to meet the people with him. And

when David came near the people, he greeted them in peace.[†] [22]But all the ill-disposed and the worthless men who had gone and fought with David said in response, “They did not go with us, and so they will not receive any of the plunder we recovered, except let each one lead away with him his wife and his children, and let them return.” [23]But David said, “My brethren, this you shall not do with what the Lord has given us, who preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. [24]And who will heed your words? For they are not inferior to you. Instead, they shall share alike, each according to the portion of him who went down to the battle, as being the same portion of him who stayed behind with the supplies.” [25]So it was, from that day forward, it became an ordinance and a statute in Israel to this day.

[26]Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah and to his friends, saying, “Behold, from the plunder of the enemies of the Lord”— [27]to those who were in Beth Shur, to those who were in Ramah of the South, to those who were in Jattir, [28]to those who were in Aroer, to those who were in Ammadi, to those who were in Siphmoth, to those who were in Eshtemoa, [29]to those who were in Gath and in Kinan, and to those in Saphek, and to those in Thimath, [30]to those who were in Carmel, to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, to those who were in the cities of the Kenites, [31]to those who were in Jerimouth, to those who were in Beersheba, to those who were in Noo, [32]to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to pass through.

The Death of Saul and His Sons

31 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines. They fell slain on Mount Gilboa. [2]Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. [3]The battle weighed heavily against Saul. The javelin-throwers and the archers hit him, and he was wounded in the belly.

[4]Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword and thrust me through with it. Do not let these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.” But his armor-bearer would not do it, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.[†] [5]And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell on his sword and died with him. [6]So Saul, his three sons, and his armor-bearer died together that same day. [7]And when the men of Israel, those on the other side of the valley and those on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled. The Philistines came and settled in them.

[8]So the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. [9]And they turned him over and stripped off his armor. They then sent them and his armor into the land of the Philistines, proclaiming the good news to their idols and to the people. [10]Then they placed his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and fastened his body onto the wall of Beth Shan.

[11]And the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines did to Saul. [12]And all the valiant men arose and traveled all night in order to

remove the body of Saul and the body of Jonathan his son from the wall of Beth Shan. They carried them to Jabesh and buried them there. [13]Then they took their bones and buried them under the field at Jabesh, and fasted for seven days.

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The Second Book of the Kingdoms
(Second Samuel)

Author—Samuel

Date—The forty years immediately following 1 Kingdoms

Major Theme—*David as King*. He is named the second king of Israel, Saul's successor. God replaced Saul because of his refusal to repent and follow His commands.

Outline

- I. Early Years of David's Reign (1:1–8:18)
    - A. David learns of Saul's death (1:1–27)
    - B. David and Ishbosheth (2:1–4:12)
    - C. Defeat of the Philistines (5:1–26)
    - D. The ark of the covenant and the house of God (6:1–7:29)
    - E. Conquests of David (8:1–18)
- II. David's Kingdom Is Established (9:1–20:26)
    - A. David and Mephibosheth (9:1–13)
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    - C. David and his eldest sons (13:1–18:32)
    - D. David's return and Sheba's revolt (19:1–20:26)
- III. Record of Events in David's Reign (21:1–24:25)
    - A. Famine and war (21:1–22)
    - B. Two psalms of David (22:1–23:7)
    - C. David's mighty men (23:8–39)

D. Census and plague (24:1–25)

Saul's Death Reported to David

1 And it happened after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David stayed for two days in Ziklag.[†] [2]And on the third day, behold, a man came from the camp of the people of Saul with his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. [3]And David said to him, “Where have you come from?” He answered, “I have escaped from the camp of Israel.” [4]Then David said to him, “What is this? Tell me.” And he answered, “The people fled from the battle, but many of the people were cut down and are dead. Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.”

[5]So David said to the young man who told him, “How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?” [6]Then the young man who told him said, “As I happened by chance to be on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul leaning on his spear, and the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. [7]And when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, ‘Here I am.’ [8]And he said to me, ‘Who are you?’ So I answered him, ‘I am an Amalekite.’ [9]He said to me again, ‘Please stand over me and kill me, for a terrible darkness has seized me, for all my life still remains in me.’ [10]So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm, and I brought them here to my lord.” [11]Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and all the men who were with him tore their clothes. [12]And they mourned and wept

and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the people of Judah and for the house of Israel, because they were killed by the sword.

[13]Then David said to the young man who told him, “Where are you from?” He answered, “I am the son of a resident foreigner, an Amalekite.”[†] [14]So David said to him, “How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?” [15]Then David called one of the young men and said, “Go near and deal with him!” And he struck him so that he died. [16]And David said to him, “Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth spoke against you, saying, ‘I killed the Lord's anointed.’ ”

David's Song of Lament

[17]Then David uttered this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son,[†] [18]and he told them to teach the children of Judah; indeed it is written in the Book of the Righteous:

[19] “Set up a monument, Israel, over the dead on the high places of your slain!

How the mighty have fallen!

[20] Do not tell it in Gath,

Do not proclaim it in the streets of Ashkelon,

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

[21] “You mountains of Gilboa,

Let no dew, no rain fall upon you, nor the fields of the first fruit,

For in that place, the shield of the mighty was dishonored!

The shield of Saul was not anointed with olive oil.

[22] From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan did not return in vain,
Nor in vain was the sword of Saul returned.
[23] “Saul and Jonathan, beloved and handsome, were not separated entirely;
So beautiful in their life,
That in their death, they were not separated entirely;
Swifter than the eagles and more powerful than lions.
[24] “O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Clothing you in the scarlet linens of your world,
Bringing to you the golden apparel.
[25] “How the mighty have fallen!
O Jonathan, dying on your high places.
[26] I am grieved for you, my brother Jonathan;
You were most pleasant to me,
Your love for me was to be admired,
Surpassing the love of women.
[27] “How the mighty have fallen,
And the warriors of war perish!”

David Made King of Judah

2 It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?” And the Lord told him, “Go up.” David asked, “Where shall I go up?” And He said, “To Hebron.”[†] [2]So David went up to Hebron. He went with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. [3]The men went up with him, every man with his household, and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. [4]Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed

David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, “The men of Jabesh Gilead buried Saul.”[†]

[5]So David sent messengers to the rulers of Jabesh Gilead and said to them, “You are blessed of the Lord, for you have shown this mercy to your lord, upon Saul, the Lord's anointed, and you have buried him and his son Jonathan.[†] [6]And now may the Lord work with you in mercy and truth. Indeed, I will repay you for this kindness since you made this happen. [7]Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened and be valiant; for your master Saul is dead. In addition, the house of Judah anointed me king over them.”

Ishbosheth Made King of Israel

[8]But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him from the camp to Mahanaim.[†] [9]He made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel. [10]Ishbosheth the son of Saul was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned for two years. But he did not reign over the house of Judah, who followed David. [11]The days David reigned in Hebron as king over the house of Judah were seven years and six months.[†]

War between Israel and Judah

[12]Now Abner the son of Ner and the servants of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon;[†] [13]and Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out from Hebron to meet them at the well of

Gibeon. The two groups sat down, one on one side of the well and the other on the other side of the well. [14]Abner said to Joab, “Let the young men stand up and duel before us.” Joab said, “Arise.”

[15]Twelve young men of Benjamin, followers of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David arose to duel. [16]By the hand, each of them grasped the head of his opponent, and by the hand, his sword went into the side of his opponent. They fell at the same moment. Thereafter, they called the name of that place the Well of Treachery, which is in Gibeon.

[17]The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David. [18]The three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Asahel was as fleet of foot as a wild gazelle. [19]Asahel pursued Abner, and not to deviate from his purpose, he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left. [20]Then Abner looked behind him and said, “Are you Asahel?” He answered, “I am.” [21]And Abner said to him, “Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armor for yourself.” But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. [22]So Abner said again to Asahel, “Stay away from me lest I strike you to the ground. How then could I lift up my face to Joab? Return to where you came. Return to Joab your brother.” [23]However, he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner smote him in the loins with the end of his spear, and the shaft of the spear came out of his back. There he fell and there he died. And it happened that everyone who came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood in silence.

[24]Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner. The sun was going down when they came to the hill of Ammah, which is east of Giah, on the road through the desert of Gibeon. [25]Here the sons of Benjamin gathered behind Abner and joined to meet in battle. They took their position on top of a hill. [26]Abner called to Joab and said, “Shall the sword devour until the victory is won? Do you truly not know that in the end it will be bitter? How long until you tell the people to turn back from pursuing their brethren?” [27]And Joab said, “As the Lord lives, if you did not talk in the morning, perhaps then each person should not be pursuing his brother afterward.” [28]So Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people stood back and did not pursue Israel, nor did they fight any more.

[29]Then Abner and his men went away toward the west all that night, crossed the Jordan, and went all morning and came to the camp. [30]And Joab returned from pursuing Abner. And when he gathered all the people, nineteen servants of David and Asahel were missing. [31]But the servants of David smote three hundred sixty of the sons of Benjamin, the men of Abner. [32]Then they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men traveled with him throughout the night and came to Hebron at daybreak.

3 Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But the house of David grew continually stronger and the house of Saul grew steadily weaker.[†]

The Sons of David

[2]And sons were born to David in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman; [3]his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; [4]the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; [5]and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

Abner Joins with David

[6]Now while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was strengthening his hold on the house of Saul.[†] [7]And Saul had a concubine, Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and Mephibosheth, son of Saul, said to Abner, “Why did you go in to my father's concubine?” [8]Then Abner became very angry at Mephibosheth's words, and Abner said to him, “Am I a dog's head? Today I brought about mercy on the house of Saul your father, his brothers, and his friends, and have not shifted loyalties to the house of David. And you on this very day seek fault against me on behalf of an unrighteous wife. [9]God do thus to Abner and more also, if as the Lord swore an oath to David, so do I not to him this day— [10]to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and Judah, from Dan to Beersheba.” [11]And Mephibosheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

[12]Then Abner immediately sent messengers to David in Thailam, saying, “Make your covenant with me, and my hand shall be with you to bring the house of Israel to you.” [13]And David said, “Good. I will make a covenant with you, but one thing I require of you. You shall not see my face unless

you bring Michal the daughter of Saul when you come to me.” [14]So David sent messengers to Mephibosheth, Saul's son, saying, “Give me my wife Michal, whom I received for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.” [15]And Mephibosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish. [16]Her husband, weeping behind her, went along with her to Bahurim. So Abner said to him, “Go, return!” And he returned.

[17]Now Abner communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, “In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you. [18]Now then, do it! For the Lord has spoken of David, saying, ‘By the hand of My servant David I will save Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.’ ” [19]And Abner spoke in the hearing of Benjamin. Then Abner also went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron everything that seemed good to the eyes of Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.

Joab Slays Abner

[20]So Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men with him. [21]Then Abner said to David, “I will arise and go, and gather all Israel to my lord the king, and I will make a covenant with you, and you may reign over all that your soul desires.” So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

[22]At that moment, the servants of David and Joab returned from their journey and brought large quantities of spoils with them. But Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace.[†] [23]When Joab and all the troops with him had come, they told Joab,

saying, “Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he sent him away, and he went in peace.” [24]Then Joab came to the king and said, “What is this you ordered? Behold, Abner came to you. Why did you send him away that he departed in peace? [25]Or do you not perceive the evil of Abner the son of Ner, who came to deceive you; to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you do?”

[26]And Joab went from David's presence and sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know of this. [27]When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab turned him aside at the gate to speak with him privately. There an ambush awaited him. Joab stabbed him in the loins, and Abner died for the blood of Asahel, Joab's brother.

[28]After David heard this, he said, “Of the blood of Abner the son of Ner I am forever innocent before the Lord, and so is my kingdom. [29]Let it rest on Joab's head and on all his father's house. And let there never be a time in the house of Joab when it will be found free of one suffering from gonorrhea, or a leper, or one that leans on a staff, or falls by the sword, or lacks bread.” [30]And Joab and Abishai his brother had lain in wait continually for Abner, because he killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon after the struggle.

David Laments Abner's Death

[31]Then David said to Joab and to all the people with him, “Tear your clothes, gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn for Abner.” And King David followed the coffin.[†] [32]So they buried Abner in Hebron; and the

king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave, and all the people wept over Abner. [33]And the king sang a lament over Abner and said:

“Should Abner die according to the death of Nabal?

[34] Your hands were not bound,

Nor were your feet held by chains,

For Nabal was brought forward on different grounds.

You fell before children of injustice.”

All the people assembled to weep for him. [35]And when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath, saying, “God do so and more to me, if I eat bread or anything else before the sun goes down!”

[36]All the people noticed and all were pleased, as the king did many pleasing things before the people. [37]On that day, all the people and all Israel came to realize the king was not intent on killing Abner the son of Ner. [38]Then the king said to his servants, “Do you not know that a great prince has fallen today in Israel? [39]Though I am governing as the anointed king, on this very day I am a kinsman; and to me these men, sons of Zeruiah, are more unyielding than I am. The Lord shall repay the evildoer according to his malice.”

Mephibosheth Is Slain

4 When Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, heard that Abner had died while in Hebron, the strength of his hands grew weaker, and all the men of Israel were low in spirits.[†] [2]Now Saul's son, Mephibosheth, had two men who were captains over the troops. The name of one was Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the sons of Benjamin; for Beeroth was considered as one of the sons of Benjamin. [3]And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and sojourn there until this day.

[4](Jonathan, a son of Saul, had a five-year-old son who was lame in his feet. When word came from Jezreel about Saul and his son Jonathan, his nurse picked up his son and fled, and as she ran to leave, she fell and his foot became lame. Mephibosheth was his name.)

[5]And Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out, and by the time the hottest part of the day arrived, they were as far as the house of Mephibosheth, and he was napping on the bed at midday. [6]And behold, the doorkeeper of the house winnowed the wheat and he too napped. Thus the presence of the brothers Rechab and Baanah went unnoticed. [7]While Mephibosheth was asleep on his bed in his bedroom, they entered and struck him dead and beheaded him. They then took his head and journeyed the whole night on the road going west. [8]They brought the head of Mephibosheth to David at Hebron. They said to the king, “Behold, the head of Mephibosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life. Today, the Lord executed for my lord the king vengeance upon his enemies, even on Saul your enemy and on his seed.”

[9]But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, saying to them, “As the Lord lives who redeemed my life from all adversity, [10]when someone told me, ‘Look, Saul is dead,’ believing he brought me good news, I arrested him—the one who thought I would give him a reward, and he was executed in Ziklag. [11]And now wicked men kill a righteous person in his house on his bed. Now by reason

of your direct involvement, I will charge you with his murder. I will have you utterly removed from the land.” [12]And David gave a command to his servants, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet, and they hung them by the pool in Hebron. But the head of Mephibosheth was buried in the tomb of Abner, son of Ner.

David Is King over All Israel

[5] Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said to him, “Indeed we are your bone and your flesh.[†] [2]In time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in, and the Lord said to you, ‘You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.’ ” [3]Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and at Hebron King David made a covenant with them before the Lord. And they anointed David king over all Israel. [4]David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. [5]For seven years and six months, he reigned over Judah while in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

David Takes Jerusalem

[6]And David and his men marched toward Jerusalem to the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, to those who said to David, “You shall not be welcomed here, for the blind and the lame will resist you saying, ‘David, do not enter here.’ ”[†] [7]Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, the City of David. [8]Now David said on that day, “Everyone who attacks the Jebusites, let him strike with the dagger both the lame and the blind and

those who hate the life of David." Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house of the Lord."

[9]Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and it was called the City of David. And he built the city itself round about the citadel, and he built his own house. [10]David continued forward in this manner and was held in high regard, for the Lord Almighty was with him. [11]Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar wood, and carpenters and stone masons. They built a house for David.[†]

[12]So David knew the Lord had prepared him as king over Israel, and his kingdom was exalted for the sake of His people Israel. [13]And after arriving from Hebron, David took more wives and concubines from Jerusalem. And David had more sons and daughters.[†] [14]Now the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem were Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, [15]Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, [16]Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet, [17]Shamaeh, Jessibath, Nathan, Galamahan, Jebahar, Theasous, Elphalat, Naged, Janatha, Leasamus, Baalimath, and Eliphalath.

Defeat of the Philistines

[18]The Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel. In response, the Philistines went up to seek David. When David heard of it, he went down to the stronghold.[†] [19]And the Philistines came and assembled in the Valley of Titan. [20]And David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hands?" And the Lord said to David, "Go up, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands." [21]So David came from the Upper Breaches of water, and there

David struck the Philistines. And David said, “Before me, the Lord broke through the line of my enemies the Philistines like water that breaches a barrier.” Therefore he called the name of that place Over Breaches.[†]

[22]The Philistines left their gods there, and David and his men took them. [23]Then the Philistines went up yet again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Titans. [24]Therefore David asked of the Lord, and the Lord said, “You shall not go up to meet them. Turn away from them and pass by them unnoticed near the Place of Weeping. [25]And when you hear the sound of marching in the grove of the Place of Weeping, then you shall go down to them. For then the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines.” [26]And David did as the Lord commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines from Gibeon as far as the land of Gezer.

The Ark Is Brought to Jerusalem

6 Again David gathered all the young men of Israel, about seventy thousand.[†] [2]And David arose and went, he and all the people with him, even with the rulers of Judah, on an expedition to bring back from there the ark of God, on which they called upon the Name of the Lord of Hosts who dwells between the cherubim. [3]So they set the ark of God on a new wagon and brought it from the house of Abinadab on the hill. And Uzzah and his brothers, the sons of Abinadab, drove the wagon [4]with the ark, and his brothers went before the ark. [5]Then David and all the sons of Israel with strength played music before the Lord on well-tuned instruments, with songs, harps, lyres, flutes, and with drums and cymbals.

[6]And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah placed his hand on the ark of God to hold it steady when the oxen shook it out of its place.[†] [7]The Lord was angered against Uzzah, and there God struck him. And before God, he died there next to the ark of the Lord. [8]And David became angry because the Lord inflicted a fatal wound against Uzzah, and he called that place Wound of Uzzah to this day. [9]And on that day, fearing the Lord, David said, “In what possible way can the ark of the Lord come with me?” [10]So David would not bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord to the City of David. Instead David directed it into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. [11]For three months, the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. And the Lord blessed all the house of Obed-Edom and everything he had.

[12]Now it was reported to King David, saying, “The Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all his possessions because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness.[†] [13]And there were with those bearing the ark of the Lord seven groups of singers, and a calf and a lamb for sacrifice. [14]David played on well-tuned instruments before the Lord, and David put on a special garment. [15]So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

[16]Now as the ark came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David dancing and playing instruments before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. [17]They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle David built for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace

offerings before the Lord. [18]And when David finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. [19]Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole army of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and to the men and women, to everyone, a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a fried cake. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

[20]Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David. She blessed him and said, “How glorious was the king of Israel today, making himself a shameful exhibition before the eyes of his handmaidens as he uncovered himself, revealing himself as does a base dancer.”[†] [21]David said to Michal, “I will dance in the presence of the Lord. Blessed is the Lord who chose me over your father and before all his house, to put me in charge to govern His people, Israel. And I will play music and I will dance before the Lord. [22]And I will again uncover myself in this manner and will thus remain vile in your sight; but with the handmaidens of which you spoke, I will be praised.” [23]And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

God's Covenant with David

7 It came to pass when the king sat in his house and the Lord had given him an inheritance on every side, free from all his enemies around him,[†] [2]the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I now live in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in the middle of a tent.” [3]Nathan said to the king, “Go and do everything that is in your heart, because the Lord is with you.” [4]But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying,[†]

[5]“Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Do not build a house for Me to dwell in. [6]To this day, I have not dwelt in a house since the time I brought the sons of Israel up from Egypt, and I walked among you in a temporary place of lodging and in a tent, [7]wherever I went with all of Israel. In that time, did I speak a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ ” ’

[8]“So now tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty, “I took you from the sheepfold to be ruler over My people, over Israel. [9]And I have been with you in all things, wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made your name held in high honor, according to the great ones on the earth. [10]And I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them so that they may dwell in a place of their own and be anxious no more. No more shall the sons of wickedness humiliate them, as they have done since the beginning, [11]since the days I appointed judges over My people Israel, and I shall give you rest from all your enemies. Await the Lord to tell you when to build Him a house. [12]And it shall come about, when your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will prepare his kingdom. [13]He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish his throne forever. [14]I will be a father to him, and he shall be to Me a son. And if he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. [15]But I will not take My mercy from him, as I took it from those whom I withdrew from My

presence. [16]And his house will be made sure, and his kingdom shall be forever." ' " [17]Nathan told David each of these words and all of this vision.

GOD'S COVENANTS WITH HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL

The Lord had a covenantal relationship with the Israelites whereby He promised to always protect and provide for them as well as rescue them. In return, they agreed to worship and serve only Him, as prescribed. When foreign armies invaded Israel, or when other disasters occurred, the Prophets consistently interpreted such calamities as resulting from the people falling away from their covenantal commitment to the Lord.

The Prophets convey God's grief and anger when the Hebrews stray from Him (Is 1:1–31; 24:1–12; Am 3:1—6:14). Yet He remains faithful to His covenant, even when His people do not. God even commands the Prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute in order to demonstrate His unfailing fidelity to Israel despite all the times she has played the harlot with other gods (Hos 1:2—3:5; Jdg 2:17).

The Old Testament records several covenants between God and His people. Through these successive, overlapping covenants, God gradually draws all of mankind, through His chosen people, closer to Himself:

1 The covenant with Noah (Gn 9:8–17). God pledges that there will never be another flood like the one which destroyed the previous civilization.

2 The covenant with Abraham (Gn 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–21; see Ps 104:1–15). God promises to Abraham a great multitude of descendants, who will inherit the land of Canaan and always be His people. Through them, “all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed” (Gn 12:3).

3 The covenant under Moses (Ex 19:1—31:18; 34:1–28; Dt 5:1—30:20). Established by the Lord shortly after He miraculously rescues His people out of Egypt, this covenant provided the lengthy and detailed Mosaic Law to guide the Hebrews in their relations with one another and with Him.

4 The renewal of the Mosaic Covenant under Joshua (Jos 23:1—24:27).

5 The covenant with David (2Kg 7:1–29; 23:1–5; Ps 88:1–37; Is 55:3, 4) and his son Solomon (3Kg. 8:1—9:9). This covenant establishes the house of David forever: “His seed shall remain forever, and his throne as the sun before Me” (Ps 88:37). From this promise comes the expectation of a great King and Savior, David’s descendant (Jer 23:5, 6) who will deliver Israel from all her enemies and will rule the earth with righteousness and peace.

The Prophet Ezekiel prophesies a “covenant of peace” inaugurating a future era of peace and prosperity for Israel under the care of “one shepherd . . . My Servant David” (Ezk 34:20–31; see 37:15–28). Jeremiah and Ezekiel envision this “new covenant” (Jer 38:31–34; Ezk 36:22–28) to be based on the spiritual cleansing and renewal of men’s hearts. Isaiah foresees the new, “everlasting covenant” when God will gather all peoples to share in the blessings of Israel (Is 2:1–4; 49:6; 55:5; 60:1–6; see Jer 3:12–17; 4:1, 2; Ps 71:1–19).

The New Testament (or New Covenant), prophesied by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, is inaugurated on earth by Jesus Christ, the “Son of David” (Mt 21:9–11; Mk 10:46–48), the one Shepherd (Jn 10:1–16, 25–28) who comes to gather all people to Himself in spiritual unity and who sends the Holy Spirit (Jn 15:26) on Pentecost to dwell in His followers. Jesus declares at the Last Supper, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood” (Lk 22:20), thus directly linking this new covenant with a covenant meal—the Eucharist. Calling Christ the “Mediator of a better covenant” (Heb 8:6), the Book of Hebrews dramatically demonstrates how He fulfills and supersedes the old covenant made with the Israelites (3:1—10:22).

In the Church, the New Israel (Gal 6:12–16; see 2Co 3:12–18; Eph 2:11–16; Mt 21:33–46), we all have the opportunity to experience the spiritual joy of the new covenant as a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom (Heb 12:18–24), in which believers from all nations will rejoice with God eternally. Hence, it is very fitting that every Divine Liturgy begins with the proclamation, “Blessed is the Kingdom!”

David's Prayer of Thanks

[18]Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, “O Lord, my Lord, who am I and what is my house, that You have loved me even until now?[†] [19]O Lord, my Lord, this is very insignificant before You, yet You spoke on behalf of the house of Your servant, even this for the distant future. O Lord, my Lord, is this the law of man? [20]What more can David say to You? O Lord, my Lord, You know Your servant. [21]You do according to Your word, and You do according to Your heart all this greatness, to

make it known to Your servant, [22]to magnify You. O Lord, my Lord, according to all we hear with our ears, there is no one like You, and there is no God but you. [23]What other nation on the earth is as Your people Israel? As God guided them in order to redeem them, to establish them as a people, to make for Yourself a name, to do greatness, and to make manifest to those You cast out from the midst of Your people, whom You redeemed out of the nation of Egypt and their tents. [24]For You prepared for Yourself Your people Israel, to be a people forever. You, O Lord, have become our God.

[25]“And now, O Lord, my Lord, the word which You now speak concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever, O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, just as You said. [26]So let Your name be magnified forever. [27]O Lord Almighty, You have disclosed this to the ears of Your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You. [28]And now, O Lord, my Lord, You are God, and Your words shall be true, and You speak these good things on behalf of Your servant. [29]Now may You rule and bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever. For You are the Lord my Lord; You spoke, and with Your blessing, let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”

David's Victories in Battle

8 After this, David attacked the Philistines and put them to flight. And David took the border country from the hand of the Philistines.[†] [2]Then David defeated Moab, and after forcing them down to the ground, he measured them off with lines. With two lines he measured off those to be put to death, and with two lines those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became David's servants and brought tribute.

[3]David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to extend his power to the River Euphrates.[†] [4]David took from him one thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstrung all the chariot horses, except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots.

[5]When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand men in Syria. [6]Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus, and the Syrians became David's servants and brought tribute. The Lord saved David wherever he went. [7]And David took the shields of gold that had belonged to the servants of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, and brought them to Jerusalem. Sousakim, king of Egypt, took them when he went up to Jerusalem in the days of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. [8]Also from the Mazbak, from the choice cities of Hadadezer, King David took a large amount of bronze with which Solomon made the bronze Sea and the pillars and the basins and all the implements.

[9]When Toi, king of Hamath, heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer, [10]Toi sent his son Joram to King David, to greet him in peace and bless him because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him. For he had been at war with Hadadezer. And in his hands he brought with him articles of silver, articles of gold, and articles of bronze. [11]King David consecrated these to the Lord along with the silver and gold that he had consecrated from all the cities he had subdued— [12]from Idumea, from

Moab, from the sons of Ammon, from the Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

[13]And David made himself a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Idumeans in Gaimele.[†] [14]He also put garrisons in Idumea, throughout all Idumea, and all the Idumeans became the king's servants. And the Lord preserved David wherever he went.

[15]So David reigned over Israel, and David administered judgment and justice to all his people. [16]Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; [17]Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were the priests; Asa was the scribe; [18]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was an advisor, as were the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief ministers.

David's Mercy on Mephibosheth

9 Now David said, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul, so that I may show him mercy for Jonathan's sake?”[†] [2]And there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” And he said, “I am your servant!” [3]Then the king said, “Is there not still someone left of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the mercy of God?”

And Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan who is wounded in his feet.” [4]So the king said to him, “Where is he?” And Ziba said to the king, “See, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in

Lo Debar.” [5]Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar.

[6]When Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to King David, he fell on his face and prostrated before him. Then David said, “Mephibosheth?” And he answered, “Here is your servant!” [7]So David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show you mercy for the sake of Jonathan your father. I will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather, and you shall always eat bread at my table.” [8]Then Mephibosheth bowed and said, “Who am I, your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog like me?”

[9]And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, “I have given your master's son everything that belonged to Saul and to all his house. [10]You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in bread for your master's son, and he will eat it. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall always eat bread at my table.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. [11]Then Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do everything my lord the king commanded his servant.”

And Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. [12]Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth. [13]So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he always ate at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

Defeat of the Ammonites and Syrians

10 It happened after this that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place.[†] [2]Then David said, “I will show mercy to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed mercy to me.” So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon. [3]And the princes of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, “Do you think David really honors your father because he sent comforters to you? Did David not rather send his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to survey it?” [4]Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off their beards, cut off their garments at the middle of their haunches, and sent them away. [5]When they told David about the men, of how they were greatly dishonored, he sent to meet them. And the king said, “Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return.”

[6]The people of Ammon saw that the people of David were put to shame, so the people of Ammon sent and hired from the Syrians of Beth Rehob twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men.[†] [7]Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. [8]Then the sons of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah were by themselves in the field.

[9]When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's young men and put them in battle array against the Syrians.[†] [10]And he put the rest of the people under the command of Abishai his brother, and they were placed in battle array against the sons of

Ammon. [11]Then he said, “If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall deliver me, but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then we will come and deliver you. [12]Be of good courage and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God; for the Lord will do what is good in His sight.” [13]So Joab and the people with him went into battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. [14]When the sons of Ammon saw that the Syrians fled, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city. And Joab returned from the sons of Ammon and went to Jerusalem.

[15]When the Syrians saw that they were defeated by Israel, they gathered together.[†] [16]Then Hadadezer sent and gathered the Syrians beyond the river Chalamak, and they came to Helam. And Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army went before them. [17]When it was reported to David, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam. Here the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. [18]And Syria fled from before Israel, and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians. David also struck Shobach, the commander of their army, who died there. [19]And when all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw they were defeated by Israel, they changed allegiance and served Israel. Syria was afraid to help rescue the people of Ammon.

David and Bathsheba

11 Then at the appointed time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab and his guards, and all Israel with him. They destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.[†]

[2]Then one evening David arose from his bed and went up on the roof of the king's house. From the roof, he saw a woman bathing, and she was very beautiful in appearance.[†] [3]So David sent and asked about the woman. And someone said, “Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” [4]David sent messengers and took her. And she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was purified from her uncleanness. And she returned to her house. [5]And the woman conceived, so she sent and told David and said, “I am with child.”

[6]Then David sent to Joab, saying, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent Uriah to David.[†] [7]When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. [8]And David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift from the king followed him. [9]But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord and did not go down to his house. [10]So when they told David, saying, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “Didn’t you come from a journey? Why didn’t you go down to your house?”

[11]And Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? How should I do this? As your soul lives, I will not do this.” [12]Then David said to Uriah, “Wait here today, and tomorrow I will send you away.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. [13]The next day, David invited him, and he ate and drank with him, and he got him drunk. In the

evening, he left to sleep on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

[14]In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.[†] [15]And he wrote in the letter, saying, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the fiercest battle and retreat from him, so that he may be struck down and die.” [16]So when Joab besieged the city, he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men. [17]Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell, and Uriah the Hittite died as well.

[18]Then Joab sent and told David everything concerning the war, [19]and charged the messenger, saying, “When you have finished telling the king the matters of the war, [20]if the king's wrath rises and he says to you, ‘Why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? [21]Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?’—then you shall say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead as well.’ ”

[22]So Joab's messenger went to the king in Jerusalem and came and told David everything Joab had told him, all the news of the battle. Now David was angry with Joab and said to the messenger, “Why did you go near to the city to fight? Did you not know that you would be wounded from the wall? Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thamsi? Why did you go near the wall?”[†] [23]And the messenger said to David, “Because the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the

field. Then we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate. [24]The archers shot from the wall at your servants, and some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.”

[25]Then David said to the messenger, “Thus you shall say to Joab, ‘Do not let this thing seem evil in your eyes, for the sword sometimes devours in this way and sometimes in that. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it. So strengthen the war.’ ” [26]When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.[†] [27]And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But what David did was evil in the Lord's eyes.

David's Confession to Nathan

12 And the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David. And he came to him and said to him, “There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.[†] [2]The rich man had very many flocks and herds. [3]But the poor man had nothing but one little lamb he had bought and nourished and reared; and it grew up together with him and with his sons. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. [4]And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare for the foreign traveler who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

[5]So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and David said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who did this shall surely die! [6]And he

shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this and because he had no pity.”

[7]Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man who did this! Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘I am the one who anointed you king over Israel, and I am the one who delivered you from the hand of Saul.[†] [8]I have given you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms, and have given you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! [9]Why did you despise the word of the Lord and do evil in His sight? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you took his wife to be your wife, and you killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. [10]Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house forever, because you scorned Me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ [11]Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sunlight. [12]For you did it secretly, but I will do this before all Israel in the sunlight.’ ”

[13]So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin. You shall not die. [14]However, because by this deed you have greatly provoked the enemies of the Lord, your son who is born to you shall surely die.” [15]Then Nathan departed to his house.

The Death of David's Son

And the Lord made feeble the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill.[†] [16]David therefore sought after God for the child, and he fasted and went in and lay on the ground in sackcloth. [17]So the elders of his house arose and went to him to raise him up from the ground. But he did not want to do so, nor did he eat food with them. [18]Then on the seventh day the child died. And David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, because they said, “Indeed, while the child was alive we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!”

[19]When David became aware his servants were whispering, he perceived the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, “Is the child dead?” And they said, “He is dead.” [20]So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of God and worshiped Him. Then he went to his own house. And when he requested food to eat, they set food before him and he ate. [21]Then his servants said to him, “What have you done? You fasted and wept and lay awake for the child while he was alive, but when the child died you arose and ate food and drank.”

[22]And he said, “While the child was alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, ‘Who can tell whether the Lord will be merciful to me, so that the child may live?’ [23]But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

The Birth of Solomon

[24]Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife and went in to her and lay with her. So she conceived and bore a son, and he called him Solomon. Now the Lord loved him,[†] [25]and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet. So he called him Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

The Capture of Rabbah

[26]Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and took the royal city.[†] [27]And Joab sent messengers to David and said, “I fought against Rabbah, and I took the city's water supply. [28]Now gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, or I will take the city and it will be named after me.” [29]So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it. [30]Then he took the crown of Melchol their king from his head. Its weight was a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance. [31]And leading out the people who were in it, he put them to work with saws and iron threshing machines and made them work as brick-makers. He did the same to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

Amnon and Tamar

13 And it came to pass that Absalom the son of David had a very lovely sister, whose name was Tamar. Amnon the son of David loved her.[†] [2]Amnon was so lovesick over his sister Tamar that he became ill; for she was a virgin and also aloof. It was nearly impossible, in the eyes of Amnon, for him to gain her affection.

[3]But Amnon had a companion whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab was a very clever man. [4]And he said to him, “What is the matter with you, son of the king? Why are you becoming weaker day after day? Will you not tell me?” Amnon said to him, “I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.” [5]So Jonadab said to him, “Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, so that I may see it and eat it from her hand.’ ” [6]Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, “Please let Tamar my sister come and make a couple of cakes for me in my sight, so that I may eat from her hand.”[†]

[7]And David sent home to Tamar, saying, “Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him.”[†] [8]So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. [9]And she took the pan and placed them before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, “Have everyone go out from me.” And they all went out from him. [10]Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food into the inner chamber, so that I may eat from your hand.” And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. [11]Now when she had brought them for him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, “Come, lie with me, my sister.”

[12]And she answered him, “No, my brother, do not shame me, because it is not done this way in Israel. Do not do this foolishness! [13]And how could

I bear my disgrace? As for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.” [14]However, Amnon would not heed her voice, and since he was stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her. [15]Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so much so that the intense hatred he bore against her was greater than the love with which he at first loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out!”[†] [16]But Tamar said to him, “No, my brother! Because the hateful malice in your casting me out is far worse than the first thing you did to me.”

But Amnon would not listen to her. [17]Then he called the servant he had put in charge of his house and said, “Here! Take her away from me, and bolt the door behind her.” [18]At the time, she wore a robe that reached to her wrists, for the daughters of the king who were virgins wore such apparel. And his servant put her out and bolted the door behind her.[†] [19]Then Tamar put ashes on her head. She tore the special robe she was wearing and then laid her hands on her head and went on her way, crying bitterly.

[20]And Absalom her brother said to her, “Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now then my sister, keep quiet. Because he is your brother, do not put it into your heart to speak about this.” So Tamar lived her life as a widow in her brother Absalom's house. [21]But when King David heard all these things, he was very angry. But he did not grieve the spirit of his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.[†] [22]However, Absalom said nothing to his brother Amnon, neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

Absalom Slays Amnon

[23]It came about after two years passed by, to the day, they were shearing sheep for Absalom in Baal Hazor, near Ephraim. Absalom invited all the king's sons. [24]Then Absalom came to the king and said, “See, your servant has sheep shearers; let the king and his servants go with your servant.” [25]But the king said to Absalom, “No, my son. Let us not all go at once and become burdensome to you.” Absalom persisted, but he would not go. Instead he blessed him. [26]Then Absalom said, “Well then, please let my brother Amnon go with us.” And the king said to him, “Why should he go with you?” [27]But Absalom persisted; so the king sent Amnon and all his sons with him.

Absalom made a banquet like the banquet of the king. [28]Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, “Take notice, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, ‘Strike Amnon and kill him,’ do not be afraid in any way, because I will give the command to you. Be courageous and valiant.” [29]So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons jumped up and each mounted his mule and fled. [30]While they were yet on the way, news came to David, saying, “Absalom has killed all the king's sons. Not one of them is left!”[†] [31]So the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn. [32]Then Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, spoke up and said, “Let not my lord the king suppose the servants killed all the young men, the king's sons, for only Amnon is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day Amnon violated his sister Tamar. [33]Now therefore, let my lord the king not take the thing to heart, thinking that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.” [34]Then Absalom escaped.

And the servant keeping watch looked up and saw many people coming down the road from the mountainside behind him. The watchman came and told the king and said, “I saw men on the road of Oronen coming from the direction of the mountain.”[†] [35]And Jonadab said to the king, “Look, the king's sons are coming. It is as your servant said.” [36]As he finished speaking, the king's sons arrived and wept aloud. And the king and all his servants wept very bitterly. [37]But Absalom escaped and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur, in the land of Machad. King David mourned for his son every day.[†]

[38]So Absalom fled and escaped to Geshur. He stayed there three years. [39]And the motivation of the king to seek out Absalom ceased, for he was consoled and at peace concerning the death of Amnon.

Absalom Comes Back to Jerusalem

14 Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was inclined toward Absalom.[†] [2]So Joab sent to Tekoa and took from there a wise woman. He said to her, “Now mourn and put on apparel for mourning. Do not anoint yourself with olive oil, and be like a woman who is mourning for the dead a long time. [3]Then go to the king and repeat the words I give you.” So Joab put the words in her mouth.

[4]And as the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she put her face to the ground and prostrated herself and said, “Help me, O king, help me!”[†]

[5]Then the king said to her, “What troubles you?” And she answered, “Indeed I am a widow. My husband is dead. [6]Now your handmaid had two sons, and the two fought with each other in the field, and there was no one to part them, but the one struck his brother and killed him. [7]And now the whole family has risen up against your handmaid and said, ‘Deliver him who struck his brother, so we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed. We will destroy your heir as well.’ So they will extinguish my ember that is left, and leave neither name nor remnant on the earth to my husband.”

[8]Then the king said, “Go in peace to your house, and I will give orders concerning you.” [9]And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, “My lord king, let the iniquity be on me and on my father's house. Let the king and his throne be guiltless.” [10]So the king said, “Who said this to you? Bring him to me, and he will no longer have influence over you.” [11]Then she said, “Indeed, remember, O king, let the Lord God prevail lest the blood of my kinsmen be utterly destroyed. Let not one of them by any means take away my son.” And he said, “As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.”

[12]Therefore the woman said, “May your handmaid speak another word to my lord the king?” And he said, “Speak.” [13]So the woman responded, “Why do you sometimes consider such a thing against the people of God? Truly, this message comes from the mouth of the king as an error, for the king does not bring back his son from being banished. [14]For as we will surely die and be spilled on the ground like water that cannot be gathered together on its own, so too God shall take away life, even as He is taking

into account the ones being banished from Him. [15]Now I come to speak this message to my lord the king, so the people may see me and say that your handmaid indeed spoke to the king—if somehow the king will fulfill the request of his handmaid. [16]For the king will hear and deliver his handmaid from the hand of the man who seeks to cast me and my son from the inheritance of God.” [17]And the woman said, “May the word of my lord the king be as an offering. For as an angel of the Lord, thus does my lord and king hear the good and the evil; and the Lord your God will be with you.”

[18]Then the king answered and said to the woman, “Hide nothing from me that I ask of you.” And the woman said, “Let my lord the king speak.”[†] [19]So the king said, “Is not the hand of Joab in all this with you?” And the woman said to the king, “O my lord the king, as your soul lives, there is no turning to the right hand or to the left from any of the words my lord the king speaks. Your servant Joab commanded me, putting all these words in the mouth of your handmaid. [20]Your servant Joab did this to bring about this change of affairs, but my lord is wise according to the wisdom of an angel of God, and knows everything on the earth.”

[21]And the king said to Joab, “All right, I have done this request of yours for you. Go and bring back the young man Absalom.”[†] [22]Then Joab fell to the ground on his face and bowed himself and blessed the king. And Joab said, “Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord king, because the king has fulfilled his servant's request.” [23]So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. [24]And the

king said, “Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face.” So Absalom returned to his own house but did not see the king's face.

Absalom Reconciles with His Father

[25]Now in all Israel there was no one praised as much as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him.[†] [26]And when he cut the hair of his head—at the beginning of every year he cut it because it was heavy on him—he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard. [27]To Absalom were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance, and she became the wife of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and she bore to him Abijah.

[28]Absalom dwelt for two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face.[†] [29]Therefore Absalom requested that Joab send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come. [30]So Absalom said to his servants, “See, a portion of Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire.” So Absalom's servants set it on fire. Then Joab's servants went to him with their clothes torn and said, “Absalom's servants set your portion on fire.” [31]Then Joab arose and came to Absalom's house and said to him, “Why did your servants set my portion on fire?” [32]And Absalom answered Joab, “Look, I sent to you saying, ‘Come here,’ so I may send you to the king to say, ‘Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still.’ Now therefore, I have not seen the king's face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me.”

[33]So Joab went to the king and told him. And he called for Absalom, and he came to the king and bowed and fell on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom.

The Treason of Absalom

15 After this Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him.[†] [2]Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the entrance to the gate. So it was that whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, Absalom would call to him and say, “What city are you from?” And the man would say, “Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel.” [3]Then Absalom would say to him, “Look, your case is good and right; but there is no one to grant you a hearing before the king.” [4]And Absalom said, “Who will appoint me as judge in the land, so everyone who has any dispute or cause will come to me? I will give him justice.” [5]And so it was, when anyone came near to him to bow down in respect, he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. [6]Absalom acted in this manner toward all Israelites who came to the king for judgment. Absalom won over the hearts of the men of Israel.

[7]Four years later Absalom said to his father, “I am going to Hebron to fulfill the vow I made to the Lord.[†] [8]For your servant took a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, ‘If the Lord brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.’ ” [9]And the king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he arose and went to Hebron. [10]Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, ‘Absalom reigns as king in Hebron!’ ” [11]And Absalom

invited two hundred men who went with him from Jerusalem. They went along innocently and knew nothing in particular. [12]Then Absalom sent for and called Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city, from Giloh, where he was offering sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for there were many people who went with Absalom.

David Flees Jerusalem

[13]Now a messenger came to David, saying, “The hearts of the men of Israel are following Absalom.”[†] [14]So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, “Arise, and let us flee. There is no refuge for us before Absalom. Make haste to depart, so he does not drive us out and bring disaster upon us and strike the city with the edge of the sword.” [15]And the king's servants said to the king, “We are your servants, ready to do whatever our lord the king commands.” [16]Then the king went out on foot with all his household. But the king left ten women of his concubines to guard the house.

[17]And the king went out with all his people on foot, and lodged in a distant house. [18]Then all his servants passed before him, even the Cherethites and all the Pelethites, and they stayed among the olive trees in the desert. All the people walked near him with his court, all the strong men, and all the six hundred men of the army present by his side. And all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites and all the Gathites totaled six hundred men who followed him from Gath on foot, who went ahead of the king.[†] [19]Then the king said to Ittai the Gathite, “Why do you also travel with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and an exile from

your own place.† [20]In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I move you with us and cause you to flee from your place? You left yesterday. Shall I make you sojourn with us today as well? For indeed I will go wherever I wish to go. So return, and take your brethren back with you. May the Lord treat you with mercy and truth."

[21]And Ittai answered the king and said, "As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king goes, to death or to life, your servant will be there as well." [22]So the king said to Ittai, "Go and cross over with me." Then Ittai the Gathite and all his men and all the crowd who were with him crossed over. [23]And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over the Brook Kidron. The king himself crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the desert.†

[24]And there was Zadok and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Bethor. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people finished crossing over from the city.† [25]Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and show me both it and its majesty. [26]But if He says thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him." [27]The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Look, return to the city in peace along with your two sons, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. [28]Take notice, I will continue to wait in Araboth, in the plains of the desert, until word comes from you to let me know." [29]Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark back to Jerusalem, and they remained there.

[30]So David went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olives and wept as he went up. His head was covered and he went up barefoot. And of the people with him, each of the men covered his head and went up, weeping as they went.[†] [31]Then someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “Lord, my God, defeat the counsel of Ahithophel!”

[32]Now it happened, when David came to the top of the mountain, where he worshipped God, Hushai the Archite, David's companion, was coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. [33]David said to him, “If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. [34]But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, ‘Your brothers crossed over, and the king your father crossed over behind me. Now I am your servant, O king; let me live. As I was previously the servant of your father, so I will now be your servant. So reject the counsel of Ahithophel for me.’ [35]Indeed, Zadok and Abiather the priests will be there, so whatever you hear from the king's house, tell the priests. [36]Indeed Zadok and Abiathar have their two sons there with them, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son. By them you shall send me everything you hear.” [37]So Hushai, David's companion, went into the city. And Absalom entered Jerusalem.

David Met by Ziba

16 When David was a little past the top of the mountain, there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys. And on them were two hundred loaves of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred dates, and a skin of wine.[†] [2]And the king said to Ziba, “Why do you have these?”

So Ziba said, “The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and dates for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who are faint in the desert from lack of drink.” [3]Then the king said, “And where is your master's son?” And Ziba said to the king, “He is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel will restore my father's kingdom to me.’ ”

[4]So the king said to Ziba, “Here, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours.” And Ziba bowed and said, “May I find favor in your eyes, lord, my king!”

David Cursed by Shimei

[5]Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man coming from there from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera. As he came out, he was cursing continuously,[†] [6]casting stones at David and all the servants of David, and at all the people and all the mighty men on the right and on the left hand of the king. [7]And Shimei cursed him and said, “Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you unlawful man! [8]The Lord brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul because you reign in his place. And the Lord now gives the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil because you are a bloodthirsty man!”

[9]Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why is this dead dog cursing my lord the king? I will go over and take off his head!” [10]But the king said, “What do I have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? Leave him alone and let him curse, because the Lord told him to curse David. Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ ” [11]And David said to Abishai and all his servants, “See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. Still more now may the son of Benjamin! Let him curse, because the Lord told him. [12]May the Lord somehow look on my humiliation, and may He turn his cursing of me this day into good.” [13]And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, throwing stones alongside him and kicking up dust. [14]Now the king and all the people with him were becoming thirsty, so they refreshed themselves there.

Absalom Enters Jerusalem

[15]Absalom and all the men of Israel came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him.[†] [16]And when Hushai the Archite, David's companion, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, “Long live the king!” [17]So Absalom said to Hushai, “Is this the mercy you show to your companion? Why did you not go with your companion?” [18]And Hushai said to Absalom, “No, I am following the one that the Lord, these people, and all the men of Israel choose. I will be his, and I will remain with him. [19]Should I not serve the next one? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? I will be in your presence as I served in your father's presence.”

[20]Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give counsel as to what we should do.”[†] [21]And Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Go in to your father's concubines, whom he left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you dishonored your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong.” [22]So they pitched a tent for Absalom on top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

[23]Now the counsel of Ahithophel which he gave in those days was treated as if he obtained it after inquiring the word of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel, both to David and to Absalom.

17 In those days, Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Let me choose for myself twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight.[†] [2]I will come upon him while he is weary and weak and make him confused. And all the people who are with him will flee, and I will strike only the king. [3]I will bring all the people back to you as a bride returns to her husband, except the life of the one man whom you seek. Then all the people will be at peace.” [4]The saying pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

Hushai Misinforms Absalom

[5]Then Absalom said, “Call Hushai the Archite, and let us hear what he says as well.”[†] [6]When Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him, saying, “Ahithophel spoke in this manner. Shall we do as he says? If not, speak up.”

[7]So Hushai said to Absalom, “The advice that Ahithophel gave is not good at this time.” [8]Hushai said, “You know that your father and his men

are very mighty and bitter in their souls, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field, or like a savage boar in the pasture. And your father is a man of war and will not camp with the people. [9]Surely by now he is hidden in one of the hills, or in some other place. And when at first some of them are overthrown, whoever hears it will say, ‘There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.’ [10]And even he who is valiant, whose heart is like that of a lion, will melt completely. For all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and those who are with him are valiant men. [11]Therefore I advise all Israel to gather to you, from Dan to Beersheba, like the multitude of sand along the sea, with you yourself standing in the midst of them. [12]So we will come upon him in one of the places where we may find him, and we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground. And we will not leave one of all the men with him. [13]Moreover, if he withdraws into a city, then all Israel shall bring ropes to that city, and we will pull it into the river until not one small stone is left.”

[14]So Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord commanded we reject the good counsel of Ahithophel, if perchance the Lord might bring all evil upon Absalom.”

David Is Warned to Flee

[15]Then Hushai the Archite said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, “Thus and so Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so I have advised.[†] [16]Now quickly send and tell David the following, ‘Do not remain lodged this night in Araboth of the desert wilderness. Make

haste and go quickly, lest perchance one swallow up the king, and with him all the people.' "

[17]Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stood by the well at Rogel awaiting a handmaid to report to them. Then they would go and tell King David, for they dared not be seen coming into and going out of the city. [18]Nevertheless, a lad saw them and told Absalom. But the two men went away quickly and came to a man's house in Bahurim. He had a reservoir for water in his court, and they went down into it. [19]Then the woman spread a covering over the opening to the pit, and she put grain on it in need of drying to disguise what was happening. [20]And when Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house they said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" So the woman said to them, "They passed a while ago for water." The men searched, but found no one, and returned to Jerusalem. [21]Now after they departed, the two men came up out of the pit and went on to tell King David. They said to David, "Arise and quickly cross over the water. For thus did Ahithophel counsel concerning you." [22]So David and all the people with him arose and crossed over the River Jordan before morning light. Not one of them was left who did not cross over the River Jordan. [23]Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he arose and saddled a donkey and went to his house in the city. He gave final orders to his household, and he hanged himself and died. He was buried in his father's tomb.[†]

[24]David went through the desert wilderness to Mahanaim, while Absalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.[†] [25]Absalom appointed Amasa captain over the army instead of Joab. Amasa

was the son of a man whose name was Jithra, an Israelite who had gone in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. [26]So all Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead. [27]Now when David came to Mahanaim, he was met by Shobi the son of Nahash, from Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim. [28]They brought ten beds and tapestries, ten basins, earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, lentils, parched seeds, [29]honey and butter, sheep, and cheese of the herd, and they offered them to David and the people with him to eat. For they said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the desert.”

Absalom's Demise

18 David considered the people with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.[†] [2]Then David sent out one third of the people under the hand of Joab, one third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the hand of Ittai the Gathite. And David said to the people, “I myself will surely go out with you as well.” [3]But they answered, “You shall not go out! For if we flee away, they will not care about us. Nor will they care about us if half of us die. You are worth ten thousand of us. And now it is well that you will be more help to us in the city.” [4]Then the king said to them, “I will do whatever seems best to you.” So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. [5]The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, “For my sake, deal gently with the young man Absalom.” And the people heard the king give orders to all the captains concerning Absalom.

[6]So the people went out into the thicket against Israel. And the battle was in the thicket of Ephraim.[†] [7]The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand men took place there that day. [8]And the battle itself was scattered over the face of all the countryside; and the thicket of woods devoured more of the people that day than did the sword.

[9]Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on his mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak tree, and his head caught in the oak, so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule that was under him went on.[†]

[10]Now a certain man saw it and told Joab, saying, “I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!” [11]So Joab said to the man who told him, “You just saw him, and did not dislodge him so he could fall to the ground? Why? I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a belt.” [12]But the man said to Joab, “Though I were to receive a thousand shekels of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For in our hearing, the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, ‘Protect the young man Absalom for me! [13]Do not deal with his life in a dishonorable way.’ For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against him.”

[14]Then Joab said, “I will make preparation for this, and thus I will not linger with you.” Joab took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the grip of the oak tree. [15]Then ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom and

struck and killed him. [16]So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab spared the people. [17]And they took Absalom and cast him into a large chasm in the thicket, into a great pit, and laid a very large heap of stones over him. Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent. [18]Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a pillar for himself in the King's Valley. For he said, “I have no son to keep my name in remembrance.” He called the pillar Absalom's Hand, and that is what it is called to this day.

Absalom's Death Reported to David

[19]Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, “Let me run now and take the good news to the king, how the Lord avenged him from the hand of his enemies.”[†] [20]And Joab said to him, “You will be no messenger of good news today, for you shall take good news another day. But on this day you shall take no good news, on account of the king's son who is dead.” [21]Then Joab said to Hushai, “Go, tell the king what you saw.” So the Cushite bowed to Joab and left. [22]And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, “But whatever happens, let me run after the Cushite.” So Joab said, “My son, why are you going to run? Come here, because you have no good news which is of use to the one going.” [23]And he said, “What if I run?” So Joab said to him, “Run.” Then Ahimaaz ran by way of Kechar and outran Hushai.

[24]Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the top of the gate of the wall and lifted his eyes and looked out. He saw a man running by himself. [25]Then the watchman cried out and told the

king. And the king said, “If he is alone, there is good news in his mouth.” And he came quickly and drew near. [26]Then the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called toward the gate and said, “There is another man running alone!” And the king said, “He also brings good news.”

[27]So the watchman said, “I think the running of the first one resembles the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.” And the king said, “He is a good man and comes with good news.” [28]And Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, “Peace!” Then he bowed to the king with his face to the earth and said, “Blessed be the Lord your God, who delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!”[†]

[29]The king said, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” Ahimaaz answered, “I saw a great multitude at the time of Joab's sending the king's servant and me your servant. I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what was happening.” [30]And the king said, “Turn aside and stand here.” So he turned aside and stood still. [31]Just then Hushai came, and he said to the king, “There is good news, my lord the king! For the Lord avenged you today, and on all those who rose against you.”[†] [32]And the king said to Hushai, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” So Hushai answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!”

David Mourns for Absalom

19 The king was deeply troubled, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as went, “My son Absalom, my son.

My son Absalom—why your death instead of mine; I instead of you! Absalom my son, my son!”[†] [2]Joab was told, “Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.” [3]So the deliverance of that day was turned into mourning for all the people. For that day the people heard it said, “The king is grieving for his son.”[†] [4]And the people crept back into the city that day like people ashamed for being cowardly in the midst of battle. [5]The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, “My son Absalom! Absalom, my son!”

[6]And Joab came into the house before the king, and said, “Today you have disgraced all your servants who delivered you today, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines, [7]because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For today you declared that you regard neither rulers nor servants. For I perceive that if Absalom lived and all of us had died today, then it would be well-pleasing to you. [8]Now therefore, arise, go out and speak to the hearts of your servants. For I swear by the Lord, if you do not go out today, not one will stay with you tonight. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now.” [9]Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people saying, “There is the king, sitting in the gate.” So all the people came before the king, for Israel fled every man to his tent.

David's Return to Jerusalem

[10]Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, “The king saved us from all our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he fled from the land and his kingdom

because of Absalom.[†] [11]But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?” [12]So King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, “Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, ‘Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king? [13]You are my brethren, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king into his house?’ [14]And say to Amasa, ‘Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not permanent commander of the army instead of Joab.’ ” [15]The king swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, as that of one man. And word was sent to the king, saying, “Return, you and all your servants!” [16]Then the king returned and came as far as the River Jordan. And the men of Judah came to Gilgal on their way to meet the king, to escort him across the River Jordan.[†]

David Shows Mercy to Shimei

[17]And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite who was from Bahurim, hastened and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David. [18]There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him, and they went over the Jordan before the king. [19]And they went through the ford, carrying the king's household, and the service of escorting the king was completed, and they did what he thought good. Now Shimei the son of Gera fell on his face before the king as he was crossing the River Jordan. [20]And he said to the king, “Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember the wrong your servant did on the day when my lord the king left

Jerusalem, so that the king should take it to heart. [21]For I, your servant, know that I sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.” [22]But Abishai the son of Zeruiah spoke up and said, “Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?” [23]And David said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For I do not know today whether I am king over Israel.” [24]And the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” For the king swore to him.

David Receives Mephibosheth

[25]Now Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his nails or his mustache, nor washed his clothes from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace.[†] [26]So when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, “Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?” [27]And he answered, “My lord the king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said to him, ‘I will saddle a donkey for myself so I may ride on it and go to the king, because your servant is lame.’ [28]And he deceived your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king is like an angel of God. Therefore do what is good in your eyes. [29]For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right do I still have to cry out any more to the king?”

[30]So the king said to him, “Why are you still speaking of your affairs? I said, ‘You and Ziba divide the land.’ ” [31]Then Mephibosheth said to the king, “No, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come back in peace to his house.”

David's Mercy to Barzillai

[32]And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the River Jordan with the king to escort him across the Jordan.[†] [33]Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old, and had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very great man. [34]And the king said to Barzillai, “Come across with me, and I will provide for your old age in Jerusalem.” [35]But Barzillai said to the king, “How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? [36]I am eighty years old today. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? [37]Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? [38]Let me your servant remain and die in my own city near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; he will cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you.”

[39]And the king answered, “Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now I will do for you whatever you ask of me.” [40]Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king

crossed. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his place.

The Debate at Gilgal

[41]Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and half the people of Israel.[†]

[42]And behold, all the men of Israel came to the king and said to him, “Why did our brethren, the men of Judah, steal you away and bring the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan?” [43]So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?” [44]And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, “We have ten shares in the king; therefore we are first over you, and we also have a greater right to David than you. Why then do you despise us? Were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?” The words of the men of Judah were sharper than the words of the men of Israel.

Rebellion of Sheba

20 There happened to be there a rebel whose name was Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet and said, “We have no share in David, nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel!”[†] [2]So every man of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, clung to their king. [3]Now David entered his house at

Jerusalem. And the king took the ten women, his concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and put them under guard and supported them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood.[†]

[4]And the king said to Amasa, “Within three days, call the men of Judah for me, and be present here yourself.”[†] [5]So Amasa went to call for the men of Judah. But he delayed longer than the time set by David, who appointed him. [6]And David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord's servants with you and pursue him so that he does not fortify cities for himself and escape from our sight.” [7]So Joab's men with the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the mighty men went out after him. They went out of Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri. [8]When they reached the large stone in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Now Joab was dressed in battle armor, and on it was a belt with a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips. Then the sword came out and fell to the ground. [9]Then Joab said to Amasa, “Are you healthy, brother?” And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. [10]But Amasa did not notice the sword that was in Joab's hand. And he struck him with it in the stomach, and his entrails poured out on the ground. He did not strike him again, and he died.

Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri. [11]Meanwhile one of Joab's servants stood near him and said, “Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David—follow Joab!”[†] [12]But Amasa was soaked in his blood in the middle of the road. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa from the path onto the field.

He threw a garment over him because he saw that everyone halted who came upon him. [13]And when he was removed from the road, all the people followed after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri. [14]And he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel and Beth Maachah, and all the Charrites. So they joined together and went after Sheba.[†] [15]They then came and besieged Sheba in Abel and Beth Maachah. And they raised a siege mound against the city and stood by the rampart. And all the people with Joab considered pulling down the wall.

[16]Then a wise woman cried out from the wall, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come near, and I will speak with him." [17]When he came near to her, the woman said, "Are you Joab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Hear the words of your handmaid." And he replied, "I am listening." [18]So she spoke, saying, "In former times they used to say, 'They asked at Abel and in Dan whether the things established by the faithful of Israel failed, and they will ask in Abel whether they failed.' [19]I am among the peaceable and loyal in Israel. You seek to put a city and a capital in Israel to death. Why are you going to swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?" [20]And Joab answered and said, "Far be it from me, far be it from me to swallow it up or destroy it! [21]That is not so. But a man from the mountains of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, raised his hand against King David. Deliver him only to me, and I will depart from the city." So the woman said to Joab, "Watch, his head will be thrown to you over the wall." [22]Then the woman in her wisdom went to the people and spoke to all the city. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it out to Joab. Then he blew a trumpet, and they scattered from the city, every man to his tent. So Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

David's Officers

[23]And Joab was over all the army of Israel; Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites;[†] [24]Adoram was in charge of revenue; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; [25]Sheva was scribe; Zadok and Abiathar were the priests; [26]and Ira the Jairite was a priest of David.

The Descendants of Saul Are Killed

21 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year, and David inquired before the Lord. And the Lord said, “In Saul and his unrighteous house there is wrongdoing, because of his bloodthirsty killings when he killed the Gibeonites.”[†] [2]So King David called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not sons of Israel, but belonged to the remnant of the Amorites. The sons of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the sons of Israel and Judah. [3]And David said to the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement so that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?” [4]And the Gibeonites said to him, “We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us.”

So he said, “What do you want me to do for you?” [5]Then they answered the king, “As for the man who consumed us and pursued us, who deceived us to destroy us, let us blot him out from remaining in any of the territories of Israel. [6]Let seven men of his descendants be delivered to us, and we will hang them in broad daylight before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord chose.”

And the king said, “I will give them.” [7]But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. [8]So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she bore for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite; [9]and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites. They hanged them on the hill before the Lord. So they fell, all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest.

[10]Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock from the beginning of barley harvest until the rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night. [11]David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. And they were faint, and Dan, son of Joah from the offspring of the giants, overtook them. [12]Then David went and took Saul's bones and the bones of Jonathan his son. He took them from the men of Jabesh Gilead, who stole them from the square of Beth Shan where the Philistines put them, on the day the Philistines struck down Saul in Gilboa. [13]So he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there, and they gathered the bones of those who were hanged. [14]And they buried Saul's bones and the bones of Jonathan his son and the bones of those who were hanged in the country of Benjamin, in Zelah beside the tomb of Kish his

father. So they did everything the king commanded. And after that God heeded the prayer for the land.[†]

The Death of the Philistine Giants

[15]Now the Philistines were still at war with Israel, and David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint.[†] [16]Then Ishbi thought he could kill David. This Ishbi was one of the descendants of the giants, and the weight of his spear was the weight of three hundred bronze shekels, and he was girded with a club. [17]But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, “You shall no longer go out with us to battle, that you do not quench the lamp of Israel.”

[18]Now after this there was another battle with the Philistines at Gath. Then Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the descendants of the giants. [19]And there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, whose spear had a shaft like a weaver's beam. [20]Yet again there was a battle at Gath, where there was a man of strife who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number. He also was born to the giant. [21]And he defied Israel, and Jonathan the son of Shimea, brother of David, killed him. [22]These four were born as offspring of the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

David's Song of Deliverance

22 And David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.[†] [2] And he sang:

“O Lord, my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

[3] My God will be my guardian, in whom I will trust;

My defender and the horn of my salvation,

My protector and the refuge of my salvation;

You will save me from unrighteousness.

[4] I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised;

And I will be saved from my enemies.

[5] “When the troubles of death encompassed me,

The floods of wickedness terrified me.

[6] The throes of death surrounded me;

The harshness of death confronted me.

[7] In my distress I will call upon the Lord

And cry out to my God;

And He will hear my voice from His temple,

And my cry will enter His ears.

[8] “Then the earth was shaken and trembled;

And the foundations of heaven were troubled,

Because the Lord was angry with them.

[9] From out of His wrath, a smoke went up,

And from His mouth a devouring fire;

Coals were kindled by it.

[10] He bowed the heavens and came down,

And there was darkness under His feet.

[11] He rode upon the cherubim, and He did fly;

He was seen upon the wings of the wind.

12 He put darkness around Him as a hiding place.

About Him, His tabernacle was the darkness of waters;

And by the clouds of the air, He thickened it.

13 From the brightness of His light

Coals of fire were kindled.

14 “The Lord thundered from heaven,

And the Most High uttered His voice.

15 He sent arrows and scattered them;

He confounded them with lightning.

16 The channels of the sea were seen,

The foundations of the world were uncovered,

With a blast of the wind, His wrath.

17 “He sent from the height and took me,

He drew me out of many waters.

18 He delivered me from my strong enemies,

From those who hated me;

For they were stronger than I.

19 They confronted me in the day of my tribulation,

But the Lord was my support.

20 He brought me to a broad place;

He delivered me because He delighted in me.

21 “The Lord repaid me according to my righteousness;

According to the purity of my hands, He repaid me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the Lord

And have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all His judgments were before me,

And I did not depart from His statutes.

24 I will be blameless before Him,

And I will guard myself from my iniquity.

25 And the Lord will recompense me according to my righteousness,

According to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.

26 “With the holy You will be holy;

With a perfect man You will be perfect;

27 With the chosen You will be the choice one;

And with the devious You will be shrewd.

28 You will save the needy people;

But You will humble the eyes of the haughty.

29 “For You, O Lord, are my lamp;

The Lord shall enlighten my darkness.

30 For by You I can run against a band of troops;

By my God I can leap over a wall.

31 As for the Mighty One, His way is blameless;

The word of the Lord is strong, tried by fire;

He is a defender to all who trust in Him.

32 “Who is mighty except the Lord?

And who will be the Creator, except our God?

33 The Mighty One who strengthens me with power,

Who has prepared my way blameless.

34 He makes my feet like the feet of deer

And sets me on my high places.

35 He instructs my hands for war,

So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

36 “You have given me the protection of my salvation;

And Your gentleness fulfills me.

37 My pathway under me is widened,

And my legs are not shaken.

38 I shall pursue my enemies and destroy them,

And I will not turn back until I destroy them.

39 I will break them and they will not rise,

For they will fall under my feet.

40 For You will strengthen me with power for the battle;

You will subdue under me those who rose against me.

41 You have given me the back of my enemy;

So I killed those who hated me.

42 They will cry out, but no one will help;

Even to the Lord, but He did not listen to them.

43 Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth;

I crushed them like dirt in the streets.

44 “You will deliver me from the quarrels of the people;

You have kept me at the head of the nations.

A people I have not known served me.

45 Philistines deceived me;

As soon as they heard, they obeyed me.

46 Philistines shall be cast out,

And they will stumble out from their hideouts.

47 “The Lord lives!

Blessed be my Guardian!

Let my God be exalted,

The Guardian of my salvation!

48 It is the Mighty Lord who avenges me

And chastises the peoples under me;

49 He delivers me from my enemies.

You will lift me above those who rise against me;

You will deliver me from the man of injustice.

50 Therefore, O Lord, I will confess You to the Gentiles

And sing praises to Your name.

51 “He is the one who extols the salvation of His king

And shows mercy to His anointed,

To David and his seed forever.”

David's Last Words

23 Now these are the last words of David.

“David, the faithful one, the son of Jesse;

The faithful man whom the Lord raised up,

The anointed of the God of Jacob,

The sweet psalmist of Israel:[†]

2 “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me,

And His word was on my tongue.

3 The God of Israel says,

A guardian of Israel spoke a parable, saying,

‘Among men, how will you strengthen the fear of God?

4 By God, the sun may arise in the light of early morning;

The early morning does not pass by without light;

So after rain, new growth shows forth out of the earth.’

5 “For my house is not so with the Mighty One;

For He prepared an everlasting covenant with me,

Keeping it prepared for every time.

For my entire salvation and my every desire is

That the lawless may not in any way flourish!

[6] All of them are as thorns thrusting outward,

For they cannot be taken by the hand.

[7] And a man will not labor among them,

Unless armed with iron and the shaft of a spear,

And to their dishonor, they shall be burned with fire.”

David's Mighty Men

[8]The names of David's mighty men were, first, Jebosheth the Canaanite, chief among the three. The second was called Adino the Eznite. He drew his sword against eight hundred men at one time and killed them.[†]

[9]And after him was Eleazar his cousin, the son of Zousitos, one of the three mighty men. He was with David in Zerran when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. [10]He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary and his hand stuck to the sword. The Lord brought about a great deliverance that day, and the people stayed behind him only to plunder.

[11]And after him was Shammah the son of Asa the Arouchaite. The Philistines had gathered to Theria, where there was a part of the field full of lentils. Then the people fled from the Philistines. [12]But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. And the Lord brought about a great deliverance.

[13]Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David in Kason at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines

encamped in the Valley of Rephaim.[†] [14]At that time David was in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. [15]And David said with longing, “Who will give me a drink of the water from the well in Bethlehem by the gate?” [16]So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord. [17]And he said, “Far be it from me, Lord, to do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives so that I should drink?” Therefore he would not drink it. These are the things the three mighty men did.

[18]Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of another three. He lifted his spear against three hundred men and won a name among these three.[†] [19]Of the three he was the most honored. Therefore he became their captain. However, he did not attain to the first three.

[20]Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, a man from Kabzeel, abundant in deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He had also gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. [21]And he killed an Egyptian man, a handsome man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand like the wood of a ladder, so he went down to him with a staff, snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. [22]These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and he won a name among three mighty men. [23]He was the most honored of the three, but he did not attain to the first three. And David appointed him as his reporter.

[24]And the names of King David's mighty men were Asahel the brother of Joab, one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo, David's uncle, of Bethlehem; [25]Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, [26]Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, [27]Abiezer the Anathothite of the sons of Asothitos, [28]Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, [29]Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah, the son of Benjamin, [30]Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai from the brooks of Gaash, [31]Abiel the son of the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, [32]Eliahba the Shaalbonite of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, [33]Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, [34]Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, [35]Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, [36]Igal the son of Nathan from the mighty men, the Gadite, [37]Elie the Ammonite, Gelorai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah, [38]Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, [39]and Uriah the Hittite. These were thirty-seven in all.

David's Census

24 And the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He incited David against them, saying, “Go, number Israel and Judah.”[†] [2]So the king said to Joab the commander of the army, who was with him, “Go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and inspect the people so that I may know the number of the people.” [3]And Joab said to the king, “May the Lord your God add to the people the same number again and a hundred times more, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?”

[4]Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out before the king to inspect the people of Israel. [5]And they crossed the Jordan and encamped at Aroer, on the right side of the city, in the midst of the ravine of Gad and Eliezer. [6]Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Thabason, which is Hodshai; they came to Dan Jaan and Houdan and around to Sidon; [7]and they came to Mapsar of Tyre and all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went to South Judah as far as Beersheba. [8]So when they had gone through the whole land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. [9]Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the inspection of the people to the king. And there were eight hundred thousand valiant men in Israel who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men of war.

A Judgment Restrained

[10]And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, “I sinned greatly in what I did. But now, I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly.”[†] [11]Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, [12]“Go and tell David, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, and I will do it to you.” ’ ” [13]So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, “Choose for yourself what is to come to pass. Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee for three months before your enemies while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days of

death in your land? Now consider, and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me the word.”

[14]And David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Therefore, I shall fall into the hands of the Lord, for the multitude of His compassion is great. Do not let me fall into the hand of man.” And David chose for himself the death he spoke. [15]So in the days of the wheat harvest, the Lord sent death upon Israel from the morning until noon. And destruction came upon the people. From Dan to Beersheba, seventy thousand men of the people died. [16]And when the angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, “It is enough; now restrain your hand.” And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-floor of Orna the Jebusite.

[17]Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and he said, “I am the shepherd and I have done wickedly, but these sheep—what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house.”

An Altar to the Lord

[18]And Gad came to David that day and said to him, “Go up and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing-floor of Orna the Jebusite.”[†] [19]So David went up according to the word of Gad, as the Lord commanded. [20]Now Orna looked and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Orna went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. [21]Then Orna said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?”

And David said, “To buy the threshing-floor from you to build an altar to the Lord, so the plague may be withdrawn from the people.” [22]Now Orna said to David, “Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him to the Lord. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood.” [23]Orna gave all these things to the king. And Orna said to the king, “May the Lord your God bless you.” [24]Then the king said to Orna, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with something that costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. [25]And David built an altar there to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And Solomon later made a larger offering upon the altar, for a small one was made first. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

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11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40

41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50

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The Third Book of the Kingdoms
(First Kings)

Author—Jeremiah is clearly stated to be the author of 3 Kingdoms in the *Baba Bathra*, a Talmudic tract. In this ancient record, an entry for the Books of the Kings identifies the author as the prophet Jeremiah. This is in keeping with the general Talmudic vision of prophetic authorship for all of the Old Testament.

Date—About 600 BC, though later material was added about 550 BC

Major Theme—*A record of King Solomon's reign and his successors*, which continues in 4 Kingdoms. The Books of 1–4 Kingdoms were one book in Hebrew. The LXX separated them into four books because of the large volume of material in the text. (The Greek text is longer because Greek includes all the vowels in each word, while the Hebrew language does not.)

Background—The major concern of 3 and 4 Kingdoms is to record what happened in the southern kingdom of Judah. Events in the northern kingdom were important only as they related to the southern kingdom. For example, the moving of the capital to Samaria is dismissed in one verse, 3 Kingdoms 16:24. Judah, the southern kingdom, and the Davidic line form the background for 3 and 4 Kingdoms.

Outline

I. The Kingdom United (1:1–11:39)

    A. The throne passes to Solomon (1:1–2:12)
    B. Solomon is established as king (2:13–71)
    C. Solomon prays for wisdom, receives and displays it (3:1–5:12)
    D. Solomon builds the temple, his palace, and other buildings (5:13–8:65)
    E. Outstanding events of Solomon's reign; his death and Rehoboam's ascension to the throne (9:1–11:39)
II. The Kingdom Divided (12:1–21:43)
    A. The revolt against Rehoboam and division of the kingdom (12:1–22)
    B. The early kings of the divided kingdoms (12:23–16:42)
    C. Elijah the Tishbite begins prophesying (17:1–20:16)
    D. Elijah confronts Ahab; Ahab repents (20:17–21:43)
III. Ahab King of Israel and Jehoshaphat King of Judah Plot Against Syria (22:1–50)

The Aging King David

1 Now King David was old, advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm.[†] [2]Therefore his servants said to him, “Let them seek a young woman, a virgin for our lord the king, and she will be beside the king, warming him; she will lie with him, so our lord the king will be warm.” [3]So they sought for a beautiful young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. [4]The young woman was very beautiful; and she warmed the king, and ministered to him; but the king did not know her.

Adonijah Aspires to Be King

[5]Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” He prepared chariots and horsemen for himself and fifty men to run before him.[†] [6]His father never at any time rebuked him, saying, “Why did

you do so?” He was also very handsome, and was born after Absalom. [7]Then he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they came to the aid of Adonijah. [8]But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and the mighty men who belonged to David did not follow Adonijah. [9]Adonijah sacrificed sheep, calves, and lambs by the stone of the Serpent, by the spring called Rogel, and he invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, servants of the king. [10]But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or Solomon his brother.

[11]Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, “Have you not heard, Adonijah the son of Haggith made himself king, and David our lord is unaware of this?[†] [12]Come, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. [13]Go immediately to King David and say to him, ‘Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, “Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne”? Why then has Adonijah become king?’ [14]Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words.”

[15]So Bathsheba went into the chamber to the king. Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king.[†] [16]Bathsheba bowed and did homage to the king. Then the king said, “What do you wish?” [17]Then she said to him, “My lord, you did swear by the Lord your God for the sake of your maidservant, saying, ‘Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.’ [18]But now behold, Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord, O king, do not know this.

[19]He sacrificed many calves, lambs, and sheep; and he has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army, but not your servant Solomon. [20]As for you, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. [21]Otherwise, when my lord the king rests with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be reckoned as sinners.”

[22]Just then, while she was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. [23]So it was reported to the king, saying, “Here is Nathan the prophet.” When he came in before the king, he bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. [24]Then Nathan said, “My lord and king, did you say, ‘Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne’? [25]For he went down today and sacrificed many calves, lambs, and sheep, and invited all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest. Behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and they said, ‘Long live King Adonijah.’ [26]But he did not invite me—I your servant—nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. [27]Was this done by my lord the king, and did you not tell your servant who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

David Names Solomon King

[28]Then King David answered and said, “Call Bathsheba to me.” So she came into the king's presence and stood before him. [29]The king swore an oath and said, “As the Lord lives, who redeemed my life from every distress, [30]just as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel, saying, ‘Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in

my place,’ so I will do today.” [31]Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and paid homage to the king and said, “Let my lord, King David, live forever.”

[32]Then King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” So they came before the king. [33]The king said to them, “Take the servants of your lord with you, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. [34]There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him as king over Israel, and blow the ram's horn, and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ [35]Then he shall sit on my throne and be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah.” [36]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, “Let it be done. May the Lord, God of my lord the king, establish it. [37]As the Lord has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord, King David.”

[38]So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites mounted Solomon on King David's mule, and they led him to Gihon. [39]Then Zadok the priest took a horn of olive oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. They blew the ram's horn, and all the people said, “Long live King Solomon!” [40]Then all the people went up after him, and the people danced and rejoiced with great joy. So the earth burst forth with their sound.

[41]Now Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished eating. Joab also heard the sound of the horn and said, “Why is the

city in such a noisy uproar?” [42]While he was yet speaking, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest, arrived. Adonijah said to him, “Come in, for you are a prominent man, and you bring good news.” [43]Then Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, “No, our lord, King David, made Solomon king. [44]The king sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they mounted him on the king's mule. [45]So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed him as king at Gihon. They went up from there rejoicing, so the city is in an uproar. This is the noise you heard. [46]Even now, Solomon is seated on the throne of the kingdom. [47]The king's servants also went to bless our lord, King David, saying, ‘May God make the name of Solomon your son greater than your name, and may He make his throne greater than your throne.’ Then the king worshiped upon his bed, [48]and the king said, ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who gave one from my seed to sit on my throne today, while my eyes see it.’ ”

[49]So all the guests with Adonijah were afraid, and arose, each one going his own way.[†] [50]Now Adonijah feared Solomon. So he arose and departed, taking hold of the horns of the altar. [51]They reported it to Solomon, saying, “Indeed, Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon. For behold, he took hold of the horns of the altar, saying, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’ ” [52]Then Solomon said, “If he proves to be a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth. But if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.” [53]So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. He came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, “Go to your house.”

David's Final Words to Solomon

2 Now the days of David drew near to death, and he charged Solomon his son, saying, [2]“I am going the way of all the earth, but you must be strong and become a man. [3]Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His commandments and statutes, and the writings of His judgments in the Law of Moses, so you may understand what you shall do regarding whatever I command of you;[†] [4]that the Lord may confirm His word which He spoke, saying, ‘If your sons guard their way and go before Me in truth, with their whole heart and their whole soul, I say to you, a man from them shall not fail to sit on the throne of Israel.’

[5]“Furthermore, you know what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. He shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put innocent blood on the belt around his waist and on the sandal on his foot. [6]Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace. [7]But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table; for they drew near to me when I fled from your brother Absalom. [8]Behold, you have with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who laid a grievous curse on me in the day I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and by the Lord I swore to him, saying, ‘I will not put you to death with the sword.’ [9]But you shall by no means hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man, and you realize what you must do to him, even to bring his gray hair to the grave with blood.”

The Death of King David

[10]So David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. [11]David reigned over Israel forty years. He reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. [12]Thus Solomon sat on the throne of David, his father, and the kingdom was exceedingly well established.

Solomon Orders Adonijah's Death

[13]Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon and bowed down before her. She said, “Have you come peaceably?” He said, “Peaceably. [14]I have something to say to you.” She said, “Speak.” [15]Then Adonijah said, “You know the kingdom was mine, and all Israel turned their face to me as king. But then the kingdom was taken back, and it was given to my brother; for it was from the Lord to be given to Solomon. [16]Now I ask one petition of you. Do not turn away your face.” Bathsheba said to him, “Speak.” [17]Then he said to her, “Speak to King Solomon, for he will not turn his face from you; and let him give me Abishag the Shunammite for a wife.” [18]So Bathsheba said, “Very well, I will speak for you to the king.”

[19]So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah. The king rose up to meet her and kissed her tenderly. He then sat down on his throne, and a throne was placed for the king's mother; and she was seated at his right hand. [20]Then she said to him, “I desire one small petition of you. Do not turn away your face.” The king said to her, “Ask it, mother, for I will not refuse you.”[†] [21]So she said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as a wife.” [22]King Solomon answered and

said to his mother, “Why did you request Abishag for Adonijah? Do you ask for him the kingdom as well? For he is my older brother above me in age, and his companions are Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Jeruiah, the chief captain of the army.”

[23]Then King Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, “May God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah has not said this against his own life. [24]Now therefore, as the Lord lives who prepared me, set me on the throne of David my father, and established a house for me, as the Lord promised, this day Adonijah will be put to death.” [25]So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he struck him; and Adonijah died that day.

Abiathar Banished, Joab Killed

[26]Then the king said to Abiathar the priest, “Go to Anathoth, to your field, for you are deserving of death today; but I will not put you to death, because you carried the ark of the Lord God before my father, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted.” [27]So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, to fulfill the word of the Lord He spoke concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.[†]

[28]Then the news came to Joab the son of Zeruiah, for Joab leaned toward Adonijah and not toward Solomon. So Joab fled to the tabernacle of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar. [29]They told King Solomon, “Joab fled to the tabernacle of the Lord. He is there, holding the horns of the altar.” Solomon sent word to Joab, saying, “Why did you flee to the altar?” Joab said, “Because I was afraid to face you, and I fled to the Lord.” Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, “Go, kill and bury

him.” [30]So Benaiah went to Joab in the tabernacle of the Lord and said to him, “The king says to come out.” But he said, “No, I am not coming out. I am going to die here.” So Benaiah brought back word to the king, saying, “This is what Joab said, this is what he answered me.” [31]Then the king said to him, “Go, and do as he said. Strike him down and bury him, and remove from me and from my father's house today the blood Joab shed for no reason. [32]The Lord will turn the blood of his unrighteousness back on his own head, because he struck down two men, Abner the son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah, who were more righteous and better than he; and yet he killed them with the sword. My father David did not know of their blood being shed.[†] [33]That is why their blood was returned upon the head of Joab and upon the head of his descendants forever. But upon David and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, let there be peace forever from the Lord.” [34]So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, struck and killed him; and he buried him in his own house in the wilderness. [35]The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in Joab's place over the army, and the kingdom was established in Jerusalem. Then the king made Zadok the first priest in the place of Abiathar.

The Wisdom of Solomon

[36]The Lord gave discernment to Solomon, exceedingly great wisdom, and a heart as broad as the sand alongside the sea.[†] [37]Solomon's discernment was multiplied exceedingly, beyond the discernment of all the sons of the ancient ones and all the wise men of Egypt. [38]Then he took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the City of David until he should

complete his house, and before all the house of the Lord, and the wall surrounding Jerusalem. In seven years he made and completed them.

Building the Citadel

[39]Solomon had seventy thousand chosen men and eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountain. [40]Thus Solomon made the sea, the undergirding, the great basins, the pillars, the fountain of the open court, and the sea of bronze. [41]He also built the citadel and its battlements, and divided the City of David in two. Consequently, the daughter of Pharaoh went up from the City of David into the house he built for her. Then he built the citadel. [42]Solomon went up three times a year to offer whole burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar he built for the Lord, and to burn incense before the Lord; and he completed the house. [43]Now these were the governors put in charge over the works of Solomon—three thousand six hundred overseers of the people doing the work. [44]He also built Ashur and Megiddo, and Gezer and Beth-Horon the greater, and Baalath. [45]However, it was after he built the house of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem that he built those cities.

[46]While still living, David commanded Solomon, saying, “Behold, take with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Hebron,[†] [47]who cursed me with a grievous curse in the day I was going to the encampments. [48]But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying, ‘He shall not be put to death with the sword.’ [49]Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what to do to him. But bring his gray hair with blood down to the grave.”

Shimei Is Killed

[50]Then the king sent and called for Shimei and said to him, “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and do not leave for any reason. [51]For on the day you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; and your blood shall be on your own head.” So the king forced him to take an oath that day. [52]Then Shimei said to the king, “What you have said is good, O my lord and king. Thus your servant will do.” So Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem three years.

[53]Now at the end of three years, two of Shimei's slaves ran away to Achish the son of Maachah, king of Gath. They told Shimei, saying, “Behold, your slaves are in Gath.” [54]Shimei then arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. So Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath. [55]But Solomon was told Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and brought back his servants.

[56]Then the king sent and called for Shimei and said to him, “Did I not make you swear by the Lord and warn you, saying, ‘Know for certain on the day you leave Jerusalem and go to the right or the left, you shall surely die’? [57]Why then did you not keep the oath of the Lord and the commandment I gave you?” [58]The king also said to Shimei, “You know and your heart acknowledges all the wickedness you did to my father David, and now the Lord has returned your wickedness on your own head. [59]But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord forever.”[†] [60]So King Solomon commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down; and

he died. [61]Thus King Solomon was exceedingly prudent and wise, and Judah and all Israel were as many as the sand of the sea in number, eating and drinking and rejoicing.

The Reign of King Solomon

[62]Now Solomon was ruler in all the kingdoms; and they brought him gifts, and served Solomon all the days of his life. [63]Then Solomon went to open the domain of Lebanon, [64]and he built Thermae in the desert.[†] [65]Moreover, Solomon's daily provision was thirty measures of the finest wheat flour and sixty measures of ground meal, ten chosen calves and twenty pastured oxen and a hundred sheep, and, besides this, deer and gazelles and choice fed hens, [66]because there was a governor all along the opposite shore of the river from Raphia unto Gaza, in all the kingdoms on the opposite shore of the river. [67]Thus he had peace from all his territories around him, and Judah and Israel dwelt confidently, each man under his own vine and his own fig tree, eating and drinking from Dan to Beersheba all the days of Solomon.

[68]Now Solomon's officials were Azariah, the son of Zadok, the priest, and Orniah, the son of Nathan, who was ruler of the standing guard, and Edram was over his house, and Zoba the scribe, and Baasha, the son of Achithalam, writing memoirs, and Abi, the son of Joab, the chief captain, and Achira, the son of Edrahi, over the labor force, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada over the temple-court and over the brickworks, and Zechariah, the son of Nathan, the counselor. [69]Solomon had forty thousand breeding horses for chariots and twelve thousand horsemen. [70]So there was a ruler in

every kingdom from the river to the land of the foreigners and the boundaries of Egypt.

[71]Thus Solomon the son of David ruled over Israel and Judah in Jerusalem.

Offerings to False Gods

3 Meanwhile the people burned incense on the high places, because there was still no house built for the name of the Lord.[†] [2]But Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. [3]Now the king arose and went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar at Gibeon.

God Appears to Solomon

[4]The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and the Lord said to him, “Make a particular request for yourself.”[†] [5]Solomon said, “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, and with You in righteousness and uprightness of heart. You have continued this great kindness for him, and gave him a son to sit on his throne, as I do today. [6]Now, O Lord my God, You made Your servant king in place of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. [7]Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You chose, a great people, who will not be numbered. [8]Therefore give Your servant a heart to hear and judge Your people in righteousness, and to

discern between good and evil. For who can judge this great people of Yours?”

[9]The Lord was pleased that Solomon asked this.[†] [10]So the Lord said to him, “Because you asked for this, and have not asked for long life for yourself; nor have you asked for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but asked understanding for yourself, to understand judgment— [11]behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you an understanding and wise heart, so there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall anyone like you arise after you. [12]I also gave you what you did not ask—both riches and honor—so there has been no man like you among kings. [13]If you walk in My ways, and keep My statutes and commandments, as your father David did, then I will multiply your days.”

[14]Solomon awoke, and indeed it was a dream. He arose and came to Jerusalem and stood before the altar, before the ark of the covenant of the Lord in Zion. He offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for himself and all his servants.

Solomon's Judgment

[15]Now two women who were prostitutes appeared before the king and stood before him. [16]One woman said, “O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house, and we gave birth in the house. [17]On the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. We were together. No one was with us in the house except the two of us. [18]But this woman's son died that night, because she lay on him. [19]So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side; and she laid him in her bosom, and her dead

child in my bosom. [20]When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, he was dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I bore." [21]Then the other woman said, "No, but the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." Thus they spoke before the king.

[22]Then the king said to them, "One says, 'This is my son, who lives, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No, but your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.' " [23]So the king said, "Bring me a sword." They brought a sword before the king. [24]The king then said, "Divide the living nursing child in two, and give half to this woman and half to the other." [25]But the woman whose son was living spoke up to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son. She said, "My lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him." But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him." [26]So the king answered and said, "Give the child to the one who said, 'By no means kill him.' She is his mother." [27]Then all Israel heard this judgment the king rendered, and they feared the king; for they saw the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.[†]

Solomon's Administrators

4 So King Solomon ruled over Israel. [2]His officials were the scribes, Azariah the son of Zadok, [3]and Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha; and the recorder, Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud; [4]and the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, the priests; [5]Azariah, the son of Nathan, over the administrators; Zabud the son of Nathan, the king's companion; [6]Ahishar, over the household; and Eliab, the son of Saph, over the people; and Adoniram the son of Abda, over the tribute.

[7]Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year. [8]They were the son of Hur, in the mountains of Ephraim, one month; [9]the son of Rechab in Makaz and Bethlehem and Beth Shemesh and Elon as far as Beth Hanan, one month; [10]the son of Hesed, in Arubboth; to him belonged Sochoh and all the land of Hepher, one month; [11]the son of Abinadab, in all the regions of Dor; he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as his wife, one month; [12]Baana the son of Ahilud, in Taanach, Megiddo, and all the house of Shean, which is beside Zaretan below Jezreel, from Beth Shean and Abel Meholah, as far as the other side of Jokneam, one month; [13]the son of Geber, in Ramoth Gilead; to him belonged the region of Argob in Bashan—sixty large cities with walls and bronze gate-bars, one month; [14]Ahinadab the son of Iddo, in Mahanaim, one month; [15]Ahimaaz in Naphtali; he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife, one month; [16]Baanah the son of Hushai in Maaleth, one month; [17]Shimei the son of Elahom in Benjamin; [18]Geber the son of Adai, in the land of Gad, in the country of Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, one month; [19]Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah in Issachar.

5 In this manner the governors provided everything King Solomon requested for the king's table, each man in his month. They did not change a thing; even the barley and the grain stalks for the horses and the chariots they brought to the place where the king was, each man according to his appointment. [2]What was needed for Solomon in one day were thirty measures of the finest wheat flour, sixty measures of beaten ground meal, [3]ten chosen calves, twenty pastured oxen, a hundred sheep, and besides this, deer and gazelles, and choice fatted hens, [4]because there was a governor all along the opposite shore of the river. So he had peace in all his territories round about.

The Greatness of Solomon's Wisdom

[5]The Lord gave discernment to Solomon, exceedingly great wisdom and a heart as broad as the sand beside the sea. [6]Thus Solomon increased beyond the understanding of all the ancient men, even beyond all the learned men of Egypt; [7]and he was made wise beyond every man. He was even made wise beyond Ethan, the Ezrahite, and Herman and Chalcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. [8]Solomon spoke three thousand parables, and there were five thousand of his songs. [9]He spoke about wood from the cedars in Lebanon, and the hyssop that grows out through the wall; and he spoke about cattle, birds, reptiles, and fish. [10]So all the people came to hear Solomon's wisdom, and he received gifts from all the kings of the earth who heard his wisdom.

Solomon Takes a Wife

[11]Solomon took the daughter of Pharaoh for his wife, and he brought her into the City of David until he completed the house of the Lord, and his own house and the walls of Jerusalem.[†] [12]Then Pharaoh the king of Egypt went up and conquered Gezer and burned it, along with the Canaanites who were living in Mergab; and Pharaoh gave letters to his daughter, the wife of Solomon, and Solomon rebuilt Gezer.

Preparation for Building the Temple

[13]Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to anoint Solomon in place of his father David, because Hiram had always loved David. [14]Then Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, [15]“You know how my father David could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the wars that were fought against him on every side, until the Lord put his foes under the soles of his feet. [16]But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor evil occurrence. [17]Behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spoke to my father David, saying, ‘Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name.’ [18]Now therefore, command them to cut down cedars for me from Lebanon. My servants will be with your servants, and I will pay you wages for your servants, according to whatever you say; because you know we have no one who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians.”

[19]So when Hiram heard Solomon's words, he rejoiced greatly and said, “Blessed be the Lord today, who gave David a wise son over this great people.” [20]Then he sent to Solomon, saying, “I have heard the message you sent me, and I will do everything you desire concerning the cedar and pine logs. [21]My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon to the sea; I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you indicate to me, and will have them broken apart there; then you can take them away. You shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household.” [22]Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar logs and everything he wished. [23]Solomon gave Hiram twenty

thousand measures of wheat as food for his household, and twenty baths of pure olive oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram every year.

[24]So the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him, and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and the two of them made a treaty together. [25]Then the king raised up a labor force out of all Israel, and the labor force was thirty thousand men. [26]He sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts. They were in Lebanon for one month and at home for two months; and Adoniram was in charge of the labor force. [27]Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried stone in the mountain, [28]with an additional three thousand six hundred from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work. [29]They prepared the stones and the trees in three years.[†]

Solomon Constructs the Temple

6 In the four hundred fortieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the second month, [2]the king issued a command, and they put great costly stones into the foundation of the house. These stones were not touched by an axe.[†] [3]The sons of Solomon cut them, and the sons of Hiram placed them. [4]In the fourth year, he laid the foundation of the Lord's house in the month Nisan, the second month. [5]In the eleventh year, in the month Bul, that is, the eighth month, the house was completed according to his every word and his every mandate.[†]

[6]Now the house King Solomon built for the Lord was sixty cubits in length, twenty cubits wide, and twenty-five cubits high. [7]The vestibule in front of the sanctuary of the house was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the width of the vestibule extended ten cubits from the front of the house. He built the house and completed it. [8]He made hidden windows from which to look from the house. [9]Against the wall of the temple, he placed beams all around—against the walls of the temple, and all around the sanctuary and inner sanctuary. He also made side chambers all around it. [10]The lowest side chamber was five cubits wide, the middle was six cubits wide, and the third was seven cubits wide; for he made a space around the outside of the temple, so the support beams would not be fastened into the walls of the temple.

[11]When the temple was being built, it was built with stones finished at the quarry, so no hammer or axe or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.[†] [12]The doorway for the lower side chamber was on the right side of the temple. They went up by spiraled stairs to the middle story, and from the middle to the third. [13]So he built the temple and finished it, and he gave the temple a ceiling with beams and boards of cedar. [14]He built the bonding of the superstructure to the foundation throughout the entire temple, each five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams.

The Holy of Holies

[15]Then he framed the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards. From the floor of the temple to the ceiling, he paneled the inside with wood,

holding it together with wood from within; and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of pine. [16]Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling beams, with cedar boards; he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the holy of holies. [17]The temple sanctuary was forty cubits long in front. [18]He prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple to set the ark of the covenant of the Lord there. [19]The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and made an altar at the front of the shrine;[†] [20]and he overlaid it with pure gold. [21]He overlaid the whole temple with gold until he finished gilding the whole temple.

Holy Images

[22]Inside the inner sanctuary, he made two cherubim standing majestically, each ten cubits high.[†] [23]One wing of the cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub, five cubits. It was ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. [24]The other cherub was ten cubits; both cherubim were of the same size and shape. [25]The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was the other cherub. [26]Then he set both cherubim inside the inner room; and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim, so the wing of one touched one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. Their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. [27]He also overlaid the cherubim with gold.

[28]Then he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and outer sanctuaries, with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees. [29]He

overlaid the floor of the temple with gold, both the inner and outer sanctuaries.

[30]For the entrance of the inner sanctuary, he made doors of juniper wood; the lintel and doorposts were one-fifth of the wall. [31]The two doors were of pine wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold. The gold went down over the cherubim and the palm trees. [32]For the door of the sanctuary, he also made doorposts of juniper wood, one-fourth of the wall. [33]And the two doors were of pine; two panels comprised one folding door, and two panels comprised the other folding door. [34]Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers on them, and overlaid the figures in relief with gold. [35]He built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams. [36]He built the curtain of the courtyard of the porch of the house at the front of the temple.

The Skill of Hiram

7 Now King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre.[†] [2]He was the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a bronze worker; he was filled with skill, understanding, and knowledge in working with all kinds of bronze work. So he was brought to King Solomon and did all his work.

Two Bronze Pillars

[3]He cast two pillars for the porch of the house, each one eighteen cubits high, and a line of fourteen cubits measured the circumference of each; and

the thickness was four fingers to the hollow portion, and the second pillar was similar. [4]Then he made two capitals of cast bronze to set on the tops of the pillars. The height of one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other, five cubits. [5]He made two lattice-works to cover the capitals on top of the pillars, a lattice-work for one capital and a lattice-work for the other capital. [6]And he made a hanging work, two rows of cast copper pomegranates, a hanging work, row upon row; and he did the same for the other capital. [7]Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right, and called it Jachin, and he set up the pillar on the left, and called it Boaz. [8]The capitals on the pillars in the hall were in the shape of lilies, four cubits high. [9]There was a roof on both pillars, and beyond the sides was a capital, one beam in thickness.

A Large Pond

[10]He made the sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; it was completely round. It was five cubits high and thirty cubits around the circumference. [11]Below its brim were supports encircling it all around, ten cubits high, all the way around to hold up the sea. [12]Its mouth was as the mouth of a drinking vessel, a lily blossom, and it was a handbreadth in thickness. [13]There were twelve oxen under the sea. Three looked toward the north, three looked toward the west, three looked toward the south, and three looked toward the east. All their back parts pointed inward and the sea was set upon them.

The Bases (Carts) of Bronze

[14]He also made ten bases of bronze; each base was five cubits long, four cubits wide, and six cubits high. [15]This was the design of the bases. They had panels, and the panels were between the reliefs; [16]the reliefs were lions, oxen, and cherubim. Above and below the lions and oxen were spaces for a hanging work. [17]Every base had four bronze wheels, and the attachments to the wash basins were bronze, with four parts to them, and supports under each wash basin, [18]and axles of bronze; and the height of one wheel was a cubit and a half. [19]The workmanship of the wheels was like the workmanship of a chariot wheel; their axle pins, their rims, their spokes, and their hubs were all of cast bronze. [20]There were four supports at the four corners of each base; its supports were part of the base itself. [21]On the top of the base, at the height of half a cubit, it was perfectly round. And on the top of the base, its axles and its panels were of the same casting. [22]On its panels he engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, wherever there was a clear space on each; and they went all around. [23]Thus he made the ten bases. There was one pattern and one measure in all of them. [24]Then he made ten washbasins of bronze; each washbasin contained forty baths. On each of the ten bases was a washbasin. [25]He put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house. He set the sea on the right side of the house, toward the southeast.

The Temple Furnishings

[26]Hiram made the washbasin, the shovels, and the bowls. So Hiram finished doing all the work he was to do for King Solomon for the house of the Lord: [27]the two pillars, the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the two pillars; the two lattice-works covering the two bowl-shaped capitals on top

of the pillars; [28]four hundred pomegranates for the two lattice-works (two rows of pomegranates for each lattice-work, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars); [29]the ten bases, and ten washbasins on the bases; [30]one sea and twelve oxen under the sea, [31]the pots, the shovels, and all the equipment. Hiram made all these articles for King Solomon for the house of the Lord. All the works Hiram made for the king, the forty-eight pillars of the king's house and the house of the Lord, were entirely of bronze. [32]There was no measure of the bronze from which he made all these works in such great number. There was no limit to the measure of the bronze. [33]In the plain of Jordan, the king had them cast in clay molds, between Succoth and Seir.

[34]Thus Solomon dedicated all the furnishings he made for the house of the Lord: the altar of gold; the table on which was the showbread, also of gold; [35]the lamp stands of pure gold, five on the right side and five on the left in front of the inner sanctuary, with the oil containers; the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold; [36]the doorways, the nails, the bowls, the dishes, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner room—that is, the holy of holies—and for the doors of the main hall of the temple. [37]So all the work King Solomon did for the Lord's house was finished, and Solomon brought in the holy things of his father David and all the holy things of Solomon, the silver and gold furnishings. He put them in the treasuries of the Lord's house.

Solomon's Residence

[38]Now Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house. [39]He built his house with wood of Lebanon; its length was one hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, with three rows of cedar pillars and cedar beams on the pillars. [40]He roofed the house with cedar above the beams on forty-five pillars, fifteen to a row. [41]There were three beams and a joint upon a joint, three times over. [42]All the doorways and doorposts had rectangular frames; and the windows were opposite one another in three tiers.

[43]He also made the porch of pillars. It was fifty cubits long and thirty cubits wide. In front of them was a portico with pillars, and a canopy was in front of them. [44]Then he made a porch for the throne, the hall of judgment, where he might judge. [45]The house where he dwelt had one courtyard that had access to these, of similar workmanship. Solomon also made a house across from this porch for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken as wife.

[46]All these things were made out of costly stones that had been fastened at the spaces inside, and at the foundation up to the eaves, and outside as far as the great courtyard, [47]where the foundation was laid with huge costly stones, ten cubits and eight cubits high, [48]very costly, according to measure, uncut, and with cedars. [49]For the great courtyard round about, there were three rows uncut, and a row fastened with cedar. [50]And Solomon completed his whole house.

The Ark Is Brought to the Temple

8 Twenty years later, when Solomon finished building the house of the Lord and his own house, King Solomon assembled all the elders of

Israel in Zion, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the City of David, which is Zion,[††] [2]in the month of Ethanim. [3]The priests took up the ark [4]and the tabernacle of testimony and all the holy furnishings in the tabernacle of meeting. [5]King Solomon and all Israel were before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen without number. [6]Then the priests brought in the ark to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the holy of holies, under the wings of the cherubim. [7]For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and the holy things. [8]The holy staves extended so the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. [9]Nothing was in the ark except the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, after they came out of the land of Egypt. [10]When the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the house, [11]so the priests could not stand there ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house.

Solomon Speaks to the People

[12]Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. [13]He said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel today, who spoke with His mouth about my father David, and fulfilled it with His hands, saying, [14]‘Since the day I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house for My name to be there; but I chose for My Name to be in Jerusalem, and I chose David to be over My people Israel.’ [15]Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the

Lord God of Israel. [16]But the Lord said to David my father, ‘Since it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. [17]But you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.’ [18]So the Lord fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I fill the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. [19]There I made a place for the ark which contains the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

Solomon's Dedication Prayer

[20]Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven;[†] [21]and he said, “O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth below, who keep Your covenant and Your mercy with Your servant who walks before You with all his heart. [22]You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth, and fulfilled it with Your hand, as today. [23]Now, O Lord God of Israel, keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, so long as your people guard and keep their ways to walk before Me, as you walked before Me.’ [24]So now, O Lord God of Israel, let the word be confirmed You spoke to Your servant David my father.

[25]“But will God indeed dwell with men on earth? If the heaven and the heaven of heaven will not be sufficient for You, how much less even this

temple I built in Your name?[†] [26]Yet, O Lord God of Israel, regard my prayer, which Your servant is praying before You today, [27]that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place of which You said, ‘My name shall be there,’ to hear the prayer Your servant prays in this place day and night. [28]You will hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel when they pray toward this place. You will hear in Your dwelling place in heaven, and You will be merciful.

[29]“When anyone sins against his neighbor, or if he takes up an oath that he should swear, and comes and redeems himself before Your altar in this temple, [30]You will hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your people Israel; condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his own head, and justifying the righteous by giving to him according to his righteousness.

[31]“When Your people Israel are defeated before their enemies because they sinned against You, and when they turn back to You, and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this house, [32]then You will hear in heaven and be propitious to the sins of Your people Israel; and You will bring them back to the land You gave their fathers.

[33]“When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, and when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sins, whenever they humble themselves— [34]You will hear from heaven, and be propitious to the sins of Your servant and Your people Israel; that You may teach them the good way in which to walk, and send rain on the land You gave Your people as an inheritance.

[35]“When there is famine in the land; when there is death; when there is burning, locusts, or blight; when their enemy besieges them in one of their cities; whatever plague or affliction there is; [36]whatever prayer and supplication shall be offered by any man, as each one might know the plague of his heart, and will spread out his hands toward this house— [37]You will hear in heaven from Your dwelling place, and be propitious and act; and You will give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know; for You alone know the hearts of all the children of men. [38]So they will fear You all the days they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

[39]“Even the foreigner who is not of Your people,[†] [40]when he comes and prays in this temple, [41]You will hear in heaven from Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You. This so all people will know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel. They will know Your name is called upon in this house I built.

[42]“When Your people go out to battle against their enemies wherever You send them, and when they pray in the name of the Lord toward the city You chose, and the temple I built for Your name— [43]then You will hear their prayer and supplication in heaven. You will make a righteous judgment for them. [44]When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy; and they are taken captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; [45]yet when they turn their hearts in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned and done wrong,’ [46]and they return to

You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land You gave to their fathers, the city You chose, and the temple I built for Your name—[47]then You will hear in heaven from Your dwelling place; [48]and You will be propitious in their unrighteousness in which they sinned against You, and in all their transgressions by which they broke faith with You; and You will grant them compassion before those who took them captive, and they will have compassion on them; [49]for they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of the land of Egypt, out of the midst of the iron furnace.

[50]"Let Your eyes and Your ears be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to hear them about everything, whenever they call to You. [51]For You, O Lord and Master, separated them from all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You said by Your servant Moses when You brought our fathers out of Egypt."

[52]Then Solomon said concerning the house he had finished building:

"The Lord made known the sun in heaven;

He spoke to those dwelling in darkness,

'Build My house, a house of splendor for yourself,

To dwell in newness.' "

Behold, is this not written in the book of the ode?

Solomon Blesses the People

[53]When Solomon finished praying all his prayer and supplication to the Lord, he rose up from before the altar of the Lord, after kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. [54]Then he stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel with a loud voice and said, [55]“Blessed be the Lord this day, who gave rest to His people Israel, just as He promised. Not one word has failed of all His good words He spoke through His servant Moses.

[56]“May the Lord our God be with us as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us,[†] [57]that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways and to keep all His commandments and His statutes that He commanded our fathers. [58]May these words with which I have made supplication before the Lord stand near the Lord our God day and night, to maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel as each day may require; [59]that all the peoples of the earth may know the Lord is God, and there is no other. [60]Let your heart therefore be perfect to the Lord our God, that you walk piously in His statutes, and keep His commandments, as today.”

Solomon Consecrates the Temple

[61]Then the king and all the children of Israel offered sacrifices before the Lord. [62]King Solomon made a sacrifice of peace offerings and offered it to the Lord: twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord. [63]On that day, the king consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the Lord. There he offered burnt offerings, grain

offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar before the Lord was too small to receive the burnt offerings and the peace offerings.

[64]On that day, Solomon made a feast, and all Israel was with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the river of Egypt, before the Lord our God in the house he built, eating, drinking, and rejoicing before the Lord our God for seven days.[†] [65]On the eighth day, he sent the people away and blessed them. Each one went to his tent, joyful and with a good heart for all the good the Lord did for His servant David and for Israel His people.

God Appears Again to Solomon

9 Now when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house, and everything Solomon wanted to do,[†] [2]the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time, as He appeared to him at Gibeon. [3]The Lord said to him, “I heard your prayer and the supplication you made before Me; I have done for you everything in your prayer. I consecrated this house you built to place My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there all the days. [4]Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, with integrity of heart and in uprightness, and you do everything I commanded him and keep My statutes and My judgments, [5]then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I said to David your father, saying, ‘There shall not fail a man to be ruler in Israel.’

[6]“But if you or your sons turn from Me and do not keep My commandments and My statutes Moses set before you, but go and serve

other gods and worship them, [7]then I will cut off Israel from the land I gave them. I will cast from My sight this house which I made holy by My name. Israel will be destroyed, and will become but prattle among the peoples. [8]As for this exalted house, everyone who passes by it will be astonished, and will hiss and say, ‘Why did the Lord do this to this land and to this house?’ [9]Then they will answer, ‘Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and they embraced other gods and worshiped and served them. That is why the Lord brought all this calamity on them.’ ”

[10]Then Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh from the City of David into the house he built for himself in those days.

The Pact with Hiram

[11]Now twenty years later, after Solomon built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house, [12]Hiram the king of Tyre helped supply Solomon, as much as he desired, with cedar and pine and gold. Then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. [13]So Hiram went from Tyre to Galilee to see the cities Solomon gave him, but they were not pleasing to him. [14]He said, “What are these cities you gave me, my brother?” So he called them frontier cities to this day. [15]Then Hiram sent Solomon one hundred and twenty talents of gold. [16]King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, near Elath on the shore of the sea, in the land of Edom. [17]Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon. [18]They came to

Ophir, and acquired one hundred twenty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba

10 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions.[†] [2]She came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels that bore spices, a great deal of gold, and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about everything in her heart. [3]So Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her. [4]When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house he built, [5]Solomon's food, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and the burnt offering he offered in the house of the Lord, she was completely amazed.

[6]Then she said to King Solomon, “The report I heard in my land about your words and your wisdom was true. [7]However, I did not believe those who told me until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed, half of what I see was not told me. You added to the good thing I heard in my land. [8]Happy are your wives, and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom. [9]Blessed be the Lord your God, who delights in you, setting you on the throne of Israel. For the Lord so loved Israel as to make it stand forever. Therefore He made you king over them, to make judgment and do righteousness.”

[10]Then she gave Solomon one hundred twenty talents of gold, spices, and precious stones in great quantity. There was never again such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. [11]The ships of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir also brought great quantities of uncut timber and precious stones. [12]The king made supports from the uncut timber for the house of the Lord and for the king's house, as well as harps and stringed instruments for the singers. There never again came such uncut timber, nor has the like been seen to this day. [13]Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she desired, whatever she asked, besides all he had given her by the hand of King Solomon. Then she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

Solomon's Wealth

[14]The weight of gold that came to Solomon in a year was six hundred sixty-six talents of gold, [15]in addition to that from traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country. [16]Solomon made three hundred spears of hammered gold, with three hundred shekels of gold in each spear. [17]He also made three hundred weapons of hammered gold, with three minas of gold that went into each weapon. The king kept them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

[18]Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, overlaid with pure gold, [19]with six upward steps to the throne and busts of calves’ heads encircling the back. On each side of the seat were armrests with two lions standing on the side of the armrests. [20]Standing, one on each side of the six

steps, were twelve lions. Nothing like this was made for any other kingdom. [21]All the drinking utensils of King Solomon were gold, as were the tubs for bathing. All the furniture of the house of the forest of Lebanon was completely overlaid with gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon, [22]for a ship of Tarshish, a merchant ship of the king's stationed at sea with the fleet of Hiram, came once every three years, bringing gold, silver, and chiseled stones.

[23]This is the outcome of the trading by which king Solomon built up the house of the Lord, the house of the king, the wall of Jerusalem, and the citadel; to fortify the City of David, Hazor and Megiddo, Gezer, Beth Horon the upper, Jethermath, and all the cities of the horsemen and the chariots. Solomon purposed to build the fortifications in Jerusalem and in all the land, so none of the people should rule over him—[†] [24]the people left behind from the Cherethites, the Amorites, the Perezzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Jebusites and the Girgashites. These were the ones, and their children, not belonging to the children of Israel, that Israel was unable to utterly destroy from the land. Solomon made them pay tribute to this day.[†] [25]Solomon did not deliver any of the sons of Israel to this work; instead, these were men of war, his servants, and those in charge of his chariots and horses.

[26]So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and discernment. [27]Now the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear the wisdom God put in his heart. [28]Everyone brought presents: golden vessels, garments, oil of myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. [29]Solomon had four thousand female horses for chariots and

twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. [30]Thus he was the leader of all the kings from the river as far as the land of the Philistines and as far as the borders of Egypt. [31]The king made gold and silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores in the lowland. [32]The importation of Solomon's horses was from Egypt and Tekoa, and the merchants of the king purchased them at market price. [33]Now a chariot imported from Egypt cost one hundred shekels of silver, and a horse cost fifty. Thus it was that all the chariots and horses exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria came by way of the sea.

Solomon Turns against God

11 King Solomon was a lover of women, and he had seven hundred princesses and three hundred concubines; and he took foreign wives, as well as the daughters of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians and Idumeans, Hittites and Amorites;[†] [2]from the nations of whom the Lord said to the children of Israel, “You shall not go in to them, and they shall not come in to you, lest they turn away your hearts after their idols.” Solomon joined to these in love. [3]For when Solomon was old and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David, his foreign wives turned his heart after their gods. [4]Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the idol of Moab, and for their king, the idol of the children of Ammon, [5]and for Ashtaroth, the abomination of the Sidonians. [6]He did the same for all his foreign wives, burning incense and sacrificing to their idols. [7]Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David.

[8]So the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart turned from the Lord God of Israel, who appeared to him twice, [9]and commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods, but keep absolutely what the Lord had commanded. [10]Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, “Because you did this and did not keep My covenant and the statutes I commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from your hand and give it to your servant.[†] [11]Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David; but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. [12]However, I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son, which I chose, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem.”

Solomon's Adversaries

[13]Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, and Rezon the son of Eliadah, who dwelt in Ramoth, and Hadadezer, king of Zoba, was his master. The men gathered together to him; and he was head of the conspiracy, and he seized control of Damascus. They were an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon. Hadad the Edomite was a descendant of the king in Edom.[†] [14]For when David destroyed Edom, and Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the slain, they killed every male in Edom. [15]Joab remained there six months with all Israel, until he killed every male in Edom. [16]Hadad fled, along with all the Edomites who served his father, and they went to Egypt. Hadad was still a little child. [17]Then men arose from the city of Midian and came to Paran, and after joining with other men, they came to Pharaoh king of Egypt. Hadad went to Pharaoh, who gave him a house and apportioned food

for him. [18]Thus Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife, that is, the older sister of Tahpenes. [19]Then the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath her son, and Tahpenes weaned him among the sons of Pharaoh; and Genubath was among the sons of Pharaoh.

[20]So when Hadad heard in Egypt that David rested with his fathers, and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Send me away so that I may go to my own country.” [21]Then Pharaoh said to him, “But what did you lack with me, that suddenly you seek to go to your own country?” So he answered, “Send me away.” Hadad then returned unto his land. [22]This is the evil Hadad did; and he was a bitter enemy to Israel and reigned in the land of Edom.

Jeroboam's Revolt

[23]Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Solomon's servant, was an Ephraimite from Zereda, the son of a woman who was a widow. [24]This was the event bringing him to rebel against Solomon the king: Now Solomon built the citadel. He built a wall of fortification that enclosed the City of David that his father built. [25]Jeroboam the man was very strong, and Solomon, seeing the young man was industrious, put him in charge of those who labored at the house of Joseph. [26]As it happened, Jeroboam went out from Jerusalem, and along the way, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, clothed with a new garment, found him and persuaded him to detour from his path. Now the two of them stood alone in a field.

[27]Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces.[†] [28]And he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Behold, I will break asunder the kingdom from the hand of Solomon and give ten tribes to you. [29]But to Solomon, he shall have two tribes for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I chose out of all the tribes of Israel. [30]Because he forsook Me, and sacrificed to Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and to Chemosh and the idols of the Moabites, and to their king, the abomination of the children of Ammon, and has not walked in My ways, to do what is right before Me, as did his father David—[†] [31]therefore I will surely set Myself against him all the days of his life; however, for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose, I will not remove the whole kingdom out of his hand. [32]But I will take the kingdom out of the hand of his son and give the ten tribes to you. [33]And to the son of Solomon himself I will pass on these same two tribes, establishing a place for My servant David to be before Me all the days of Jerusalem, the city I chose for Myself as the place to put My name. [34]So I will receive you, and you shall reign over everything your heart desires. You shall be king over Israel. [35]It shall be, if you hear and do everything I command you, and walk in My ways, and do what is right before Me, to keep My statutes and My commandments as My servant David did, then I shall be with you, and build you a house that shall endure, as I did for David.’ ”

[36]Thereafter Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt. He remained there in Egypt until Solomon died. [37]Now the rest of the words of Solomon, all that he did and

all his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon?

The Death of Solomon

[38]So the days Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel were forty years. [39]Then Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David his father. When Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it, while yet in Egypt at the place to which he had fled from the face of Solomon and remained, he came directly to his city, into the land of Zereda in the Mount of Ephraim. Thus King Solomon slept with his fathers, and his son Rehoboam reigned as king in his place.

A Revolt against Rehoboam

12 Now King Rehoboam traveled to Shechem, for all Israel were coming to Shechem to proclaim him as king. [2]The people of Israel spoke to Rehoboam, saying, [3]“Your father made our yoke a heavy burden; but if you now lighten the harsh servitude and the burdensome yoke under which your father placed us, then we will serve you.” [4]So he said to them, “Go away for three days; then come back to me.” Thus they departed.

[5]Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, “How do you advise me to answer these people?”[†] [6]They spoke to him, saying, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants all the days.” [7]But he rejected the advice of the elders, and consulted the young men who had grown up with

him and stood in his presence. [8]He said to them, “What advice do you give? How should I answer these people who spoke to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke your father put on us’?”

[9]Then these same young men said to him, “Here is how you should speak to this people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but may you make it lighter on us,’ thus respond to them, saying, ‘Being from the loins of my father, my meanness will be more burdensome. [10]Now whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. Whereas my father chastised you with whips, I will discipline you with scorpions.’ ”

[11]So all the people came to King Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, “Come back to me on the third day.” [12]Then the king answered the people harshly, for Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders offered to him. [13]Instead, Rehoboam spoke to the people according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” [14]So the king did not hear the appeal of the people, because the change of mind was from the Lord, that He might establish His word which He spoke by the authority of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.[†]

[15]Now all Israel saw the king did not heed their words. So the people answered the king, saying, “What share of the inheritance have we in David? Nor do we have any inheritance in the son of Jesse. Israel, run to your dwelling-places. Now, O David, feed your own house.” Thus Israel

departed to their dwelling. [16]In response, King Rehoboam sent for Adoniram, who was in charge of the tribute; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Then King Rehoboam knew it was time to mount up and flee back to Jerusalem. [17]Even to this day, Israel refuses any request concerning the house of David.

Jeroboam Is the King of Israel

[18]Now when all Israel heard Jeroboam was back from Egypt, they sent for him and called him to the assembly. They made him king over Israel, and not one tribe followed the house of David except the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Jeroboam Avoids Civil War

[19]When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. He had one hundred twenty thousand chosen men as warriors to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. [20]But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,[†] [21]“Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, [22]‘Thus says the Lord, “You shall not go up, nor shall you fight against your brethren the sons of Israel. Instead return, each of you, to his house, because this word is from Me.” Hear the word of the Lord.’ ” So according to the word of the Lord, they ended the march.

The Transition of Power

[23]King Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his place in Jerusalem. His son was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned twelve years in Jerusalem. The name of his mother was Naamah, daughter of Hanun, son of Nahash, the king of the sons of Ammon. He did evil before the Lord and did not walk in the way of David, his father.[†]

[24]There was a man from Mount Ephraim, a servant of Solomon, whose name was Jeroboam. The name of his mother was Zeruah, a prostitute. Solomon gave him the staff of authority over the male laborers of the house of Joseph, and he built Zereda for Solomon on Mount Ephraim. There were three hundred horse-pulled chariots with him. He also built the citadel with the laborers of the house of Ephraim, and enclosed the city of David. He was lifted up in opposition to the kingdom.[†] [25]Solomon then sought to kill him, and he was afraid and escaped to Shishak, king of Egypt, where he stayed until Solomon died.

Jeroboam's Family

[26]When Jeroboam heard in Egypt that Solomon died, he spoke to Shishak, king of Egypt, saying, “Send me away, and I shall go to my land.” Shishak said to him, “Ask any request, and I shall give it to you.” [27]So Shishak gave Anna to Jeroboam as a wife. She was the eldest sister of Tahpenes, the wife of Shishak. She was highly admired in the midst of the daughters of the king, and she bore to Jeroboam a son, Abijah. [28]Then Jeroboam said to Shishak, “Please send me away, and I shall leave.” Thus Jeroboam went out from Egypt and into the land of Zereda, which is in

Mount Ephraim. It is here the whole tribe of Ephraim gathers together, and where Jeroboam built a fortress.

[29]Jeroboam's son became seriously ill, so Jeroboam went to inquire concerning his son, and he said to Anna, his wife, “Arise, and go ask God concerning the child, whether he shall recover from this illness.” [30]Now there was in Shiloh a man whose name was Ahijah. He was sixty years old, and the word of the Lord was with him. So Jeroboam said to his wife, “Arise, and take bread in your hand for this man of God and cakes for his children, and grapes and a jar of honey.”[†] [31]The woman arose and took in her hand bread, two cakes, grapes, and a jar of honey for Ahijah. The man was elderly, and his eyesight was fading. [32]She arose from Zereda and traveled to the city where Ahijah the Shilonite dwelt. Ahijah said to his young son, “Go out at once to meet Anna, the wife of Jeroboam, and say to her, ‘Come in and take a seat, for thus says the Lord, “I Myself am sending harsh things on you.” ’ ” [33]So Anna came in to the man of God, and Ahijah said to her, “Why did you bring me bread and grapes and cakes and a jar of honey? Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, you shall depart from Me, and when you enter the gate into the city of Zereda and your maidens come out to greet you, even they shall say to you, “The child is dead.’ ” [34]For Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I shall put to death those of Jeroboam, and those of Jeroboam who die in the city of Jerusalem will be eaten by dogs, while the birds of the sky will consume those who die in the field. They will mourn the young child, saying, “Woe to me, O Lord! For you perceived in him a good word concerning the Lord.” ’ ” [35]Then the woman departed as one who heard and understood. It came to be as she entered Zereda, the child died, and the mourners went out to meet her.

[36]Then Jeroboam went to Shechem at Mount Ephraim, and there they gathered the tribes of Israel. Even Rehoboam the son of Solomon went up there, and the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the son of Elami, saying, “Take for yourself a new garment, one which has not entered into water, and tear it into twelve pieces; then give it to Jeroboam and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Take for yourself ten pieces to clothe yourself,” ’ ” and Jeroboam took them. Shemaiah then said, “Thus says the Lord to the ten tribes of Israel.”

Rehoboam and His Advisors

[37]Then the people said to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, “Your father made his yoke a heavy burden upon us, and he made the foods of his table oppressive; and now, if you yourself shall go more lightly on us, then we will serve you.” Rehoboam said to the people, “In three days I shall answer the matter for you.” [38]Rehoboam then said, “Bring the elders to me, and I will counsel with them as to what answer I should give the people on the third day.” So Rehoboam told the elders what the people sent him to say, and the elders of the people advised him to do what the people said.

[39]But Rehoboam rejected their counsel, for it was not pleasing in his sight. So he sent and brought those he grew up with. He told them what the people said to him. In response, his childhood companions advised him to speak to the people as follows: “Since I am from the loins of my father, my meanness will be more burdensome. Whereas my father disciplined you with the beating of whips, I will discipline you with scorpions.” [40]Rehoboam was pleased with this advice, and he answered the people just as the young men, his childhood companions, advised him. [41]But all the

people spoke as one man, every man to his neighbor, and they all cried out, saying, “What share of the inheritance have we in David? Nor do we have any inheritance in the son of Jesse. O Israel, run to your dwelling-places, for this man is not going to be a ruler or a leader over us.” [42]So all the people scattered from Shechem, and each man returned to his dwelling; but Rehoboam did not relent.

Rehoboam departed by way of his chariots, and went up and entered Jerusalem. Behind him came the entire tribe of Judah and the entire tribe of Benjamin. [43]And it came to pass that in the beginning of the year, Rehoboam gathered all the men of Judah and Benjamin, and he went out to make war with Jeroboam in Shechem. [44]But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, “Speak to Rehoboam the king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Do not go up and do not make war with your brothers, the sons of Israel. Let each man return to his house, for this word has come from Me.” ’ ” [45]So they heard the word of the Lord, and according to the word of the Lord, they held back from going.

Jeroboam's False Worship

[46]Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim and dwelt there. From here, he went out and built Penuel. [47]Then Jeroboam said in his heart, “Behold, now the kingdom will return to the house of David. [48]If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord and master, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me.” [49]Therefore the king deliberated, and went and made two calves of gold. He then said to the people, “You have

traveled enough to Jerusalem. Behold, O Israel, your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt."[†] [50]He placed one in Bethel and the other in Dan. [51]This word became a sin, and the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. [52]He also made houses on the high places, and he made priests from every class of people, even those who were not of the sons of Levi.

[53]Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, according to the feast in the land of Judah, and went up to the altar he made at Bethel to sacrifice to the calves he made. Also at Bethel, he presented the priests of the high places which he made. [54]So on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month he devised in his own heart, he went up to the altar he made at Bethel and made a feast for the children of Israel. He also went up to the altar of the sacrifice.

13 Now behold, there came by the word of the Lord a man of God from Judah to Bethel, even as Jeroboam stood by the altar of the sacrifice. [2]By the word of the Lord, he cried out against the altar, saying, "O altar, altar, thus says the Lord, 'Behold, a son is to be born to the house of David, Josiah is his name, and he will kill the priests of the high places upon you, offering sacrifice upon you; and he will burn the bones of men upon you.' " [3]In that day, he gave a sign, saying, "This is the sign the Lord has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the fat on it shall be poured out." [4]So when King Jeroboam heard the words of the man of God who cried out against the altar in Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Seize him!" But behold, the hand he stretched out toward him withered, and he himself could not stretch it back. [5]The altar was broken apart, and the fat on the altar poured out from the altar—this according to the sign the man of God had given by the word of the Lord. [6]Then King Jeroboam said to the man of God, “Entreat the favor of the Lord your God, that my hand may be restored to me.” So the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored new, as it was before.[†] [7]Then the king said to the man of God, “Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.”[†] [8]But the man of God said to the king, “Even if you give me half your house, I would not go in with you. Nor will I eat bread nor drink water in this place. [9]For the Lord commanded me, saying, ‘You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.’ ” [10]So he went another way, and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

The Old Prophet in Bethel

[11]Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works the man of God did that day in Bethel. They also told their father the words he spoke to the king, and the father's countenance changed. [12]Their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” His sons pointed out the way the man of God who came from Judah had gone. [13]Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him, and he mounted, [14]to seek after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree. Then he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” And he said, “I am.” [15]Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.” [16]And he said, “I cannot return with you, nor eat bread or drink water in this place. [17]For the Lord commanded me, saying, ‘You shall not eat bread or drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.’ ”

[18]The old prophet said to him, “I am a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’ ” But he was lying to him. [19]The man of God went back with him, and ate bread and drank water in his house. [20]As they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet who brought him to his house; [21]and he said to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Because you disobeyed the word of the Lord and did not keep the commandment the Lord your God commanded you, [22]but indeed, did come back, and ate bread and drank water in the place where the Lord said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water”; therefore, your dead body shall never enter the tomb of your fathers.’ ”

[23]So after he ate bread and drank water, he saddled the donkey for him, and he departed. [24]After he left, a lion met him and killed him on the road, and his dead body remained by the side of the road. The donkey and the lion stood by the dead body. [25]When men passed by and saw the corpse on the road, with the lion standing by the corpse, they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

[26]Now when the old prophet who had brought him to his house heard it, he said, “It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord.” [27]Then he said to his sons, “Saddle a donkey for me.” So they saddled one. [28]Then he went and found his dead body thrown on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing next to it. The body was not eaten by the lion, nor did the lion maul the donkey. [29]The prophet took up the dead body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it to the city to

bury him in his own tomb. [30]They mourned over him, saying, “Alas, my brother!” [31]So after he mourned for him, he spoke to his sons, saying, “When I am dead, then bury me in this tomb where the man of God is buried. Lay me beside his bones, that my bones shall be preserved with his bones. [32]For the word will surely come to pass which he spoke by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places in Samaria.”

[33]But even after this event, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but he again made priests from every class of people for the high places. Whoever desired to be a priest, he consecrated him, and he became a priest of the high places. [34]This became the sin of the house of Jeroboam, even to its total disappearance from the face of the earth.

Rehoboam Is King of Judah

14 Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned over Judah, and he was forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the Lord chose out of all the tribes of Israel to place His name. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonite woman.[†] [2]Now Rehoboam did evil in the sight of the Lord, and provoked Him in all the things which their fathers did in the sins they committed.[†] [3]For they built high places for themselves: sacred pillars, and groves on every high hill and under every shady tree. [4]So there was a conspiracy in the land, and they did all the detestable things of the nations the Lord removed from before the children of Israel.

[5]In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. [6]He took all the treasures of the Lord's house, the treasures of the king's house, and the gold spears David received from the hand of the servants of Hadadezer, king of Syria, who brought them to Jerusalem. He took away all the gold weapons.

[7]Then King Rehoboam made bronze weapons in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. [8]For whenever the king entered the house of the Lord, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom.

[9]Now the rest of the words of Rehoboam, and everything he did, is it not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [10]There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.[†] [11]So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Abijam his son reigned in his place.

Abijam Is King of Judah

15 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam the son of Rehoboam became king over Judah. [2]He reigned for six years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maachah the daughter of Abishalom. [3]Now he walked in all the sins his father did before him, and his heart was not perfect toward the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.[†] [4]Nevertheless for David's sake, the Lord gave him a remnant, so as to establish his sons after him and to establish Jerusalem. [5]For David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and did not turn aside from anything He commanded him all the days of his life. [6]Now the rest of the words of Abijam and all he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. [7]Then Abijam rested with his fathers in the twenty-fourth year of Jeroboam, and he was buried in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place.

Asa Is King of Judah

[8]In the twenty-fourth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. [9]He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Ana, the daughter of Abishalom. [10]Asa did what was right before the Lord, as did his father David. [11]He removed the cultic rituals from the land, and eliminated all the practices his fathers had done. [12]He also removed Ana, his mother, from being a leader, because she conducted assemblies in her grove. Asa cut down her sacred grove and burned it by the Brook Kidron. [13]But he did not remove the high places. Nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days. [14]He brought into the house of the Lord the pillars his father had dedicated, and his own pillars of silver and gold and his vessels.

[15]Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. [16]Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, so Asa king of Judah could not go out or come in. [17]Then Asa took all the silver and gold found in the treasuries of the king's house and delivered them into the hands of his servants. Asa then sent them to the son of Hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, [18]“Let there be a covenant between you and me, as

there was between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, that he might withdraw from me.”

[19]So the son of Hadad heeded King Asa. He sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. [20]Now when Baasha heard it, he stopped building Ramah and returned to Tirzah. [21]Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah to Ainakim. They took away the stones and timber of Ramah which Baasha used for building; and with them King Asa built upon every hill of Benjamin, and also a watchtower.

[22]The rest of the words of Asa, all his might, and everything he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age, his feet were diseased. [23]Asa then rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

Nadab Is King of Israel

[24]Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel for two years. [25]He did evil before the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and in the sins by which he caused Israel to sin. [26]Then Baasha the son of Ahijah conspired against the house of Belaan, and killed him at Gibbethon, in the land of the foreigners, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. [27]Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa the son of Abijam king of

Judah, and reigned in his place. [28]It came to pass that when he reigned, he struck every house of Jeroboam and left no one of Jeroboam's house breathing, until he utterly destroyed him, according to the word of the Lord spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite,[†] [29]for the sins of Jeroboam that Israel sinned, and in the anger of him who provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel. [30]Now the rest of the words of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Baasha Is King of Israel

[31]In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over Israel in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years. [32]Now he did evil before the Lord and walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins he caused Israel to commit.

16 Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, [2]“Because I raised you from the earth and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you walked in the way of Jeroboam, and made My people Israel sin and provoke Me to anger with their follies— [3]surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. [4]The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the sky shall eat whoever dies in the fields.”

[5]Now the rest of the words of Baasha, what he did and his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [6]So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son

reigned in his place in the twentieth year of King Asa. [7]So the Lord spoke against Baasha and his house by the hand of Jehu, because of all the evil he did before the Lord by provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and also because he struck them down.[†]

Elah Is King of Israel

[8]Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel and reigned for two years in Tirzah. [9]Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him, and he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. [10]Then Zimri went in, struck and killed him. He then reigned in his place. [11]When he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, he killed all the household of Baasha, [12]according to the word the Lord spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, [13]for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son which they caused Israel to commit, and provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger with their follies. [14]Now the rest of the words of Elah and everything he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Zimri's Brief Reign

[15]Zimri reigned in Tirzah for seven days, and Israel was encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. [16]Now the people encamped heard it said, “Zimri conspired and killed the king.” So that day in the camp all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel. [17]Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah. [18]When Zimri saw the city was taken, he went into

the citadel of the king's house, and burned the king's house down upon himself, and died. [19]This he did because of the sins he committed in doing evil before the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins he caused Israel to commit. [20]Now the rest of the words of Zimri and the treason he committed, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Omri Is King of Israel

[21]Then the people of Israel were divided. Half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath to make him king, and half followed Omri. [22]But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died that day, as well as Joram his son, and Omri reigned after Tibni. [23]In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and reigned twelve years. He reigned for six years in Tirzah. [24]Omri bought the hill of Samaria for two talents of silver from its owner, Shemer. Then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city he built Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill.[†] [25]Omri did evil before the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him. [26]For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins he committed and caused Israel to commit. With their follies, he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger. [27]Now the rest of the words of Omri and everything he did, and the might he showed, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [28]So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place.

Jehoshaphat Reigns in Jerusalem

[29]And in the eleventh year of Omri, Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign. He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem for twenty-five years. The name of his mother was Azubah, daughter of Shilhi. [30]Now he walked in the way of Asa his father, and he did not turn aside from doing what was upright before the Lord. Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away; they sacrificed in the high places and burned incense. [31]What Jehoshaphat agreed to do, and all the mighty deeds he did, and his deeds in war, behold, have not these things been written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [32]And the rest of the cultic groups which remained from the days of Asa his father he removed from the land.

[33]Now there was no king or king's deputy in Syria, [34]and King Jehoshaphat made a ship in Tarshish to go to Ophir for the gold; but they did not go, because the ship was broken to pieces in Ezion-Geber. [35]Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will send your servants and my servants in the ship”; but Jehoshaphat was not willing. [36]After this, Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and he was buried with his fathers in the City of David, and Joram his son reigned in his place.

Ahab Is King of Israel

[37]In the second year of Jehoshaphat, Ahab the son of Omri became king of Israel. He ruled over Israel in Samaria for twenty-two years. [38]Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil before the Lord, more than all who were before him. [39]It was not enough for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the

son of Nebat, but he also took as his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. [40]Then he set up an altar for Baal in the house of his idols which he built in Samaria, [41]and also made a sacred grove. Ahab did yet more provocations, so as to provoke the Lord and to destroy his own life; for he did more evil things than all the kings of Israel before him. [42]In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by the hand of Joshua the son of Nun.[†]

Elijah Warns of Drought

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite from Tishbe in Gilead said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Hosts lives, the God of all Israel before whom I stand, there shall not be any dew nor rain during these years except at my word.”[†] [2]Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying,[†] [3]“Depart and go eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. [4]You shall drink water from the brook, and I shall command the ravens to feed you there.” [5]So Elijah went and obeyed the word of the Lord, and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. [6]The ravens brought him bread in the morning and meat in the evening, and he drank water from the brook. [7]But after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

Elijah Helps a Widow

[8]Again the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying,[ω] [9]“Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow

there to provide for you.” [10]So he arose and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the city, there was a widow gathering firewood. Elijah called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup so I can drink.”[†] [11]She went to get it, and Elijah called after her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” [12]But the woman said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have any bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar. You see I am gathering a couple of sticks, so I can go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.”[†] [13]But Elijah said to her, “Take courage, and do as you say, but make me a small cake from it first and bring it to me. Afterward make some for yourself and your son. [14]For thus says the Lord, ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, and the jar of oil shall not run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’ ”[†] [15]So the woman went and did it. Thus she and he and her children ate for many days. [16]The bin of flour was not used up, and the jar of oil did not run dry, according to the word the Lord spoke by Elijah.

[17]Now after this, the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. His sickness was so serious there was no breath left in him. [18]So she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God? You came to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to kill my son.” [19]But Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. [20]Then Elijah cried out to the Lord and said, “Woe is me, O Lord! The witness of the widow with whom I lodge, you have embittered her by killing her son.”[†] [21]Then he stretched himself out on the child three times, and called on the Lord and said, “O Lord my God, let the soul of this child come back

to him.”† [22]So it happened, and the child cried out. [23]He took the child and brought him down from the upper room of the house, and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, “Behold, your son lives.” [24]Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and the word of the Lord in your mouth is the truth.”

Elijah's Word to Ahab

18 It came to pass many days later, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying, “Go and appear to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.”† [2]So Elijah went and appeared to Ahab, and there was a severe famine in Samaria.† [3]Then Ahab called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly.† [4]For when Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water. [5]So Ahab said to Obadiah, “Let us go into the land, to the springs of water and brooks. Perhaps we will find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so none of the livestock dies.” [6]So to explore it, they divided the path between them. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

[7]Now Obadiah was alone on his way, and Elijah came alone to meet him. Obadiah quickly fell on his face in Elijah's presence and said, “My lord Elijah, is that you?”† [8]Elijah replied, “It is I; go, tell your master, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’ ” [9]So Obadiah said, “What sin did I commit for you to give me, your servant, into the hand of Ahab to put me to death? [10]As the Lord your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to hunt you. If they said, ‘He is not here,’ then he set fire to the

kingdom and its territories, because he did not find you. [11]So now you say to me, ‘Go, tell your master, “Behold, Elijah is here’ ”! [12]But if I so do, it shall come to pass, when I leave you, the Spirit of the Lord shall carry you to a land I do not know. Moreover, when I go and report this to Ahab, he will kill me. Yet your servant fears the Lord from his youth.[†] [13]Was it not reported to you, my lord, as to what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? [14]But now you say to me, ‘Go, tell your master, “Behold, Elijah is here,’ ” but he will kill me.”

[15]Then Elijah said, “As the Lord of hosts lives before whom I stand, today I will appear to him.”[†] [16]So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab ran out and went to meet Elijah. [17]When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Are you the one who is troubling Israel?”[†] [18]Elijah answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but rather you and the house of your father, in that you forsook the Lord your God and followed after the Baals. [19]Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of shame, and the four hundred prophets of the sacred groves who eat at Jezebel's table.”[†]

The Victory over Baal

[20]So Ahab went back to Israel and gathered all the prophets on Mount Carmel. [21]Then Elijah came near to all of them and said, “How long will you be undecided between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him, but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer.[†] [22]Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone remain as a prophet of the Lord, but there are

four hundred and fifty men who are prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of the sacred groves. [23]Let them give us two oxen. Then let them choose one bull for themselves, to be cut into pieces and laid on the wood; but they shall not light a fire under it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood; and I will not light a fire under it. [24]Then you will call loudly on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord, my God. So it shall come to pass that the God who answers by fire, He is God.” So all the people answered and said, “The word you have spoken is good.”

[25]Then Elijah said to the prophets of shame, “Choose one calf for yourselves and prepare it, for there are many of you. Then call on the name of your god, but do not put fire to the wood under it.” [26]So they took a calf and prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “Hear us, O Baal, hear us.” But there was no voice, for no one answered, and they ran about the altar they had made.

[27]Then it came to pass at noon that Elijah the Tishbite mocked them and said, “Cry out with a loud voice, for he is a god; for either he is away meditating, or he is too busy, or preoccupied with other business. Perhaps he is sleeping and has need to be awakened from his nap.” [28]So they cried aloud and cut themselves with knives and lances, as is their custom, until blood gushes forth. [29]They prophesied until early evening, until the appointed time to offer the evening sacrifice. But even still, there was no voice. Finally, Elijah the Tishbite spoke to the prophets of the idols, saying, “Now remove yourselves from this place, for I will offer my whole burnt offering.” And they turned away and departed.

[30]Then Elijah said to the people, “Come near me.” So all the people came near to him.[†ω] [31]Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, for the Lord said, “Israel shall be your name.” [32]Then he built an altar with the stones in the name of the Lord, and he repaired the altar of sacrifice that was scattered about, and around the altar he made a furrow holding two measures of seed. [33]He piled the firewood on the altar he had made, divided the whole burnt offering, laid it on the firewood, and laid it in order on the altar. [34]Then he said, “Bring me four pots of water, and pour it on the whole burnt offering and pour it on the unlit firewood.” They did so. Again Elijah said, “Do it a second time.” So they did it again. Again he said, “Do it a third time.” So they did it a third time. [35]And the water ran all about the altar, and even the furrow became filled with water.

[36]After this, Elijah cried out to heaven and said, “O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, answer me, O Lord, answer me this day with fire, and let this people know You are the God of Israel, and I am Your servant; and for Your sake I do all these works. [37]Hear me, O Lord, hear me with fire, and let these people know You are the Lord God, so as turn the heart of this people back.”

[38]Then fire fell from the Lord out of the heaven and consumed the whole burnt offering, the firewood, and the water in the furrow. The fire also licked up the stones and the soil. [39]So all the people fell on their faces, and they said, “Truly, the Lord is God; He is God.” [40]Elijah then said to the people, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Let not one of them escape.” So they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon, where he slaughtered them.

End of the Drought

[41]After this, Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up and eat and drink, for there is a sound of rain.” [42]So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, where he bowed down on the ground and put his face between his knees. [43]He said to his servant, “Go up and look toward the sea.” So the servant went up, and looked and said, “There is nothing.” Then Elijah said, “Go again seven times, and return to me seven times.” [44]So it came to pass that on the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud, like the footprint of a man, bringing up water.” So Elijah said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Make ready your chariot and get down from here before the rain overcomes you.’ ” [45]Thus it came to pass that the sky darkened with black clouds and wind, and there was a heavy downpour of rain. But Ahab mourned and went to Jezreel. [46]Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab as far as Jezreel.

Elijah Flees from Jezebel

19 Now Ahab told Jezebel his wife everything Elijah did, and how he put to death the prophets with the sword. [2]Then Jezebel sent to Elijah, saying, “If you are Elijah and I this Jezebel, may God do so to me and more also if at this hour tomorrow, I do not make your life like the life of one of them.” [3]Elijah was fearful, and he arose and ran for his life. He came to Beersheba of Judah, where he left his servant.[ω] [4]But Elijah himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat under a juniper tree. He prayed concerning his life, that he might die, and said, “I pray it be enough, O Lord. Now take my life, for I am no better than my fathers.”[†] [5]Then he lay down and slept under a tree.

Unexpectedly, someone touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” [6]Then Elijah looked, and there by his head was a cake made of wheat and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. [7]Again the angel of the Lord came back a second time, touched him, and said, “Arise and eat, because the journey is a great many days for you.” [8]So he arose, ate and drank; and he went with the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, as far as Mount Horeb. [9]There he went into a cave and rested.

The Sound of a Gentle Breeze

Behold, the word of the Lord came to him and said to him, “Elijah, what are you doing here?” [10]And Elijah said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord Almighty since the children of Israel have forsaken You. They tore down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life.”[†] [11]Then He replied, “Go out tomorrow and stand on the mountain before the Lord; and behold, the Lord will pass by, and before the Lord, a great and powerful wind will be rending the mountains and shattering the rocks; but the Lord will not be in the wind. After the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord will not be in the earthquake.[†] [12]After the earthquake, there will be a fire, but the Lord will not be in the fire. After the fire, there will be a sound of a gentle breeze, and the Lord will be there.”

[13]So when Elijah heard this, he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a Voice came to him and

said, “Elijah, what are you doing here?”[†] [14]He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord Almighty, since the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life.” [15]Then the Lord said to him, “Go and return on your way to the desert of Damascus. When you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. [16]You shall also anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel, and shall anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah as prophet in your place. [17]Whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. [18]And you will leave seven thousand in Israel; all those whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and whose mouth has not kissed him.”[†]

Elisha Follows after Elijah

[19]Elijah departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. [20]So Elisha left the oxen, and ran after Elijah and said, “I will kiss my father, then I will follow after you.” Elijah said to him, “Return, for I have done this for you.” [21]Elisha returned from following him, and took a pair of oxen, and slaughtered them. He boiled their flesh with the proper equipment, and gave it to the people to eat. He then arose and followed Elijah, and ministered to him.

Naboth Killed for His Vineyard

20 Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, next to the threshing floor of Ahab king of Samaria. [2]So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, “Give me your vineyard, and it will be my garden for herbs; for it is near my house. In return, I will give you a better vineyard. Or if you prefer, I will give you money for it, and it will be my herb garden.” [3]But Naboth said to Ahab, “The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you.”[†]

[4]So Ahab's spirit was disturbed; and he lay down on his bed and covered his face. He would not eat any food.[†] [5]But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, “Why is your spirit disturbed, and you are not eating any food?” [6]He said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money. Otherwise, if you like, I will give you another vineyard for it.’ And he answered, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ ” [7]Then Jezebel his wife said to him, “Do you not now exercise authority over Israel? Arise, eat some food, and be yourself. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” [8]So she wrote a letter in Ahab's name, sealed it with his seal, and sent the letter to the elders and the nobles dwelling in the city with Naboth. [9]She wrote in the letters, saying, “Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people; [10]and seat two men before him, scoundrels, to bear witness against him, saying, ‘He cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him, that he dies.”

[11]Thus the men of his city, the elders and nobles, inhabitants of his city, did as Jezebel requested them, as it was written in the letters she sent to them. [12]They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth with high honor among the people. [13]Two men, scoundrels, also came in and sat before him. The scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, and in the presence of the people, saying, “Naboth cursed God and the king.” So they took him

outside the city and stoned him with stones, that he might die. [14]Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, “Naboth has been stoned and is dead.” [15]When Jezebel heard it, she said to Ahab, “Arise and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he did not give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.” [16]When Ahab heard that Naboth the Jezreelite was dead, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth. After that, Ahab arose and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

The Evil Deeds of Ahab

[17]Then the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, [18]“Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who lives in Samaria. He is there in the vineyard of Naboth, for he went there to take possession of it. [19]You shall speak this to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, “As you were involved in murder, and took possession,” therefore, Thus says the Lord: “In every place where the swine and dogs licked the blood of Naboth, in the same place shall the dogs lick your blood; and in your blood the prostitutes shall bathe themselves.” ’ ” [20]So Ahab said to Elijah, “My enemy, you have surely found me.” Elijah replied, “I have found you because you sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.[†] [21]Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I shall bring evils upon you, and before you, fires kindle. I will utterly destroy the males of Ahab, and him who is shut up and left in Israel. [22]I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the way you provoked Me to anger and made Israel sin.’ [23]The Lord spoke of Jezebel, saying, ‘The dogs shall devour her by the outer wall of Jezreel.’ [24]The dogs shall

devour the one of Ahab who dies in the city, and the one of Ahab who dies in the field, the birds of the sky shall devour.”

[25]Nevertheless, Ahab sold himself to vainly do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, because his wife Jezebel led him astray.[†] [26]He behaved abominably in following after idols, just as all the Amorites had done, whom the Lord utterly cast out before the sons of Israel. [27]But as a result of the word, Ahab became deeply troubled before the Lord. He fasted, he ripped his shirt, and put sackcloth on his body. He also put on sackcloth the day he killed Naboth the Jezreelite. [28]Concerning Ahab, the word of the Lord came by the hand of His servant Elijah the Tishbite. The Lord said, [29]“Did you see how Ahab humbled himself before Me? I will not bring the evil in his days. But in the days of his son, I will bring evil upon his house.”

Ahab's Defeat of Syria

21 Now the son of Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces, and went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it. He had thirty-two kings with him, with horses and chariots.[†] [2]Then he sent notice to Ahab king of Israel in the city [3]and said to him, “Thus says the son of Hadad, ‘Your silver and your gold are mine; your wives and your children are mine.’ ”

[4]The king of Israel answered and said, “O lord and king, I am yours, and everything I have.” [5]Then the messengers came back and said, “Thus says the son of Hadad, ‘Indeed I sent notice to you, saying, “You shall deliver to me your silver and gold, your wives and children,” [6]for I will send my servants to you at this time tomorrow, and they shall search your house and

the houses of your servants. Whatever is pleasant in their eyes, they will put it in their hands and take it.' " [7]The king of Israel then called all the elders and said, "Know and consider, this man seeks to ruin us. He sent notice to me concerning my wives, my sons and daughters, although I did not deny him my silver and my gold." [8]But all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent." [9]Thus he said to the messengers of the son of Hadad, "Tell your lord, 'Everything you sent as a demand to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.' "

The messengers departed and carried back to him a response. [10]Then the son of Hadad sent word back and said to him, "May God do so to me and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall be sufficient for all the cunning people of my infantry." [11]So the king of Israel answered and said, "Enough! Let the hunchback not boast like a man who stands erect." [12]And it came to pass, when the son of Hadad heard this answer, he and all the kings were drinking in their tents. He said to his servants, "Build ramparts, and place ramparts against the city."

[13]Then behold, a prophet approached the king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the Lord, 'Have you seen this great multitude? Behold today, I will deliver it into your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.' " [14]So Ahab said, "In what way?" The prophet said, "Thus says the Lord, 'By the young men of the governors of the regions.' " Then Ahab said, "Who will set the battle in order?" The prophet answered, "You." [15]So Ahab visited the young men of the governors of the regions, and they were two hundred thirty. After them he reviewed all the people, every son of the army, sixty thousand.

[16]Then he marched out at noon, while the son of Hadad was drinking himself senseless in Sochoh, he and his allies of thirty-two kings. [17]The young men of the governors of the regions went out first. Those of Syria sent a report to the king of Syria, saying, “Men have come out from Samaria.” [18]The son of Hadad said to them, “If they have come for peace, take them alive. If they have come out for war, take them alive”; [19]because he did not believe the young men of the governors of the regions had marched out of the city. [20]But the army that went out behind them, each of them struck down the man beside him, and each of them struck down two more. So the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them vigorously. The son of Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse of a cavalryman. [21]Then the king of Israel went out and took the horses and chariots. He killed those of Syria with a great slaughter. [22]Then the prophet came to the king of Israel and said, “Strengthen and reinforce yourself; learn and observe what you will do, because the son of Hadad the king of Syria will be returning within the year to march against you.”

The Syrian Attack Turned Back

[23]The servants of the king of Syria said to him, “The God of Israel is a god of the mountains, and not a god of the valleys. Therefore he was stronger than we. But if we battle them in the plain, surely they will not be stronger than we.[†] [24]But do this: Send away the kings, each one to his place, and replace them with satraps of Persia. [25]Then you shall muster an army equal to the army you lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will battle against them in the plain, and surely we will be stronger than they.” And the son of Hadad listened to their voice and did so. [26]When

it was one year later, the son of Hadad reviewed the Syrians and went up to Aphek to war against Israel. [27]They were well organized and went to meet them. The sons of Israel encamped before them like two flocks of goats, but the Syrians filled the land with their army.

[28]Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel and said, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Because Syria said, “The Lord God of Israel is a god of the mountains, but He is not a god of the valleys,” therefore, I will deliver this entire great multitude into your hand, and you shall know I am the Lord.’ ” [29]So they encamped opposite them for seven days. And on the seventh day the battle was joined, and in one day the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians. [30]The rest fled to Aphek, into the city, but there a wall fell upon twenty-seven thousand of the remaining men. As for the son of Hadad, he fled into a house and hid in the private chamber of the bedroom.

[31]Then he said to his servants, “I know the kings of Israel to be merciful kings. Let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he may spare our lives.” [32]So they put sackcloth around their waists and put ropes around their heads and said to Ahab the king of Israel, “Your servant the son of Hadad says, ‘Allow my life to be spared.’ ” The king said, “Does he still live? He is my brother.” [33]The men took this as an omen, and listened carefully to the words from the mouth of the servant. Then the men said, “Your brother is the son of Hadad.” The king said, “Go in and bring him here.” So the son of Hadad came out with them, and they brought him to the chariot. [34]He said to him, “I will restore the cities my father took from your father. You may set up

marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria. I will make a treaty with you.” So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

Ahab Is Condemned

[35]Now a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his neighbor by the word of the Lord, “Strike me down.” But the man refused to strike him. [36]Then he said to him, “Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord, surely, as soon as you depart from me, a lion shall kill you.” Thus as soon as he left him, a lion found and killed him. [37]Then he found another man and said, “Strike me down.” So the man struck him and inflicted a wound. [38]The prophet departed, and waited for the king of Israel by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. [39]Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, “Your servant went out against the army in the war, and behold, a man brought a man to me and said to me, ‘Guard this man. But if by some means he escapes, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.’ [40]So it came to pass that your servant was looking here and there, but he was not to be found. But the king of Israel said to him, ‘Behold, you destroyed the ambush meant for me.’ ”

[41]Then the prophet hurried to take the bandage off his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. [42]He said to him, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Because you freed a man meant for destruction at your hand; therefore, your life shall be in place of his life, and your people in place of his people.’ ” [43]So the king of Israel left, and returned to Samaria confused and weary.

Micaiah the Prophet Warns Ahab

22 Three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. [2]Then it came to pass that in the third year, Jehoshaphat the king of Judah traveled down to the king of Israel. [3]And the king of Israel said to his servants, “Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours? But we are silent about taking it from the hand of the king of Syria.” [4]So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Will you go with us to fight at Ramoth Gilead?” Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.” [5]Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “Ask the Lord today.”

[6]Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and the king said to them, “Shall I go and fight against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?” So they said, “Go up, for the Lord will surely deliver it into the hands of the king.” [7]But Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “Is there yet not here another prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord through him?” [8]So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord. But for myself, I hate him because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but only evil.” Jehoshaphat the king of Judah said, “Let not the king say such things.” [9]Then the king of Israel called a eunuch and said, “Quickly, bring Micaiah the son of Imlah here.”

[10]The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat, each man on his throne, with armed men within the gates of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them.[†] [11]Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made horns of iron for himself and said, “Thus says the Lord, ‘With these you shall gore Syria until they are brought to an end.’ ” [12]All the prophets

prophesied in the same manner, saying, “Go up to Ramoth Gilead and you will prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into your hands, even the king of Syria.”

[13]Then the messenger who went to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, “Behold, all the prophets, speaking in one accord, are saying good things to the king. Come now, and let your word be as theirs, and speak good things.” [14]But Micaiah said, “As the Lord lives, I will say whatever the Lord says to me.” [15]Then he came to the king, and the king said to him, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?” He answered him, “Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king.” [16]So the king said to him, “How many times shall I make you swear you are telling me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?” [17]Micaiah said, “It was not so. I saw all Israel being scattered on the mountains, like a shepherd without a flock. The Lord is not with them. Let each return to his house in peace.” [18]Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, “Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but on the contrary, evil?”

[19]Micaiah said, “No, this is not so, for I hear the word of the Lord. This is not so, for I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by on His right hand and on His left. [20]Then the Lord said, ‘Who will deceive Ahab the king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ One spoke one way and another spoke in another way. [21]Then a spirit came forth and stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will deceive him.’ The Lord said to him, ‘In what way?’ [22]So he said, ‘I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ The Lord said, ‘You shall

deceive him, and you shall prevail. Go and do so.' [23]Now behold, the Lord put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours. So the Lord has spoken evil things against you."

[24]Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, "Which spirit of the Lord is speaking in you?" [25]And Micaiah said, "Indeed, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide yourself." [26]So the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, son of the king; [27]and place him in prison. Feed him with bread of suffering and water of suffering until I return in peace." [28]But Micaiah said, "If you return in peace, the Lord did not speak through me."

Ahab Killed in Battle

[29]So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. [30]The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on my robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

[31]Now the king of Syria commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, "Fight with no one small or great except the king of Israel." [32]So when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, they said, "Surely it is the king of Israel." So they encircled him to fight him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. [33]When the captains of the chariots saw it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. [34]Now a certain man drew his bow at random, and struck the king of Israel

between the lungs and the breastplate. So the king said to the driver of his chariot, “Turn around, and take me out of the battle; for I am wounded.”

[35]The battle turned that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians, and he died at evening. The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. [36]Then, as the sun was going down, a shout went throughout the army, saying, “Every man to his city, and every man to his own land.”

[37]So the king died and was brought to Samaria, where they buried him. [38]They also bathed the chariot at a pool in Samaria, and the dogs and the swine licked up his blood while the prostitutes bathed, according to the words the Lord spoke. [39]Now the rest of the acts of Ahab and everything he did, the ivory house he built, and all the cities he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [40]So Ahab rested with his fathers. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Jehoshaphat Is King of Judah

[41]Jehoshaphat the son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. [42]Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. [43]Now he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, but did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. [44]Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. [45]Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel. [46]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat and the might that he showed, are they not

written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [47]So Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

Azariah Is King of Israel

[48]Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. [49]He did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father Ahab, and in the way of his mother Jezebel, and in the sins of the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. [50]For he served the Baals and worshiped them, and provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger, according to all the things done before him.

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The Fourth Book of the Kingdoms

(Second Kings)

Author—By tradition, Jeremiah, though most scholars agree his work was reframed and added to by numerous editors.

Date—Covers the period from about 651–609 BC

Major Theme—*Works of the Kings of Judah (Southern Kingdom).*

Background—The writers were concerned mainly with what happened in the southern kingdom of Judah (see background notes on 3 Kingdoms).

Outline

I. The Northern Kingdom of Israel until Its Fall (1:1–17:41)
    A. The prophetic labors of Elijah and Elisha (1:3–9:10)
    B. From Jehu to the fall of Israel (9:11–17:41)
II. Judah until the Day of Its Fall (18:1–25:30)
    A. The kingdom of Judah under Hezekiah (18:1–20:21)
    B. Manasseh and Amon rule Judah (21:1–26)
    C. Reforms in Judah (22:1–23:30)
    D. The last days of Judah (23:31–25:30)

Ahaziah Judged by God

1 After the death of Ahab, Moab reneged on its covenant with Israel.
[2]Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and

was injured. He sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury.” And they went to inquire of him. [3]But the Angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Arise, go and meet the messengers of Ahaziah, the king of Samaria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub god of Ekron?[†] [4]This is not true,’ says the Lord, ‘and you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’ ”

So Elijah went and told them. [5]When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, “Why did you return?” [6]They said to him, “A man came up to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub god of Ekron? This is not true. You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’ ” ’ ” [7]Then the king said to them, “What were the distinguishing marks of the man who came up to meet you and told you these words?” [8]They answered him, “A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist.”

And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”[†] [9]Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there was Elijah, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him, “Man of God, the king summoned you. Come down!”[†] [10]Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, then fire will come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And fire came down from heaven and consumed the captain of fifty and his fifty.[†] [11]Then the king again sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. He answered and said to him, “Man of God, the king said, ‘Come down quickly!’ ” [12]So Elijah answered and spoke to him, “If I am a man of God, fire will come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” The fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. [13]Then the king sent yet a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. The third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and pleaded with him, and said to him, “Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. [14]Look, fire came down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight.”

[15]The Angel of the Lord said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So he arose and went down with him to the king. [16]Then Elijah spoke to him and said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Why did you send captains with fifty messengers to inquire? It shall not be so. You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’ ” [17]So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah spoke. [18]Now the rest of the acts Ahaziah did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Jehoram King of Israel

[19]Jehoram, the son of Ahab, reigned over Israel in Samaria twelve years, beginning in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. [20]He did evil before the Lord, but not as his brothers nor as his mother. [21]He removed the pillars of Baal which his father made and broke them into

pieces; nevertheless, he was joined to the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which caused Israel to sin. He did not remove himself from them. [22]The Lord in anger was furious against the house of Ahab.

Elijah Caught Up to Heaven

2 As the time came to be for the Lord to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha went from Gilgal.[†] [2]Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here, please, for the Lord sent me to Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So they went to Bethel. [3]Now the sons of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that this day the Lord will take away your master from over your head?” And he said, “I know. Please be silent!”

[4]Then Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” And they went to Jericho. [5]Now the sons of the prophets in Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that this day the Lord will take away your master from over your head?” So he answered, “I know, please be silent!” [6]Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, please, for the Lord sent me on to the Jordan.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So both of them went on.[†ω] [7]Fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. [8]Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water. The water divided this way and that, and the two of them crossed on dry ground.[††]

[9]So it was that during the time they crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I may do for you, before I am taken away from you.” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” [10]So Elijah said, “You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken up from you, it shall be so for you; and if not, it shall not be so.” [11]Thus it came to be, as they walked and continued to talk, behold a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and the fire separated them one from the other; and Elijah was taken up into heaven by a whirlwind.[†]

[12]Then Elisha saw it and cried aloud, “Father, O father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” He saw Elijah no more, and he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces.[†] [13]Then he raised Elijah's mantle, which fell from Elijah and upon Elisha, and Elisha returned and stood on the bank of the River Jordan.[†] [14]He took Elijah's mantle which had fallen upon him and struck the water, but it did not divide. Then he said, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah himself?” And he struck the water again, and it divided this way and that. So Elisha crossed over. [15]When the sons of the prophets in Jericho met him and saw him, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.[†] [16]They said to him, “Look! There are fifty men of power with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord took him up and cast him into the Jordan or onto one of the mountains or onto one of the hills.” Elisha said, “Send no one.” [17]But they urged him till he was ashamed, and he said, “Send them!” They sent fifty men and searched for three days, but did not find him. [18]They came back to where Elisha stayed in Jericho. And he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?”

Elisha Works Miracles

[19]Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Behold, as my lord can see, this city is a pleasant place to live, but the water is bad, and the ground is barren.”[†ω] [20]So Elisha said, “Bring me a new water pitcher and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him. [21]Then he went out to the spring of the waters and cast salt into it, and said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘I have healed these waters; from them there shall no longer be death or barrenness.’ ” [22]So the water was healed by the word Elisha spoke, and so it remains today.

[23]From there he went up to Bethel. Along the way some young boys came from the city who continued teasing him by saying, “Go up, baldy, go up!”[†] [24]So Elisha turned around and stared at them. He then cursed them in the name of the Lord, and two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. [25]From there he went to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Israel and Moab at War

3 Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned for twelve years. [2]He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not like his father and mother, for he removed the sacred pillars of Baal his father built. [3]But still he persisted in the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin; he did not depart from it.

[4]Now Mesha king of Moab was a herdsman, and in the beginning of the year he regularly paid tribute to the king of Israel, one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. [5]But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. [6]So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and inspected all Israel. [7]Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, “The king of Moab rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?” And he said, “I will go. I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.” [8]Then he said, “Which way shall we go up?” And he answered, “By way of the Desert of Edom.”

[9]So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and this roundabout march took them seven days to complete. There was no water for the army or for the animals that went with them. [10]And the king of Israel said, “Alas! That the Lord should call these three kings together only to deliver them into the hand of Moab.” [11]But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?” So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, “Elisha the son of Shaphat, who poured water on Elijah's hands, is here.” [12]And Jehoshaphat said, “He has the word of the Lord.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. [13]Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father.” But the king of Israel said to him, “No, has the Lord called these three kings together to deliver them into the hands of Moab?” [14]And Elisha said, “As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you nor see you. [15]But now bring me a harpist.”

When the harpist played, the hand of the Lord came upon him. [16]And he said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Fill this valley with ditches.’ [17]For Thus says the Lord: ‘You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your beasts, and your cattle may drink.’ [18]And this is easy in the eyes of the Lord. Then I will deliver Moab into your hand.[†] [19]Thus you shall attack every fortified city; you shall cut down every good tree; you shall stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones.” [20]Now when the grain offering was offered in the morning, behold water came from the direction of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

[21]All the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to wage war against them. All those being able to bear armor and older uttered loud cries and stood at the border. [22]The Moabites rose early in the morning, when the sun was shining on the water. They saw the water on the other side being as red as blood. [23]So they said, “This is blood. The kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another. Now Moab, to the spoils!”

[24]They entered the camp of Israel; and Israel rose and smote Moab, and they fled before them. They pursued them and killed the Moabites as they went. [25]They razed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; they stopped every spring; cut down all the good trees, leaving only the stones of the wall; and they pulled down the sling-throwers that surrounded them and broke them. [26]When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took seven hundred men with him who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom. But they

could not. [27]Then he took his firstborn son who would rule in his place, and up against the wall they offered him up as a burnt offering. Then a great remorse came upon Israel, and they departed from him and turned back toward their land.

Elisha and the Poor Widow's Oil

4 The wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know your servant feared the Lord, and the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his servants.”[†] [2]Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me what you have in the house.” She replied, “Your maidservant has nothing in the house but the oil I use to anoint myself.” [3]Then he said, “Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors, empty vessels; do not gather just a few. [4]And you shall go in and shut the door behind yourself and your sons. Then you shall pour out into these vessels, and take away what is being filled.”

[5]So she went from him and did so. She shut the door behind herself and her sons. Then they brought the vessels to her, and she poured [6]until the vessels were filled. And she said to her son, “Bring me an additional vessel.” And they said to her, “There is not another vessel.” So the oil ceased. [7]Then she came and told the man of God. And Elisha said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt. Thus you and your sons shall live by means of the rest of the oil.”[†]

Elisha Raises the Shunammite Woman's Son

[8]Now one day Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a persuasive woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food.[ω] [9]And the woman said to her husband, “Look now, I know this is a holy man of God who comes to us regularly. [10]Let us make a small room upstairs; and let us put a bed for him there, with a table, a stool, a chair, and a lamp stand. And it shall be when he comes to us, he will turn aside into this place.” [11]Now it happened one day that he came and he went there, and turned aside into the upper room and lay down there.[†] [12]Then he said to his servant, Gehazi, “Call this Shunammite woman.” He called her, and she stood before him. [13]And he said to Gehazi, “Say now to her, ‘Hear me. You have shown us all this care. What can I do for you? Do you have any request for the king or the commander of the army?’ ” But she answered, “I dwell among my own people.”

[14]So Elisha said, “What then is to be done for her?” And his servant, Gehazi, replied, “She certainly has no son, and her husband is old.” [15]Then Elisha called her, and she stood by the door. [16]And Elisha said, “About this time next year, you shall embrace a son.” So she said, “No, my lord, do not lie to your maidservant!” [17]Then as Elisha told her, the woman conceived, and she bore a son when the appointed time came. [18]And the child grew.

And it came to pass when he went out to his father to the reaping, [19]that he said to his father, “My head, my head!” His father said to a servant, “Carry him to his mother.” [20]So he carried him to his mother, and he lay upon her knees till noon and died. [21]She took him up and laid him on the bed of the man of God. She went out and closed the door as she left. [22]She called to her husband and said, “Please bring to me one of the young men and one of the donkeys. I will ride quickly to the man of God and come back.” [23]So he said, “Why go to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath.” And she replied, “It is well.”

[24]She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Lead onward and do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.” [25]She rode and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. And when the man of God saw her, he said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, it is that Shunammite woman! [26]Please run now to meet her and say to her, ‘Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?’ ” And she answered, “Peace.” [27]Now she came to the man of God on the hill and took hold of him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, “Leave her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the Lord hid it from me and did not tell me.” [28]So she said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not tell you not to deceive me?”

[29]Then Elisha said to Gehazi, “Prepare yourself, take my staff in your hand and be on your way. If you meet anyone, you will not greet him. And if anyone greets you, you will not answer him. You shall lay my staff on the face of the child.”[†] [30]Then the mother of the child said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you.” So Elisha arose and followed her. [31]Now Gehazi went on ahead of them and laid the staff on the child's face; but there was neither voice nor hearing. So he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, “The child is not awakened.”

[32]Elisha went into the house, and there was the child, lying dead on his bed.[†] [33]He went into the room and shut the door against the other two, and prayed to the Lord. [34]Then he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he bowed himself down upon him, and the flesh of the child warmed. [35]He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and he went up and bowed himself down upon the child seven times, and the child opened his eyes. [36]Then Elisha called Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite woman.” So he called her. And she came to where he was and he said, “Take your son.” [37]So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.[†]

The Other Miracles

[38]Then Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and Elisha said to his servant, “Put on the large pot and boil some pottage for the sons of the prophets.” [39]So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and threw them into the pot of soup, though they did not know what they were. [40]Then they served it to the men to eat. Now, as they were eating the vegetables, they cried out and said, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it. [41]So he said, “Take wheat flour and throw it in the pot.” Then Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, “Serve it to the people and let them eat.” Thus there was no longer anything harmful in the pot.

[42]Then a man came from Baal-Shalisha and brought to the man of God the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread and fruit cake. And he said, “Give it to the people and let them eat.”[†] [43]But his servant said, “Why shall I set this before one hundred men?” Elisha said, “Give it to the people and let them eat, for Thus says the Lord: ‘They shall eat and will leave some behind.’ ” [44]So they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.

Naaman Cured of Leprosy

5 Now Naaman, commander of the army of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the Lord gave victory to Syria. The man was mighty in strength and valor, but a leper.[†] [2]And the Syrians, lightly armed, had gone out on raids and brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. [3]Then she said to her mistress, “If only my master were with the prophet of God in Samaria! For he would expel his leprosy from him.” [4]And she went in and told her master, saying, “This is what the girl from the land of Israel said.” [5]Then the king of Syria said to Naaman, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand gold shekels, and ten changes of clothing. [6]Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, “Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I am sending Naaman my servant to you, so that you may heal him of his leprosy.”

[7]And it came to pass, when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, able to kill and make alive, to heal this man of

his leprosy that this man sends to me? You perceive and see that this man is using this as a pretext for a quarrel with me.” [8]When Elisha the man of God heard the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent notice to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let Naaman come to me, and he shall know there is a prophet in Israel.”

[9]Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot and stood at the door of Elisha's house. [10]And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and bathe in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.”[†] [11]But Naaman became furious and went away, saying, “Indeed, I told myself that Elisha would come out to greet me; that he would stand and call on the name of his God; and that he would put his hand upon the place and heal the leprosy. [12]Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Can I not bathe in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage.

[13]Then his servants approached and said to him, “If the prophet were to tell you to do something great, would you not complete it? But here the prophet said to you, ‘Bathe and be clean.’ ” [14]So Naaman went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to Elisha's instruction, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was cleansed.[†] [15]Then he, with all his aides, returned to Elisha and came and stood before him; and he said, “Indeed, now I have come to know that in all the earth there is no God except the God of Israel. Now accept the gift of your servant.”[†] [16]But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.” Again he urged him to take it, but he refused. [17]So Naaman said, “If not, then, please let your servant be given two mule-loads

of red earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord alone. [18]And let the Lord be merciful with your servant: when my master goes there, to the house of Rimmon, to worship, he will rely on my hand, and I will worship in the house of Rimmon. In the worship in the house of Rimmon, may the Lord be merciful to your servant in this matter.” [19]Then Elisha said to Naaman, “Go in peace.”

He departed from him but a short distance. [20]Then Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, said, “Behold, my master spared this Syrian Naaman, yet from his hand he received nothing of what he brought; but as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something of his.” [21]So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he turned from the chariot to meet him. [22]And Gehazi said, “Peace. My master sent me saying, ‘Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets came to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.’ ” [23]Then Naaman said, “Take two talents of silver.” So Gehazi took two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants. They left and carried them on ahead of him. [24]As they entered into the darkness, he took them from their hands and stored them in the house. He then dismissed the men. [25]Now he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, “From where have you come, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant did not go anywhere.”

[26]Then Elisha said to him, “Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? And now you received the silver and the garments, and it shall happen that you shall receive from him

gardens and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and menservants and handmaidens. [27]And the leprosy of Naaman shall also cling to you and your seed forever.” Thus he went out from his presence leprous, like snow.[†] [†]

The Floating Ax Head

6 Then the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See now, the strip of land where we dwell with you is too narrow for us.[†] [2]Please let us go to the River Jordan, and let every man take a log and build there a dwelling place.” So he answered, “Go.”

[3]And one of them humbly requested, “Come with your servants.” And he replied, “I will go.” [4]Then he went with them, and they came to the River Jordan and began to cut trees.[†] [5]But as one man was cutting a log, the iron ax head fell into the water. He cried out and said, “Alas, master, it was borrowed.” [6]So the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” And he showed him the place. So he broke off a stick of wood and threw it in the water at the same place; and the iron ax head rose to the surface.[†] [7]Then Elisha said, “Raise it up to yourself.” So he reached down into the water and lifted it out.

Defeat of Syria

[8]Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, “I shall encamp in this specific place.”[†] [9]Then Elisha sent word to the king of Israel, saying, “Be careful not to pass this place, for the Syrians are hidden there.” [10]In response, the king of Israel

sent someone to this place which Elisha warned about, and thereby kept careful watch over the Syrians on more than two occasions. [11]As a result, the king of Syria became troubled as to what was happening. He called his officers and said to them, “Will you not tell me who gives advance warning of our movements to the king of Israel?” [12]And one of his officers said, “No one, O lord my king. It is Elisha the prophet in Israel that tells the words you speak in your bedroom to the king of Israel.” [13]So he said, “Go, see where this man is, and I will send and kidnap him.”

They sent word to him, saying, “Behold, he is in Dothan.” [14]So he sent horses and chariots and a great army that arrived at night to surround the city. [15]When Elisha's servant arose early and went out, the army was there, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “O master, what shall we do?” [16]So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are greater in number than those who are with them.” [17]Then Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, open the eyes of the servant and let him see.” And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he was now able to see, and he beheld the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.[†]

[18]Then the Syrians marched toward him, and Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, “Strike these people with blindness.” And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. [19]So Elisha said to them, “This is not the city nor is this the way to it. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man you seek.” But he led them away to Samaria. [20]So it came to be when they arrived in Samaria, Elisha said, “Lord, open their eyes and let

them see.” Thus the Lord completely restored their ability to see. And behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

[21]Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, “O father, shall I not strike to kill them?” [22]But he answered, “You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you took captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and return to their lord.” [23]Then he prepared a great feast for them, and after they ate and drank, he dismissed them and they departed to their lord. So lightly armed raiding parties of Syrians no longer came into the land of Israel.

Syria Besieges Samaria

[24]And it came to pass that after this, the son of Hadad king of Syria gathered all the troops of his army and went up and besieged Samaria. [25]There was a great famine in Samaria. Indeed they besieged it even to the point where the value placed on the head of a donkey was fifty shekels of silver, and two quarts of dove droppings cost five shekels of silver. [26]As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, “Save me, my lord, O king!” [27]And he said, “If the Lord does not save you from the threshing floor or from the winepress, how can I save you?” [28]Then the king said to her, “What is troubling you?” And she answered, “This woman said to me, ‘Give us your son so that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’ [29]So we boiled my son and ate him. And on the next day I told her, ‘Give me your son so that we may eat him,’ but she hid her son.”

[30]Now when the king heard the woman's words, he tore his clothes, and as he passed by on the wall, the people saw that underneath his clothes he wore sackcloth on his body. [31]Then he said, “God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha remains on him today.”

[32]Now Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him, when the king sent a man ahead of him. But before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, “Do you see that this son of a murderer was sent to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and keep him on the outside of the door. Is that not the sound of his master's feet behind him?” [33]While yet talking with them, behold the messenger came down towards him; and the king said, “Listen! This evil is of the Lord, so why should I remain patient in the Lord?”

7 Then Elisha said, “Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: ‘About this time tomorrow, at the gate of Samaria a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and for a shekel, two measures of barley.’ ”[†]
[2]So the officer on whose hand the king relied retorted to Elisha and said, “Look, even if the Lord in heaven will make a downpour of rain, this event shall not happen.” And Elisha said, “Behold, you shall see this with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it.”

The Syrian Army Flees

[3]Now at the entrance of the gate there were four leprous men. And one of them said to his neighbor, “Why are we sitting here until we die? [4]If we say, ‘Let us go into the city,’ and there is famine in the city, we will die there. And if we sit here in this place, then we will die. Now therefore,

come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall die.” [5]So they rose in the darkness to head to the army camp of the Syrians. They entered the outskirts of the army camp and no one was there. [6]For the Lord had caused the army of Syria to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses, the noises of a very great army. For the Lord made the army of Syria say to one another, “Look, the king of Israel hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!” [7]So they arose in the darkness and quietly fled for their lives, leaving their tents, their horses, and their donkeys at the campsite.

[8]And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried away from it silver and gold and clothing. Then they left and came back to enter another tent to take from there and to hide the spoils. [9]And one said to the others, “This is not right. This day is a day of good news, and if we remain silent and wait until the light of morning, we will find wickedness in the city. Now come here! Let us enter the city and deliver this good news to the house of the king.” [10]So they went and cried out with a loud voice toward the gate of the city, and proclaimed to them, saying, “We entered the army camp of Syria and behold, no one was there, not a man nor a human voice. The only things there were the tied-up horses and donkeys, and their tents, which they left intact.”

[11]Then the gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported to the house of the king inside. [12]So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, “Now I will inform you as to what the Syrians are doing. They

know we are hungry. Therefore they went out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive and capture the city.' "

[13]Then one of his servants answered and said, "Indeed! Let them now take five of the remaining horses, of all that remain of the multitude of Israel, and send them there to see." [14]Therefore they saddled two horses, and the king of Israel sent them after the king of Syria, saying, "Go and see." [15]And they went after them even to the Jordan. Indeed all along the way, the road was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians themselves cast away in the panic. So the messengers returned and brought word to the king.[†] [16]Then the people went out and plundered the army camp of Syria. And a measure of fine flour sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, true to the word of the Lord.

[17]Now the king had appointed the officer, the one on whose hand the king relied, to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God said who spoke when the king came down to him. [18]So it happened just as Elisha said to the king, saying, "Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria." [19]Then the officer had answered Elisha with this retort, "Look, even if the Lord in heaven should make a downpour of rain, this sort of thing would never happen." Then Elisha had answered, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." [20]And so it was in this way; for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

The Shunammite Woman Returns Home

8 Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life saying, “Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the Lord called for a famine on the land, and it will come upon the land for seven years.”[†] [2]So the woman arose, and both she and her house did according to the saying of Elisha. They sojourned in the land of the Philistines for seven years.

[3]At the end of seven years, the woman returned from the land of the Philistines and went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. [4]Now the king spoke to Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, saying, “Tell me all the significant deeds Elisha has accomplished.” [5]And it came pass, as he was telling the king how Elisha restored her dead son to life, behold the woman whose son Elisha had restored to life came crying to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, “My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life.” [6]So the king asked the woman, and she related this fully to him. Then the king told a certain eunuch, saying, “Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day she left the land until now.”

Death of the Syrian King

[7]Then Elisha went to Damascus at a time when the son of Hadad the king of Syria was sick. And they brought word to him saying, “The man of God is here.” [8]And the king said to Hazael, “Take in your hand a present and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, asking, ‘Shall I recover from this disease?’ ” [9]So Hazael went to meet him. In his hand, he took a present plus all the good things of Damascus, forty camel-

loads, and he came and stood before him and said, “Your son the king of Syria, the son of Hadad, sent me to ask you whether he would recover from this disease.”

[10]So Elisha said to him, “Go tell him, ‘You shall live.’ However, the Lord made known to me that he will die by being put to death.” [11]The man of God wept and sat there until he was ashamed, then he stood up in the presence of Hazael.[†] [12]At this Hazael said, “Why does my lord weep?” He answered, “Because I know the evil you will do to the sons of Israel. You will utterly destroy their strongholds with fire, and you will kill their young men with the sword. You will dash their children and rip open their pregnant women.”[†] [13]Then Hazael said, “What is your servant that I should do such a thing, a dead dog?” Elisha answered, “The Lord has shown me that you will become king over Syria.”

[14]Then he departed from Elisha and came to his lord, who said to him, “What did Elisha say to you?” And he answered, “He told me you will live.” [15]But on the next day, Hazael took a thick cloth and dipped it in water, and spread it over the face of the king, the son of Hadad, and he died. Hazael reigned in his place.

Jehoram Is King of Judah

[16]Now in the fifth year of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign. [17]He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he ruled for eight years in Jerusalem. [18]And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in

the eyes of the Lord. [19]Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for the sake of his servant David, as He promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.

[20]In his days, Edom revolted against Judah's authority and made a king over themselves. [21]So Joram went to Seir with all his chariots, and it came to be, after he raised his troops, he struck Edom and the captains of the chariots who had encircled him. The people fled to their tents. [22]Even so, Edom revolted from being subordinate to the authority of Judah to this day. At the same time Libnah revolted as well. [23]Behold, the rest of the acts of Joram, and everything he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [24]So Joram rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Ahaziah Is King of Judah

[25]In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram began to reign. [26]Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he ruled for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. [27]And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the Lord, like the house of Ahab.

[28]Now he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. [29]Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Syrians inflicted on him at Ramah, where he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And

Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

Jehu Is King of Israel

9 Then Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, “Prepare yourself, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead.[†] [2]Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and awaken him from among his brethren, and take him to the innermost chamber. [3]Then take the flask of oil, pour it on his head, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I have anointed you king over Israel.” Then open the door and flee, and do not delay.” [4]So the young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. [5]When he arrived where the captains of the army were sitting, he said, “I have a message for you, O captain.” Jehu said, “For which one of us?” And he said, “For you, O captain.” [6]Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel. [7]You shall destroy the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel [8]and by the hand of all the house of Ahab, and you shall cut off from the house of Ahab every male held captive, those looked after and those in solitary confinement. [9]Then I will deliver the house of Ahab, like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. [10]The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and there shall be no one to bury her.’ ” And he opened the door and fled.

[11]Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and they said to him, “Peace to you. Why did this possessed man come to you?” And he said to them, “You know the man and his babble.” [12]And they said, “Liar! Now you tell us.” And Jehu said to them, “Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I anointed you king over Israel.” ’ ” [13]When they heard this, they hastened to take their garments and to place them beneath him on the top of the stairs. And they blew trumpets, saying, “Jehu is king!”

Israel's King Joram Is Killed

[14]So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram; and Joram was defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria; [15]and King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. Jehu said, “If your heart is with me, let no one leave or escape from the city to go and tell it in Jezreel.” [16]So Jehu rode ahead and came down to Jezreel; for Joram, king of Israel, was being restored to health in Jezreel from the arrow wounds the Syrians inflicted on him with the bow in Ramoth, in the battle with Hazael king of Syria; for he was powerful and a man of strength. And Ahaziah king of Judah came down to see Joram.

[17]Now a watchman went up on the tower in Jezreel, and saw Jehu's dust as he came, and said, “I see dust.” And Joram said, “Get a horseman and send him to meet them. Let him say, ‘It is a time for peace.’ ” [18]So the horseman went to meet him, and said, “Thus says the king, ‘Let there be peace.’ ” And Jehu said, “What do you have to do with peace? Turn around and follow me.” So the watchman reported, saying, “The messenger went to

them, but is not coming back.” [19]Then he sent out a second horseman, who came to them and said, “Thus says the king, ‘It is time for peace!’ ” And Jehu answered, “What do you have to do with peace? Turn around and follow me.”

[20]So the watchman reported, saying, “He went up to them and is not coming back. And he brought Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he was in a frenzy!” [21]Then Joram exclaimed, “Make ready! Harness a chariot!” Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, for a meeting with Jehu. They found him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. [22]Now it happened when Joram saw Jehu, he said, “Jehu, let there be a time of peace.” And he answered, “How can there be a time of peace? The sexual immorality of Jezebel your mother and her sorceries are still many.”

[23]Then Joram turned the reigns in his hand to flee, and said to Ahaziah, “This is treachery, Ahaziah!” [24]But Jehu drew back on his bow fully and shot Joram with an arrow between his shoulders. The arrow came out through his heart, and he buckled at his knees. [25]Then Jehu said to Bidkar his officer, “Cast him into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for I remember when you and I were mounting onto a pair of chariots behind Ahab, Joram's father, and the Lord took upon Himself this promise against Ahab, saying, [26]‘Yesterday,’ says the Lord, ‘I surely saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons. I will recompense to him in this same portion.’ Therefore now, pick him up and cast him into the portion of ground, according to the word of the Lord.”

Judah's King Ahaziah Is Killed

[27]But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled on the road to Beth Haggan. So Jehu pursued after him, saying, “Him, too!” And on the ascent of Gur, one struck him in the chariot, near Ibleam. He then fled to Megiddo and died there. [28]From here, his servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb in the City of David. [29]And in the eleventh year of Joram king of Israel, Ahaziah became king over Judah.

The Bloody Death of Jezebel

[30]Now Jehu returned to Jezreel, and Jezebel received the news of it. She put black makeup on her eyes and adorned her head, and she stooped down and peeked through the window. [31]As Jehu entered into the city, she said, “Peace, Zimri, the murderer of his master.”

[32]Jehu raised his eyes upward toward the window and saw her, and said, “Who are you? Come down by me.” Then two eunuchs looked down at him. [33]He exclaimed, “Throw her down.” So they threw her down, and her blood splattered against the wall, even on the horses which trampled her. [34]Then Jehu went in, and he ate and drank, and said, “Indeed, have care for this cursed woman. Give her a proper burial, as she is the daughter of a king.” [35]So they went to bury her, but no more of her was found but the skull, the feet, and the palms of her hands.

[36]They came back and told Jehu. And he said, “This is the word the Lord spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘On the plot of ground at Jezreel, dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; [37]and Jezebel's corpse shall be

like dung on the face of the field in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, “Here lies Jezebel.” ’ ”

The Sons of Ahab Are Killed

10 Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote a letter and sent it to Samaria, to the rulers of Samaria, to the elders, and to those who reared the sons of Ahab, saying, [2]“At the moment this letter is delivered to you, since your master's sons are with you, and because you have chariots and horses, a fortified city, and weapons, [3]choose the best qualified of your master's sons, then set him on his father's throne, and prepare to fight for your master's house.”

[4]But they were very afraid and said, “Look, two kings could not stand up to him. How can we stand?” [5]Those over the house and over the city, plus the elders, and including even those who reared the sons, sent word to Jehu, saying, “We are your servants and we will do everything you tell us, but we will not make anyone king. Do what is good in your eyes.” [6]Then Jehu wrote them a second letter, saying, “If you are for me and obey my voice, take the heads of the sons of your lord, and by this time tomorrow, bring them to me at Jezreel.”

Now the sons of the king totaled seventy men. These well-educated headmasters from within the city reared them. [7]But when the letter came to them, they took the seventy sons of the king and slaughtered them. They then put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu at Jezreel. [8]Then a messenger came and spoke to Jehu, saying, “They have brought the heads of the king's sons.” And he said, “Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning.” [9]So in the morning, he went out and stood at the gate and said to all the people, “You are the righteous ones! Indeed, I conspired against my master and killed him. But who struck down all these? [10]See then that not one thing from the word of the Lord against the house of Ahab fall on the ground for any reason. For the Lord has fulfilled all He spoke of by the authority of His servant Elijah.” [11]So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel: all his well-educated headmasters, his friends, and his priests, so no remnant of him survived.

Ahaziah's Brothers Are Killed

[12]Then Jehu arose and departed to Samaria. When he was at Beth Eked of the Shepherds, [13]Jehu found the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah and said, “Who are you?” So they answered, “We are the brothers of Ahaziah. We came down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother.” [14]And he said, “Take them alive!” So they took them alive and killed these forty-two men at Beth Eked; he left not one of them alive.

Other Relatives of Ahab Killed

[15]After he departed from there, he found Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to greet him, and he bestowed a blessing on him. Jehu said to him, “Is your heart right with my heart, as my heart is right with your heart?” And Jehonadab answered, “It is.” Jehu said, “If it is, give me your hand.” So he gave him his hand, and he brought him into the chariot. [16]Then he said, “Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts.” So Jehonadab rode in his chariot. [17]And when Jehu came to Samaria, he killed all who

remained to Ahab in Samaria till he had completely destroyed them, according to the word the Lord spoke through Elijah.

Worshipers of Baal Are Killed

[18]Then Jehu gathered all the people together and said to them, “Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. [19]Now all the prophets of Baal, all the servants of his and the priests of his, must call upon me. Let not a man be missing, for I have a great sacrifice to offer Baal. Whoever is missing will not live.” But Jehu acted in deception in order to destroy the servants of Baal. [20]And Jehu said, “Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal.” So they proclaimed it. [21]Then Jehu sent to all Israel, saying, “And now all the servants of Baal, and all his priests and all his prophets, let no one be left out. For I am making a great sacrifice, and if anyone is not in attendance, he shall not live.”

Then all the servants of Baal and all his priests and all his prophets came. There was not a man who did not come, no one was left behind. And they entered the house of Baal, and the house of Baal was filled from one end to the other. [22]So he said to the one in charge of the house and the wardrobe, “Bring out vestments for all the servants of Baal.” And the one in charge of the vestments brought them. [23]Then Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab entered the house of Baal and said to the servants of Baal, “Search and see whether there are any servants of the Lord here, or only servants of Baal.” [24]So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu appointed for himself eighty guards to be on the outside and said to them, “If any of the men I brought into your hands escapes, whoever lets him escape, it shall be his life for the life of the one he spares.”

[25]Now it happened that when Jehu finished offering the whole burnt offering, he said to the guards and to the officers, “Go in and kill every person. Let no one come out!” And they killed them with the edge of the sword. Being completely overrun, the guards, even the officers, cast the bodies out. They then proceeded to the city of the house of Baal, [26]and they brought out the foundational pillar of Baal and burned it. [27]Then they pulled down the other pillars of Baal and demolished the house. It was made into a latrine, and remains so to this day. [28]Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.

[29]However, Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin by way of the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan. [30]So the Lord said to Jehu, “Because of the many upright deeds which you did to carry out the good in My sight, and according to all things that were in My heart which you did to the house of Ahab, your sons to the fourth generation shall sit for you on the throne of Israel.” [31]Even still, Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with his whole heart. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin.

Death of Jehu

[32]In those days, the Lord began to divide off parts of Israel. All along the border of Israel, Hazael defeated them; [33]from the Jordan River eastward, all the land of Gilead of the Gadites, that of Gad and that of Reuben and of Manasseh; from Aroer, which is on the bank of the brook of Arnon, and to Gilead and Bashan. [34]Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, all he did, all the

wars he engaged in and the alliances he formed, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [35]So Jehu rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Jehoahaz his son ruled in his place. [36]And the period that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

Athaliah Is Queen of Judah

11 Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw her sons were dead, and that she had destroyed all the seed of the kingdom.[†] [2]But Jehosheba the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, kidnapped Joash, her brother's son, and kept him from being among the murdered sons of the king. She hid Joash and his nurse in the secret room by the bed. In this way he was safe from Athaliah and was not killed. [3]Thus while Athaliah reigned over the land, he remained hidden with her in the house of the Lord.

[4]In the seventh year, Jehoiada the priest sent for the captains of hundreds, both Chorri and Rasim, and had them brought to him in the house of the Lord. After he made a covenant with them, a binding oath in the house of the Lord, Jehoiada showed them the son of the king. [5]Then he commanded them, saying, “This is what you shall do: When the Sabbath comes, one-third of you shall keep guard over the house of the king by the gate, [6]and one-third by the gate of the roads, and one-third by the gate behind the escorts. You shall keep the evening watch of the house. [7]Two divisions you have are off-duty on the Sabbath. For the sake of the king, they shall keep the evening watch of the house of the Lord. [8]And you shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand. And anyone

penetrating their ranks, let him be put to death. You shall be with the king in his going out and his coming in.”

[9]So the captains of the hundreds did according to all the wise Jehoiada commanded. Each of them took his men, those to be on duty on the Sabbath and those going off duty on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. [10]So the priest gave the captains of hundreds the swords and spears of King David, those kept in the house of the Lord. [11]Then the guards stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right corner of the house to the corner of the house left of the altar, and round about the house of the king. [12]And he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the Testimony. They thereby announced him king and anointed him. They then clapped their hands and said, “Long live the king!”

Queen Athaliah Dies

[13]Athaliah heard the noise of the people running, and she went to the people in the temple of the Lord. [14]When she looked, there was the king standing by a pillar according to decree; and the singers and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. So Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, “Treason! Treason!” [15]So Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds and the officers of the army and said to them, “Lead her out to the field under guard, and slay her with the sword, and whoever follows her.” For the priest had said, “Do not let her be killed in the house of the Lord.” [16]They laid their hands upon her and went by way of the horse entrance to the house of the king. She died there.

The Reforms of Jehoiada

[17]Jehoiada the priest made a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people, that they would remain the Lord's people. He also made one between the king and the people. [18]Then all the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and they completely tore it down and broke it all to pieces, its altars and its images. And before the altars, they killed Mattan the priest of Baal. The priest then placed overseers over the house of the Lord. [19]Then he took the captains of hundreds, Chorri and Rasim, and all the people of the land, and he led the king from out of the house of the Lord. They then went by way of the gate of the guardhouse to the king's house, and they sat him on the throne of the kings. [20]So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was at peace. And in the house of the king, they killed Athaliah with the sword.

Joash Is King of Judah

12 Joash was seven years old when he began to reign. [2]He began his reign in the seventh year of Jehu, and he ruled for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.[†] [3]And all the days in which Jehoiada the priest enlightened him, Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. [4]However, none of the high places were removed, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

Repairs of the Temple

[5]And Joash said to the priests, “With regard to all the silver arising from things consecrated, the silver offerings of the house of the Lord—the

valuation of the silver assessed for each man—all the silver which comes from the heart of the man who brings it into the house of the Lord, [6]let the priests take for themselves, each man from the silver that comes in. But they must maintain the repairs to the temple, whenever and whatever repairs are needed."

[7]Now it came to be that by the twenty-third year of King Joash, the priests had not maintained the repair of the temple. [8]So King Joash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and said to them, "Why have you not repaired and maintained the temple? Now take the silver from the treasury and use it to repair and maintain the temple." [9]So the priests, all with one voice, agreed they would not receive any more silver from the people until they had made all the repairs to the temple.

[10]Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and placed it on the right side of the altar in the house of the Lord. Then the priests who kept the weights put in the chest all the money found in the house of the Lord. [11]And it came to be that whenever they noticed a large amount of silver in the chest, the king's scribe and the high priest put it in bags and weighed the silver found that day in the house of the Lord. [12]Then they gave the silver apportioned for repairs into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the Lord; to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the Lord, [13]to the masons, to the hewers of stone, to the buyers of wood, to make all repairs to the house of the Lord, and for all things discharged to maintain the house of the Lord. [14]However, silver doors, nails, bowls, and trumpets—any vessel of gold or vessel of silver—were not to be made from any of the silver brought into

the house of the Lord. [15]For this was given to the workmen who repaired the house of the Lord with it, [16]for they did not require an account from the men into whose hands they delivered the silver, for the workmen dealt faithfully. [17]Money for a sin offering, and money for a trespass offering, and any money brought into the house of the Lord went to the priests.

[18]In those days, Hazael king of Syria went up to wage war against Gath, and they captured it. Then Hazael set his face to war against Jerusalem. [19]So Joash king of Judah took all the sacred things dedicated by his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, his own sacred things, all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and in the king's house, and sent them on to Hazael king of Syria. Then Hazael went away from Jerusalem.

[20]Now the rest of the acts of Joash and everything he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [21]And his servants rose up and formed a conspiracy, and killed Joash in the house of the Millo in Silla. [22]For Jozachar the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, struck him, and he died. And they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Jehoahaz Is King of Israel

13 In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, and ruled seventeen years. [2]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led Israel to sin. He did not depart from them.

[3]Thus the Lord was roused to anger against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of the son of Hadad, the son of Hazael, for all their days. [4]But Jehoahaz pleaded with the Lord, and the Lord heard him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. [5]Then the Lord gave deliverance to Israel, so they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians. And the sons of Israel dwelt in their habitations as before.[†] [6]But still they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who led Israel to sin, but walked in them. Indeed, the wooden image remained in Samaria. [7]Yet there were no more troops left for Jehoahaz except fifty horsemen, ten chariot drivers, and ten thousand infantry. For the king of Syria destroyed them and made them like dust to be trampled.

[8]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, everything he did, and his mighty acts, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [9]So Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Joash his son ruled in his place.

Jehoash Is King of Israel

[10]In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria and ruled for sixteen years. [11]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led Israel to sin. He walked in them.

[12]Now the rest of the acts of Joash, everything he did, and his might in fighting with Amaziah king of Judah, is all this not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [13]And Joash slept with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat upon his throne in Samaria among the sons of Israel.

The Death of Elisha

[14]Elisha became sick with an illness from which he would die. Joash king of Israel came down to him and wept before him, and said, “My father! My father! The chariots of Israel and their horsemen!” [15]And Elisha said to him, “Take a bow and some arrows.” So he brought him a bow and some arrows. [16]Then he said to the king, “Put your hand on the bow.” So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. [17]Then he said, “Open the east window.” And he opened it. Then Elisha said, “Shoot the arrow with the bow,” and he shot. And Elisha said, “An arrow of the Lord's deliverance; an arrow of release from Syria. For you will strike the Syrians at Aphek till their end.” [18]Then Elisha said to him, “Take the bow of an archer.” And he did. And he said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground.” So the king struck three times and stopped. [19]Then the man of God was grieved and said, “If you had struck five or six times, then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you shall strike Syria only three times.”

[20]Now Elisha died, and they buried him. Then in the following year, the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land. [21]And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, they beheld a lightly armed band of raiders, and cast

the man into the tomb of Elisha. When the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet.[†]

Israel Retakes Syrian Cities

[22]Now Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. [23]But the Lord had mercy on them. He pitied them and watched over them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus He did not want to destroy them or cast them from His presence.

[24]Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then the grandson of Hadad reigned in his place. [25]And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz returned and captured the cities out of the hand of the grandson of Hazael, the cities which he took from the hand of Jehoahaz his father in the war. Joash defeated him three times and recaptured the cities of Israel.

Amaziah Is King of Judah

14 In the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. [2]He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he ruled for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. [3]He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not like his father David. He did everything as did his father Joash. [4]However, he did not remove the high places, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

[5]And it came to be, when the kingdom was established in his hand, Amaziah had his servants who had murdered his father struck with a deadly

blow. [6]But he did not have the sons of the murderers put to death, for just as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, as the Lord commanded, saying, “Fathers shall not face death on behalf of their sons, nor shall sons face death on behalf of their father, but each one shall face death for his own sin.” [7]He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela by war and called itIoktheel, until this day.

[8]Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, “Come here! Let us look one another in the face.”[†] [9]So Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, “The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son as wife’; but wild beasts of the fields in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. [10]You indeed defeated Edom, and your heart lifts you up. So while sitting at your house, be glorified in yourself; why wrangle in your hateful feelings and fall to your destruction, and Judah with you?” [11]But Amaziah did not heed the words. So the king of Israel went up, and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Beth Shemesh of Judah. [12]Thus Judah fell before Israel, and every man fled to his tent. [13]Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh. And Jehoash came to Jerusalem and broke down four hundred cubits of the wall of Jerusalem, from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate. [14]He took the silver and gold and all the vessels found in the house of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house, and the indentured servants, and returned to Samaria.

[15]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash, including all he did in his might, how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [16]So Jehoash rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Then Jeroboam his son ruled in his place.

[17]Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. [18]Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah and all he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [19]They plotted a conspiracy against Amaziah in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they sent after him to Lachish, and there they put him to death. [20]They brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David.

[21]Afterwards, all the people of Judah took Azariah, when he was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. [22]After the king rested with his fathers, Azariah rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah.

Jeroboam II Is King of Israel

[23]In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, Jeroboam the son of Joash became king over Israel in Samaria and ruled for forty-one years. [24]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led Israel to sin. [25]He rescued the people from the territory of Israel, from the entrance to Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word the Lord God of Israel spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher. [26]For the Lord saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter; that

they were few in number, lacking much and forsaken, and there was no one to come to the aid of Israel.[†] [27]And the Lord said He would not blot out the seed of Israel from beneath heaven; so He delivered them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

[28]Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did and his power to wage war, and how he rescued Damascus and Hamath of Judah for Israel, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [29]So Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then Azariah the son of Amaziah ruled in his place.

Uzziah Is King of Judah

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Uzziah the son of Amaziah king of Judah became king.[†] [2]He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he ruled for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. [3]And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to everything his father Amaziah had done, [4]except that he did not remove any of the high places. The people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. [5]Then the Lord touched the king, and he was a leper to the day of his death. He reigned in a house isolated from all others. Concerning matters of the household, Jotham the son of the king judged the people of Israel. [6]Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah and everything he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [7]So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Zachariah Is King of Israel

[8]In the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam ruled over Israel in Samaria for six months. [9]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his fathers had done. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led Israel to sin. [10]Then Shallum, the son of Jabesh, and Keblaam conspired against him. They struck and killed him, and Shallum ruled in his place. [11]Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, indeed they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel. [12]This was the word of the Lord which He spoke to Jehu saying, “Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.” And so it was.

Shallum Is King of Israel

[13]Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah. And Shallum ruled for a month in Samaria. [14]For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah and came to Samaria. He struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him. [15]Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy he led, indeed they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel. [16]Then Menahem attacked Tirzah, all who were there, and the extended area of Tirzah, because they did not open their gates to him. There he ripped open all the women who were with child.

Menahem Is King of Israel

[17]In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel and ruled for ten years in Samaria. [18]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. [19]In his days, Pul king of Assyria came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, so his hand would be with him. [20]This money Menahem exacted from Israel, fifty shekels of silver each from all the very wealthy, as tribute to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and he did not remain in the land.[†] [21]Now the rest of the acts of Menahem and everything he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? [22]So Menahem rested with his fathers. Then Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

Pekahiah Is King of Israel

[23]In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria and ruled for two years. [24]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin. [25]Then Pekah the son of Remaliah his officer, along with Argob and Arieh, conspired against him and attacked him in Samaria, in the citadel of the king's house. With him were fifty men of the four hundred. Pekah killed him and became king in his place. [26]Now the rest of the acts of Pekahiah and everything he did are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Pekah Is King of Israel

[27]In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria and ruled for twenty years. [28]He did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led Israel to sin. [29]In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, the entire land of Naphtali. He exiled the people to Assyria. [30]Then Hoshea the son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck and killed him. He became king in his place, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.[†] [31]Now the rest of the acts of Pekah and everything he did are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Jotham Is King of Judah

[32]In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah became king of Judah. [33]He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he ruled for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerusha the daughter of Zadok. [34]And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to everything his father Uzziah had done. [35]However, he did not remove the high places. The people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the Upper Gate of the house of the Lord. [36]Now the rest of the acts of Jotham and everything he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [37]In those days the Lord began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah. [38]So Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David, his father. Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

Ahaz Is King of Judah

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham became king of Judah.[†] [2]Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he ruled for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, and he was not faithful as was his father David. [3]But he walked in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, king of Israel; indeed, he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the sons of Israel. [4]And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every tree growing in the woods.

[5]Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to make war. They began to besiege Ahaz, but they could not sustain the war. [6]At that time, Rezin king of Syria returned Elath to Syria and drove the men of Judah from Elath. Then the Edomites went to Elath, where they continue to dwell to this day. [7]So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel. They have risen up against me.” [8]And Ahaz took the silver and gold found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and the house of the king, and delivered it as a gift to the king. [9]So the king of Assyria heeded him, and he went up against Damascus and took it. He removed the inhabitants and killed Rezin.

[10]Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. There in Damascus, he saw an altar. And King Ahaz sent to Urijah

the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. [11]Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to the design plans King Ahaz sent from Damascus. [12]When the king saw the altar, he went up to it [13]and offered his burnt offering on it, and his sacrifice and his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. [14]He also relocated the bronze altar, which was before the Lord, forward from between the new altar and the house of the Lord. He put it on the north side of the new altar. [15]Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, “On the large altar, offer the morning burnt offering, the evening sacrifice, the king's whole burnt offering with his sacrifice, and the whole burnt offering of all the people with their sacrifice, and their drink offerings. And sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. The bronze altar shall be mine for the early morning.” [16]And Urijah the priest did everything King Ahaz commanded.

[17]Then King Ahaz cut off the embossments of the bases and removed the lavers from them. He took down the Sea from the bronze oxen under it and put it on a stone base. [18]And he built the foundation for the throne in the house of the Lord, and he brought the king's entrance back into the house of the Lord, which had been outside because of the king of Assyria. [19]And the rest of the acts of Ahaz, even all he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [20]So Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

Hoshea Is King of Israel

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he ruled for nine years.[†] [2]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not like the kings of Israel before him. [3]Shalmaneser the king of Assyria came up against him. Now Hoshea was his servant and had paid tribute to him. [4]And the king of Assyria found scheming in Hoshea. He had sent messengers to Segor the king of Egypt, but in that year, they did not bring any tribute back to the king of Assyria. Therefore the king of Assyria besieged him and bound him in prison.

Israel Exiled to Assyria

[5]Now the king of Assyria marched through the entire land. He went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. [6]In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and exiled Israel to Assyria, where he placed them along the rivers of Gozan, in Halah, and in Habor, and on the mountains of the Medes. [7]For the sons of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. But still they came to fear other gods [8]and to walk in the very customs of the nations the Lord had cast out before the face of Israel, before the kings of Israel who did this; [9]so many sons of Israel clothed themselves with customs contrary to the Lord their God, and built for themselves high places in all their cities, by use of the watchtowers guarding the fortified city. [10]They set up for themselves pillars and made wooden images on every high hill and under every tree growing in the woods. [11]There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the Lord previously carried away before them. They acquired familiar spirits and provoked the Lord to great anger. [12]They even served

idols, although the Lord had said to them, “You shall not do such a thing to the Lord.”

[13]And the Lord solemnly testified against Israel and against Judah by the authority of all His prophets and seers, saying, “Turn from your evil ways. Keep My commandments and My statutes and all the law I commanded your fathers. Keep all that I sent to them through the authority of My servants the prophets.” [14]But they did not heed His voice. Instead, they stiffened their necks, making them more unbending than their fathers. [15]They did not keep the testimonies with which He charged them, but instead followed vain things and became vain. They followed the nations around them in the very things the Lord commanded them not to do. [16]So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and instead made for themselves a molten image, two heifers. And they made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. [17]They caused their sons and daughters to pass through the test of fire; they consulted oracles and divined from the cries of birds; and they even sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. [18]Thus the Lord became exceedingly angry with Israel, and He removed them from His presence. There was none left, except only for the tribe of Judah alone.

[19]But no, not even Judah kept the commandments of the Lord their God. Instead they walked according to the customs and traditions Israel had made. [20]They rejected the Lord, throughout all the seed of Israel. So He afflicted them and gave them over to the hand of those plundering them, until He cast them forth from His presence. [21]And this because the house of Israel had in earlier days revolted from the house of David, and made

Jeroboam the son of Nebat king; and because Jeroboam drew back Israel from following the Lord and led them to commit a great sin; [22]and only because the sons of Israel walked in all the sins which Jeroboam committed, and did not depart from it, [23]until the Lord removed Israel from His presence as He spoke by all His servants the prophets. So therefore Israel was exiled from their own land into Assyria until this day.

Assyrians Settle in Israel

[24]Then the king of Assyria brought from Babylon the people out of Cuthah, and from Ava, from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and they settled in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. They gained possession of Samaria and inhabited her cities.[†] [25]And it came to be in the beginning of their settlement, they did not fear the Lord. And the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them. [26]So it was told to the king of Assyria, saying, “The nations you exiled, even those you settled in the cities of Samaria, do not know the rituals of the God of the land. Therefore he sent lions among them, and behold, the lions are killing them, because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land.” [27]Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, “Take from the exiles those that came from that place, and let them go and settle there. They will enlighten them concerning the rituals of the God of the land.” [28]So they brought one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria, and he came and dwelt in Bethel, and he enlightened them on how they should fear the Lord.

[29]But each nation continued to make their own gods and to put them in the shrines on the high places the Samaritans made, even in the cities of every nation where they dwelt. [30]The men of Babylon made Succoth

Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, [31]and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. [32]Though they were being fearful of the Lord, yet they established their abominations in the houses of the high places they made in Samaria, each nation within the city in which they dwelt. Though they were being fearful of the Lord, even so they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, and made for themselves a sacrifice in the high places. [33]They feared the Lord and God Himself, yet they worshiped according to the rituals of the nations to which He had exiled them.

[34]Even to this day, they did according to their rituals. They feared the Lord, and yet they acted according to their customs and according to their rituals, and according to their law, and yet according to the commandment which the Lord commanded the sons of Jacob, to whom He gave the name Israel. [35]For the Lord had made a covenant with them and charged them, saying, “You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them. [36]But only the Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm—Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice. [37]And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandments He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods. [38]Thus you shall not forget the covenant I made with you, nor shall you fear other gods. [39]But you shall fear the Lord your God; and He will deliver you from all your enemies. [40]And you shall not conform to the rites they practice.” [41]But these nations feared the Lord, yet served their carved

images. So their sons and the sons of their sons have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.

Hezekiah Is King of Judah

18 Now in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah the king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign.[†] [2]He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he ruled for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. [3]And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to everything his father David did. [4]He removed the high places and broke into pieces the sacred pillars. He cut down the sacred wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent Moses had made, because up to those days, the sons of Israel had burned incense to it. They called it Nehushtan.[†] [5]He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, and after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those that were before him. [6]For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept all the commandments the Lord gave Moses. [7]The Lord was with him. He prospered wherever he went. So he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.[†] [8]He struck the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from the watchtower to the fortified city.

[9]Now in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. [10]And after three years, Shalmaneser captured Samaria. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. [11]So the king of

Assyria carried the people of Samaria away to Assyria, and put them in Halah, and in Habor, by the River of Gozan, and in the mountains of the Medes. [12]For they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant, even in all the things the servant of the Lord Moses commanded. They did not listen to them nor do them.

Assyria Threatens Jerusalem

[13]Then in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.[†] [14]So Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have offended you. Turn away from me and I will pay whatever you impose on me." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. [15]So Hezekiah gave him all the silver found in the house of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house. [16]At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.[†]

[17]Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan, and Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with an overwhelming force against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem and stood near the aqueduct of the upper pool, which is on the way to Fuller's Field. [18]And they cried aloud to Hezekiah. But Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the steward, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. [19]Then Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, "What is this confidence which you

trust? [20]You speak the words of the lips; however, I speak the purpose and the power of war. Now then, what is persuading you to reject me? [21]Take notice of yourself and of your trust on this broken staff of Egypt, made from a reed. If a man leans on it, it will pierce his hand. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. [22]But because you say to me, 'In the Lord God we trust,' is it not He whose high places and His altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?' " [23]Therefore now join with my lord the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses to use in the battle, if you can find horsemen to ride on them! [24]How will you turn back the presence of one captain of the least of the servants of my lord? Whereas you yourself hope on Egypt for chariots and horsemen! [25]Now we did not come up against this place to utterly destroy it without the Lord. The Lord said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.' "

[26]Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Now speak to your servants in the Syrian language, for we understand; do not speak Hebrew with us. Why is it that you speak to us within the hearing of the people on the wall?" [27]But Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master, or to you, to deliver these words? Was it not to the men who sit on the wall, who along with you will eat their own dung and drink their own urine?"

[28]Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the words of the great king of Assyria![†] [29]Thus says the king, 'Do not let Hezekiah encourage you with words, for he shall not be able to deliver you from my hand. [30]Nor let Hezekiah cause you to trust

in the Lord, saying, “The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ ” [31]Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria, ‘Gain my favor and come out to me, and every man will drink from his own vine, and every man will eat from his own fig tree and drink the waters of his own well, [32]until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine and bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil and honey, and you will live and not die. Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he deceives you, saying, “The Lord will deliver us.” [33]Each of the gods of the nations is not, of himself, able to deliver a country from the hands of the king of Assyria. [34]Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? [35]Who among all the gods of the lands delivered their countries from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?’ ” [36]But the men were silent and did not answer him, not a word, for the king's commandment was, “Do not answer him.”[†]

[37]Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the steward, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

Isaiah Promises Deliverance

19 When King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.[†] [2]Then he sent Eliakim, the steward, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. [3]They said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah, ‘This is a day of tribulation and rebuke and great anger. For in the time the children are to be born, the mother has no strength. [4]If in any way the Lord your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria sent to insult the living God and revile him with words which the Lord your God has heard, perhaps you will offer a prayer concerning the remnant that is found.' " [5]So the servants of King Hezekiah appeared before Isaiah, [6]and Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the Lord: "Do not be afraid of the words of blasphemy you heard uttered by the king of Assyria's servants. [7]Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will strike him down by the sword in his own land." ' "

Assyria Makes Another Threat

[8]Having heard the king had departed from Lachish, Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah. [9]And concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, he had heard it being said, "Look! Tirhakah king of Ethiopia has come out to make war with you." So he returned, but sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, [10]"Do not let your God in whom you trust exalt you, saying, 'Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' [11]Listen! You have heard about what all the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, utterly destroying them, and you think you shall be delivered? [12]Did the gods of the nations deliver those my fathers destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? [13]Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?"

[14]So Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. Then Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord, [15]and said, “Lord God of Israel, enthroned on the cherubim, You alone are God in all the kingdoms of the earth. You made heaven and earth. [16]O Lord, incline Your ear and hear. O Lord, open Your eyes and see. Hear the words Sennacherib sent to reproach the living God. [17]O Lord, truly the kings of Assyria laid waste the nations [18]and cast the gods of these nations into the fire, because they are not gods, but only the work of men's hands, of wood and of stone, and they destroyed them. [19]Now, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth will know that You alone are the Lord God.”[†]

Isaiah's Word to King Hezekiah

[20]Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord God of Hosts, the God of Israel, ‘I heard the things you prayed concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria.’ [21]This is the word which the Lord spoke against Sennacherib king of Assyria: ‘The virgin, the daughter of Zion, despised you, laughed you to scorn. The daughter of Jerusalem shook her head at you! [22]Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice? You lifted up your eyes against the Holy One of Israel! [23]By the hand of your messengers you reproached the Lord and said, “With the multitude of my chariots I came up to the height of the mountains, to the limits of Lebanon, and I shall cut down its tall cedars and its choicest cypress trees, and I entered the midst of the forest of Carmel. [24]I refreshed myself and drank the water of strangers, and with the sole of my foot I desolated all the rivers of defense.” [25]I formed

her and made her so strong that she was effectual against fortified cities, [26]and those who lived there were too weak, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field and the green herb, like tender shoots on the housetops and grain blighted before it is grown. [27]But I know your sitting down, and your going out, and your coming in, and your rage against Me. [28]Because you rage against Me, and your insolence has come up to My ears, therefore I will put My hook in your noses and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way you came.’

[29]“This shall be a sign to you. This year you shall eat what grows by itself, and in the second year what springs from it. Then in the third year you shall sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. [30]And the remnant of the house of Judah who escaped shall again take root in the soil, and shall bear fruit on its branches. [31]For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and he who is being delivered out of Mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.[†] [32]Is it not so? Thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He shall not enter this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor will a shield come before it, nor will he build a siege mound against it. [33]By the way he came, by the same way he shall return. And he shall not come into this city,’ says the Lord. [34]‘For I will defend this city for My own sake and for the sake of My servant David.’ ”

[35]And it came about that the angel of the Lord went out while it was yet night, and struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When they arose early in the morning, all the dead bodies were there. [36]So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and left from there. He returned and dwelt in Nineveh. [37]Later it happened, while he was

worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon reigned in his place.

Hezekiah Is Sick and Recovers

20 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. Then Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’ ”[†] [2]Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed to the Lord, saying, [3]“O Lord, remember how I walked before You in truth, and with a full heart, and did what was good in Your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept with a great wailing.

[4]Thus while Isaiah was in the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, [5]“Return and tell Hezekiah, the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you, and on the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. [6]And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.” ’ ”

[7]Then Isaiah said, “Let them take a cake of figs and rest it on the boil, and he will recover.” [8]And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What is the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that on the third day I shall go up to the house of the Lord?” [9]And Isaiah said, “This is the sign from the Lord that the Lord shall do what He said. Either the shadow of the sundial will move forward

ten degrees, or should it go backward ten degrees?” [10]Hezekiah answered, “It is easy for the shadow on the dial to move forward ten degrees. Therefore, let the shadow return and go backward ten degrees.” [11]So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the Lord, and the shadow on the dial went backward ten degrees.[†]

Ambassadors from Babylon

[12]At that time Berodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah because he heard Hezekiah was sick.[†] [13]So Hezekiah rejoiced in them and showed to these messengers all the house of his treasures—the silver and the gold, the spices and good olive oil, even the house of his vessels—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. [14]Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?” So Hezekiah said, “They came from a far country, from Babylon.” [15]He said, “What did they see in your house?” So he answered, “They saw everything in my house. There was nothing in my house I did not show them, even what is in my treasuries.”

[16]Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord, [17]‘Behold, the days are coming when everything in your house, and what your fathers accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left,’ says the Lord. [18]‘And as for your descendants, your sons, Babylon shall take them, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of

Babylon.’ ” [19]So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “Good is the word of the Lord which He spoke. Let there be peace in my days.”

King Hezekiah Dies

[20]Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, all his might, and how he made a reservoir and an aqueduct, and how he brought water into the city, are these things not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [21]So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. And he was buried in the city of David. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Manasseh Is King of Judah

21 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he ruled for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah.[†] [2]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the sons of Israel. [3]For he brought back and built the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed. He raised up an altar for Baal, and as Ahab king of Israel did, he made a wooden image. He worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.[†] [4]He also built an altar in the house of the Lord, of which He had said, “In Jerusalem I will put My name.” [5]And he built an altar for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

[6]Also, he made his sons pass through the fire and practiced divination. He read omens from the flight and cries of birds, and consulted wizards, and multiplied those familiar with them, to do evil in the sight of the Lord. He provoked Him to anger. [7]He even took a carved image of the wooden

image and placed it in the house of which the Lord had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever. [8]But to those who shall keep all that I command, according to all the commandments which my servant Moses commanded them, I will not again let the foot of Israel be shaken from the land I gave their fathers.” [9]But they paid no attention as Manasseh led them astray. They did more evil than the nations whom the Lord had removed from before the sons of Israel.

[10]And the Lord spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, [11]“Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, acting more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and because he made Judah sin with his idols, [12]it shall not be so. Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Behold! I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. [13]And I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plumb line of the house of Ahab. I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes an alabaster vessel, wiping it and turning it upside down. [14]So I will drive away the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder by all their enemies. [15]For they have done evil in My eyes and have provoked Me to anger since the day I brought their fathers out of Egypt to this day.’ ” [16]Indeed, Manasseh poured out large quantities of innocent blood until it filled Jerusalem from end to end. This in addition to the sins which he led Judah to commit, in doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

[17]Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, all he did, and all the sins he committed, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [18]So Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

Amon Is King of Judah

[19]Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he ruled for two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. [20]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. [21]And he walked in all the ways that his father walked, and he served the idols his father served, and worshiped them. [22]He forsook the Lord God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the Lord. [23]Then servants of Amon conspired against him and killed the king in his own house. [24]But the people of the land put to death all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place. [25]Now the rest of the acts Amon did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [26]And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

Josiah Is King of Judah

22 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he ruled for thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.[†] [2]And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David. He did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Discovery of the Book of the Law

[3]Now in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, in the eighth month, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe of the house of the Lord, saying, [4]“Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, and take account of the money brought into the house of the Lord gathered from the people. [5]And let them deliver it into the hand of the appointed workers in the house of the Lord.” So he gave it to those in the house of the Lord doing the work to repair the damages of the house; [6]to the carpenters, and builders, and masons; to acquire wood and hewn stones, to strengthen the repairs of the house. [7]However, because they dealt faithfully, they were not asked to account for the money delivered into their hand.

[8]Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, “I discovered the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord.” And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. [9]Then he brought the book to King Josiah and turned to the king to report, saying, “Your servants have melted down the silver being found in the house of the Lord and given it to the ones having responsibility for repairs to the house of the Lord.” [10]So Shaphan the scribe spoke to the king, saying, “Hilkiah the priest gave me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king. [11]Now when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes.[†] [12]Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the servant of the king, saying, [13]“Go and

inquire of the Lord for me, for all the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that was found. For great is the wrath of the Lord kindled against us, because our fathers did not hear and obey the words of this book, to do according to all the words of this book written concerning us.”

[14]So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, the keeper of the wardrobe, who dwelt in Jerusalem studying the Law, and they spoke with her. [15]And she said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, [16]‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon those who dwell here, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. [17]For they forsook Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be kindled against this place. It shall not be quenched.’ ” [18]And to the king of Judah, sending you to seek out the Lord, thus you shall say this to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel, “The words which you heard, [19]because your heart was softened, and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard I spoke against this place and those dwelling in it, that it will disappear and become a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, so I have heard you,” says the Lord. [20]“Behold, it shall not be so. I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace. Your eyes shall not see any of the evils which I shall bring on this place.” ’ ” They brought the message back to the king.

True Worship of God Is Restored

23 Now the king sent and gathered to himself all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.[†] [2]The king went up to the house of the Lord with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great. He read all the words of the Book of the Covenant discovered in the house of the Lord for them to hear. [3]Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments, and His testimonies, and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to conform to the words of this covenant written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant.

[4]So the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and those who had charge of the weights, to bring out of the temple of the Lord all the articles made for Baal, and for the sacred wooden image, and for all the host of heaven. Then he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron and carried their ashes to Bethel.[†] [5]And he put an end to the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places, in the cities of Judah, and in the places all around Jerusalem. This included those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. [6]Then he took the wooden image from the house of the Lord to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem. He burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes. He threw its ashes on the graves of the sons of the people. [7]So in the house of the Lord, he tore down the ritual booths of the male temple prostitutes, the place where the women wove linen garments for the wooden image. [8]Then he led up all the priests from the cities of Judah and defiled the high places where the priests burned incense, from

Geba to Beersheba. And he pulled down the house of the gate by the entrance of the Gate of Joshua, the governor of the city, which was to the left of the city gate. [9]Only the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, for they only ate leavened bread among their brethren.

[10]He defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, so no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire as an offering to Molech. [11]Then he removed the horses the kings of Judah dedicated to the sun at the entrance to the house of the Lord, by the offering box of Nathan, the king's eunuch, in the court. He burned the chariot of the sun with fire. [12]As for the altars made by the kings of Judah on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, and the altars Manasseh made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, the king pulled them down and removed them by force. He cast their dust into the Brook Kidron. [13]Then the king defiled the house east of Jerusalem, on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel built for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom, the abomination of the people of Ammon. [14]And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars, and he cut down the sacred wooden images and filled their places with human bones.

[15]As for the altar at Bethel, the high altar which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had made, who led Israel to sin, that altar and that high place he tore down and crushed the stones. He ground them into dust and burned the wooden image. [16]As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs on the mountain there in the city. So he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them

on the altar. He defiled it according to the word of the Lord which the man of God had spoken when Jeroboam stood at the altar during the festival. And he turned and raised his eyes to the tomb of the man of God who spoke those words,[†] [17]and he said, “What gravestone is this that I see?” So the men of the city told him, “It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things you did against the altar of Bethel.” [18]Then he said, “Leave him alone. Let no one move his bones.” So his bones were saved along with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria. [19]Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places, the ones the kings of Israel made in the cities of Samaria to provoke the Lord to anger. And he did to them as he had done in Bethel. [20]He put to death all the priests of the high places on the altars, and burned human bones on them, and returned to Jerusalem.

Passover and Order Restored

[21]King Josiah commanded all the people, saying, “Keep the Passover to the Lord our God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.”[†] [22]Such a Passover had not been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, not in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. [23]But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the Passover was held to the Lord in Jerusalem. [24]So Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and wizards, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem. He did so that he might perform the words of the Law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord. [25]Before him, there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his

might, according to all the Law of Moses. There was no king like him who arose after him.

[26]Yet the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath aroused against Judah. For all the provocations of Manasseh had provoked Him.[†] [27]So the Lord said, “I shall also remove Judah from My sight, as I removed Israel. I shall reject this city Jerusalem which I chose, and the house where I said, ‘My name shall be there.’ ”

Josiah Killed in Battle

[28]Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and everything he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [29]In his days, Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. [30]Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

Jehoahaz Is King of Judah

[31]Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he ruled for three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. [32]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to all the things his fathers had done. [33]Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not rule in Jerusalem. He imposed a tribute on the land, a talent of gold and one

hundred talents of silver. [34]Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there.

Jehoiakim Is King of Judah

[35]So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh. But at the command of Pharaoh, he taxed the land; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Necho. [36]Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. [37]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to all his fathers had done.

Judah Is Overrun

24 In his days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.[†] [2]So the Lord sent against him raiding bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the sons of Ammon. He sent them against the land of Judah to destroy it, true to the word of the Lord He had spoken by His servants the prophets. [3]Moreover, it was the purpose of the Lord concerning Judah to remove them from His sight. This, because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did, [4]and for all the innocent blood he shed. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord did not want to pardon him.

[5]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and everything he did, are these not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? [6]So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. [7]As for the king of Egypt, he did not come out of his land anymore. The king of Babylon seized all that belonged to the king of Egypt, from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

Jehoiachin Is King of Judah

[8]Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for three months. His mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. [9]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to everything his father did.

[10]At that time Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem, and he besieged the city.[†] [11]And Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, entered the city, and his servants besieged it. [12]Then Jehoiachin king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon himself, and his servants, and his mother, and his officers, and his eunuchs. And the king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign.

[13]Then he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon the king of Israel made in the temple of the Lord, according to the word of the Lord.

[14]Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem, all the officers and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and

smiths. None remained except the poor of the land. [15]He then carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon along with the king's mother, the king's wives, and his eunuchs. And he led the mighty of the land into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon, [16]and all the valiant men, seven thousand, and one thousand craftsmen and smiths, all of them strong and fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. [17]Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his son king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah Is King of Judah

[18]Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah.[†] [19]And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, all that Jehoiakim had done. [20]For it was according to the anger of the Lord against Jerusalem and Judah, until He finally cast them out from His presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

The Fall of Jerusalem

25 In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it. They built a siege wall against it all around.[†] [2]So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. [3]By the ninth day of the month, the famine was severe in the city, and there was no food for the people of the land. [4]Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night. They ran by way of the gate, between the walls, through the gate of the king's garden. They and the king ran out, even though the Chaldeans still encircled the entire city. They left by way of the plain toward Arabah. [5]But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. The king's army was scattered all about him. [6]So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he pronounced judgment on him. [7]And before his eyes, they killed the sons of Zedekiah. They then put out his eyes, bound him with fetters, and took him to Babylon.

The Temple Is Destroyed

[8]In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, came before the king of Babylon in Jerusalem.[†] [9]He burned the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every house was burned [10]by the captain of the guard. [11]Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the people who remained in the city, and those who deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude. [12]But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

[13]The Chaldeans broke into pieces the bronze pillars, and the bases, and the bronze Sea in the house of the Lord. They carried their bronze to Babylon. [14]They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils used by the priests to minister. [15]The captain of the guard took away the fire-pans, the golden bowls, and the silver. [16]The amount of bronze in the two pillars, the one Sea, and the carts, and all the articles made by Solomon for the house of the Lord, was beyond

measure. [17]The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the capital on it was of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network.

[18]And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the high-priest, and Zephaniah the second in order, and the three doorkeepers. [19]And they took out of the city one eunuch who was commander of the men of war, and five men who saw the face of the king that were found in the city, and the secretary of the commander-in-chief, who took account of the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land that were found in the city. [20]And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon, to Reblatha. [21]And the king of Babylon struck them and killed them at Reblatha in the land of Amath. So Judah was carried away from his land.

Judah Is Captive in Babylon

[22]As for the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take away captive, he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over them. [23]All the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon made Gedaliah governor, so they—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite—they and their men came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. [24]Then Gedaliah made them and their men take an oath, and he said to them, “Do not be afraid of the servants of the

Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.”

[25]But in the seventh month, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Jews as well as the Chaldeans with him. [26]So all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies arose and went to Egypt because they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

Jehoiachin Is Freed from Prison

[27]In the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.[†] [28]He spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings with him in Babylon. [29]So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments and ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. [30]And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

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The First Book of the Chronicles

Author—Traditionally, Ezra is believed to be the author.

Date—About 450 BC

Major Themes—*The hope of the coming Messiah, and the continuation of the Davidic covenant.* “I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; his throne shall be established forever” (17:14).

Background—The LXX [translation first divided Chronicles into two books and named them “the things omitted,” meaning that the Greek translators understood these books to be a supplement to the four Books of Kingdoms. Much of the text of this book is taken from portions of other books and sacred writings. The genealogies recorded here from Adam to David serve as a preamble to the genealogies of Christ in the New Testament (Mt 1), beginning with the tribe of the Levites, since the Messiah will descend from Judah. The writer idealizes David, ignoring his transgressions, and records his final days and the transfer of the kingdom to Solomon, his son and successor.

Outline

I. Genealogical Lists: Adam to the Babylonian Exile (1:1–9:44)

  A. The patriarchs (1:1–42)

  B. The twelve sons of Jacob/Israel (2:1, 2)

  C. The family of Judah (2:3–4:23)

  D. The sons of Simeon (4:24–43)

    - E. Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (5:1–26)
    - F. Levi and families (5:27–6:66)
    - G. Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher (7:1–9:44)
- II. King David's Reign and the Founding of the Temple (10:1–29:30)
    - A. The death of Saul (10:1–13)
    - B. Capture of Jerusalem; David's reign (11:1–12:41)
    - C. The return of the ark and founding of David's kingdom (13:1–16:42)
    - D. Promise of messianic dynasty (17:1–27)
    - E. David's military campaigns (18:1–20:8)
    - F. The census (21:1–30)
    - G. Plans for the temple (22:1–19)
    - H. Organization of the temple service (23:1–26:32)
    - I. Administration of the kingdom's structure (27:1–34)
    - J. David's final days (28:1–29:20)
    - K. Solomon's succession; David's death (29:21–30)

From Adam to Abraham

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh,[†] [2]Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, [3]Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, [4]Noah, the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.[†]

[5]The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. [6]The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Diphath, and Togarmah. [7]The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshishah, Kittim, and Rodanim.

[8]The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. [9]The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabtecha. The sons of Raama

were Sheba and Dedan. [10]Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty hunter on the earth.[†]

[11]The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, and Arphaxad. [12]Shela, [13]Eber, Pheleg, Ragan, [14]Seruch, Nachor, Tharrha, [15]Abraham.

Descendants of Ishmael

[16]And the sons of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael. [17]And these are their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nabaeoth, and Kedar, Nabdeel, Massam, [18]Masma, Iduma, Masse, Chondan, Thaeman, [19]Jettur, Naphes, Kedma: these the sons of Ishmael. [20]And the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bore him Zembram, Jexan, Madiam, Madam, Sobac, Soe; and the sons of Jexan: Daedan and Sabai; [21]and the sons of Madiam: Gephar, and Opher, and Enoch, and Abida, and Eldada; all these the sons of Keturah.

Descendants of Isaac

[22]And Abraham begot Isaac: and the sons of Isaac were Jacob and Esau.

[23]The sons of Esau: Eliphaz, and Raguel, and Jeul, and Jeglom, and Core. [24]The sons of Eliphaz: Thaeman, and Omar, Sophar, and Gootham, and Kenez, and Thamna, and Amalek. [25]And the sons of Raguel, Naches, Zare, Some, and Moze.

Descendants of Seir

[26]The sons of Seir: Lotan, Sobal, Sebegon, Ana, Deson, Osar, and Disan. [27]And the sons of Lotan: Chorri and Aeman; and the sister of Lotan was Thamna. [28]The sons of Sobal: Alon, Machanath, Taebel, Sophi, and Onan; and the sons of Sebegon: Aeth and Sonan. [29]The sons of Sonan, Daeson; and the sons of Daeson: Emeron, and Asebon, and Jethram, and Charran. [30]And the sons of Hosar: Balaam, and Zucam, and Acan; the sons of Disan: Os and Aran.

The Kings of Edom

[31]And these are their kings: Bela the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. [32]When Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. [33]When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. [34]And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. The name of his city was Avith. [35]When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. [36]And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his place. [37]When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. [38]And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadad the son of Barad reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Phogor. [39]Hadad died also. And the chiefs of Edom were Chief Timnah, Chief Aliah, Chief Jetheth, [40]Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, [41]Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, [42]Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom.

Descendants of Israel

2 These were the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, [2]Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

From Judah to David

[3]The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, and Shelah. These three were born to him by the daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess. Er, the firstborn of Judah, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; so He killed him.[†] [4]And Tamar, his daughter-in-law, bore him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah were five. [5]The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. [6]The sons of Zerah were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara, five of them in all. [7]The sons of Carmi: Achar, the troublemaker of Israel, who was nullified with a curse. [8]The son of Ethan was Azariah. [9]Also the sons of Hezron who were born to him were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai. [10]Ram begot Amminadab, and Amminadab begot Nahshon, leader of the children of Judah; [11]Nahshon begot Salma, and Salma begot Boaz; [12]Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse; [13]Jesse begot Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, [14]Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, [15]Ozem the sixth, and David the seventh. [16]Now their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. The sons of Zeruiah were Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, three. [17]Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.

Descendants of Hezron

[18]Caleb the son of Hezron had children by Azubah, his wife, and by Jerioth. Now these were her sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. [19]When Azubah died, Caleb took Ephrath as his wife, who bore him Hur. [20]And

Hur begot Uri, and Uri begot Bezalel. [21]Now afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir, the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub. [22]Segub begot Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. [23]Geshur and Syria took from them the towns of Jair, with Kenath and its towns, sixty towns. All these belonged to the sons of Machir the father of Gilead. [24]After Hezron died in Caleb-Ephrathah, Hezron's wife Abijah bore him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.

Descendants of Jerahmeel

[25]The sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron, were Ram, the firstborn, and Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. [26]Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. [27]The sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. [28]The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. The sons of Shammai were Nadab and Abishur. [29]And the name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. [30]The sons of Nadab were Seled and Appaim; Seled died without children. [31]The son of Appaim was Ishi, the son of Ishi was Sheshan, and Sheshan's son was Ahlai. [32]The sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai, were Jether and Jonathan; Jether died without children. [33]The sons of Jonathan were Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. [34]Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. And Sheshan had an Egyptian servant whose name was Jarha. [35]Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant as wife, and she bore him Attai. [36]Attai begot Nathan, and Nathan begot Zabad; [37]Zabad begot Ephlal, and Ephlal begot Obed; [38]Obed begot

Jehu, and Jehu begot Azariah; [39]Azariah begot Helez, and Helez begot Eleasah; [40]Eleasah begot Sismai, and Sismai begot Shallum; [41]Shallum begot Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begot Elishama.

Descendants of Caleb

[42]The descendants of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel were Mesha, his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. [43]The sons of Hebron were Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. [44]Shema begot Raham the father of Jorkoam, and Rekem begot Shammai. [45]And the son of Shammai was Maon, and Maon was the father of Beth Zur. [46]Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran begot Gazez. [47]The sons of Jahdai were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph. [48]Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. [49]She also bore Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah and the father of Gibea. And the daughter of Caleb was Achsah. [50]These were the descendants of Caleb: The sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, were Shobal the father of Kirjath Jearim, [51]Salma the father of Bethlehem, and Hareph the father of Beth Gader. [52]And Shobal the father of Kirjath Jearim had descendants: Haroeh and half of the families of Manuhoth. [53]The families of Kirjath Jearim were the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraites. From these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites. [54]The sons of Salma were Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth-Beth-Joab, half of the Manahethites, and the Zorites. [55]And the families of the scribes who dwelt at Jabez were the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Suchathites. These were the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

Descendants of David

3 Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: The firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelitess;[†] [2]the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; [3]the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah. [4]These six were born to him in Hebron. There he reigned seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. [5]And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, four by Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel. [6]Also there were Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, [7]Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, [8]Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine in all. [9]These were all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines, and Tamar their sister.

Descendants of Solomon

[10]The sons of Solomon were Rehoboam; Abijah was his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son,[†] [11]Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, [12]Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, [13]Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, [14]Amon his son, and Josiah his son. [15]The sons of Josiah were Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth Shallum. [16]The sons of Jehoiakim were Jeconiah his son and Zedekiah his son.

Descendants of Jeconiah

[17]The sons of Jeconiah were Assir, Shealtiel his son, [18]and Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. [19]The sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei. The sons of Zerubbabel were Meshullam, Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister, [20]and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-Hesed, five in all. [21]The sons of Hananiah were Pelatiah and Jeshaiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, and the sons of Shechaniah. [22]The son of Shechaniah was Shemaiah. The sons of Shemaiah were Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat, six in all. [23]The sons of Neariah were Elioenai, Hezekiah, and Azrikam, three in all. [24]The sons of Elioenai were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani, seven in all.

Descendants of Judah

4 The sons of Judah were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.[†] [2]And Reaiah the son of Shobal begot Jahath, and Jahath begot Ahumai and Lahad. These were the families of the Zorathites. [3]These were the sons of the father of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister was Hazelelponi; [4]and Penuel was the father of Gedor, and Ezer was the father of Hushah. These were the sons of Hur: the firstborn of Ephrathah the father of Bethlehem. [5]And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. [6]Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah. [7]The sons of Helah were Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan. [8]Koz begot Anub, Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum. [9]Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.”[†] [10]And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and make known that You will not humble me.” Then God made it all happen as he requested.

[11]Chelub the brother of Shuhah begot Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. [12]And Eshton begot Beth-Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Ir-Nahash. These were the men of Rechah. [13]The sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Seraiah. The sons of Othniel were Hathath, [14]and Meonothai who begot Ophrah. Seraiah begot Joab the father of Ge-Harashim, for they were craftsmen. [15]The sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh were Iru, Elah, and Naam. The son of Elah was Kenaz. [16]The sons of Jehalelel were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. [17]The sons of Ezrah were Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. Mered's wife bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. [18]His wife Jehudijah bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Sochoh, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. These were the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. [19]The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister of Naham, were the fathers of Keilah the Garmite and of Eshtemoa the Maachathite. [20]The sons of Shimon were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-Hanan, and Tilon. The sons of Ishi were Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth. [21]The sons of Shelah the son of Judah were Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers of the house of Ashbea; [22]also Jokim, and the men of Chozeba and Joash and Saraph, who lived in Moab, and he turned them back. Now the records are ancient. [23]These were the potters living at Netaim and Gederah with the king, who prevailed in his kingdom and lived there.

Descendants of Simeon

[24]The sons of Simeon were Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul, [25]Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, and Mishma his son. [26]The sons of Mishma were Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, and Shimei his son. [27]Shimei had sixteen sons and three daughters; but his brothers did not have many children, nor did any of their families multiply as much as the children of Judah. [28]They dwelt at Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, [29]Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, [30]Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, [31]Beth-Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth-Biri, and at Shaaraim. These were their cities until the reign of David. [32]And their villages were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan, five cities, [33]and all their villages were round about these cities as far as Baal.

This was their possession and their allotment: [34]Meshobab, Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah; [35]Joel, and Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel; [36]Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, and Benaiah; [37]Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah; [38]these mentioned by name were leaders in their families, and they increased abundantly in their fathers’ households.

[39]So they went to the entrance of Gedor, as far as the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. [40]And they found rich, good pasture, and the land was broad, quiet, and peaceful. This is because some Hamites formerly lived there. [41]These recorded by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and they attacked their tents and the Meunites who

were found there, and utterly destroyed them, as it is to this day. So they dwelt in their place, because there was pasture for their flocks there. [42]Now some of them, five hundred men of the sons of Simeon, went to Mount Seir, having as their captains Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. [43]And they killed the remnants of the Amalekites, and dwell there to this day.

Descendants of Reuben

5 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel. He was indeed the firstborn, but his father gave his blessing to his son Joseph, the son of Israel, because Reuben climbed onto his father's bed, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright;[†] [2]for Judah was able to prevail over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the blessing was Joseph's.[†] [3]The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. [4]The sons of Joel were Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, [5]Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, [6]and Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, carried into captivity. He was leader of the Reubenites. [7]And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was registered: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, [8]and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal-Meon. [9]And because their flocks were many in the land of Gilead, they settled eastward, as far as the entrance of the wilderness on this side of the River Euphrates. [10]Now in the days of Saul they made war with the sojourners, and those who dwelt in tents throughout the entire area east of Gilead fell by their hand.

Descendants of Gad

[11]The children of Gad dwelt next to them in the land of Bashan as far as Salcah: [12]Joel was the chief, Shapham the next, then Jaanai and Shaphat in Bashan, [13]and their brethren according to the house of their fathers: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jachan, Zia, and Eber, seven in all. [14]These were the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; [15]Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, was chief of their fathers' house. [16]And the Gadites dwelt in Gilead, in Bashan and in its villages, and in all the common lands of Sharon within their borders. [17]All these were registered by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

[18]The sons of Reuben, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh had forty-four thousand seven hundred sixty valiant men able to bear shield and sword, to shoot with the bow, and who were skillful in war. [19]They made war with the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. [20]And they prevailed against them, and the Hagrites and all their encampments were delivered into their hand; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He heeded them, for they hoped in Him. [21]Then they took away fifty thousand of their camels, two hundred fifty thousand of their sheep, and two thousand of their donkeys, also one hundred thousand of their men; [22]for many fell dead, because the war was of God. And they dwelt in their place until the captivity.

Descendants of Manasseh (East)

[23]And the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land from Bashan to Baal-Hermon, and Senir to Mount Hermon. [24]These were the heads of the houses of their fathers: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were mighty men of valor, of fame, who were heads of the houses of their fathers.

[25]But they were unfaithful to the God of their fathers and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them.[†] [26]So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day.

Descendants of Levi

[27]The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. [28]The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. [29]The children of Amram were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [30]Eleazar begot Phinehas, and Phinehas begot Abishua; [31]Abishua begot Bukki, and Bukki begot Uzzi; [32]Uzzi begot Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begot Meraioth; [33]Meraioth begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; [34]Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Ahimaaz; [35]Ahimaaz begot Azariah, and Azariah begot Johanan; [36]Johanan begot Azariah: it was he who ministered as priest in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem. [37]Azariah begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; [38]Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Shallum; [39]Shallum begot Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begot Azariah; [40]Azariah begot Seraiah, and Seraiah

begot Jehozadak. [41]Jehozadak went into captivity when the Lord carried Judah and Jerusalem into captivity by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

6 The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.[†] [2]These are the names of the sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei. [3]The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. [4]The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. Now these are the families of the Levites according to their fathers: [5]of Gershon were Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, [6]Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, and Jeatherai his son. [7]The sons of Kohath were Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, [8]Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son, [9]Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son. [10]The sons of Elkanah were Amasai and Ahimoth. [11]As for Elkanah, the sons of Elkanah were Zophai his son, Nahath his son, [12]Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, and Elkanah his son. [13]The sons of Samuel were Joel the firstborn, and Abijah the second. [14]The sons of Merari were Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, [15]Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, and Asaiah his son.

Musicians in the Temple

[16]These are the men whom David appointed over the service of the singers in the house of the Lord after the ark came to rest.[†] [17]And they ministered in front of the tabernacle of witness, playing on instruments, until Solomon built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. And for their services, they stood according to their order. [18]And these are the ones who ministered with their sons: of the sons of the Kohathites were Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, [19]the son of Elkanah, the son of

Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, [20]the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, [21]the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, [22]the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, [23]the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. [24]And his brother Asaph, who stood at his right hand; Asaph was the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea, [25]the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah, [26]the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, [27]the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, [28]the son of Jahath, the son of Gershon, the son of Levi. [29]Their brethren, the sons of Merari, on the left hand were Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, [30]the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, [31]the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer, [32]the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi. [33]And their brethren according to the houses of their fathers, the Levites, were appointed to every kind of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

Descendants of Aaron

[34]But Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices on the altar of whole burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the most holy place and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. [35]Now these are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, [36]Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, [37]Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, [38]Zadok his son, and Ahimaaz his son.

The Levites’ Dwelling Places

[39]Now these are their dwelling places throughout their settlements in their territory, for they were given by lot to the sons of Aaron, of the family of the Kohathites:[†] [40]They gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, with its surrounding common lands. [41]But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. [42]And to the sons of Aaron they gave one of the cities of refuge, Hebron, and Libnah with its common lands, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa with its common lands, [43]Hilen with its common lands, Debir with its common lands, [44]Ashan with its common lands, and Beth-Shemesh with its common lands. [45]And from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba with its common lands, Alemeth with its common lands, and Anathoth with its common lands. All their cities among their families were thirteen. [46]To the rest of the family of the tribe of the Kohathites, they were given, by lot, ten cities from half the tribe of Manasseh.

[47]And to the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, they gave thirteen cities from the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. [48]To the sons of Merari, throughout their families, they gave twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun. [49]So the children of Israel gave these cities with their common lands to the Levites. [50]And they gave by lot from the tribe of the children of Judah, from the tribe of the children of Simeon, and from the tribe of the children of Benjamin these cities, which are called by their names.

[51]Now some of the families of the sons of Kohath were given cities as their territory from the tribe of Ephraim. [52]And they gave them one of the cities of refuge, Shechem with its common lands in the mountains of Ephraim, also Gezer with its common lands, [53]Jokmeam with its common lands, Beth-Horon with its common lands, [54]Aijalon with its common lands, and Gath-Rimmon with its common lands. [55]And from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Aner with its common lands, and Bileam with its common lands, for the rest of the family of the sons of Kohath.

[56]From the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh, the sons of Gershon were given Golan in Bashan with its common lands and Ashtaroth with its common lands. [57]And from the tribe of Issachar, Kedesh with its common lands, Daberath with its common lands, [58]Ramoth with its common lands, and Anem with its common lands. [59]And from the tribe of Asher, Mashal with its common lands, Abdon with its common lands, [60]Hukok with its common lands, and Rehob with its common lands. [61]And from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its common lands, Hammon with its common lands, and Kirjathaim with its common lands.

[62]From the tribe of Zebulun, the rest of the children of Merari were given Rimmon with its common lands and Tabor with its common lands. [63]And on the other side of the Jordan, across from Jericho on the east side of the Jordan, they were given from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its common lands, Jahzah with its common lands, [64]Kedemoth with its common lands, and Mephaath with its common lands. [65]And from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its common lands,

Mahanaim with its common-lands, [66]Heshbon with its common lands, and Jazer with its common lands.

Descendants of Issachar

[7] The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four in all.[†] [2]The sons of Tola were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of the houses of their fathers. Strong in power, their number in the days of David was twenty-two thousand six hundred, according to their generations. [3]The son of Uzzi was Izrahiah, and the sons of Izrahiah were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Ishiah. All five of them were chief men. [4]And with them, by their generations, according to the houses of their fathers, were thirty-six thousand troops ready for war; for they had many wives and sons. [5]Now their brethren among all the families of Issachar were mighty men of valor: listed by their genealogies, they were eighty-seven thousand in all.

Descendants of Benjamin

[6]The sons of Benjamin were Bela, Becher, and Jediael, three in all. [7]The sons of Bela were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri, five in all. They were heads of houses of families—influential men—and their number was twenty-two thousand thirty-four. [8]The sons of Becher were Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jerimoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Becher. [9]As heads of the houses of their fathers—men of influence—they numbered twenty thousand two hundred, according to their generations. [10]The son of Jediael was Bilhan, and the sons of Bilhan were Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tharshish, and Ahishahar.

[11]All these sons of Jediael were heads of the houses of their fathers’ houses; there were seventeen thousand two hundred men, strong in strength, fit to go out for war and battle. [12]Shuppim and Huppim were the sons of Ir. Hushim was the son of Aher.

Descendants of Naphtali

[13]The sons of Naphtali were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

Descendants of Manasseh (West)

[14]The descendants of Manasseh: his Syrian concubine bore him Machir the father of Gilead, the father of Asriel. [15]Machir took as his wife the sister of Huppim and Shuppim, whose name was Maachah. The name of Gilead's grandson was Zelophehad, but Zelophehad begot only daughters. [16]Maachah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she called his name Peresh. The name of his brother was Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam and Rakem. [17]The son of Ulam was Bedan. These were the descendants of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. [18]His sister Hammoleketh bore Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah. [19]The sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

Descendants of Ephraim

[20]The sons of Ephraim were Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eladah his son, Tahath his son,[†] [21]Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. The men of Gath who were born in that land killed them

because they came down to take away their cattle. [22]Then Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. [23]And when he went in to his wife, she conceived and bore a son; and he called his name Beriah, because tragedy had come upon his house. [24]And for those who remained, he also built Lower and Upper Beth-Horon. And the son of Uzzen was Sheerah; [25]and Rephah was his son, as well as Resheph, and Telah his son, Tahan his son, [26]Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, [27]Nun his son, and Joshua his son. [28]Now their possessions and dwelling places were Bethel and its towns: to the east Naaran, to the west Gezer and its towns, and Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah and its towns; [29]and by the borders of the children of Manasseh were Beth-Shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph, the son of Israel.

Descendants of Asher

[30]The sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. [31]The sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith. [32]And Heber begot Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and their sister Shua. [33]The sons of Japhlet were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath—these were the children of Japhlet. [34]The sons of Shemer were Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram. [35]And the sons of his brother Helem were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. [36]The sons of Zophah were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, [37]Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Jithran, and Beera. [38]The sons of Jether were Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara. [39]The sons of Ulla

were Arah, Haniel, and Rizia. [40]All these were the children of Asher, heads of the households of their fathers' houses, choice men, strong in strength and chief leaders. They were recorded by generations among the army fit for battle. Their number was twenty-six thousand.

Descendants of Benjamin, Continued

8 Now Benjamin begot Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, Aharah the third,[†] [2]Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. [3]The sons of Bela were Addar, Gera, Abihud, [4]Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, [5]Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram. [6]These are the sons of Ehud, who were the heads of the houses of their fathers, of the inhabitants of Geba—they who forced them to move to Manahath: [7]Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera, who forced them to move. He begot Uzza and Ahihud. [8]Also Shaharaim had children in the country of Moab, after he had sent away Hushim and Baara his wives. [9]By Hodesh his wife he begot Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, [10]Jeuz, Sachiah, and Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of their fathers' houses. [11]And by Hushim he begot Abitub and Elpaal. [12]The sons of Elpaal were Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod with its towns; [13]and Beriah and Shema, who were heads of their fathers' houses of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who drove out the inhabitants of Gath. [14]Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth, [15]Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, [16]Michael, Ispah, and Joha were the sons of Beriah. [17]Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, [18]Ishmerai, Jizliah, and Jobab were the sons of Elpaal. [19]Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, [20]Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, [21]Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath were the sons of Shimei. [22]Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, [23]Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, [24]Hananiah, Elam, Antothijah, [25]Iphdeiah, and Penuel were the sons of Shashak. [26]Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, [27]Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri were the sons of Jeroham. [28]These were heads of the houses of their fathers by their generations, chief men. These dwelt in Jerusalem. [29]Now the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name was Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon. [30]And his firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, [31]Gedor, Ahio, Zecher, [32]and Mikloth, who begot Shimeah. They also dwelt alongside their relatives in Jerusalem, with their brethren.

Descendants of Saul

[33]Ner begot Kish, Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal. [34]The son of Jonathan was Merib-Baal, and Merib-Baal begot Micah. [35]The sons of Micah were Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz. [36]And Ahaz begot Jehoaddah; Jehoaddah begot Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza. [37]Moza begot Binea, Raphah his son, Eleasah his son, and Azel his son. [38]Azel had six sons whose names were these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel. [39]And the sons of Eshek his brother were Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third. [40]The sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor, archers. They had many sons and grandsons, one hundred fifty in all. These were all sons of Benjamin.

The Return from Captivity to Jerusalem

9 And the census was of all Israel, those who had been inscribed in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, along with those banished to

Babylon in their lawlessness;[†] [2]and those who dwelled formerly with their possessions in the cities of Israel, and the priests, the Levites, and those to whom permission had been given.

[3]Then some of the children of Judah dwelt in Jerusalem, along with some of the children of Benjamin, and the children of Ephraim and Manasseh: [4]Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the descendants of Perez, the son of Judah. [5]Of the Shilonites: Asaiah the firstborn and his sons. [6]Of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel, and their brethren, six hundred ninety. [7]Of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah; [8]Ibneiah the son of Jeroham; Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri; Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; [9]and their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred fifty-six. All these men were heads of the families, according to the houses of their fathers.

The Priests in Jerusalem

[10]Of the priests, there were Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, and Jachin; [11]Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the officer over the house of God; [12]Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah; Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; [13]and their brethren, heads of the houses of their fathers, one thousand seven hundred sixty. They were very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

The Levites in Jerusalem

[14]Of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; [15]Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph; [16]Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun; and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

Gatekeepers of the Levites

[17]The gatekeepers were Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their brethren. Shallum was the chief.[†] [18]Until then they had been gatekeepers for the camps of the children of Levi at the King's Gate on the east. [19]Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren from his father's house, the Korahites, were in charge of the work of the service, gatekeepers of the tabernacle. Their fathers had been keepers of the entrance to the camp of the Lord. [20]And Phinehas the son of Eleazar had been the officer over them in time past, and these were with him. [21]Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was keeper of the door of the tabernacle of the testimony. [22]All those chosen as gatekeepers were two hundred twelve, and in their villages they were recorded by their genealogy. David and Samuel, the seer, appointed them for their faithfulness.

[23]So they and their sons were to guard the gates of the house of the Lord, the house of the tabernacle. [24]The gatekeepers were assigned to the four directions: the east, west, north, and south. [25]And their brethren in their villages had to come with them from time to time for seven days. [26]For in this trusted office were four chief gatekeepers; they were Levites. They had

charge over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. [27]And they remained round about the house of God, for they had charge over the keys to unlock the doors of the temple every morning.

Other Work of the Levites

[28]Now some of them were in charge of the serving vessels, for they brought them in and took them out by count. [29]Some of them were appointed over the furnishings and over all the implements of the sanctuary, and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the incense and the spices. [30]And some of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices. [31]Mattithiah of the Levites, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, was entrusted over the items of the sacrificial offering from the chief priest's frying pan. [32]And Banaias the Kohathite out of their brethren was in charge of preparing the showbread for every Sabbath. [33]These are the singers, heads of the houses of the fathers of the Levites, who were assigned daily, freed from other duties, for they were employed in that work day and night. [34]These heads of the houses of the fathers of the Levites were heads throughout their generations. They dwelt in Jerusalem.

Family Line of King Saul

[35]Jeiel the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name was Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon. [36]His firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, [37]Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. [38]And Mikloth begot Shimeam. They also dwelt alongside their relatives in Jerusalem, with their brethren.

[39]Ner begot Kish, Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal. [40]The son of Jonathan was Merib-Baal, and Merib-Baal begot Micah. [41]The sons of Micah were Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz. [42]And Ahaz begot Jarah; Jarah begot Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza; [43]Moza begot Binea, Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, and Azel his son. [44]And Azel had six sons, whose names were Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan; these were the sons of Azel.

The Death of Saul and His Sons

10 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.[†] [2]Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed the sons of Saul—Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua. [3]The battle became fierce against Saul, and he was wounded by the archers who struck him. [4]Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and dishonor me.” But his armor-bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. [5]And when his armor-bearer saw Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died. [6]So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together. [7]And when all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they had fled, that Saul and his sons were dead, and that they left their cities fleeing, then the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

[8]So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his sons dead on Mount Gilboa. [9]They stripped him

and took his head and his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among the people. [10]Then they put his armor in the temple of their gods and fastened his head to the temple of Dagon. [11]And when all of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines did to Saul, [12]all the valiant men arose from Gilead and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons back with them to Jabesh. They buried their bones under the oak tree at Jabesh and fasted seven days.

[13]So Saul died for his lawlessness which he committed against the Lord, according to the Word of the Lord, because he did not keep it, and because Saul sought counsel of a wizard and Samuel the prophet answered him; so He slew him and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

David Is King of All Israel

11 Then all Israel came to David at Hebron, saying, “Indeed, we are your bone and your flesh.[†] [2]Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, it was you who led Israel in and out. And the Lord your God said to you, ‘You shall feed My people Israel, and be a ruler over Israel.’ ” [3]Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel.

[4]And the king and all Israel went to Jerusalem—this is Jebu—and there the Jebusites were inhabiting the land.[†] [5]And the people inhabiting Jebu said to David, “You shall not enter here!” But he seized the stronghold of Mount Zion, which is the City of David. [6]And David said, “Whoever first strikes the Jebusites shall be chief and captain.” And Joab, the son of

Zeruiah, went up first and became chief. [7]Then David dwelt in the stronghold; thereafter he called it the City of David. [8]And he waged war and took the city; around it he fortified the city. [9]So David grew ever stronger, and the Lord Almighty was with him.[†]

David's Mighty Men

[10]Now these were the heads of the mighty men whom David had with him, who strengthened themselves in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the Lord regarding Israel. [11]And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam the son of a Hachmonite, chief of the captains; he lifted up his spear against three hundred and killed them at one time. [12]After him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighty men. [13]He was with David at Pasdammim, and the Philistines gathered there for battle, near a field full of barley. And the people fled from the sight of the Philistines. [14]And he stood in the midst of the field and preserved it, and killed the Philistines. The Lord brought about a great deliverance.

[15]Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock towards David, to the cave of Adullam. The encampment of the Philistines was set up in the valley of Rephaim.[†] [16]David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. [17]And David said with longing, “Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!” [18]So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem by the gate, and took it and brought some to David. Nevertheless, David did not drink it, but

poured it out to the Lord. [19]And he said, “God be merciful to me. Should I do what was spoken? Shall I drink the blood of these men with their lives? For they brought it with their lives in peril.” Therefore he was not willing to drink it. The three mighty men did these things.

[20]Abishai the brother of Joab was chief of another three. He had lifted up his spear against three hundred men, killed them, and won a name among these three.[†] [21]Of the three he was more favored than the other two men, and was chief over them. But of the three of them, he did not go. [22]Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two ruffians of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. [23]And he killed an Egyptian, a man of great height, five cubits tall. In the hand of the Egyptian there was a spear like a weaver's beam, and he went down to him with a staff, snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. [24]These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. [25]Indeed, he was honored more than this thirty, but he did not attain to the first three. And David appointed him over his family.

[26]And the mighty warriors were Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, [27]Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, [28]Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, [29]Sibbechai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, [30]Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, [31]Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah, of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, [32]Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, [33]Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite,

[34]the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shageh the Hararite, [35]Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur, [36]Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, [37]Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, [38]Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, [39]Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite (the armor-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah), [40]Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, [41]Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, [42]Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite (a chief of the Reubenites) and thirty with him, [43]Hanan the son of Maachah, Joshaphat the Mithnite, [44]Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, [45]Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, [46]Eliel the Mahavite, Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam, Ithmah the Moabite, [47]Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

David's Army Expands

12 Now these were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish. They were among the mighty men, helpers in the war,[†] [2]being armed with bows for shooting arrows and using either the right hand or the left for slinging stones. They were of Benjamin, Saul's brethren. [3]The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; Jeziel and Pelet the sons of Azmaveth; Berachah and Jehu the Anathothite; [4]Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; [5]Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite; [6]Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite; [7]Elkanah, Jisshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and

Jashobeam, the Korahites; [8]and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

[9]Some Gadites joined David in the wilderness, strong, mighty men of war, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were as swift as gazelles on the mountains: [10]Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, [11]Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, [12]Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, [13]Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, [14]Jeremiah the tenth, and Machbanai the eleventh. [15]These were from the sons of Gad, captains of the army; the least was over a hundred, and the greatest was over a thousand. [16]These are the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks; and they put to flight all those in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

[17]Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to aid David at the stronghold. [18]David went out and met them, and addressed them by saying, “If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since there is no guile in my hands, may the God of our fathers observe and bring judgment.”

[19]And the Spirit came upon Amasai, a captain of the thirty, and he said:

“Go, you and your people,

David, son of Jesse,

Peace, peace be to you,

And peace to your helpers,

For your God has helped you.”

And David received them and made them captains of the forces.

[20]And some from Manasseh defected to David when he was going with the Philistines to battle against Saul; but they did not help them, for the lords of the Philistines sent him away by agreement, saying, “He may defect to his master Saul and endanger our heads.” [21]When he went to Ziklag, those of Manasseh who defected to him were Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of the thousands who were from Manasseh. [22]And they helped David against the bands of raiders, for they were all mighty men of valor, and they were captains in the army. [23]For at that time they came to David day by day to help him, until it was a great army, like the army of God.

The Soldiers at Hebron

[24]Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war and that came to David at Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the Lord: [25]of the sons of Judah bearing shield and spear, six thousand eight hundred armed for war; [26]of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor fit for war, seven thousand one hundred; [27]of the sons of Levi, four thousand six hundred; [28]Jehoiada, the leader of the Aaronites, and with him three thousand seven hundred; [29]Zadok, a young man, a valiant warrior, and from his father's house, twenty-two captains; [30]of the sons of Benjamin, relatives of Saul, three thousand—until then the greatest part of them had remained loyal to the house of Saul; [31]of the sons of Ephraim, twenty thousand eight hundred mighty men of valor, noted men throughout the house of their fathers; [32]of the half-tribe of

Manasseh, eighteen thousand who were designated by name to come and make David king; [33]of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their command; [34]of Zebulun, there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks; [35]of Naphtali, one thousand captains, and with them thirty-seven thousand with shield and spear; [36]of the Danites who could keep battle formation, twenty-eight thousand six hundred; [37]of Asher, those who could go out to war, able to keep battle formation, forty thousand; [38]of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, from the other side of the Jordan, one hundred twenty thousand armed for battle with every kind of weapon of war.

[39]All these men of war who could keep ranks came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king.[†] [40]All these men of war who could keep ranks in a peaceful spirit came to Hebron to make David king over all Israel; and they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. [41]Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen; provisions of flour, cakes of figs, cakes of raisins, wine, oil, and oxen and sheep abundantly, for there was joy in Israel.[†]

The Ark Is Moved from Kirjath-Jearim

13 Then David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, with every leader.[†] [2]And David said to all the assembly of Israel, “If it is of the Lord our God and it seems good to you, let us send to our brethren remaining in all of Israel, and to the priests, the Levites who are with them in the cities of their possession, so they may gather together with us. [3]And let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not sought it since the days of Saul.” [4]Then all the assembly said they would do so, for this thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

[5]So David summoned an assembly of all Israel, from the boundaries of Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to carry in the ark of God from the city of Kirjath-Jearim. [6]David brought it up, and all Israel went up to the city of David, which belonged to Judah, to bring up the ark of God the Lord, who rests between the cherubim, whose name is proclaimed by it. [7]So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Aminadab; Uzza and his brothers drove the cart. [8]Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their strength, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.

[9]And when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen stumbled. [10]Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand upon the ark. He died there before God. [11]And David became disheartened regarding the Lord's action against Uzza, and called that place Perez-Uzza until this day.

[12]David was afraid of God that day, saying, “How shall I bring the ark of God home by myself?” [13]So David would not move the ark by himself into the City of David, but had it taken aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. [14]The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom, in his house, three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all he had.

David Prospers as King

14 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent to David messengers, cedar trees, masons, and carpenters to build him a house.[†] [2]So David knew the Lord had established him as king over Israel, for his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel.

[3]Then David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters. [4]And these are the names of his children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, [5]Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, [6]Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, [7]Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

[8]Now when the Philistines heard David was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David. When David heard of it, he went out to meet them. [9]But the Philistines came and raided the Valley of the Giants. [10]And David inquired of God, saying, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?” The Lord said to him, “Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand.”

[11]So he went up to Baal-Perazim, where David defeated them. Then David said, “God broke through the lines of my enemy like a breach of water.” He thus called the name of that place Breach of Perazim.[†] [12]And there the Philistines left behind their idols, and David commanded them to burn them up by fire.

[13]And again the Philistines made a raid on the Valley of the Giants.[†] [14]And again David inquired of God, and God said to him, “You shall not go up after them. Instead, circle around them and come upon them near the pear trees. [15]And it shall be, when you hear the tops of the pear trees rustling in the wind, then you shall enter into battle, for God has gone out before you to defeat the army of the Philistines.” [16]So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer. [17]Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the terror of him upon all nations.

Preparing to Transport the Ark

15 David built houses for himself in the City of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it.[†]

[2]Then David said, “No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the Lord has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever.” [3]And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the Lord to its place which he prepared for it. [4]Then David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites: [5]of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and one hundred twenty of his brethren; [6]of the sons of

Merari, Asaiah the chief, and two hundred fifty of his brethren; [7]of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and one hundred thirty of his brethren; [8]of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and two hundred of his brethren; [9]of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and eighty of his brethren; [10]of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and one hundred twelve of his brethren.

[11]And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. [12]He said to them, “You, the heads of the families of the Levites, sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, so you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place I prepared for it. [13]Because you were not prepared the first time, because we did not strive for judgment, God divided us within ourselves.” [14]So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. [15]As Moses had commanded, in accordance with the written word of the Lord, the sons of the Levites took the ark of God upon their shoulders with bearing-poles.

[16]Then David said to the chief of the Levites, “Establish your brethren to be the singers with musical instruments—stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals—to sing invitingly in a voice of joyfulness unto His heaven.” [17]So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of their brethren, the sons of Merari, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; [18]and with them their brethren of the second rank: Zechariah, Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers; [19]the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were to sound the cymbals of bronze; [20]Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah,

and Benaiah, with strings according to Alamoth; [21]Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, to direct with harps on the Sheminith; [22]Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was in charge of the music because he was skillful; [23]Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers for the ark; [24]Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, were to blow the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-Edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark.

The Ark Is Moved to Jerusalem

[25]With joy David and the elders of Israel and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the house of Obed-Edom.[†] [26]And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, they offered seven bulls and seven rams.[†] [27]David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master with the singers. David also wore a linen ephod.[†] [28]Thus all of Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting and the sound of the horn, with trumpets and cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps. [29]And it happened, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked out through a window and saw King David dancing and playing music; and she despised him in her heart.

16 So they brought in the ark of God and set it in the midst of the tent David had pitched for it. They offered up whole burnt offerings and peace offerings before God.[†] [2]And David finished offering the whole burnt offerings and peace offerings, and blessed the people in the name of the Lord. [3]And he divided one loaf of baked bread to every man and woman of Israel.

[4]And he appointed Levites to minister before the presence of the ark of the Lord, to exclaim and give thanks and to praise the Lord God of Israel: [5]Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom; Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; [6]Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests, continually before the ark of the covenant of God with trumpets.

David's Song of Praise

[7]Then David by the hand of Asaph and his brethren gave orders to praise the Lord:

[8] Give praise to the Lord Himself! Call upon His name;

Make known His deeds among the peoples.

[9] Sing songs to Him, sing praises to Him;

Tell of all His wondrous works which the Lord has done.

[10] Praise His holy name;

The heart that seeks to do His pleasure shall rejoice.

[11] Seek the Lord and be strong;

On account of all things, seek His face.

[12] Remember His remarkable works which He has done,

His wonders and the judgments of His mouth,

[13] O seed of Israel His servant,

You children of Jacob, His chosen ones.

14 He is the Lord our Lord;

His judgments are over all the earth.

15 Let us remember His covenant unto the ages,

The word He commands for a thousand generations—

16 The covenant He made with Abraham

And His oath to Isaac;

17 He confirmed it to Jacob for an ordinance,

To Israel for an eternal covenant,

18 Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan

As the allotment of your inheritance.”

19 When they were few in number,

When they were small in stature and dwelt as sojourners in it,

20 And when they went from nation to nation

And from one kingdom to another people,

21 He allowed no man to rule over them,

And He reproved kings for their sakes,

22 Saying, “Do not touch My anointed ones,

And bring no harm to My prophets.”

23 Sing to the Lord, all the earth;

Proclaim His salvation from day to day.

24 For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised;

He is to be feared above all gods.

25 For all the gods of the Gentiles are idols,

But our God made the heavens.

26 Glory and praise are before Him;

Strength and rejoicing are in His place.

[27] Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,

Give to the Lord glory and strength.

[28] Give to the Lord the glory due His name;

Take gifts and offer them before His presence.

Oh, worship the Lord in His holy courts!

[29] Let all the earth fear because of His presence;

Let the earth be set upright

And not be moved.

[30] Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;

And let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns.”

[31] Let the sea roar and all its fullness,

And the trees of the forest and all that is in them.

[32] For the trees of the forest shall rejoice before the Lord,

For He is coming to judge the earth.

[33] Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.

[34] And say, “Save us, O God of our salvation;

And deliver us from the Gentiles

To praise Your holy name,

And boast in Your praises.”

[35] Blessed be the Lord God of Israel

From ages unto the ages.

All the people said, “Amen.” And they praised the Lord.

The Worship of God Continues

[36]And they left Asaph and his brothers there, before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to minister continually from day to day according to

the service of each day. [37]And Obed-Edom and his brothers were sixty-eight; Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah were gatekeepers; [38]Zadok the priest and the brethren of the priests stood before the tabernacle of the Lord in the high place in Gibeon, [39]to offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of whole burnt offering every morning and evening; and to do according to all things written in the Law of the Lord that He commanded the sons of Israel by the hand of Moses the servant of God. [40]And with him were Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest chosen out by name to give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy is forever; [41]and with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. Now the sons of Jeduthun were gatekeepers.

[42]Then all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.

God's Promise to David

17 Now it came to pass when David was dwelling in his house, David said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under tent curtains.”[†] [2]Then Nathan said to David, “Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you.” [3]But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, [4]“Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord, “You shall not build Me a house to dwell in, [5]for I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought up Israel until this day; but I was in a tabernacle, even a tent, [6]in all the places through which I went with all Israel. Have I ever spoken to one leader of Israel whom I appointed to shepherd my people, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house made of cedar?’ ” ’

[7]“Now therefore, you shall say this day to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty, “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the flock, to be ruler over My people Israel. [8]And I was with you wherever you have gone, and cut off all your enemies from before you, and made you a name like the name of the great men who are on the earth. [9]Moreover, I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, [10]and from the days when I appointed judges to be over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies, and I will increase you, and the Lord will build you a house. [11]It shall be when your days are fulfilled, and you shall be laid to rest with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, he who will be out of your belly; I will establish his kingdom. [12]He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. [13]I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy from him, as I took it from those who were before you. [14]And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; his throne shall be established forever.” ’ ” [15]So Nathan spoke to David according to all these words and according to all his vision.

David Gives Thanks to God

[16]Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and said, “O Lord God, who am I? And what is my house, that You have loved me forever?[†] [17]O God, these things are insignificant in Your presence. O Lord God, You

spoke about the house of Your servant from long ago, and have looked upon me as a man looks upon his fellow, and exalted me. [18]Yet what will David add that would bring glory to You? For You know Your servant. [19]And according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness. [20]O Lord, according to all we have heard with our ears, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You. [21]There is not another nation upon the earth such as Your people Israel, whereas God led him in the way, to redeem a people for Himself, to establish for Himself a great and glorious name, to cast out nations from before Your people whom You redeemed out of Egypt. [22]For You have appointed Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, O Lord, became God to them.

[23]“And now, O Lord, the word which You have spoken regarding Your servant and upon his house, let it be guaranteed forever, [24]saying, ‘O Lord, O Lord, the Almighty is the God of Israel.’ And the house of Your servant David has been set aright before You. [25]For You, O my God, have revealed to Your servant that You will build him a house. Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray before You. [26]And now, Lord, You are God, and have promised this goodness to Your servant. [27]And now You have started to bless the house of Your servant, so it may continue before You forever. O Lord, You blessed it, and bless it forever.”

David's Victories in Battle

18 After this it came to pass that David attacked the Philistines, subdued them, and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines.[†] [2]Then he struck Moab, and the children of Moab brought tribute to David.

[3]And David struck Hadadezer, king of Zobah Hamath, as he went to establish his power by the River Euphrates. [4]David took from them in advance one thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Moreover, David disabled all the chariots—but one hundred chariots were kept in reserve for them.

[5]When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. [6]Then David put a garrison in Damascus of Syria; and the Syrians became David's servants and brought tribute. So the Lord preserved David wherever he went. [7]And David took the collars of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. [8]Also from those places passed over and from the chosen cities of Hadadezer, David brought a large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze Sea, the pillars, and the articles of bronze.

[9]Now when Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, [10]he sent Hadoram his son, to King David to ask him for peace and to bless him because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Hadadezer was an enemy of Tou, and with him he sent all kinds of articles of silver and gold. [11]These King David also dedicated to the Lord, along with the silver and gold he had brought from all these nations, from Edom, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, and from Amalek. [12]Moreover, Abishai the son of Zeruiah killed eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. [13]He also put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David wherever he went.

[14]David reigned over all Israel, and administered judgment and justice to all his people. [15]Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; [16]Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar were the priests; Shavsha was the scribe; [17]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were the king's first successors.

David Conquers Ammon and Syria

19 It happened after this that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place.[†] [2]Then David said, “I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me.” So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father.

And David's servants came to Hanun in the land of the people of Ammon to comfort him. [3]And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun, “Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Did his servants not come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?” [4]Therefore, Hanun took David's servants, shaved them, removed the half of their garments as far as their tunic, and sent them away. [5]Then some reported to David about these men, and he sent someone to meet them, for these men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, “Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return.”

[6]When the sons of Ammon saw that the people of David had been shamed, Hanun and the people of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver

to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Syrian Maacah, and from Zobah. [7]So they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, with the king of Maacah and his people, who came and encamped before Medeba. Also the people of Ammon gathered together from their cities and came to battle. [8]Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. [9]Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array before the gate of the city, and the kings who had come were by themselves in the field.

[10]When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best, and put them in battle array against the Syrians. [11]And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, and they set themselves in battle array against the people of Ammon. [12]Then he said, “If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. [13]Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And the Lord will do what is good in His sight.”

[14]So Joab and the people who were with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. [15]When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai his brother, and entered the city. So Joab went to Jerusalem.

[16]Now when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought the Syrians who were beyond the river, and Shophach the commander of Hadadezer's army went before them. [17]When it was told to David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and

came upon them. He set up in battle array against them, and the Syrians fought against him. [18]And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven thousand riders of chariots and forty thousand Syrian foot soldiers, and killed Shophach the commander of the army. [19]And when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they had fallen before Israel, they made peace with David and became his servants. So the Syrians were no longer willing to help the people of Ammon.

David Defeats Rabbah

20 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time kings go out to battle, that Joab led out the armed forces and ravaged the country of the people of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab defeated Rabbah and razed it to the ground. [2]Then David took the crown of Molchol their king from his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance.[†] [3]And he brought out the people who were in it and put them to work with saws, with iron picks, and with axes. So David did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

The Philistine Giants Fall

[4]Now it happened afterward that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines, at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite struck Sippai, who was one of the sons of the giant. And he humbled them.[†] [5]Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of

Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. [6]Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, with twenty-four fingers and toes, six on each hand and six on each foot; and he also was born to the giant. [7]So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. [8]These were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

The Census of All Israel

21 Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. [2]So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, “Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring the number of them to me that I may know it.”[†] [3]And Joab said, “May the Lord add to His people a hundredfold as many as they are, and let the eyes of my lord the king see all who are the servants of my lord. Why does my lord seek this? Do not allow it, lest it become a sin to Israel.” [4]Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem. [5]Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. All Israel had one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and Judah had four hundred and eighty thousand men who drew the sword. [6]But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's word was painful to Joab.

[7]And this deed appeared wicked before God; therefore He struck Israel. [8]So David said to God, “I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly.” [9]Then the Lord spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,[†]

[10]“Go and tell David, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I offer you three
things; so choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.” ’ ” [11]So
Gad came to David and said to him, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Choose for
yourself: [12]either three years of famine, or that you flee for three months
from the face of your enemies and the sword of your enemies utterly
destroying you, or that for three days the sword of the Lord and pestilence
should be with you in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying the
territory throughout all the inheritance of Israel.’ Now consider what
answer I should take back to Him who sent me.” [13]And David said to Gad,
“Groan for me and for the three exceedingly. Please let me fall into the hand
of the Lord, for His mercies are very great, but do not let me fall into the
hand of man.”

[14]So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of
Israel fell.[†] [15]And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was
destroying, the Lord looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the
angel who was destroying, “It is enough; now restrain your hand.” And the
angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.[†]
[16]Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing
between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out
over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their
faces. [17]And David said to God, “Was it not I who commanded the people
to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but
these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O Lord my God,
be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they
should be plagued.”

[18]Therefore, the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.[†] [19]And David went up according to the word of God, which he had spoken in the name of the Lord. [20]Now Ornan turned and saw the king, and he and his four sons with him hid themselves, but Ornan was threshing wheat.

[21]So David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and saw David. And he went out from the threshing floor, bowing before David with his face to the ground. [22]Then David said to Ornan, “Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the Lord. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.” [23]But Ornan said to David, “Take it to yourself, and let my lord the king do what is good in his eyes. Look, I also give you the oxen for whole burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give it all.”

[24]Then King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the Lord, nor offer whole burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing.” [25]So David gave six hundred shekels of gold by weight for his place. [26]And there David built an altar to the Lord, and offered whole burnt offerings and peace offerings, and cried out to the Lord; and He answered him by fire from heaven upon the altar of whole burnt offering and consumed the whole burnt offering.[†]

[27]So the Lord commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath. [28]At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him, he

sacrificed there on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. [29]For the tabernacle of the Lord that Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the whole burnt offering, were in the high place at Gibeon at the appointed time. [30]But David was unable to go before it to seek God, for the sword of the angel of the Lord prevented him.

Preparing to Build the Temple

22 Then David said, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of whole burnt offering for Israel."[†] [2]So David gave orders to gather all converts to Judaism, those in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. [3]And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance beyond measure, [4]and cedar trees in abundance; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought ample cedar wood to David. [5]Now David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, known and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it." So David made abundant preparations before his death.

[6]Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the Lord God of Israel. [7]And David said to Solomon, "My son, as for me, it was in my heart to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. [8]But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have made great wars. You shall not build a house for My name, for in My sight you have shed much blood on the earth.[†] [9]Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest, and I will give to him rest from all

his enemies that surround him. His name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. [10]He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.’

[11]“Now, my son, the Lord shall be with you and prosper you; you will build a house to the Lord your God, as He spoke concerning you. [12]Only may the Lord give you wisdom and prudence, and strengthen you concerning Israel, that you may guard and do the law of the Lord your God. [13]Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the ordinances and judgments that the Lord charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage. Do not fear nor be dismayed. [14]Indeed I, according to my poverty, have prepared for the house of the Lord one hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for there is so much. I also prepared timber and stone, to which you also may add. [15]Moreover, there are workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. [16]Of gold and silver and bronze and iron there is no limit. Arise and begin working, and the Lord be with you.”

[17]David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, [18]“Is not the Lord your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the Lord and before His people. [19]Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the Lord God, and into the house to be built

in the name of the Lord bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy articles of God.”

Assignments for the Levites

23 So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.[†] [2]And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. [3]Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and above. The number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand. [4]Of these, twenty- four thousand were taskmasters over the work of the house of the Lord, six thousand were officers and judges, [5]four thousand were gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the Lord with musical instruments which he made to praise the Lord. [6]David also separated them into divisions among the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. [7]And to Paroshom, to Edan, and to Shimei. [8]The sons of Laadan: the first Jehiel, then Zetham and Joel, three in all. [9]The sons of Shimei: Shelomith, Haziel, and Haran, three in all. These were the heads of the fathers’ houses of Laadan. [10]And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, Jeush, and Beriah. These were the four sons of Shimei. [11]Jahath was the first, and Zizah the second. As for Jeush and Beriah, they did not multiply sons, and they became but one reckoning, according to their father's house.

[12]The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four in all. [13]The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was set apart that he should sanctify the holy of holies, that he and his sons forever should burn incense before the Lord, to minister and to offer prayers in His name forever. [14]Now the sons of Moses the man of God had been called to the

tribe of Levi. [15]The sons of Moses were Gershon and Eliezer. [16]Of the sons of Gershon, Shebuel was the first. [17]Of the descendants of Eliezer, Rehabiah was the first. And Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah greatly multiplied.

[18]Of the sons of Izhar, Shelomith was the first. [19]Of the sons of Hebron, Jeriah was the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. [20]Of the sons of Uzziel, Michah was the first and Jesshiah the second. [21]The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli were Eleazar and Kish. [22]And Eleazar died and had no sons, only daughters; and their brethren, the sons of Kish, took them as wives. [23]The sons of Mushi were Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth, three in all.

[24]These were the sons of Levi according to the houses of their fathers, chiefs of their families according to the number in the household, according to their polls, who from the age of twenty years and older did the work for the service of the house of the Lord. [25]For David said, “The Lord God of Israel has given rest to His people, and dwells in Jerusalem forever.” [26]And the Levites carried not the tabernacle nor all of its vessels for its ministry. [27]For by the last words of David was the numbering of the Levites taken, from twenty years of age and older. [28]For their duty was to help the sons of Aaron in the service of the house of the Lord, in the courts and in the chambers, in the purification of all holy things and the work of the service of the house of God; [29]for the showbread and fine flour for the meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, the fried cake, and the dough, and for every measure; [30]to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening;[†] [31]and regularly before the Lord—at every

presentation of a whole burnt offering to the Lord, on the Sabbaths, on the New Moons, and on the set feasts, as by the number according to the ordinance governing them. [32]They are to keep charge of the tabernacle of witness, of the holy places, and the sons of Aaron their brethren, to minister in the house of the Lord.

Assignments to the Priests

24 Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.[†] [2]And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests. [3]Then David, with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their census, according to their ministry, according to their fathers' houses. [4]There were more leaders found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar, and thus they were divided. Among the sons of Eleazar were sixteen heads of their fathers' houses, and eight heads of their fathers' houses among the sons of Ithamar. [5]Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of the house of God, from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar. [6]And the scribe, Shemaiah the son of Nethanel, one of the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the leaders, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and Levites, one father's house taken for Eleazar and one for Ithamar. [7]Now the first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, [8]the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, [9]the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, [10]the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, [11]the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, [12]the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, [13]the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, [14]the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, [15]the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez, [16]the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezekel, [17]the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, [18]the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. [19]This was their numbering according to their ministry for coming into the house of the Lord, according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him.

The Other Levites

[20]And the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. [21]Concerning Rehabiah, of the sons of Rehabiah, the first was Isshiah. [22]Of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. [23]Of the sons of Hebron, Jeriah was the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. [24]Of the sons of Uzziel, Michah; of the sons of Michah, Shamir. [25]The brother of Michah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. [26]The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi; the sons of Jaaziah, the sons of Beno. [27]The sons of Merari by Jaaziah, his sons were Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri. [28]Of Mahil: Eleazar and Ithamar; and Eleazar died, and there were no sons by him. [29]Of Kish: the son of Kish, Jerahmeel. [30]Also the sons of Mushi were Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth.

These were the sons of the Levites according to their fathers' houses. [31]These also cast lots just as their brothers the sons of Aaron did, in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and Levites. The chief fathers did just as their younger brethren.

The Temple Musicians

25 David the king and the captains of the hosts appointed the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun to their service, for the purpose of playing the lyre and harp, stringed instruments, and cymbals. The list of ministrants for this service was as follows:[†] [2]of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah; the sons of Asaph were under the direction of Asaph the prophet and were loyal to the king. [3]Of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, after their father Jeduthun on the harp, led the music of thanks and praise to the Lord. [4]Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth. [5]All these were the sons of Heman the king's chief musician in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. [6]All these sang hymns with their father in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, and harps, and lyres for the service of the king and Asaph, and Jeduthun, Heman.

[7]And the number of them with their brethren, those being instructed to sing to the Lord, everyone who was skilled in singing, was two hundred and eighty-eight. [8]And they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, those taught and the students.

[9]Now the first lot for Asaph of his sons and his brethren came out for Joseph; the second for Gedaliah by Iniah, his brethren and his sons, twelve; [10]the third for Zaccur, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [11]the fourth for Jizri, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [12]the fifth for Nethaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [13]the sixth for Bukkiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [14]the seventh for Jesharelah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [15]the eighth for Jeshaiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [16]the ninth for Mattaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [17]the tenth for Shimei, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [18]the eleventh for Azarel, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [19]the twelfth for Hashabiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [20]the thirteenth for Shubael, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [21]the fourteenth for Mattithiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [22]the fifteenth for Jeremoth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [23]the sixteenth for Hananiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [24]the seventeenth for Joshbekashah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [25]the eighteenth for Hanani, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [26]the nineteenth for Mallothi, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [27]the twentieth for Eliathah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [28]the twenty-first for Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [29]the twenty-second for Giddalti, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [30]the twenty-third for Mahazioth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [31]the twenty-fourth for Romamti-Ezer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

The Temple Gatekeepers

26 Concerning the divisions of the gates: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph.[†] [2]And the sons of

Meshelemiah were Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, [3]Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh.

[4]Moreover the sons of Obed-Edom were Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, [5]Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him. [6]Also to Shemaiah his son were sons born from the firstborn Roshai in his father's house, because they were men of great ability. [7]The sons of Shemaiah were Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad, whose brothers Elihu and Semachiah were able men. [8]All these were of the sons of Obed-Edom, they and their sons and their brethren, able men with strength for the work: sixty-two of Obed-Edom. [9]And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, eighteen able men.

[10]Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons who guarded the first, since he was not the firstborn, yet his father made him the first of the second division: [11]Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen.

[12]Among these were the divisions of the gatekeepers assigned daily by the leaders of the army, just like their brethren, to serve in the house of the Lord. [13]And they cast lots for each gate, the small as well as the great, according to their father's house. [14]The lot of those for the East Gate fell to Shelemiah and Zechariah. The sons of Joash cast lots for Melchiah, and his lot came out for the North Gate; [15]to Obed-Edom the South Gate opposite the storehouse. [16]For the second: to Hosah for the West Gate following the

Pastophorion Gate of the ascending highway: watchman opposite watchman. [17]On the east were six each day, on the north four each day, on the south four each day, and for the storehouse two by two. [18]For relief, to the west there were four and on the track there were two relief guards. [19]These were the divisions of the gatekeepers among the sons of Korah and among the sons of Merari.

Other Duties of the Levites

[20]And their Levite brethren were over the treasuries of the house of the Lord and over the treasuries of the dedicated things. [21]These were the sons of Laadan, the descendants of the Gershonites; to Laadan were the heads of their families; the son of Laadan the Gershonite was Jehieli. [22]The sons of Jetheli, Zetham and Joel, were brothers over the treasuries of the house of the Lord. [23]Of the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites: [24]Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was overseer of the treasuries. [25]And his brethren by Eliezer were Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiah his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son. [26]This Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasuries of the dedicated things which King David and the heads of fathers’ houses, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the army had dedicated. [27]He also dedicated things taken from battles and from the spoils so that there would not be any lack in the maintenance of the house of the Lord. [28]And all that Samuel the seer, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah dedicated—every dedicated thing was under the hand of Shelomith and his brethren.

[29]Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons performed outside duties as officials and judges over Israel. [30]Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, one thousand seven hundred able men, had the oversight of Israel on the west side of the Jordan in every service of the Lord and duty for the king. [31]Among the Hebronites, Jerijah was head of the Hebronites according to their generations, according to their families. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were numbered, and among them in Jazer of Gilead mighty men were found. [32]And his brethren were two thousand seven hundred able men, heads of fathers' houses, whom King David made officials over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in every edict of the Lord and utterance of the king.

Military Commanders

27 Now the sons of Israel according to their number—heads of the families, captains of thousands and captains of hundreds and their officers, scribes ministering to the king, and for every affair of the king according to their divisions, for every matter coming in and going out monthly, for all the months of the year, one division of them was twenty-four thousand.[†]

[2]Over the first division for the first month was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel, and in his division were twenty-four thousand; [3]he was of the children of Perez and the chief of all the captains of the army for the first month. [4]Over the division of the second month was Dodai, an Ahohite, and in his division were twenty-four thousand leaders of the army. [5]The third captain of the army for the third month was Benaiah the son of Jehoiada the

priest, who was chief; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [6]This was the Benaiah who was mighty among the thirty, and was over the thirty; in his division was Ammizabad his son. [7]The fourth captain for the fourth month was Asahel the brother of Joab and Zebadiah his son after him; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [8]The fifth captain for the fifth month was Shamhuth the Izrahite; in his division were twenty-four thousand.

[9]The sixth captain for the sixth month was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [10]The seventh captain for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite of the children of Ephraim; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [11]The eighth captain for the eighth month was Sibbechai the Hushathite of the Zarhites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [12]The ninth captain for the ninth month was Abiezer the Anathothite of the Benjamites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [13]The tenth captain for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite of the Zarhites; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [14]The eleventh captain for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite of the children of Ephraim; in his division were twenty-four thousand. [15]The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite of Othniel; in his division were twenty-four thousand.

Tribal Leaders

[16]Furthermore, over the tribes of Israel: the officer over the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri; over the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; [17]over the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; over the Aaronites, Zadok; [18]over Judah, Elihu, one of David's brothers; over

Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; [19]over Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; over Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel; [20]over the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; over the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah; [21]over the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; over the sons of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; [22]over Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel. [23]But David did not take into consideration the number of those twenty years old and younger, because the Lord said He would multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens. [24]Joab the son of Zeruiah began a census, but he did not finish, for wrath came upon Israel because of this census; nor was the number recorded in the account of the chronicles of King David.

Property Administration

[25]And Azmaveth the son of Adiel was over the king's treasuries; and Jehonathan the son of Uzziah was over the storehouses in the field, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses. [26]Ezri the son of Chelub was over those who did the work of the field for tilling the ground. [27]And Shimei the Ramathite was over the vineyards, and Zabdi the Shiphmite was over the produce of the vineyards for the supply of wine. [28]Baal-Hanan the Gederite was over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the lowlands, and Joash was over the store of oil. [29]And Shitrai the Sharonite was over the herds that fed in Sharon, and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over the herds that were in the valleys. [30]Obil the Ishmaelite was over the camels, Jehdeiah the Meronothite was over the donkeys, [31]and Jaziz the Hagrite was over the flocks. All these were the officials over King David's

property. [32]Also Jehonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, a wise man and a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons. [33]Ahithophel was the king's counselor, and Hushai was the king's best friend. [34]After Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, then Abiathar. And the general of the king's army was Joab.

Solomon Charged to Construct the Temple

28 And David assembled all the chief men of Israel—the chief of the judges, the chief men of those who serve in attendance on the king, the captains of divisions, the treasurers, the lords of his substance and all the king's property, his sons together with the eunuchs, and the mighty men and the warriors of the army.

[2]Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Hear me, my brethren and my people. It was in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and a footstool of our God. I made preparations to build it. [3]But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.’ [4]Yet the Lord God of Israel chose me from out of the entire house of my father to be king over Israel unto the age. And in Judah, he chose the royal palace; and of the house of Judah, he chose the house of my father; and of the sons of my father, He desired me to become king over all Israel. [5]And of all my sons, for the Lord gave me many, He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel.

[6]“And He said to me, ‘It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts, for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his

Father.[†] [7]And if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, I will establish his kingdom forever, as it is this day.’ [8]And now before the whole assembly of the Lord and in the hearing of our God, I charge you to keep and seek all the commandments of the Lord our God, that you may inherit the good land and leave this for your sons to inherit after you forever.

[9]“And now, my son Solomon, know the God of your fathers, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing soul; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every thought. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you forever. [10]Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do it.”

[11]Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the temple, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner storehouses, and the house of the mercy seat;[†] [12]and the plans that he had in his mind concerning the courts of the house of the Lord, all the chambers round about the storehouses of the house of the Lord, and the storehouses for the dedicated things; [13]also for the quarters for the daily priests and the Levites for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord; and for the storehouses for the serving articles used to worship in the house of the Lord. [14]And the measure of their weight both in gold and in silver, [15]he gave to him the weight of the lamps and of the lamp stands. [16]He gave to him in like manner the weight for the tables of the showbread, for each table in gold and likewise in silver; [17]also for the forks, the basins, the pitchers of gold, and the weight of the gold and the silver bowls for each weight; [18]and the weight of the altar for

burning incense made of refined gold he showed to him, and the plans for the chariot of the cherubim that spread out their wings and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the Lord. [19]All these things in writing from the hand of the Lord David gave to Solomon, so that he would succeed in understanding how to follow the plan.

[20]And David said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.[†] [21]And take notice of the division of the priests and Levites for all the daily service of the house of the Lord. With them shall be the men for every workmanship, every one of ready skill in every art. And at your command are the chief men and all the people.”[†]

Collections to Build the Temple

29 Furthermore, King David said to the entire assembly, “My one son Solomon, whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the work is a great work, for the temple is not for man, but for the Lord God.[†] [2]According to all means possible I prepared gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, onyx stones, costly and precious stones of various colors, and much marble for the house of my God. [3]And because I took pleasure in the house of my God, I gave to the house of my God gold and silver over and above what I procured for myself; more than all I prepared for my house of my God, over and above all I prepared for my consecrated house. [4]Three thousand talents of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver to be overlaid in these the walls of the sanctuary [5]by the hands of craftsmen. And who this day zealously dedicates his hands for the Lord?”

[6]Then the heads of the families, the princes of the sons of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly.[†] [7]They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents of gold and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. [8]And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the Lord, into the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. [9]Then the people rejoiced as a result of their willingness, for they offered willingly to the Lord with their whole heart. King David rejoiced greatly.

David Gives Praise to God

[10]With this, King David blessed the Lord before all the assembly, saying, “Blessed are You, O Lord God of Israel, our Father, unto the ages of ages.[†] [11]Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the might. You are master over all that is in heaven and on the earth. Every king and nation is thrown into confusion before You. [12]From the first, You are the wealth and the glory who reigns over all, as the Lord and dominion of all. In Your hand is power and authority, and you are almighty with Your hand to increase and establish all things. [13]And now, Lord, we give thanks to You, and we praise Your glorious name.

[14]“But who am I, and who are my people, that we are able to be zealous in offering to You? For all things are Yours, and of Your own we give to You.[†] [15]For we are strangers before You and sojourners, as were all our

fathers. Our days upon the earth are as a shadow, and there are none that remain.[†] [16]O Lord our God, as for all this abundance which I have prepared that a house should be built to Your holy name, it is of Your hand and all is Yours. [17]I know also, O Lord, that You search the heart and You love righteousness. As for me, in the sincerity of my heart I willingly offer all these things. And now I see Your people who brought themselves here joyfully to offer willingly to You. [18]O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep under guard these things in the thoughts of the heart of Your people forever, and lead their heart toward You. [19]And give my son Solomon a fitting heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your ordinances and bring to an end the final preparation of Your house."

[20]Then David said to all the congregation, "Now bless the Lord your God." And everyone in the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down before the Lord and the king.

Solomon Anointed King

[21]The next day after the first day, David sacrificed and offered up whole burnt offerings to the Lord—even a thousand calves, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs—along with their drink offerings, and an abundance of sacrifices for all Israel.[†] [22]So they ate and drank before the Lord with great gladness on that day. And they made Solomon the son of David king a second time and anointed him king before the Lord, and Zadok to the priesthood.[†] [23]Then Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father, and was well pleased, and prospered; and all Israel listened to him.[†] [24]All the leaders and the mighty men, as well as all the sons of King David his father,

were subject to him. [25]And the Lord exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel and gave him the glory of a king, which was not given any king of Israel before him.

Review of David's Reign

[26]Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over Israel [27]forty years, in Hebron for seven years and in Jerusalem for thirty-three years. [28]So he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and glory. Solomon his son reigned in his stead. [29]And the remaining works of King David, the former and the latter, are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, [30]concerning all his reign, his power, and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the lands.

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The Second Book of the Chronicles

Author—Ezra is believed to be the writer.

Date—About 450 BC. The book spans the forty years of Solomon's reign, four hundred years of the reigns of succeeding kings, and seventy years of captivity in Babylon.

Major Themes—*Continuation of the Davidic covenant through Solomon and the building of the temple*. The importance of proper worship in the temple, particularly the place of the Levites and the musicians, is given special, detailed emphasis. Another theme is the character of each of the kings that followed Solomon—whether they encouraged proper worship of God. The writer ends this book with the tragic account of the destruction of Jerusalem and the seventy-year exile of the Jews to Babylon.

Background—Solomon has succeeded to the throne of Israel, and his major task is building the temple. David gathered all the supplies and drew up the plans, but the Lord did not allow him to construct it.

The wisdom and wealth of Solomon were known throughout the world and written about in foreign histories. The Queen of Sheba, an Arabian country, came to witness Solomon's glory.

After Solomon's death, the people of Israel divided into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom separated from Judah with Jeroboam as king, and fell away from worshipping the true God. Jeroboam established idol worship. The rejected priests and Levites and many faithful followers left

Israel and emigrated to Jerusalem to worship God. The smaller southern kingdom, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, was ruled by Solomon's son Rehoboam. The author brings a final word of hope, recounting the permission given by Cyrus king of Persia for the exiles to return and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

Outline

I. Solomon's Reign (1:1–9:31)

    A. The gift of wisdom (1:1–17)
    B. The building of the temple (2:1–5:1)
    C. The dedication of the temple (5:2–7:22)
    D. Solomon's life, wisdom, wealth, and death (8:1–9:31)

II. Two Kingdoms Divide; the History of the Kings of Judah to the End of the Exile (10:1–36:23)

    A. Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor (10:1–12:16)
    B. Abijah (13:1–14:1)
    C. Asa (14:2–16:14)
    D. Jehoshaphat (17:1–21:3)
    E. Jehoram and Ahaziah (21:4–22:9)
    F. Joash (22:10–24:27)
    G. Amaziah (25:1–28)
    H. Uzziah (26:1–23)
    I. Jotham (27:1–9)
    J. Ahaz (28:1–27)
    K. Hezekiah (29:1–32:33)
    L. Manasseh (33:1–20)
    M. Amon (33:21–25)
    N. Josiah (34:1–36:1)

O. Josiah's successors (36:2–14)

P. Exile and restoration (36:15–23)

Solomon Prays for Wisdom

1 When Solomon the son of David was firmly established over his kingdom, the Lord his God was with him and magnified him in honor.[†]

[2]Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, to the judges, to all the rulers over Israel, and to the heads of the families. [3]Solomon went with all the assembly to the high place at Gibeon, for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the Lord made in the wilderness. [4]David had brought up the ark of God from the city of Kirjath Jearim to the place he prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. [5]And the bronze altar made by Bezalel the son of Uri the son of Hur was there before the tabernacle of the Lord, and Solomon and the assembly enquired about it. [6]Solomon made an offering there on the bronze altar before the Lord, at the tabernacle of meeting, offering a thousand burnt offerings on it.

[7]God appeared to Solomon that night and said to him, “Tell Me what you want Me to give you.” [8]And Solomon said to God, “You showed great mercy to David my father, and made me king in his place. [9]Now, Lord God, let Your name be established on my father David, for You made me king over a people numerous as the dust of the earth. [10]Give me wisdom and understanding, so that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can judge this great people of Yours?”

[11]And God said to Solomon, “Because this was in your heart and you did not ask for riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor did you ask for long life, but you asked for wisdom and understanding for yourself, that you might judge My people over whom I made you king, [12]now I will give you this wisdom and understanding. I will also give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings before you possessed, nor shall any after you possess.” [13]So Solomon came to Jerusalem from the high place at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of witness, and reigned over Israel.

Solomon's Power and Riches

[14]And Solomon collected chariots and horsemen. He had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities. And the people were with the king in Jerusalem. [15]The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant in Judea as sycamores in the plain. [16]And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt; the king's merchants paid the going price. [17]They acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for one hundred fifty. They also brought them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Syria. [18]Solomon said he would build a house in the name of the Lord and a house for his kingdom.

Solomon Plans to Build the Temple

2 Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry stone in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.

[2]Then Solomon sent to Hiram king of Tyre, saying, “As you dealt with David my father and sent him cedars to build himself a house to dwell in, [3]behold I, his son, am building a house for the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to Him, to burn sweet incense before Him, to offer showbread continually, and to offer up burnt offerings continually, morning and evening, and on the Sabbaths, on the New Moons, and on the festivals of the Lord our God. This is a perpetual ordinance for Israel; [4]and the house I am going to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. [5]Who is able to build Him a house, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain His glory? Who am I, then, to build Him a house, except to burn incense before Him? [6]Therefore send me at once a wise man skilled to work in gold and silver, in bronze and iron, in purple and crimson and blue, who can work skillfully with the skilled men with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. [7]Also send me cedar and cypress and pine timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants are skilled in cutting timber in Lebanon. And indeed my servants and your servants [8]will go to prepare an abundance of timber for me, because the house I am about to build is to be great and glorious. [9]And indeed to your servants, the woodsmen who cut timber, I gave twenty thousand kors of wheat, twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.”

[10]Then Hiram king of Tyre sent an answer in writing to Solomon: “Because the Lord loves His people, He made you king over them.” [11]Hiram also said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, for He gave King David a wise son, endowed with prudence and understanding, who will build a temple for the Lord and a royal house for

himself! [12]And now I have sent a skillful man, endowed with discernment, Huram my father, [13]the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilled at working in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, at weaving purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and at making any engraving and accomplishing any plan that may be given to him, with your skillful men and with the skillful men of my lord David your father. [14]Now therefore, let my lord send his servants the wheat, the barley, the oil, and the wine he spoke of,[†] [15]and we will cut as much wood from Lebanon as you need. We will bring it to you in rafts by sea to Joppa, and you will carry it to Jerusalem.”

Construction Begins on the Temple

[16]Then Solomon gathered all the foreigners in the land of Israel, after the census in which David his father had numbered them. And there were found to be one hundred fifty-three thousand six hundred.[†] [17]And he made seventy thousand of them bearers of burdens, eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountain, and three thousand six hundred to oversee the people's work.

3 Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.[†] [2]And he began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign. [3]This is the foundation Solomon laid for building the house of God. It was sixty cubits long (according to the former measure) and twenty cubits wide. [4]The vestibule in front of the sanctuary was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and one hundred twenty cubits high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold. [5]He paneled the larger room with cypress and overlaid it with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chain work on it.[†] [6]He decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold was gold from Parvaim. [7]He also overlaid the house—the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors—with gold and carved cherubim on the walls. [8]And he made the most holy place. Its length corresponded to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and it was twenty cubits wide. He overlaid it as far as the cherubim with six hundred talents of fine gold.[†] [9]The weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. He overlaid the upper room with gold.

[10]In the most holy place he made two wooden cherubim and overlaid them with gold. [11]The wings of the cherubim were twenty cubits in overall length. One wing of the one cherub was five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing was five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub; [12]one wing of the other cherub was five cubits as well, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing also was five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. [13]The wings of these cherubim spanned twenty cubits overall. They stood on their feet and faced inward. [14]He made the veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and wove cherubim into it.

[15]In front of the house he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high, and the capital on the top of each was five cubits. [16]He made wreaths of chain work, as in the inner sanctuary, and put them on top of the pillars. And he made one hundred pomegranates and put them on the wreaths of chain work. [17]Then he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand

and the other on the left. He called the one on the right hand Upholding, and he called the one on the left Strength.

The Temple Is Furnished

4 He made a bronze altar twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and ten cubits high. [2]And he made the sea of cast bronze, ten cubits in diameter. It was completely round. It was five cubits high and thirty cubits around.[†] [3]Under it were the likenesses of oxen encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the sea. The oxen were cast in two rows when it was cast. [4]It stood on twelve oxen. Three looked toward the north, three looked toward the west, three looked toward the south, and three looked toward the east. The sea was set upon them, and all their back parts pointed inward. [5]It was a handbreadth thick and its brim was like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It contained three thousand baths. And he finished it.

[6]He also made ten basins, and put five on the right side and five on the left, to wash what they offered for the burnt offering. The sea, however, was for the priests to wash in. [7]He made ten gold lampstands according to their design and set them in the temple, five on the right and five on the left.[†] [8]He also made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the right and five on the left. And he made one hundred golden bowls.

[9]He made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the door panels with bronze. [10]He set the sea on the right side toward the east. [11]Then Huram made the pots and the shovels and the bowls for the altar and all its utensils. So Huram finished the work he was to do for King Solomon for the house of God, [12]the two pillars and the

bowl-shaped capitals on top of the two pillars, the two networks covering the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars; [13]four hundred pomegranates for the two networks—two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals on the pillars. [14]He made carts and put basins on the carts, [15]and one sea with twelve oxen under it, [16]and tripods and buckets and basins and forks and all the other utensils. Huram his master craftsman made them of pure bronze for King Solomon for the house of the Lord. [17]The king had them cast in clay molds in the plain of Jordan between Succoth and Zeredah. [18]And Solomon had all these articles made in such great quantity that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

[19]Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of God, the golden altar and the tables for the showbread, [20]the lamp stands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn in the prescribed manner in front of the inner sanctuary, [21]with the tongs and the lamps and the cups and the censers of pure gold. [22]The door of the sanctuary, the inner door to the most holy place, and the doors of the main hall of the temple were gold.

5 So all the work that Solomon did for the house of the Lord was finished. And Solomon brought in everything his father David had dedicated, the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put them in the treasuries of the house of God.[†]

The Ark Is Brought to the Temple

[2]Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the families of the sons of Israel, in Jerusalem, that

they might bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the City of David, which is Zion.[†] [3]Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the feast in the seventh month. [4]All the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. [5]Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites carried it. [6]And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel assembled with him in fear before the ark, sacrificing more sheep and oxen than could be counted or numbered. [7]Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim. [8]For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. [9]And the poles extended so that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen from the holy place, in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. [10]There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets Moses put there at Horeb when the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel when they came out of Egypt.

The Glory of God's Presence

[11]And when the priests came from the holy place (for all the priests who were present were sanctified before being separated into divisions), [12]and the Levites and the singers of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, and with them were one hundred twenty priests sounding with trumpets; [13]and the trumpeters and singers were as one voice in sounding the trumpet and singing and in

praising and thanking the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, they praised the Lord, saying:

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.”

The house was filled with a cloud of the Lord's glory,[†] [14]so the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

Solomon Speaks to the People

6 Then Solomon said: “The Lord said He would dwell in the dark cloud.

[2] But I built a house to your name, a house holy to You,

And prepared for You a place to dwell forever.”[†] [†]

[3]Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. [4]And he said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who fulfilled with His hands what He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, [5]‘Since the day I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man to be a ruler over My people Israel; [6]yet I chose Jerusalem so that My name may be there, and I chose David to be over My people Israel.’

[7]“Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel; [8]but the Lord said to my father David, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well

by having it in your heart, [9]but you shall not build the house, for your son who will come from your body, he shall build the house for My name.’ [10]So the Lord fulfilled the word He spoke, and I took my father David's place and sat on the throne of Israel as the Lord said, and I built the house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. [11]And there I put the ark containing the covenant which the Lord made with Israel.”

The King's Prayer of Dedication

[12]Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands; [13]for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court. And he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven. [14]And he said, “Lord God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. [15]You held true to what You promised Your servant David, my father; You spoke with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hands, as it is this day. [16]Now, Lord God of Israel, keep what You promised Your servant David, my father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, if your sons guard the way they walk in My law, as you walked before Me.’ [17]And now, Lord God of Israel, confirm the word You spoke to Your servant David.

[18]“Will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. What is this house I built! [19]Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, Lord my God, and

listen to the supplication and the prayer Your servant prays before You today, [20]so day and night Your eyes may be open toward this house, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer Your servant prays in this place. [21]And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and Your people Israel when they pray in this place. Hear from Your dwelling place in heaven, and when You hear, be merciful. [22]If anyone sins against his neighbor and takes an oath, and comes and takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, [23]then from heaven hear and act and judge Your servants, bringing retribution on the wicked by bringing his way on his own head, and justifying the righteous by giving to him according to his righteousness.

[24]“Or if Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they sinned against You, and return and confess Your name, and pray and supplicate before You in this house, [25]then hear from heaven and have mercy on the sins of Your people Israel and bring them back to the land You gave to them and their fathers. [26]When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they sinned against You, when they pray in this place and confess Your name and turn from their sin because You afflict them, [27]then hear in heaven and have mercy on the sins of Your servants and Your people Israel, so You may teach them the good way for them to walk and send rain on Your land, the land You gave as an inheritance to Your people. [28]When there is famine in the land, death and blight and mildew and locusts and grasshoppers, when their enemies besiege their cities, whatever plague or whatever sickness there may be; [29]whatever prayer, whatever supplication anyone makes, or all Your people Israel make, when each one knows his own burden and his own grief and spreads out his hands in this

house; [30]then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and forgive them. And give to everyone according to his ways, for You know his heart, since You alone know the hearts of the sons of men; [31]so they may fear Your ways as long as they live in the land You gave our fathers.

[32]“And whenever a foreigner, not of Your people Israel, comes from a far country for the sake of Your great name, and for Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, and prays in this house, [33]then hear from Your dwelling place in heaven. Do everything the foreigner calls to You to do, so all the peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, so they may know this house I built is called by Your name. [34]When Your people go to battle against their enemies, wherever You send them, when they pray to You in the city You choose and in the house I built in Your name, [35]then hear their prayer and their supplication from heaven and sustain their cause.

[36]“When they sin against You—for there is no one who does not sin—and You strike them and deliver them to the enemy, and they are taken captive to a land far or near, [37]when they turn their hearts back to You in the land where they were carried in captivity, and repent and supplicate You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We sinned, we have done wrong and committed wickedness,’ [38]and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity where they were carried captive, and pray toward their land You gave their fathers, the city You chose, and the house I built for Your name, [39]then hear their prayer and their supplications from Your dwelling place in heaven and sustain their cause, and be merciful to Your people who sinned against You.

[40]“My God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and let Your ears be attentive to the prayer made in this place. [41]Now therefore:

“Arise Lord God, to Your resting place,

You and the ark of Your strength;

Let Your priests, Lord God, be clothed with salvation;

And let Your sons rejoice in goodness.

[42] Lord God, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed;

Remember the mercies of Your servant David.”

The Temple Is Consecrated

7 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house.[†] [2]And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord at that time because the glory of the Lord had filled the house. [3]When all the sons of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the house, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying:

“For He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.”[†]

[4]Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the Lord. [5]Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand calves and one hundred twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.[†] [6]And the priests stood at their posts along with the Levites and their instruments for the music of the Lord, which King David had made to praise the Lord, saying, “For His mercy endures forever,” with the hymns of David. The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all

Israel stood. [7]Solomon consecrated the middle of the court of the house of the Lord. He offered burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar Solomon made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat. [8]At that time Solomon kept the feast for seven days, and all Israel kept it with him, a very great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt. [9]And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar for seven days. [10]On the twenty-third day of the seventh month, he sent the people away to their habitations, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the Lord had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel.

God Appears Again to Solomon

[11]So Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house, and Solomon successfully accomplished everything that came into his heart to do in the house of the Lord and in his own house. [12]Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said to him, “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. [13]If I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, [14]if My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will be merciful to their sins and heal their land.[†] [15]Now My eyes will be open and My ears will hear the prayer of this place; [16]for now I have chosen and sanctified this house, so that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there all the day. [17]If you shall walk before Me as your father David and do everything I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes

and My judgments; [18]then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, ‘A man ruling in Israel shall not be removed from you.’ [19]But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments that I set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, [20]then I will remove you from the land I gave them and I will cast from My sight this house which I have sanctified for My name, and I will make it a parable and a byword among all peoples.

[21]“As to this proud house, everyone who passes will be astonished and say, ‘Why did the Lord do this to this land and this house?’ [22]Then they will answer, ‘Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods and worshiped them and served them. That is why He brought all this calamity on them.’ ”

Solomon's Other Accomplishments

8 Twenty years after Solomon built the house of the Lord and his own house, [2]Solomon built the cities Hiram had given him and settled the sons of Israel there. [3]And Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it. [4]And he built Tadmor in the desert and built all the fortified cities in Hamath. [5]He built Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon, cities fortified with walls, gates, and bars, [6]and Baalath and all the fortified cities Solomon had, and all the chariot cities and the cities of the cavalry, and everything Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all his kingdom. [7]All the people who were left of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of Israel— [8]that is, their sons who were left in the land after them, whom the sons of Israel did not destroy—from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is done today. [9]But Solomon did not turn the sons of Israel into servants for his kingdom. Some were men of war, captains of his officers, captains of his chariots and his cavalry. [10]Others were chiefs of the officials of King Solomon, two hundred fifty, who ruled over the people.

[11]Now Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he built for her. For he said, “My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, king of Israel, because the place where the ark of the Lord has come is holy.”

[12]Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of the Lord he built before the temple, [13]according to the daily rate, offering according to the commandment of Moses, for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the three appointed yearly feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. [14]According to the order of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, the Levites for their duties—to praise and serve before the priests—as each day's duty required, and he appointed the gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate, for so David the man of God commanded. [15]Concerning any matter or the treasuries, they did not depart from the command of the king to the priests and Levites. [16]Now all the work of Solomon was well ordered, from the day of the foundation until Solomon finished the house of the Lord.

[17]Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath on the seacoast, in the land of Edom. [18]And Hiram sent him ships by the hand of his servants, and servants who knew the sea. They went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, where they acquired four hundred fifty gold talents and brought them to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Pays a Visit

9 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions. She brought a very great retinue, camels that bore spices, an abundance of gold, and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about everything in her heart. [2]Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing too difficult for Solomon to explain to her. [3]And when the queen of Sheba had seen Solomon's wisdom, the house that he had built, [4]the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers and their apparel, and the burnt offerings he made in the house of the Lord, she was beside herself.

[5]She said to the king, “What I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom was true. [6]However, I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes. And indeed what they told me was not the half of the greatness of your wisdom. You exceed the fame I heard. [7]Happy are your men, and happy are these servants of yours who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! [8]Blessed be the Lord your God, who was pleased to set you on His throne to be king for the Lord your God! Because your God loved Israel and established them forever, He made

you king over them to do justice and righteousness.” [9]And she gave the king one hundred twenty talents of gold, a great quantity of spices, and precious stones. There were never such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon.

[10]The servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon also brought gold from Ophir and pine wood and precious stones. [11]The king made walkways of pine wood for the house of the Lord and for the king's house, and harps and stringed instruments for the singers, and there were none such as these seen before in the land of Judah. [12]Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she desired, whatever she asked, much more than she had brought King Solomon. So she returned to her own land.

Solomon's Material Wealth

[13]The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred sixty-six talents of gold, [14]not including what the traveling merchants and traders brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to King Solomon. [15]And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold. Six hundred shekels of hammered gold went into each shield, and each shield weighed six hundred shekels of gold. [16]He also made three hundred shields of hammered gold. Three hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

[17]And the king made a great throne of ivory from elephant tusks and overlaid it with pure gold.[†] [18]There were six steps fastened to the golden throne, and there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and

two lions stood beside the armrests.[†] [19]Twelve lions stood beside the six steps. Nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom.[†] [20]All King Solomon's drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. [21]The king's ships went to Tarshish with Hiram's servants. Once every three years the merchant ships returned, loaded with gold and silver and elephant tusks and monkeys.

[22]So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in wealth and wisdom.[†] [23]And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear the wisdom God put in his heart. [24]Each man brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, oil of myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate every year. [25]Solomon had four thousand female horses for chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. [26]So he reigned over all the kings from the river to the land of the foreigners, as far as the border of Egypt. [27]The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores of the lowland. [28]And they brought Solomon horses from Egypt and from all lands.

The Death of Solomon

[29]Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the words of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Joel the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? [30]Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. [31]Then

Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David his father. Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

Revolt against King Rehoboam

10 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel went to Shechem to make him king.[†] [2]So when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it—he was in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon—Jeroboam returned from Egypt. [3]Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, [4]“Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.” [5]So he said to them, “Come back to me in three days.” And the people departed.

[6]Then King Rehoboam gathered the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived and said, “How do you advise me to answer these people?” [7]And they spoke to him, saying, “If you are kind to these people and please them and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever.” [8]But he rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. [9]And he said to them, “What is your advice? How should I answer this people who spoke to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke your father put on us’?”

[10]Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, “This is how you should speak to the people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us’—this you shall tell them: ‘My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! [11]And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add

to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions!’ ”

[12]So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, “Come back to me three days from now.” [13]And the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders [14]and spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions!” [15]So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from God, so the Lord might fulfill the word He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

[16]Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, “What share have we in David? What inheritance do we have in the son of Jesse? Every man to your tents, Israel! Now see to your own house, David!” So all Israel departed to their tents. [17]And the men of Israel dwelt in the cities of Judah, and Rehoboam reigned over them. [18]Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was in charge of revenue, but the children of Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. [19]So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

The Prophecy of Shemaiah

11 When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled one hundred eighty thousand young men, warriors from Judah and Benjamin, to fight against Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.[†] [2]But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, [3]“Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon and to all Judah and Benjamin, saying, [4]‘Thus says the Lord: “You shall not go up and fight against your brethren! Let every man return to his house, for this is from Me.” ’ ” And they obeyed the words of the Lord and turned back from marching against Jeroboam.

Defensive Fortifications

[5]So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem and built cities with walls in Judah. [6]He built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, [7]Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, [8]Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, [9]Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, [10]Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, walled cities which belong to Judah and Benjamin. [11]He fortified them with walls and put captains in them and stores of food, olive oil, and wine. [12]In every city he put shields and spears and made them very strong, and they belonged to Judah and Benjamin. [13]And the priests and the Levites throughout Israel gathered to him from all their regions.[†] [14]For the Levites left the habitations of their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving the Lord. [15]Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places and the idols, and the vain things and the calves Jeroboam had made. [16]Then Jeroboam cast them out of the tribes of Israel, those who had set their heart on seeking the Lord God of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers. [17]So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and strengthened Rehoboam the son of Solomon for three years, because he walked in the ways of David and Solomon for three years.

Rehoboam's Family

[18]Then Rehoboam took as his wife Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliah the son of Jesse. [19]And she bore him children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham. [20]Then he took Maachah the daughter of Absalom, and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. [21]Now Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom more than all his wives and concubines, for he took eighteen wives and thirty concubines and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. [22]And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maachah as chief to be the leader among his brothers, for he intended to make him king. [23]He grew more powerful than all his sons throughout the territories of Judah and Benjamin and in all the fortified cities, and he gave them provisions in abundance. He also sought many wives for them.

Egypt Invades Judah

12 When Rehoboam's kingdom was established and strengthened, he forsook the commandments of the Lord, as did all Israel along with him.[†] [2]And in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they sinned against the Lord. [3]And he brought twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him from Egypt—the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians. [4]And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem. [5]Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, “Thus says the Lord: ‘You have forsaken Me, and I shall forsake you in the hand of Shishak.’ ”[†] [6]So the leaders of Israel and the king were ashamed and said, “The Lord is righteous.” [7]Now when the Lord saw that they repented, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, “They repented. Therefore I will not destroy them, and I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem; [8]nevertheless, they will be servants of the king, and they will know My service as well as the service of the kingdom of the land.”

[9]So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem and took the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house. He took everything. He even carried away the gold shields Solomon had made.[†] [10]Then Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard who guarded the doorway of the king's house. [11]And whenever the king entered the house of the Lord, the guard would go and bring them out. Then they would take them back into the guardroom. [12]When Rehoboam repented, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, and He did not destroy him completely. Things went well in Judah.

Rehoboam's Reign Ends

[13]Thus Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonite woman. [14]And he did evil because he did not direct his heart to seek the Lord. [15]The acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written

in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And Rehoboam waged war against Jeroboam all their days. [16]So Rehoboam died and rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Then Abijah his son reigned in his place.

Abijah Is King of Judah

13 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah. [2]He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. [3]Abijah set a battle in array with an army of valiant warriors, four hundred thousand mighty men. Jeroboam also drew up in battle formation against him with eight hundred thousand mighty men of valor.

[4]Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, “Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel,[†] [5]do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David and his sons forever by a covenant of salt?[†] [6]Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. [7]Then worthless rogues gathered to him and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. [8]And now you think you can stand against the kingdom of the Lord, which is in the hand of the sons of David. You are a great multitude, and you have as gods the golden calves Jeroboam made for you. [9]Did you not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made priests for yourselves from the

peoples of the land, so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of things that are not gods?

[10]“But we have not forsaken the Lord our God. And the priests who minister to the Lord are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites attend to their duties. [11]And every morning and every evening they offer burnt sacrifices and sweet incense to the Lord, and they set the showbread in order on the pure gold table, and the golden lamp stand with its lamps to burn every evening. For we keep the command of the Lord God of our fathers, but you have forsaken Him. [12]Listen, Israel, God Himself is with us as our head, and so are His priests, with trumpets to sound the alarm over us. Children of Israel, do not fight against the Lord God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!”

[13]And Jeroboam sent men to slip behind Judah, so Jeroboam would be in front of Judah with an ambush being behind them. [14]Judah looked back, and behold, a battle line was behind them and in front of them. And they cried out to the Lord, and the priests sounded the trumpets. [15]Then the men of Judah shouted. And as the men of Judah shouted, God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. [16]And the sons of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. [17]Then Abijah and his people struck them with a great slaughter, and five hundred thousand mighty men of Israel fell slain. [18]Thus the sons of Israel were subdued on that day, because Judah relied on the Lord God of their fathers.

[19]Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephrain with its villages. [20]So

Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah. And the Lord struck him, and he died.

[21]However, Abijah grew mighty. He married fourteen wives and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. [22]Now the rest of the acts of Abijah and his ways and his sayings are written in the annals of the prophet Iddo. [23]And Abijah died and rested with his fathers. They buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days, the land of Judah was quiet for ten years.

Asa Is King of Judah

14 Asa did what was good and proper in the eyes of the Lord his God, [2]for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the groves. [3]He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandments. [4]He also removed the altars and the idols from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. [5]He was able to build walled cities in Judah, for the land had rest. There was no war in those years because the Lord gave him rest. [6]Therefore he said to Judah, “Because we sought the Lord our God, let us build these cities and make walls around them, and towers, gates, and bars in the land we rule. We sought Him, and He gave us rest on every side, and we have prospered.” [7]Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred fifty thousand men who carried shields and drew bows. All these were mighty men of valor.[†]

[8]Then Zerah the Ethiopian came against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and came to Mareshah. [9]So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the valley to the north of Mareshah. [10]And Asa cried out to the Lord his God and said, “Lord, with You it is not impossible, whether with the many or with the few. Strengthen us, Lord our God, for we trust in You. And in Your name we go against this multitude. Lord our God, do not let man prevail against You!”

[11]So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. [12]And Asa and the people with him pursued them to Gerar, and the Ethiopians were so defeated they could not recover. They were crushed before the Lord and His army. And they carried away a great deal of spoil. [13]Then they cut off all the villages round about Gerar, for the fear of the Lord came upon them; even so, they plundered all their cities, for they had a great amount of spoil in them. [14]They even tore down the enclosures for the livestock. Then they took many of the sheep and camels and returned to Jerusalem.

Asa Brings Reforms

15 Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. [2]And he went out to meet Asa and all Judah and Benjamin, and said, “Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.[†] [3]For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a teaching priest, and held to what is not the law.[†] [4]But when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel and sought Him, He was found by them. [5]In those times, there was no peace for the one who went out or the one who came in, but great terror of the Lord was on all the inhabitants of the lands. [6]So nation destroyed nation and city against city, for God troubled them with every adversity. [7]But be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for there is a reward for your work.”[†]

[8]When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage and removed the abominations throughout the land of Judah and Benjamin, and the cities he took in the mountains of Ephraim. And he restored the altar of the Lord before the temple of the Lord.[†] [9]Then he gathered all of Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.

[10]So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. [11]And at that time, they offered to the Lord seven hundred calves and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. [12]Then they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul. [13]Whoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel was to be put to death, small or great, man or woman. [14]With a loud voice and trumpets and rams’ horns they took an oath before the Lord. [15]And all of Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul. And He was found by them, and the Lord gave them rest all around.

[16]And he removed Maachah his mother from being queen mother because she served the Asherah; and he cut down the idol and burned it at

the Brook Kidron. [17]But the high places were not removed, and they still existed in Israel. But the heart of Asa was loyal all his days. [18]He also brought the things his father had dedicated and that he himself had dedicated—silver and gold and utensils.

[19]And there was no war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.

Asa's Treaty with Syria's King

16 In the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, so that no one could go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.[†] [2]Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the Lord and the king's house. He sent them to the son of Hadad the king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, [3]“Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. Here, I have sent you silver and gold. Come and drive away Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me.”

[4]So the son of Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the areas around Naphtali. [5]Now when Baasha heard it, he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work. [6]Then King Asa took all of Judah, and they carried away the stones and timber of Ramah which Baasha had used for building. With them he built Geba and Mizpah.

Hanani's Prophecy to Asa

[7]And at that time, Hanani the prophet came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, “Because you relied on the king of Syria and did not rely on the

Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria escaped from your hand. [8]Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a large and courageous army with a great many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. [9]For the eyes of the Lord look over the whole earth and strengthen every heart that is loyal to Him. In this you did foolishly, and from now on you shall have wars.” [10]Asa was angry at the prophet and he put him in prison, for because of this he was enraged at him. And at that time Asa oppressed some of the people.

Sickness and Death of Asa

[11]Now the acts of Asa, first and last, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. [12]In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe. And in his disease he sought physicians rather than the Lord. [13]So Asa rested with his fathers. He died in the thirty-ninth year of his reign. [14]They buried him in the tomb he had made for himself in the City of David. And they laid him in a bed filled with spices and various ingredients prepared in a mixture of ointments. They made a very great funeral for him.

Jehoshaphat Is King of Judah

17 Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place and strengthened himself against Israel.[†] [2]He placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set captains in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken. [3]Now the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David and did not seek idols, [4]but sought the Lord God of his father and walked in His commandments, and not according to the deeds of Israel. [5]Therefore the Lord guided the kingdom by his hand. And all Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, and he had great wealth and honor. [6]His heart took delight in the ways of the Lord. And moreover, he removed the high places and groves from the land of Judah.

[7]And in the third year of his reign, he sent his leaders and the sons of the mighty men, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. [8]And with them he sent Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah—the Levites. And with them were the priests Elishama and Jehoram. [9]So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them. They went through the cities of Judah and taught the people.

Jehoshaphat's Strength

[10]And the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands around Judah, so they did not make war against Jehoshaphat. [11]And some of the foreigners brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute, and the Arabians brought him flocks—seven thousand seven hundred rams. [12]So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and fortified cities in Judah.

[13]He had great works in Judah, and in Jerusalem men of war, mighty men of valor. [14]These are their numbers by their fathers’ houses: of Judah, the captains of thousands, Adnah the captain, and with him three hundred thousand mighty men of valor; [15]and with him was Jehohanan the captain, and with him were two hundred eighty thousand; [16]and with him was

Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the Lord, and with him were two hundred thousand mighty men of valor. [17]From Benjamin came Eliada, a mighty man of valor, and with him were two hundred thousand men armed with bow and shield. [18]And with him was Jehozabad, who brought one hundred eighty thousand prepared for war. [19]These served the king in addition to those the king put in the fortified cities throughout Judah.

King Ahab Hears Micaiah's Prophecy

18 Jehoshaphat had great wealth and honor, and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab.[†] [2]After several years, he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab killed many sheep and oxen for him and for the people with him, and he persuaded him to go with him to Ramoth Gilead. [3]So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, “Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead?” And he answered him, “In time of war, I am like you and my people are like your people.” [4]And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “Please inquire of the Lord today.”[†]

[5]The king of Israel gathered the prophets—four hundred men—and said to them, “Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?” And they said, “Go up, for God will deliver this place into the king's hand.” [6]But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not still a prophet of the Lord here, so that we may inquire of Him?” [7]So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He is Micaiah the son of Imla.” And Jehoshaphat said, “Let not the king say such

things!” [8]Then Ahab called a eunuch and said, “Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imla!”

[9]The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat on their thrones clothed in their robes. They sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them. [10]Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made iron horns for himself and said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.’ ” [11]And all the prophets prophesied in a similar manner, saying, “Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the king's hand.”

[12]Then the messenger who went to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, “Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore let your word be like the word of one of them and speak encouragement.” [13]And Micaiah said, “As the Lord lives, I will say whatever my God tells me.” [14]Then he came to the king, and the king said to him, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?” And he said, “Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!” [15]So the king said to him, “How many times shall I make you swear not to tell me anything but the truth, in the name of the Lord?” [16]Then he said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep that have no shepherd; and the Lord said, ‘These have no master; let each return to his house in peace.’ ” [17]And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Did I not tell you he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?”

[18]Then Micaiah said, “No, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing at His right and His left. [19]And the Lord said, ‘Who will deceive Ahab king of Israel, to go up so he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner and another spoke in that manner. [20]Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, ‘I will deceive him.’ And the Lord said, ‘In what way?’ [21]So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And the Lord said, ‘You shall deceive him and prevail. Go out and do so.’

[22]“Listen therefore! The Lord put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours. The Lord declares disaster against you.” [23]Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah approached and slapped Micaiah on the cheek and said, “What sort of spirit of the Lord passed by way of me speaking to you?” [24]And Micaiah said, “Indeed you shall see on that day when you go from chamber to chamber to hide yourself.” [25]Then the king of Israel said, “Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the chief captain, the son of the king; [26]and say, ‘Thus says the king: “Put this fellow in prison. Let him eat the bread of affliction and drink the water of affliction until I return in peace.” ’ ” [27]And Micaiah said, “If you ever return in peace, the Lord did not speak by me.” And he said, “Take heed, all you people.”

King Ahab Killed in Battle

[28]So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. [29]And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will

disguise myself and go into battle. You put on my robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

[30]Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots by saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." [31]So when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "It is the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack. But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord saved him, and God diverted them from him. [32]For when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not Ahab king of Israel, they turned away from him. [33]Now a certain man with good aim drew a bow and struck the king of Israel between the lungs and the breastplate. Ahab said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." [34]On that day, the war turned. The king of Israel, away from the Syrians, remained standing in his chariot until evening, and at sunset he died.[†]

Jehoshaphat Brings Reforms

19 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned in peace to his house in Jerusalem.[†] [2]And Jehu, the son of Hanani the prophet, went out to meet him and said to him, "King Jehoshaphat, do you help a sinner or love one who hates the Lord? Therefore, this wrath of the Lord came upon you. [3]Nevertheless, good things are found in you, for you removed the groves from the land of Judah, and did direct your heart to seek the Lord."

[4]So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem and went out again among the people from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers.[†] [5]And city by city, he appointed judges in all the

fortified cities of Judah, [6]and said to the judges, “Watch what you are doing, because you are not judging for man but for the Lord, and the words of judgment are with you. [7]Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Take care and so do it, for there is no wrongdoing with the Lord our God, no partiality nor taking of bribes.”

[8]Moreover in Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the Lord and to judge those dwelling in Jerusalem. [9]And he commanded them, saying, “Thus you shall act in the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a mature heart. [10]Whatever case comes to you from your brethren that dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them not to trespass against the Lord, so that wrath may not come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty of sin. [11]Listen, regarding Amariah the priest, he is head over you in each matter of the Lord. Zebadiah the son of Ishmael is the head over the house of Judah in every matter of the king; and the scribes and the Levites will be before you. Be willing and do the works, for the Lord will be with the good.”

Defeat of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir

20 After this, the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon and others from the Meunites came to battle against Jehoshaphat. [2]And some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude has come against you from beyond the sea, from Syria. They are in Hazazon Tamar” (which is En Gedi). [3]Jehoshaphat was afraid and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.[†] [4]So Judah gathered to seek the

Lord, and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. [5]Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah in Jerusalem, before the new court in the house of the Lord, [6]and said, “Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might so that no one is able to withstand You? [7]Are You not the Lord who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and gave it to the seed of Abraham Your friend forever? [8]And in it they settled and built You a sanctuary in it to Your name, saying, [9]‘If disaster comes upon us, whether sword, judgment, death, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You, for Your name is in this house. It cries out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.’

[10]“Here are the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whom You would not let Israel capture when they came out of the land of Egypt; they turned from them and did not destroy them.[†] [11]Now they are here, attempting to throw us out of the inheritance You gave us. [12]Lord our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude coming against us. We do not know what to do to them, but our eyes are upon You.” [13]Now all Judah stood before the Lord, with their wives and their children.

[14]And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. [15]And he said, “Listen, King Jehoshaphat, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Thus says the Lord to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the

battle is not yours but God's.[†] [16]Go down against them tomorrow. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the river before the Desert of Jeruel. [17]You will not need to fight in this battle. Understand that the salvation of the Lord is with you, Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed. Go out against them tomorrow, for the Lord is with you.” [18]And Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord and worshiped Him. [19]And the Levites of the sons of Kohath and the sons of Korah stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.

[20]So they rose early in the morning and went to the Desert of Tekoa. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and cried out and said, “Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: trust in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; trust His prophet and you shall prosper.” [21]And he consulted with the people, and appointed singers and those who should confess and praise the beauty of holiness. And they went out before the army and said, “Give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.” [22]Now when they began to sing and to give praise, the Lord allowed the sons of Ammon to fight against Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. [23]For the sons of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir and utterly killed and destroyed them. And when they had killed the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. [24]So when Judah came to a place overlooking the desert, they saw the multitude, and there were all the dead bodies fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. [25]When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found a great deal of cattle

and baggage and spoils and precious articles, which they stripped off for themselves, and they spent three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. [26]And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Blessing, for there they blessed the Lord. That is why that place has been called the Valley of Blessing until this day. [27]Then every man of Judah returned to Jerusalem with Jehoshaphat in front of them with great joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. [28]So they came to Jerusalem to the house of the Lord with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets. [29]And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of the land when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. [30]Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

King Jehoshaphat's Reign Is Over

[31]So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. [32]And he walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not turn aside from them, doing right in the sight of the Lord. [33]But the high places were not taken away, for the people did not direct their hearts to the God of their fathers. [34]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, from beginning to end, are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who wrote them down in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

[35]After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah the king of Israel, who acted most wickedly.[†] [36]He allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber.

[37]But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you allied yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy your work, wreck your ships, and Ahaziah will be unable to go to Tarshish.”

Jehoram Is King of Judah

21 Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.[†] [2]He had six brothers, Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. [3]Their father gave them many gifts of silver and gold, together with weapons and fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, since he was the firstborn. [4]Now when Jehoram was established over his father's kingdom, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers, as well as others of Israel. [5]Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and ruled for eight years in Jerusalem. [6]He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done; for Ahab's daughter was his wife, and he did evil before the Lord. [7]Yet the Lord did not wish to destroy the house of David because of the covenant He had made with David, because He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.

[8]In those days, the Edomites revolted against Judah and set a king over themselves.[†] [9]So Jehoram went out with his officers and all his cavalry. He rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots, and the people fled to their tents. [10]Thus Edom remained in opposition to Judah's authority to this day. At that time, Libnah

revolted against the rule of Jehoram because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers. [11]Moreover, he made high places in the cities of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray.

[12]And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, “Thus says the Lord God of your father David, because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa the king of Judah, [13]but walked in the way of the kings of Israel; because you caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab; and because you have killed your brothers, those of your father's household who were better than yourself, [14]behold, the Lord will strike your people with a great affliction—your sons, your wives, and all your possessions. [15]And you will become day by day very sick with a disease of your belly, until your belly comes out because of the sickness.”

The End of Jehoram's Reign

[16]Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of both the foreigners and the neighbors of the Arabs near the Ethiopians. [17]And they came up to Judah and invaded it; they carried away all the possessions from the king's house as well as his sons and daughters, so he had no son left except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. [18]After all this the Lord struck him in the belly with an incurable disease.[†] [19]And in the course of time, at the end of two days, his belly came out with the disease, and he died in severe pain. His people made no funeral for him like the funeral for his fathers. [20]He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he

reigned in Jerusalem for eight years. He departed without praise and he was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah Is King of Judah

22 And in his place, the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king, for the raiders who came into the camp with the Arabians and the Alimazones killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, was made king.[†] [2]Ahaziah was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri. [3]He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in sinning. [4]He did evil in the sight of the Lord, similarly to the house of Ahab, for after the death of his father they were his counselors to his destruction. [5]He followed their advice and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead, whose archers wounded Joram.[†] [6]Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from his wounds the Syrians inflicted in Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

[7]His going to Jehoram was God's opportunity for Ahaziah's downfall. For when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.[†] [8]And when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, he found both the princes of Judah, and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, and killed them. [9]Jehu gave orders to search for Ahaziah in Samaria where he was recuperating, and they brought him to Jehu. After

they killed him, they buried him, because they said, “He is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart.” Thus there was no one in the house of Ahaziah to assume power over the kingdom.

Athaliah Is Queen of Judah

10Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah.[†] 11But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons being murdered, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest—for she was the sister of Ahaziah—hid him from Athaliah, so she did not kill him.[†] 12He remained hidden with them in the house of God for six years while Athaliah reigned over the land.

Joash Is King of Judah

23 In the seventh year, Jehoiada strengthened himself and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri with him into the house.[†] 2They went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the leaders of the families of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3Then all the assembly of Judah made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he showed them the king's son and said to them, “Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord said of the house of David. 4This is what you shall do: One-third of the priests and the Levites who enter on the Sabbath shall keep watch over the entrance gates. [5]One-third shall be at the king's house. And one-third shall be at the Middle Gate. All the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord. [6]But let no one come into the house of the Lord except the priests and those Levites who serve. They may go in, for they are holy, but all the people shall keep the watch for the Lord. [7]And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand, and whoever comes into the house will be put to death. They will be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.”

[8]So the Levites and all Judah did everything Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, along with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss the divisions. [9]And he gave them the swords and shields and weapons which had belonged to King David that were in the house of God. [10]Then he stationed all the people, every man with his weapon in his hands, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, and next to the altar and by the temple, and all around the king. [11]And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the Testimony, and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons made him king and anointed him and said, “Long live the king!”

The Death of Athaliah

[12]Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and giving thanks and praising the king, she came to the king in the house of the Lord.[†] [13]When she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance, with the leaders and the trumpeters around the king. All the

people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, along with the singers and their musical instruments, and those who led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, “Treason! Treason!” [14]Jehoiada the priest went out and commanded the captains of hundreds, who were set over the army, and said to them, “Take her out of the house and slay whoever follows her with the sword.” For the priest said, “Do not kill her in the house of the Lord.” [15]So they seized her, and she went into the king's house by the entrance of the Horse Gate, and there they killed her.

Jehoiada's Reforms

[16]Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the Lord's people. [17]And all the people went to the house of Baal and tore it down. They broke its altars and idols in pieces, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. [18]Also, Jehoiada the priest strengthened the works of the house of the Lord in the hand of the priests and the Levites whom David had assigned in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and singing as it was established by David. [19]And the gatekeepers stood at the gates of the house of the Lord so no one unclean should possibly enter. [20]Then he took the leaders of the families, the mighty men, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king into the house of the Lord. Going through the Inner Gate to the king's house, they set the king on the throne of the kingdom. [21]So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

King Joash Repairs the Temple

24 Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.[†] [2]Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord for all the days of Jehoiada the priest. [3]And Jehoiada took two wives and begot sons and daughters. [4]After this, Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the Lord.

[5]So he gathered the priests and the Levites and said to them, “Go out to the cities of Judah and gather money from all Israel to repair the house of your God from year to year. See that you do it quickly.” However, the Levites did not do it quickly. [6]So the king called Jehoiada the chief priest and said to him, “Why did you not require the Levites to bring in the collection from Judah and Jerusalem, according to the commandment of Moses the man of God when he assembled Israel at the tabernacle of witness?” [7]For Athaliah, a wicked woman, and her sons broke into the house of God and gave all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord to the Baals. [8]Then at the king's command, they made a chest and set it outside at the gate of the house of the Lord. [9]And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem, to bring to the Lord the collection that Moses the servant of God imposed on Israel in the desert.

[10]And all the leaders and all the people gave and brought their contributions. They put them into the chest until it was full. [11]So at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw there was a lot of money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest and returned it to its place. They did this every day and gathered a great deal of money. [12]The

king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the Lord. They hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the Lord, and iron and bronze workers to restore the house of the Lord. [13]So the workmen labored, and by their hand the amount of work being completed increased. They restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it. [14]When they finished, they brought the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada. With this, they made articles for the house of the Lord, articles for serving in the whole burnt offerings, and censers of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the Lord without interruption all the days of Jehoiada.

Death of Jehoiada

[15]But Jehoiada grew old and full of days, and he died. He was one hundred thirty years old when he died. [16]They buried him in the City of David with the kings, because he had done good in Israel toward God and His house. [17]Now after the death of Jehoiada, the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. [18]And they left the Lord God of their fathers to serve Asherah and the idols. And wrath came on Judah and Jerusalem on that day. [19]But still He sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord, but they did not listen. The prophets testified against them, but they would not listen.

[20]Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who watched over the people, and said to him, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Since you forsook the Lord, He shall forsake you.’ ” [21]So they conspired against Zechariah, and at the command of the king they stoned

him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord. [22]Thus Joash the king did not remember the mercy Jehoiada his father had shown him, but killed his son. As he died, he said, “May the Lord see and judge!”

Death of Joash

[23]So after the end of the year, the army of Syria came up against him. They came to Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. [24]For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, but the Lord delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. They executed judgment against Joash. [25]When Syria withdrew, they had left him severely wounded. Then his own servants conspired against him, because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. He died, and they buried him in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings. [26]Those who conspired against him were Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonite, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabite. [27]He had five sons. Everything else that is written about him is in the annals of the Book of the Kings. Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Amaziah Is King of Judah

25 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.[†] [2]And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a loyal heart. [3]As soon as the kingdom was established for him, he executed his servants who murdered his father the king.

[4]However, he did not execute their children, for as it is written in the Law in the Book of Moses where the Lord commands, saying, “The fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall the sons be put to death for their fathers, but each person shall die for his own sin.”

War against Edom

[5]Amaziah gathered the house of Judah then according to their fathers’ houses throughout Judah and Jerusalem, and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. He numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found there were three hundred thousand mighty men who could go to war with spear and shield. [6]And from Israel for one hundred talents of silver he hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor. [7]But a man of God came to him, saying, “King, the army of Israel will not go with you, for the Lord is not with Israel, nor with any of the sons of Ephraim; [8]and if you try to be strong in battle, the Lord will cast you down before the enemy, for the Lord has power to strengthen and to overthrow.” [9]Then Amaziah said to the man of God, “But what shall we do about the hundred talents I gave the army of Israel?” And the man of God answered, “The Lord can give you more than this.” [10]So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim and sent them back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

[11]And Amaziah strengthened himself and led his people and went to the Valley of Salt, where he killed ten thousand of the sons of Seir.[†] [12]The sons of Judah took ten thousand men captive, brought them to the top of the

rock, and cast them down from there. They were all dashed to pieces. [13]As for the sons of the army Amaziah discharged so they would not go to war with him, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon and killed three thousand in them, and took a great deal of spoil. [14]After Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, he brought the gods of the sons of Seir, set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. [15]Therefore the anger of the Lord was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent prophets who said to him, “Why did you seek the gods of the people who could not rescue their own people from your hand?” [16]As he talked with him, the king said to him, “Have we made you the king's counselor? Be careful so that you are not scourged!” Then the prophet ceased, and said, “I know that God determines to destroy you, because you did not heed my advice and you did this thing.”

Judah Defeated by Israel

[17]Now Amaziah king of Judah sought advice and sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu the king of Israel, saying, “Come, let us face one another in battle.” [18]And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, “The thistle in Lebanon sent to the cedar in Lebanon, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son as wife,’ and the beasts of the field will come in Lebanon, and the beasts came and trampled the thistle. [19]Indeed, you say you defeated the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up to boast. Stay at home now. Why should you meddle with trouble and fall, you and Judah with you?”

[20]But Amaziah did not listen, as it came from God for him to be given into the hands of his enemies, since he sought the gods of Edom. [21]So

Joash king of Israel went out, and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah. [22]And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. [23]Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, at Beth Shemesh. And Joash brought him to Jerusalem and broke down the walls of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. [24]And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of the Lord with Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king's house, and the sons of mixed marriages, and returned to Samaria.

[25]Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Joash the son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. [26]Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last, are they not written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel? [27]When Amaziah turned from the Lord, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they went after him to Lachish and killed him there. [28]Then they brought him on horses and buried him with his fathers in the City of David.

Uzziah Is King of Judah

26 Now all the people of the land took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.[†] [2]He built Elath and restored it to Judah after the king rested with his fathers. [3]Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. [4]And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to everything his father Amaziah had done. [5]He sought the Lord in the days of Zechariah, who was wise in the fear of the Lord. And as long as he sought the Lord, the Lord made him prosper.

[6]Now he went out and made war against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod. And he built cities around Ashdod and among the Philistines. [7]God strengthened him against the foreigners, against the Arabs who lived in the rock, and against the Meunites. [8]And the Meunites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong. [9]And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall, and he fortified them. [10]He also built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had a great deal of livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains. He had vine-dressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil.

[11]Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. [12]The total number of chief officers of the mighty men of valor was two thousand six hundred. [13]And the power of an expert military force, equal to three hundred seven thousand five hundred, was with them to help the king against the enemy. [14]And for each of them in the army, Uzziah prepared shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings for stones. [15]And in Jerusalem, he built devices invented by skilled men for the launching of javelins and large stones, and placed them on the towers and corners of the devices. And the fame of his preparing for war was heard far and wide, for he was helped marvelously till he became strong.

The Pride and Downfall of Uzziah

[16]But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord his God by entering the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the incense altar. [17]So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty valiant priests of the Lord. [18]And they challenged King Uzziah and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have rebelled against the Lord! You shall have no honor from the Lord God.”

[19]Then Uzziah became furious with the priests while holding a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, next to the incense altar. [20]And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked on, for he was leprous on his forehead. So they thrust him out of the place. And indeed he hurried, because the Lord reproached him.

[21]King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death, and because he was a leper he dwelt in an isolated house and was excluded from the house of the Lord. Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. [22]Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, are written by the prophet Isaiah. [23]So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial that belonged to the kings, for they said, “He is a leper.” Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Jotham Is King of Judah

27 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok.[†] [2]He did what was right in the sight of the Lord according to everything his father Uzziah had done, although he did not enter the temple of the Lord. But still the people acted corruptly. [3]He built the Upper Gate of the house of the Lord, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. [4]Moreover, he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and he built fortresses and towers in the forests. [5]He also did battle with the king of the sons of Ammon and defeated them. And the sons of Ammon gave him one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat, and ten thousand of barley every year. The king of Ammon brought this to him in the first year and the second year and the third year.

[6]So Jotham became mighty, for he directed his ways before the Lord his God. [7]Now the rest of the acts of Jotham and all his wars and his deeds are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. [8]And Jotham rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Ahaz his son, reigned in his place.

Ahaz Is King of Judah

28 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do right in the sight of the Lord as his father David had done.[†] [2]For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made molded images for their idols. [3]He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the sons of Israel. [4]He burned incense on the high places, on the housetops, and under every green tree.

Judah Defeated by Syria and Israel

[5]Therefore the Lord his God delivered Ahaz into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought them to Damascus. He then was delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter. [6]For Pekah the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, killed one hundred twenty thousand mighty men in Judah in one day, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. [7]Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer over the house, and Elkanah, who was second to the king. [8]And the sons of Israel carried away captive three hundred thousand of their brethren—their wives, the sons, and their daughters—and they took away a great deal of spoil from them and brought the spoil to Samaria.

Israel Releases Her Captives

[9]But a prophet of the Lord was there whose name was Oded, and he went out before the army that came to Samaria and said to them, “Look, the wrath of the Lord God of your fathers is on Judah. He has delivered them into your hand, but you killed them in a rage that reaches up to heaven.[†] [10]And now do you propose to force the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female servants? Will I not bear witness about you before the Lord your God? [11]Therefore, now hear me and return the captives you took from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you.”

[12]Then some of the leaders of the sons of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war [13]and said to them, “You shall not bring the captives here to us, for we have already offended the Lord. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt, for our guilt is great and there is fierce wrath against Israel.” [14]So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. [15]And the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives. From the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them. They let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

Assyria Will Not Help Judah

[16]At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria to help him. [17]For again the Edomites had come and attacked Judah and carried away captives. [18]The foreigners had also invaded the cities of the lowland and the South of Judah and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages, and settled there. [19]For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Judah, for he had rebelled against the Lord. [20]Also Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, came to him and struck him. [21]For Ahaz took what was in the house of the Lord and the house of the king and the leaders, and gave it to the king of Assyria, and he did not help him.

Sins and Death of Ahaz

[22]Now in the time of his distress, King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord. And the king said, [23]“I shall seek the gods of Damascus, who defeated me.” And he said, “Because the gods of the king of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them and they will help me.” But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.

[24]So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut the articles of the house of God in pieces, shut the doors of the house of the Lord, and made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem. [25]And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to foreign gods, and provoked the Lord God of his fathers to anger. [26]Now the rest of his acts and all his deeds, from first to last, indeed they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. [27]So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem. But they did not place him in the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah Is King of Judah

29 Hezekiah became king when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah.[†] [2]And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to everything his father David had done.

Cleansing the Temple

[3]In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. [4]Then he brought in the priests

and the Levites and gathered them in the East Square, [5]and said to them, “Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and cast out the uncleanness from the holy place; [6]for our fathers trespassed and did evil in the eyes of the Lord our God. They forsook Him, they turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the Lord and turned their backs on Him. [7]They also shut up the doors of the temple, put out the lamps, and did not burn incense or offer burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel. [8]Therefore the Lord turned His anger against Judah and Jerusalem, and as you see with your eyes, He gave them up to terror, to desolation, and to jeering. [9]For indeed, because of this our fathers fell by the sword, and our wives, our sons, and our daughters are in captivity. [10]Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, to turn the fierce wrath of His anger from us. [11]Now do not be negligent, for the Lord chose you to stand before Him and serve Him, to minister to Him and burn incense.”

[12]Then these Levites arose: the sons of Kohath, Mahath the son of Amasai and Joel the son of Azariah; of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah and Eden the son of Joah;[†] [13]of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; [14]of the sons of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

[15]And they gathered their brethren and sanctified themselves according to the commandment of the king, at the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord. [16]Then the priests went into the house of the Lord to

cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness they found in the temple of the Lord and in the court of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took it out and carried it to the Brook Kidron. [17]They began to sanctify it on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the Lord. They sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days and finished on the sixteenth day of the first month.

[18]And they went in to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed everything in the house of the Lord, the altar of burnt offerings with all its articles, and the table of the showbread with all its articles. [19]Moreover, we have prepared and sanctified all the articles King Ahaz polluted in his reign and his apostasy. We have prepared and sanctified them all, and there they are before the altar of the Lord."

Worship Is Restored

[20]Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the Lord. [21]He offered seven calves, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the Lord. [22]So they sacrificed the calves, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. Likewise they sacrificed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They also killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar. [23]Then they brought out the male goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. [24]And the priests sacrificed them. They presented their blood on the altar as a sin offering to make an

atonement for all Israel, for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering be made for all Israel.

[25]And he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David and Gad the king's seer and Nathan the prophet; for this was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets. [26]The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. [27]Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, they started to sing to the Lord with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. [28]So all the assembly worshiped. The singers sang and the trumpeters sounded until the burnt offering was finished. [29]And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed. [30]And King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the prophet. So they sang praises with gladness, and bowed their heads and worshiped.

[31]Then Hezekiah spoke up and said, “Now that you have cleansed your hands for the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord.” So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all who were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings. [32]And the number of the burnt offerings the assembly brought was seventy calves, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs. All these were for a burnt offering to the Lord. [33]And there were six hundred consecrated calves and three thousand sheep. [34]But there were not enough priests, so they could not skin all the burnt offerings. Therefore their brethren the

Levites helped them until the task was finished and until the other priests had sanctified themselves, for the Levites were more diligent in sanctifying themselves than the priests.[†] [35]There were many burnt offerings, with the fat of the peace offerings and with the drink offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order. [36]Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly.[†]

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover

30 Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, telling them to come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem and keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel.[†] [2]For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. [3]For they could not keep it at the regular time, because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves and the people had not gathered in Jerusalem. [4]And the matter pleased the king and the assembly. [5]So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba to Dan that they should come to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it in the prescribed manner for a long time.

[6]Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king, “Sons of Israel, return to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Then He will return to the remnant of you who escaped from the hand of the king of Assyria. [7]Do not be like your fathers and your brethren who rebelled against the Lord God of their fathers; so He gave them up to

desolation as you see. [8]Do not be stiff-necked as your fathers were. Give glory to the Lord God and enter His sanctuary, which He sanctified forever. Serve the Lord your God, so that He turns the fierceness of His wrath away from you. [9]For if you return to the Lord, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who led them captive, so they may come back to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and He will not turn His face from us if we return to Him."

[10]So the runners passed from city to city, through Mount Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun. But the people laughed at them and mocked them. [11]Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun were ashamed and came to Jerusalem. [12]At the word of the Lord, the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders.

[13]Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. [14]They arose and took away the altars in Jerusalem. And they took away all the altars on which they burned incense to the false gods and cast them into the Brook Kidron. [15]Then they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves, and they brought the burnt offerings to the house of the Lord. [16]They stood in their place according to their custom, according to the Law of Moses, the man of God. The priests received the blood from the hand of the Levites. [17]For there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves. Therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover lambs for all those who were not able to sanctify themselves

to the Lord. [18]Most of the people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not cleansed themselves, but they ate the Passover contrary to what was written.

But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, “May the good Lord provide atonement for everyone [19]who prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, even though he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.” [20]And the Lord listened to Hezekiah and healed the people. [21]So the sons of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great gladness. And the Levites and the priests praised the Lord every day, singing to the Lord with instruments.

[22]And Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites who knew the good knowledge of the Lord. And they completed the feast in seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers. [23]And the whole assembly agreed to keep the feast for another seven days, and so they kept it another seven days with great joy.[†] [24]For King Hezekiah began the sacrifice for the assembly of Judah with a thousand calves and seven thousand sheep. And the leaders began the sacrifice for the assembly with a thousand calves and ten thousand sheep, and there was an abundance of holy things for the priests.

[25]The whole assembly rejoiced along with the priests and Levites, all the assembly of Judah and those who came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. [26]So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David king

of Israel there had been no feast like this in Jerusalem. [27]Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard. And their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place in heaven.

Priests and People Are Renewed

31 Now when all was completed, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the sacred pillars in pieces, cut down the groves, and cast down the high places and the altars—from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh—until they utterly destroyed them all. Then all the sons of Israel returned to their own possessions and their own cities.[†]

[2]And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions, each man according to his service: the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to praise, to give thanks, and to serve in the gates and the courts of the house of the Lord. [3]The king also appointed a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons, and the feasts prescribed in the Law of the Lord.

[4]Moreover, he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute a portion for the priests and the Levites so that they might devote themselves to the service of the house of the Lord. [5]As soon as the commandment was circulated, the sons of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, olive oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. [6]And the

sons of Israel and Judah who dwelt in the cities of Judah brought the tithe of calves and sheep and the tithe of goats and consecrated them to the Lord their God, and they brought in offerings and laid them in heaps. [7]In the third month the heaps began to accumulate, and in the seventh month they were finished. [8]And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord and His people Israel. [9]Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the heaps. [10]And Azariah, the chief priest from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, “Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and drink and have plenty left, for the Lord blessed His people. What is left is this great abundance.”

[11]Now Hezekiah commanded them to prepare rooms in the house of the Lord, and they prepared them. [12]Then they faithfully brought in the offerings and tithes. Cononiah the Levite had charge of them, and Shimei his brother was his helper. [13]Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the ruler of the house of God. [14]Kore, the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, was over the freewill offerings to God, to distribute the offerings of the Lord and the most holy things. [15]Under him were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, his faithful assistants among the priests, to distribute to their brethren by divisions, great and small. [16]Apart from those, males from three years old and up were listed in the book of days, for daily service by division. [17]This was the register of the priests by their father's house, and the Levites from twenty years old and up according to their daily duties by

divisions; [18]and in the register of all their sons and daughters, their whole company, for in their faithfulness they sanctified the holy place. [19]Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, who were from their cities and in every single city, there were men designated by name to distribute portions to all the males among the priests and to all who were listed by genealogies among the Levites.

[20]Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right before the Lord his God. [21]And in every task he undertook in the service of the house of God, he sought his God in the law and in the commandment with all his heart. So he prospered.

Assyria Invades Judah

32 After these things and this faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came to Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to capture them. [2]And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib came, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, [3]he consulted with his leaders and commanders to stop the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him. [4]And he gathered many people, and they stopped the waters of the springs and the river that ran through the city, saying, “Let not the king of Assyria come and find a lot of water and prevail.” [5]And Hezekiah strengthened himself and built up all the wall that was broken, raised it up to the towers, and built another wall outside. He also repaired the fortress of the City of David and made many weapons. [6]Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them to him in the open square of the Valley Gate, and encouraged them, saying, [7]“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid of the king of Assyria, nor before all the nation with him, for there are more with us than with him. [8]With him are arms of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to save us and to fight our battles.” And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

[9]Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem, while he and all the forces with him laid siege against Lachish, to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, [10]“Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria: ‘In what do you trust, that you continue under siege in Jerusalem? [11]Does not Hezekiah deceive you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, “The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria”? [12]Did not the same Hezekiah take away the altars and the high places and command Judah and Jerusalem, saying, “You shall worship before one altar and burn incense on it”? [13]Do you not know what my fathers and I did to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands able to deliver their lands from my hand? [14]Who among all the gods of those nations my fathers utterly destroyed could deliver his people from my hand, that your God will be able to deliver you from my hand? [15]Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this. Do not believe him. For no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?’ ”

[16]Furthermore, Sennacherib's servants spoke against the Lord God and His servant Hezekiah. [17]He also wrote a letter to revile the Lord God of

Israel and spoke against Him, saying, “As the gods of the nations of other lands did not deliver their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand.” [18]And they called out with a loud voice in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them so that they might take the city. [19]And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, the work of men's hands.

Assyria's Defeat

[20]And King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed about this and cried out to heaven. [21]And the Lord sent an angel, who cut down every mighty man of valor and leader and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his land. And he went into the temple of his god, where some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword. [22]Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria and from the hand of all others. He gave them rest on every side. [23]And many brought gifts to the Lord in Jerusalem and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so afterwards he was exalted in the sight of all nations.

Hezekiah Humbled and Honored at His Death

[24]In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord heard him and gave him a sign.[†] [25]But Hezekiah did not repay the favor shown him, but exalted his own heart, and His anger came upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. [26]Hezekiah was humbled

because of his exalted heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

[27]Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items, [28]and cities for the harvest of grain, olive oil, and wine, and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. [29]And he built cities for himself, and he possessed flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him a great deal of property. [30]This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon and brought the water by a tunnel to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works. [31]However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom Babylon sent to him to inquire about the wonder done in the land, God withdrew from Hezekiah in order to test him and know what was in his heart.

[32]Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his mercy, indeed they are written in the prophecy of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz and in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. [33]So Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David. And all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Manasseh Is King of Judah

33 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem.[†] [2]But he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the Gentiles whom the

Lord destroyed before the sons of Israel, [3]for he turned and rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had broken down. He raised up pillars for the Baals and made groves and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. [4]He also built altars in the house of the Lord, where the Lord had said, “In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.” [5]And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. [6]Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. He practiced soothsaying and bird-augury and sorcery, and consulted mediums and divining spirits. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord and provoked Him to anger. [7]He even set a carved image and a cast image, idols he had made, in the house of God, where God had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever, [8]and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land I gave your fathers; provided they are careful to do all I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.” [9]So Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray to do more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the sons of Israel.

Manasseh's Repentance

[10]And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. [11]Therefore the Lord brought against them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with bonds, bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. [12]Now when he was in affliction, he sought the face of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, [13]and prayed to Him. And the Lord received his

entreaty, heard his cry, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.[†]

[14]After this, he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the gate. It enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. [15]He took away the foreign gods and the carved idols from the house of the Lord, and destroyed all the altars he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord and in Jerusalem outside the city. [16]He also repaired the altar of the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it. He commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. [17]Nevertheless, the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the Lord their God.

Manasseh's Death

[18]The rest of the acts of Manasseh and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel—indeed of the word [19]of his prayer and how God heard and responded to him, to all his sins and rebellions, and to the sites where he built high places and established groves and carved images, before he returned—indeed this is written among the sayings of the seers. [20]So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the garden of his house. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

Amon Is King of Judah

[21]Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for two years in Jerusalem. [22]But he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as his

father Manasseh had done, for Amon sacrificed to all the idols his father Manasseh had made and served them. [23]And he did not humble himself before the Lord as his father Manasseh had humbled himself, but Amon trespassed more and more.

[24]Then his servants conspired against him and killed him in his house. [25]But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

Josiah Is King of Judah

34 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem.[†] [2]And he did what was right before the Lord and walked in the ways of his father David. He did not turn aside to the right hand or the left.

Josiah Purges False Worship

[3]For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. And in the twelfth year of his reign, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the groves, and the molded images. [4]They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence and the high places above them, and Josiah cut down the groves and the carved images and the molded images and crushed them to dust, and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. [5]He burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem [6]and the cities of Ephraim and Manasseh and Simeon, as far as

Naphtali and all the surrounding areas. [7]When he had broken down the groves and the altars and the idols, beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the high places throughout the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

Repair of the Temple

[8]In the eighteenth year of his reign, after he cleansed the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz his recorder to repair the house of the Lord his God. [9]When they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin and these who dwelt in Jerusalem. [10]Then they put it in the hand of the foremen who had the oversight of the house of the Lord, and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the Lord to repair and restore the house. [11]They gave it to the carpenters and builders to buy hewn stone and timber for beams to roof the houses the kings of Judah had destroyed. [12]And the men were faithful in the work. Their overseers were Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of Kohath, who supervised; and all the Levites who were skillful with musical instruments; [13]and overseers were over the burden-bearers and those who did work in any kind of service; and some of the Levites were scribes, officers, and gatekeepers.

The Book of the Law Is Found

[14]Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses.[†] [15]Then Hilkiah spoke up and said to Shaphan the scribe, “I found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord.” And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. [16]So Shaphan carried the book to the king and brought the king's word, saying, “All the money given is in the hands of your servants who are doing the work; [17]and they cast the silver found in the house of the Lord, and delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen.” [18]Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, “Hilkiah the priest gave me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king.

[19]Thus when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes. [20]Then the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the servant of the king, saying, [21]“Concerning the words of the book that was found, go inquire of the Lord for me from those who are left in Israel and Judah. For the wrath of the Lord is burning greatly against us, for our fathers did not obey the word of the Lord nor do everything written in this book.” [22]So Hilkiah and those the king had appointed went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter. And they told her this.

[23]And she told them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Tell the man who sent you to Me, [24]“Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will bring calamity on this place—all the words written in the book they read before the king of Judah, [25]for they forsook Me and burned incense to other gods. They

provoked Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath burns in this place and it will not be quenched.' " ' [26]But as for the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord—this is what you shall say to him: 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: "Concerning the words you have heard, [27]because your heart was turned and you humbled yourself before My face when you heard My words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and tore your clothes and wept before Me, I have heard you," says the Lord. [28]"Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be placed in your grave in peace. Your eyes shall not see the calamity I will bring on this place and its inhabitants." ' " So they brought back word to the king.

Josiah Restores True Worship

[29]Then the king sent and gathered the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.[†] [30]The king went up to the house of the Lord with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the Levites and all the people, great and small. And he read for their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that was found in the house of the Lord. [31]And the king stood by his pillar and made a covenant before the Lord that he would follow the Lord and keep His commandments, His testimonies, and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, and perform the words of the covenant written in this book. [32]And he required it of all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made a covenant in the house of the Lord God of their fathers. [33]Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the land that belonged to the sons of Israel, and made all present in Jerusalem and Israel diligently serve the Lord their God for all

their days. They did not depart from following the Lord God of their fathers.

Josiah Keeps Passover

35 Now Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord his God in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.[†] [2]He established the priests in their duties and encouraged them for the service of the house of the Lord. [3]Then he said to the Levites who had power in all Israel, to sanctify themselves for the Lord. And they put the holy ark in the house built by Solomon the son of David, king of Israel. And the king said, “It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders. Now serve the Lord your God and His people Israel. [4]Prepare yourselves according to your fathers’ houses, by your divisions, following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son. [5]And stand in the house according to the divisions of the fathers’ houses of your brethren, the sons of the people, and according to the division of the father's house of the Levites. [6]Slaughter the Passover and prepare the holy things for your brethren so they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.”

[7]Then Josiah began the sacrifice for the sons of the people, with sheep and lambs and young goats from the flock to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand calves for all the Passover offerings, for all who were present. These were from the king's possessions. [8]And the leaders began the offering for the people and the priests and the Levites, rulers of the house of God. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel gave the priests two thousand six hundred sheep and lambs and goats from the flock for the

Passover offerings, and three hundred calves. [9]Conaniah and Banaiah and Shemaiah and Nethanel his brother, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, leaders of the Levites, began the offering for the Levites with five thousand sheep and five hundred calves for the Passover offerings.

[10]So the service was prepared. And the priests stood in their places with the Levites in their divisions according to the king's command. [11]And they slaughtered the Passover offerings. The priests sprinkled the blood with their hands, while the Levites skinned the animals. [12]Then they prepared the burnt offerings to give it to them by the divisions of the fathers' houses of the sons of the people, to offer to the Lord as it is written in the Book of Moses. And so they did in the morning. [13]They roasted the Passover offerings with fire according to the ordinance. But they boiled the other holy offerings in bronze pots and in pans. And it went well, and they divided them quickly among all the sons of the people. [14]Afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests were busy offering burnt offerings and fat until night. Therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and their brethren, the sons of Aaron. [15]And the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their places according to the command of David. Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, the king's prophets and the gatekeepers, were at each gate. They did not have to leave their service of the holy things because their brethren the Levites prepared portions for them.

[16]So all the service of the Lord was arranged and prepared on that day to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the Lord according to the command of King Josiah. [17]And the sons of Israel who

were present kept the Passover at that time, and they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. [18]No Passover like this was kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet, and none of the kings of Israel kept such a Passover to the Lord as Josiah kept, having the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, [19]in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah.

[20]The ventriloquists, and the mediums, and the images and the idols, and the other abominations which were in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, King Josiah burned with fire, to confirm the words of the law written in the book which Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord. [21]There was no one like him before him, who turned towards the Lord with all his heart and all his soul and all his strength in all the law of Moses. No one arose like him afterward. [22]But the Lord did not turn from the anger of His great wrath with which the Lord was enraged against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Mannaseh provoked Him. [23]And the Lord said, “I will remove Judah from before Me as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and the house where I said that My name would be there.”

Josiah Killed in Battle

[24]Pharaoh Necho, the king of Egypt, came against the king of the Assyrians to fight at the river Euphrates. And King Josiah went out against him. [25]But Pharaoh sent messengers to him saying, “What do I have to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come to fight against you today, and God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, so that He does not destroy you.” [26]Nevertheless Josiah would

not turn his face from him, but continued to fight with him. He did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

27 And the archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am severely wounded.” 28 His servants took him out of the chariot and put him in a second chariot he had, and brought him to Jerusalem. So he died and was buried with his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.[†] 29 Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day, all the important men and women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel, and it is written in the Lamentations. 30 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his hope are written in the Law of the Lord, 31 and his deeds from first to last, indeed they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

Jehoahaz Is King of Judah

36 Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and anointed him and established him as king in his father's place in Jerusalem.[†] 2 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned for three months in Jerusalem. 3 And his mother's name was Amital the daughter of Jeremiah from Lobema. 4 And he did evil before the Lord according to everything his fathers did. 5 And Pharoah Necho bound him in Deble in the land of Emath, lest he reign in Jerusalem. 6 The king of Egypt carried him away to Egypt, and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

Jehoiakim Is King of Judah

[7]Then Pharaoh Necho made Josiah's son Eliakim king over Judah in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh Necho took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him off to Egypt, where he died.[†] [8]And he gave silver and gold to Pharaoh. Then the land began to be taxed to give silver to feed Pharaoh, and each one asked as he was able for silver and gold from the people of the land to give to Pharaoh Necho.

[9]Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zechora the daughter of Neriou from Rama. And as his fathers did, he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God in all things. [10]In those days, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to the land, and he served him three years and revolted from him. [11]And the Lord sent the Chaldeans against them, and bands of robbers from Syria, and bands of robbers from the Moabites, and the sons of Ammon and Samaria. But after this they departed, according to the word of the Lord by the hand of his servants the prophets.

[12]But the wrath of the Lord was on Judah because they rebelled against Him through the sins of Manasseh in all he did, [13]and in the innocent blood Jehoiakim shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord did not want to destroy him. [14]Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against him and bound him in bronze fetters and carried him off to Babylon. [15]He carried off some of the articles from the house of the Lord to Babylon and put them in his temple in Babylon. [16]And the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and all he did, are they not written in the Book of the Kings of Judah? And Jehoiakim rested with his fathers and was buried in Ganoza with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

Jehoiachin Is King of Judah

[17]Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord. [18]At the turn of the year, King Nebuchadnezzar summoned him and brought him to Babylon with the costly articles from the house of the Lord, and made Zedekiah, his father's brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah Is King of Judah

[19]Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. [20]He did evil in the sight of the Lord his God and was not ashamed before Jeremiah the prophet, nor because of the word of the Lord. [21]He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar and broke the oath he swore by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart, turning against the Lord God of Israel.

[22]Moreover all the nobles of Judah and the leaders and the priests and the people transgressed more and more, following all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.[†] [23]And the Lord God of their fathers sent them warnings by His messengers, rising up early and sending His messengers, because He spared His people and His dwelling place. [24]But they mocked His messengers, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people and there was no remedy.

[25]Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of His sanctuary, and did not spare Zedekiah or have pity on the virgins, and he led away the aged. He gave everything into their hands. [26]And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king and his nobles, he took all these to Babylon. [27]Then he burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. [28]And he settled those remaining in Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of the Medes, [29]to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate, she kept the Sabbath, until seventy years had passed.

King Cyrus: Go up to Jerusalem

[30]In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, after the fulfillment of the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia and told him to make a proclamation throughout all his kingdom in writing, saying,[†] [31]“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia to all the kingdoms of the earth: ‘The Lord God of heaven gave to me even a command, to build for Him a house in Jerusalem of Judah. Is there anyone from among you, from among all the people God will be with? Let him go up to Jerusalem.’ ”

Prayer of King Manasseh

37 “O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their righteous seed;[ω] [2]who made heaven and earth with all their ornamentation; [3]who set the bounds of the sea by the word of Your command; who closed the abyss and sealed it by Your fearful and glorious name; [4]before whom all things tremble and fear because of Your power; [5]for the majesty of Your glory is unbearable, and the wrath of Your threats toward sinners cannot be withstood; [6]yet Your merciful promise is immeasurable and unsearchable. [7]For You are the Lord Most High, and are tenderhearted, patient, very merciful, and who repent toward the evils of man.

[8]“Therefore You, O Lord God of the righteous, have not appointed repentance for the righteous, for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who have not sinned against You; but You have appointed repentance for me, a sinner, [9]because I have sinned more than the number of the sands on the seashore. My lawlessness, O Lord, is multiplied. Yes, my lawlessness is multiplied, and I am not worthy to fix my eyes to behold the heights of heaven because of the multitude of my wrongdoings. [10]I am bent down with so many iron chains that I shake my head over my sins, neither do I have any relief. For I have provoked Your anger and done evil in your sight. I have set up abominations and multiplied idols.

[11]“Now therefore, I bow the knee of my heart, begging goodness from You. [12]I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I know my lawlessness. [13]I ask and beg you: forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and do not destroy me because of my lawlessness; neither reserve evils for me, nor be wrathful forever; nor condemn me to the lowest parts of the earth; for You are the

Lord God of those who repent. [14]And in me, though I am unworthy, You will show Your goodness, and will save me according to Your great mercy. [15]Therefore I shall praise You continually all the days of my life, for all the powers of the heavens praise You, and Yours is the glory unto the ages. Amen.”

1 EZRA(2 ESDRAS)

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The First Book of Ezra

Author—Uncertain. The authorship of this book is debated, since it appears to contain some of Ezra's memoirs, and yet parts of 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah are found in the text.

Date—About 150 BC, and not later than 100 BC since Josephus used the LXX version in his *Antiquities of the Jewish People* (AD 93–94)

Major Themes—*The restoration of temple worship in Jerusalem and renewed commitment to the Law of Moses*

Background—This historical account assumes readers are familiar with the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, the history of the kings from David to the Babylonian Captivity, and the exile and return of the Jews to Jerusalem. First Ezra presents the Israelites as a people chosen to worship the true God; their strength comes from their faithfulness to His commandments.

Outline

I. Josiah Celebrates the Passover, the Attempt to Stop the Egyptians at Megiddo, and Josiah's Death (1:1–31)

II. The Last Kings of Judah: The Babylonians Capture Jerusalem (1:32–55)

III. The Royal Edict of Cyrus the Persian (2:1–11)

IV. Opposition to the Reconstruction of the Temple (2:12–26)

V. Three Young Guards (3:1–4:42)

VI. The List of Returning Exiles (4:43–5:45)

VII. Reconstruction of the Temple (5:46–71)

VIII. The Temple Is Completed (6:1–7:15)

Josiah Keeps the Passover

1 Josiah kept the Passover to his Lord in Jerusalem. He sacrificed the paschal lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month.[†] 2 He then placed the priests in the Lord's temple according to their divisions, clothed in their vestments. 3 He told the Levites, Israel's servants in the temple, to sanctify themselves to the Lord and to place the holy ark of the Lord in the house that King Solomon, son of David, had built. For he said, “No longer will you carry the ark upon your shoulders. 4 Now serve the Lord your God, and heal His people Israel. Prepare yourselves according to your families and tribes, according to the writing of King David of Israel and the magnificence of Solomon his son. 5 Stand in the temple in your proper order before your brothers, the children of Israel, and according to the office of your paternal families, the Levites. 6 Sacrifice the paschal lamb, prepare the sacrifices for your brothers, and keep the Passover according to the Lord's commandment given to Moses.”

7 Josiah gave thirty thousand lambs and kids and three thousand calves to the people who were present. These were given from the king's possessions to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites, as he promised. 8 Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the overseers of the temple, gave the priests two thousand six hundred sheep and three hundred calves for Passover. 9 Jeconiah, Shemaiah, and Nathanael his brother, and Hashabiah, Ochiel, and Joram, high-ranking officers, gave the Levites five thousand sheep and seven hundred calves for Passover.

[10]This is what happened. The priests and Levites stood in their proper order before the people, [11]holding the unleavened bread according to the tribes [12]and the governors of their paternal families, to present the offering to the Lord, as was written in the Book of Moses. This was done in the morning. [13]They roasted the paschal lamb with fire, as was fitting, and the sacrifices were boiled in copper pots and pans, providing a fragrant aroma. They were then carried out to all the people.

[14]After this was done, they prepared the paschal lamb for themselves and for the priests their brothers, the sons of Aaron. For the priests offered the fat until late and the Levites prepared it for themselves and for the priests, their brothers, the sons of Aaron. [15]The temple singers, the sons of Asaph, were also in their proper place according to their appointed order made by David, along with Asaph, Zechariah, and Eddinus, who belonged to the king's entourage. Moreover the gatekeepers from each gate were not to leave their posts, for their brothers, the Levites, prepared the paschal lamb for them.

[16]So the things concerning the sacrifices were completed on that day. They kept the Passover and offered sacrifices on the altar of the Lord according to the command of King Josiah. [17]Thus the children of Israel who were present at that time kept Passover, as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for seven days. [18]From the times of Samuel the prophet, there was no Passover kept in Israel such as this. [19]No king in Israel ever kept such a Passover as Josiah did, along with the Levites, the Jews and all Israel who were present and living in Jerusalem. [20]This

Passover was kept in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. [21]These works of Josiah were upright before the Lord, for his heart was full of godliness.

[22]The events that took place in the days of Josiah were recorded long ago. They concerned those who sinned and acted impiously against the Lord, even more so than any nation and kingdom. For they grieved Him extremely, so the words of the Lord came against Israel.

[23]Then after these acts of Josiah took place, Pharaoh the king of Egypt went to make war at Carchemish on the River Euphrates. So Josiah went out to encounter him. [24]Then the king of Egypt sent word to him, saying, “What do we have to do with each other, O king of Judea? [25]I was not sent against you by the Lord God, for my war is at the Euphrates. The Lord is now with me, and the Lord is hastening me onward! Therefore withdraw from me, and do not be in opposition to the Lord.”

Josiah's Reign Is Ended

[26]Josiah, however, did not turn back his chariot, but tried to fight against him. Thus he did not heed the words of Jeremiah the prophet from the mouth of the Lord. [27]Rather, he engaged Pharaoh in battle on the plain of Megiddo, and his commanders came down against King Josiah. [28]Then the king told his servants, “Remove me from the fight, for I am badly wounded.” Thus his servants immediately withdrew him from the line of battle. [29]They mounted him on his second chariot and brought him back to Jerusalem, where he died. So they buried him in the tomb of his forefathers.

[30]They mourned over Josiah throughout all Judea. Jeremiah the prophet also sang a lamentation on Josiah's behalf. Even to this day, the chief men and the women make lamentations for him, for it came to pass that this was to be done perpetually throughout the entire nation of Israel. [31]These things are recorded in the book of the histories of the Judean kings. Now everything Josiah did—his glory, his understanding in the law of the Lord, both his prior accomplishments and things now related—are recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Jerusalem Falls to Babylon

[32]The men of the nation took Jeconiah the son of Josiah to succeed Josiah as king. He was twenty-three years old. [33]He reigned for three months in both Judah and Jerusalem. Then the king of Egypt dethroned him in Jerusalem [34]and made the people pay a fine of one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold. [35]The king of Egypt then appointed Jehoiakim his brother as king of Judah and Jerusalem. [36]Jehoiakim put the people of high status in prison, then arrested his brother Zarius and brought him up from Egypt.

[37]Now Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king of Judea and Jerusalem, but he did evil before the Lord. [38]So Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up against him, bound him with a copper chain, and led him away by force to Babylon. [39]Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the Lord's holy vessels and carried them away and placed them in his temple in Babylon. [40]Now the things written about Jehoiakim, his uncleanness and ungodliness, are described in the chronicles of the kings.

[41]Then his son Jehoiachin reigned in his place, for he was appointed king when he was eighteen years old. [42]He reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem and did evil before the Lord. [43]After a year, Nebuchadnezzar sent and deported him to Babylon, together with the holy vessels of the Lord. [44]Then he appointed Zedekiah king of Judea and Jerusalem. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old and he reigned for eleven years. [45]He also did evil before the Lord and did not respect the words from the mouth of the Lord spoken to him by Jeremiah the prophet. [46]Although King Nebuchadnezzar made him swear in the Lord's name, he swore falsely and revolted. He became stiff-necked, hardened his heart, and transgressed the laws of the Lord God of Israel. [47]Even the chief leaders of the people and the priests acted in many ungodly and lawless ways, surpassing all the uncleanness of all the nations. They even defiled the Lord's temple which He had sanctified in Jerusalem.

[48]Now the God of their fathers sent to call them back through His angel so as to spare them and His dwelling place. [49]But they ridiculed His messengers, and whenever the Lord spoke, they mocked His prophets until He became furious with His people because of their impious acts. So He gave the command to bring the kings of the Chaldeans against them. [50]They killed their young men by the sword round about their holy temple. They spared neither young man nor virgin, neither old man nor child, for He handed over all into their hands. [51]They took all the large and small holy vessels of the Lord, the ark of the Lord, and the king's possessions, and carried them off to Babylon. [52]They burned the Lord's house, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, and set the towers on fire. [53]They made all its

glorious things to be worthless and led away the survivors to Babylon with the sword.

[54]They became servants of the king and his heirs until the Persians began to reign, in fulfillment of the Lord's word by the mouth of Jeremiah, [55]which said, “Until the land has enjoyed its Sabbaths, it shall keep its Sabbath the entire time of its desolation until the fulfillment of seventy years.”

Decree of Cyrus

2 When Cyrus was reigning over the Persians in his first year, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of the Persians for the completion of the Lord's word by the mouth of Jeremiah. So he made a written proclamation in all his kingdom, saying,[†] [2]“Thus says Cyrus the king of the Persians: Israel's Lord, the Lord Most High, revealed and indicated to me, the king of the inhabited world, that I should build a house for Him at Jerusalem in Judea. [3]Therefore, if any of you are from His nation, may the Lord be with you, and when you go up to Jerusalem in Judea, may you build the house of the Lord of Israel. He is the Lord who dwells in Jerusalem. [4]Therefore, let as many as are living around you in various places help you with gifts of gold and silver, with horses and cattle, as well as with other things added as votive offerings for the Lord's temple in Jerusalem.”

[5]Then the chiefs of the families of Judah and of the tribe of Benjamin, and the priests and Levites, and everyone whose spirit the Lord stirred up stepped forth to go up to build the Lord's house in Jerusalem. [6]Those round

about whose hearts were stirred helped them with everything: with silver and gold, with horses and cattle, and with a very great number of votive offerings.

[7]King Cyrus also brought forth the sacred vessels of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had carried out from Jerusalem and placed in his temple of idols. [8]Cyrus, king of the Persians, brought these out and handed them over to Mithridates, his treasurer. He, in turn, gave them to Sheshbazzar, the chief leader of Judea. [9]The number of these was as follows: one thousand gold cups, one thousand silver cups, twenty-nine silver censers, [10]thirty gold bowls, two thousand four hundred and ten silver bowls, and one thousand other vessels. [11]All the gold and silver vessels handed over totaled five thousand four hundred and sixty-nine. All these, together with the returning captives, were brought back to Jerusalem by Sheshbazzar.

Rebuilding of the Temple Opposed

[12]But Bishlam, Mithridates, Tabeel, Rehum, Beltethmus, Shimshai the scribe, and the other members of their council, as well as those living in Samaria and other places, wrote a letter to Artaxerxes during the time he was king of the Persians. They wrote it against those dwelling in Judea and Jerusalem, inscribed as follows:

[13]“To King Artaxerxes our lord from your servants Rehum the recorder, and Shimshai the scribe, and the other members of their council, and the judges in Coelesyria and Phoenicia: [14]Let it now be known to our lord the king that the Jews who came up from you to us went to Jerusalem to build the rebellious and evil city. They are restoring both its marketplaces and its

walls and are laying a foundation for a temple. [15]If therefore this city is built and its walls completed, they will not continue to pay tribute but will also resist kings. [16]Since work is being done on the temple, we assume it best not to overlook such a matter, but to address our lord the king, that if it seems appropriate to you, this may be researched in the books of your forefathers. [17]For you will find the record of these things in the archives. You will learn that this city was rebellious and troubled both kings and cities, and that the Jews themselves are rebels. They formed military blockades in it from ancient times, which is the reason the city itself was destroyed. [18]Therefore we now make known to you, O lord our king, that if this city is built and its walls restored, you will no longer have access to Coelesyria and Phoenicia."

[19]Then the king wrote back to Rehum the recorder, to Beltethmus, to Shimshai the scribe, to the other members of their council, and to those dwelling in Samaria, Syria, and Phoenicia. He inscribed his letter as follows:

[20]"I read the letter you sent to me. [21]So I commanded a search to be made. It was discovered that this city from ancient times stood in hostile array against kings, that the people within it perpetrated rebellion and war, [22]that mighty and fierce kings were ruling in Jerusalem and levying tributes from Coelesyria and Phoenicia. [23]Therefore I have now imposed orders to prevent those men from building the city, [24]to be careful not to do anything contrary to this order, and to do nothing to cause trouble for kings."

[25]After they read the letter from King Artaxerxes, Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and the other members of their council went speedily to Jerusalem. They departed with cavalry and a large number of armed soldiers formed in battle array and began to hinder the builders. [26]So the building of the temple in Jerusalem became idle until the second year of the reign of Darius king of the Persians.

The Three Young Guards

3 Now King Darius put on a great banquet for all his subjects, for his entire household, and for all the nobles of Media and Persia.[†] [2]He also invited all the satraps, commanders, and governors under him throughout the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces extending from India to Ethiopia. [3]They ate and drank, and when they were satisfied they returned home. As for King Darius, he returned to his bedchamber and slept, but awoke.

[4]Then the three young men who were attending the king as bodyguards said one to the other,[†] [5]"Let each of us speak one strong saying, and whichever saying of ours seems to be the strongest, King Darius will give him great gifts and a feast in his honor. [6]He will be dressed in purple, drink from gold cups, and sleep in a gold bed. He will have a chariot with a gold-studded bridle, a turban of fine linen, and a gold necklace around his neck.[†] [7]Because of his wisdom he will sit second to Darius and will be addressed as kinsman of Darius."[†]

[8]So each one then wrote down his saying, sealed it, and placed it under the pillow of King Darius. They said, [9]"When the king awakens, they will

give the writings to him and the one whose saying the king and the three nobles of Persia may judge the wisest, the victory shall be given to him, as it is written."

Which Is Strongest?

[10]The first one wrote, "Wine is the strongest."[†] [11]The second wrote, "The king is the strongest." [12]The third wrote, "Women are the strongest, but above all things the truth conquers."

[13]So when the king was awakened, he took the writings they gave to him, and he read them. [14]Then he sent forth and invited all the nobles of Persia and Media and the satraps, commanders, governors, and highest officials. He took his place in the seat of judgment, and the writings were read in their presence. [15]He said, "Call the young men, and they will clarify their sayings." So they were summoned and came in. [16]They said to them, "Interpret for us the sayings you wrote."

The Strength of Wine

[17]So the first, who spoke about the strength of wine, began and said thus:[†] [18]"Men, how is wine the strongest? It leads astray the mind of all who drink it. [19]It makes a single mind of both the king and the orphan, of the servant and the freeman, and of the poor man and the rich man. [20]It turns every mind to feasting and gladness, and it does not remember any pain or any debt. [21]Wine makes all hearts rich, does not remember a king or satrap, and makes everyone talk in big money terms. [22]When men drink, they do not remember to act as a friend to friends, and after a short while

they draw swords. [23]But when they become sober, they do not remember what they did. [24]O men, is not wine the strongest because it forces us to do such things?” So he spoke in this way and then became silent.

The Strength of the King

4 Then the second, who talked about the strength of the king, began to speak:[†] [2]“O men, has not man prevailed on land and sea, becoming the master of them and everything in them? [3]But the king is strong and rules over these, for he is their master; whatever he commands them they obey. [4]If he commands one to make war on the other, they do it. If he sends them out against enemies, they go and subdue mountains, walls, and towers. [5]They kill and are killed, but the word of the king is not transgressed. If they conquer, they bring everything to the king—whatever they forage or anything else. [6]But those who do not serve as soldiers nor wage war, but cultivate the land, they too bring to the king whatever they sow and harvest. They also compel one another to pay taxes to the king. [7]Although he is only one man, yet if he says to kill, they kill; if he says to spare, they spare. [8]If he says to smite, they smite; if he says to destroy, they destroy; if he says to build, they build. [9]If he says to cut down, they cut down; if he says to plant, they plant. [10]So all his people and his army listen to him. [11]In addition to these things, he reclines—he eats, he drinks, he rests—while they keep watch around him. Nobody can leave to do his own business, nor do they disobey him. [12]O men, in what is the king not strong, since he is so carefully obeyed?” Then he kept silent.

The Strength of Women

[13]Then the third, who had spoken about women and the truth and whose name was Zerubbabel, began to speak:[†] [14]“Men, is not the king great, and men many, and wine strong? Who then rules them, or who is their master? Is it not women?[†] [15]Women gave birth to the king and to all the people who rule over sea and land. [16]They came to exist from women, and women reared those who plant the vineyards from which the wine comes.[†] [17]Women also make men's clothing and bring glory to men. Indeed, men could not exist without women.

[18]“Moreover, if men are gathering gold, silver, or anything beautiful, but see one woman who looks good in form and beauty, [19]they drop everything and gape at her, and with mouths wide open they stare at her. They all choose her rather than gold, silver, or any beautiful thing. [20]Yes, a man will even forsake his own father who reared him and his own country so as to cleave to his own wife.[†] [21]He will live out his life and not even remember father, mother, or country. [22]From all this, you should realize that women rule over you!

“Do you not work hard and grow weary with toil, then bring it and give it all to women? [23]Furthermore, a man will put on his sword and go forth to rob, steal, and sail the sea and rivers. [24]He will stalk a lion and walk in darkness, and when he steals, whatever he takes and pillages he will bring back to his beloved. [25]For a man dearly loves his own wife more than his father or mother. [26]Yes, many men have lost all sense and even become slaves because of their wives. [27]Many have perished, stumbled, or sinned because of their wives.

[28]“Do you not believe me now? Is the king not great in his authority? Are not all the countries moved with fear to touch him? [29]Yet I saw him with Apame, the king's concubine and the daughter of the admirable Bartacus. She sat at the king's right hand,[†] [30]removed the crown from the king's head, and put it on her own. She also struck the king with her left hand. [31]At this, the king gaped at her with his mouth wide open. When she smiled at him he laughed, and when he exasperated her, he flattered her that she might be reconciled with him. [32]O men, in what way are women not strong, since they do such things?”

The Strongest Is Truth

[33]Then the king and the nobles looked at one another,[†] [34]and Zerubbabel began to speak about the truth: “Men, are not women strong? The earth is great, heaven is high, and the sun is swift in its course, for it revolves around heaven in a circle and returns again to its place in one day. [35]Is not He great who made all things? For His truth is great and stronger than all things.[†] [36]All the earth summons the truth, and heaven blesses it; for all His works shake with fear and tremble, and there is nothing unjust with Him. [37]But wine is unjust, the king is unjust, women are unjust, all the children of the men and their works are unjust, and all such things are unjust; for there is no truth in them. So they will perish in their injustice.

[38]“But the truth abides and is strong forever. The truth lives and rules unto ages of ages. [39]There is no partiality or prejudice with the truth, but it does righteous things, distinct from all wrongdoings and evil. All are pleased with its deeds, and there is nothing unjust in its judgment. [40]For

strength, dominion, authority, and majesty belong to it unto all ages, and blessed is the God of truth.”

[41]So he stopped speaking, and all the people then cried aloud and said, “Great is the truth, for it is the strongest!”[†] [42]Then the king said to him, “Ask what you will, and let it be more than what is written; for we will give it to you, inasmuch as you were found to be the wisest. You will also sit next to me and be called my kinsman.”[†]

Back to Jerusalem

[43]Then Zerubbabel said to the king, “Remember the vow you swore on the day you received your kingdom to rebuild Jerusalem[†] [44]and to send back all the vessels taken from Jerusalem, the ones Cyrus removed when he vowed to destroy Babylon and vowed to send them back there? [45]You also vowed to rebuild the temple which the Edomites set on fire when Judea was laid waste by the Chaldeans. [46]Now this is what I consider worthy of you, O lord our king, and what I ask of you, for this befits your greatness. Therefore I beg of you that you keep the vow you vowed to the King of heaven from your own mouth.”

[47]Then King Darius arose and kissed him. He wrote letters for him to all the treasurers, governors, commanders, and satraps that they help him on his way, and everyone going up with him to rebuild Jerusalem. [48]He also wrote letters to all the governors in Coelesyria and Phoenicia, and to those in Lebanon to transfer cedar logs from Lebanon to Jerusalem to help him rebuild the city.

[49]Then he wrote to all the Jews who went up from his kingdom to Judea in behalf of their freedom, that no power, satrap, commander, or treasurer was to come against their doors; [50]that all the territory they ruled was to be theirs without subjection to taxes; that the Edomites were to hand over to the Jews the villages they had seized; [51]that twenty talents were to be given every year for the building of the temple until it was completed, [52]and ten talents every year for the whole burnt offerings to be offered each day on the altar according to the commandment to make seventeen offerings; [53]and that all those from Babylon who went up to build the city were to have their freedom, the people and their children, and all the priests who went up with them. [54]He also wrote that they were to pay the expenses for the priestly vestments in which they served. [55]He likewise wrote that they were to pay the Levites' expenses until the temple was completed and Jerusalem rebuilt. [56]Also, for all who guarded the city, he wrote that they were to be given lands and wages. [57]Then he sent forth from Babylon all the vessels Cyrus had removed; and everything Cyrus said to do, he also commanded to be done, and he sent them forth to Jerusalem.

[58]Now when the young man went out, he lifted his face to heaven toward Jerusalem and blessed the King of heaven, saying, [59]"The victory and the wisdom are from You, the glory is Yours, and I am Your servant. [60]Blessed are You who granted me wisdom, and I give thanks to You, O Lord of our fathers."

[61]So he took the letters and went to Babylon, and reported everything to all his brothers. [62]They, too, blessed the God of their fathers because He had granted them freedom and release from captivity [63]to go up and rebuild

Jerusalem and the temple called by His name. Then they feasted with music and gladness for seven days.

Return of the Exiles

5 After this the heads of the paternal houses were chosen according to their tribes to go up, along with their wives, sons, and daughters, and their male and female servants, and their cattle. [2]Darius also sent along one thousand cavalry with them, to bring them back to Jerusalem in peace and with the music of drums and flutes. [3]All their kindred were dancing, for Darius arranged for them to go up with them as well.

[4]These are the names of the men who were their governors and who went up according to their paternal houses in the tribes: [5]the priests, the sons of Phinehas the son of Aaron; Jeshua the son of Jozadak the son of Seraiah, and Joakim the son of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, of the house of David, from the family of Phares, of the tribe of Judah. [6]Zerubbabel was the one who spoke wise words before Darius the king of the Persians in the second year of his reign, in the month of Nisan, the first month. [7]They are the ones from Judea who went up from their sojourn in captivity and whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon resettled in Babylon. [8]They returned to Jerusalem and the rest of Judea, each to his own city. They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Hehum, and Baanah, their leaders.

[9]The number of those from the nation, including their leaders, were: the sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy-two; [10]the sons of Shephatiah, four hundred seventy-two; the sons of Arah, seven hundred

fifty-six; [11]the sons of Pahath-Moab of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred twelve; [12]the sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four; the sons of Zattu, nine hundred forty-five; the sons of Chorbe, seven hundred five; the sons of Bani, six hundred forty-eight; [13]the sons of Bebai, six hundred twenty-three; the sons of Azgad, one thousand three hundred twenty-two; [14]the sons of Adonikam, six hundred sixty-seven; the sons of Bigvai, two thousand sixty-six; the sons of Adin, four hundred fifty-four; [15]the sons of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-two; the sons of Kilan and Azetas, sixty-seven; the sons of Azaru, four hundred thirty-two; [16]the sons of Annias, one hundred one; the sons of Arom and the sons of Bezai, three hundred twenty-three; the sons of Hariph, one hundred twelve; [17]the sons of Baiterus, three thousand five; the sons of Bethlomon, one hundred twenty-three.

[18]Those from Netophah were fifty-five; those from Anathoth, one hundred fifty-eight; those from Beth Azmaveth, forty-two; [19]those from Kirjath Jearim, twenty-five; those from Chephirah and Beeroth, seven hundred forty-three; [20]the Chadiasans and Ammidians, four hundred twenty-two; those from Kirama and Geba, six hundred twenty-one; [21]those from Macalon, one hundred twenty-two; those from Betolio, fifty-two; the sons of Nephish, one hundred fifty-six; [22]the sons of the other Calamolalus and Ono, seven hundred twenty-five; the sons of Jerechus, three hundred forty-five; [23]the sons of Senaah, three thousand three hundred thirty.

[24]The number of the priests were: the sons of Jedaiah the son of Jeshua, of the sons of Anasib, nine hundred seventy-two; the sons of Immer, one

thousand fifty-two; [25]the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred forty-seven; the sons of Charme, one thousand seventeen.

[26]The Levites: the sons of Joshua and Kadmiel and Bannas and Sudias, seventy-four. [27]The number of the temple singers were: the sons of Asaph, one hundred twenty-eight. [28]The number of the gatekeepers were: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, in all one hundred thirty-nine.

[29]The number of the temple servants were: the sons of Esau, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, the sons of Keros, the sons of Sua, the sons of Padon, the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah, [30]the sons of Akkub, the sons of Uthai, the sons of Ketab, the sons of Hagab, the sons of Subai, the sons of Hana, the sons of Cathua, the sons of Geddur, [31]the sons of Jairus, the sons of Daisan, the sons of Noeba, the sons of Chezib, the sons of Gazera, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Phinoe, the sons of Hasrah, the sons of Basthai, the sons of Asnah, the sons of Maani, the sons of Nephisim, the sons of Acuph, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Asur, the sons of Pharakim, the sons of Bazluth, [32]the sons of Mehida, the sons of Cutha, the sons of Charea, the sons of Barkos, the sons of Serar, the sons of Temah, the sons of Neziah, the sons of Hatipha.

[33]The sons of the servants of Solomon: the sons of Assaphioth, the sons of Peruda, the sons of Jaalah, the sons of Lozon, the sons of Isdael, the sons of Shephatiah, [34]the sons of Agia, the sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the sons of Sarothie, the sons of Masiah, the sons of Gas, the sons of Addus, the sons of Subas, the sons of Apherra, the sons of Barodis, the sons of

Shaphat, the sons of Allon. [35]All the temple servants and the sons of the servants of Solomon were three hundred seventy-two.

[36]Those who come up from Thermeleth and Thelersas, led by Charaath, Adan and Amar, [37]were unable to tell of their lineage and generation as to how they were from Israel. They were the sons of Delaiah the son of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda, and their number was six hundred fifty-two.

[38]The priests who laid claim to the priesthood but were not found in the register were: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, and the sons of Jaddus, who married Agia, one of the daughters of Barzillai, and was called by his name. [39]So when a search into the lineage of these men was made in the register, and nothing was found, they were removed from the list to perform priestly service. [40]Nehemiah and Attharias said they were not to partake in the holy things until a high priest arose wearing the Urim and the Thummim.

[41]All those from Israel from twelve years of age and older, apart from the male and female servants, were forty-two thousand three hundred sixty. Their male and female servants were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven. Cantors and musicians were two hundred forty-five. [42]There were four hundred thirty-five camels, seven thousand thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules, and five thousand five hundred twenty-five donkeys.

[43]Some of the heads of the paternal houses in Israel arrived at the temple of God in Jerusalem and vowed to the best of their ability to rebuild the

house on its site, [44]and to give to the temple treasury for its works: one thousand minas of gold, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly vestments. [45]The priests, the Levites, and some of the people decided to live in Jerusalem, while the temple singers and doorkeepers settled in the countryside with all Israel in their villages.

The Altar Is Made Ready

[46]When the seventh month came and each of the children of Israel was settled in his own place, they gathered together with one accord in the open area of the first gate toward the east. [47]Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brother-priests and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel with his brothers took charge. They prepared the altar of the God of Israel [48]to offer whole burnt offerings on it according to what was said in the book of Moses, the man of God.

[49]Some of the other people from the land gathered with them in hostility, and all the people of the land were stronger than they. Yet they set up the altar in its place and offered sacrifices and whole burnt offerings to the Lord at the appointed times, morning and evening. [50]They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles as commanded in the law, and they offered sacrifices every day as was fitting. [51]After this they offered the daily sacrifices and the sacrifices of the Sabbaths, the new moons, and all the sacred feasts. [52]As many as made a vow to God began to offer sacrifices to Him from the new moon of the seventh month, but the temple of God was not built as yet. [53]So they gave silver to the stonecutters and the woodworkers, and food, drink, and conveyances to the Sidonians and Tyrians, to bring cedar trees

from Lebanon, then float them on rafts to the harbor at Joppa, according to the ordinance written to them from King Cyrus of the Persians.

[54]Then in the second year and the second month after they came to the temple of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak and their brothers, and the Levitical priests and all who came to Jerusalem from the captivity began the work. [55]They laid the foundation of God's temple on the new moon of the second month in the second year after they arrived in Judea and Jerusalem. [56]They established the Levites who were twenty years and older over the Lord's works. So Jeshua and his sons and brothers, and Kadmiel his brother, and the sons of Jeshua Emadabun, and the sons of Joda son of Iliadun with his sons and brothers, and all the Levites moved forward the work on God's house with one accord.

[57]The builders built the temple of the Lord. Then the priests, donned in their vestments and with musical instruments and trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with their cymbals, praised and blessed the Lord according to the instructions of King David of Israel. [58]They sang hymns, thanking the Lord “for His goodness and His glory to all Israel unto the ages.” [59]All the people cried out with a loud voice, singing to the Lord because of the raising of the Lord's house.

Work on the Temple Is Halted

[60]But some of the priests and Levites, old men who were leaders of their paternal houses, had seen the former temple. So they came to the building of this one with loud crying and bitter wailing. [61]But many others came with trumpets and a loud shout of joy. [62]However, the crowd could not hear

the trumpets because of the people who wept. Therefore the multitude blew their trumpets so loud, the sound could be heard far away.

[63]When the enemies of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin heard it, they came to see what the noise of the trumpets was about. [64]They discovered that those from the captivity were rebuilding the temple for the Lord God of Israel. [65]So they approached Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the leaders of the paternal houses and said to them, “We will build together with you. [66]For we likewise obey your Lord and have offered sacrifices to Him from the days of King Esar-haddon of the Assyrians who brought us here.” [67]But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the leaders of the paternal houses of Israel answered them, “It is not for you and us to build the house of the Lord our God. [68]For we alone will build it for the Lord of Israel, according to what Cyrus the king of the Persians commanded us.” [69]But the peoples of the land moved strongly against those in Judea. They besieged them and hindered them from continuing to build. [70]By plots and by false claims and riots, they blocked the completion of the building during the lifetime of King Cyrus. [71]They were halted from construction for two years until the reign of Darius.

The Temple Is Completed

6 Now in the second year of the reign of Darius, the prophets to the Jews, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, who were in Judea and Jerusalem, prophesied to them in the name of the Lord God of Israel.[†] [2]Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak resumed building the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. The prophets of the

Lord were with them and helped them. [3]During this same time, Sisinnes, governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes and his associates arrived and said, [4]“By whose instruction are you building this house, the roof, and completing all these other things? Who are the builders accomplishing all this?” [5]But the elders of the Jews had the grace of visitation from the Lord, for His grace was over the captives. [6]So they were not stopped from construction until word could be gotten to Darius about them and a response received. [7]Here is a copy of the letter which Sisinnes, governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes and their officers, the governors in Syria and Phoenicia, wrote and sent to Darius:

[8]“To King Darius: Greetings. Let it be known fully to our lord the king that we arrived in the country of Judea and went into the city of Jerusalem. We discovered the elders of the Jews from the captivity building a great new house for the Lord in the city. It is made of polished stones with very costly wood laid on the walls. [9]Those works are being done with zeal, and the work is flourishing at their hands. It is being finished with all grandeur and carefulness.

[10]“We inquired of their elders, saying, ‘By whose direction are you building this house and setting the foundations for this building?’ [11]Then we asked them who their leaders were, for the sake of making them known to you in writing. And we asked them for a list of names. [12]They replied, ‘We are the servants of the Lord who created heaven and earth. [13]This house was built many years before by a king of Israel. He was great and powerful, and it was completed. [14]But when our fathers sinned against the Lord of Israel, who is in heaven, and provoked Him, He handed them over

to the authority of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and of the Chaldeans. [15]He both razed the house and set it on fire; then he led the people as captives to Babylon.

[16]‘But in the first year King Cyrus reigned over the country of Babylon, he wrote to rebuild this house. [17]Then King Cyrus brought out the sacred vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had carried from this house in Jerusalem and put in his own temple, and he handed them over to Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar the governor. [18]He then commanded him to carry all these vessels and put them back in the temple in Jerusalem, and to rebuild the Lord's temple in this place. [19]Then this same Sheshbazzar, after he arrived here, set the foundations of the Lord's house in Jerusalem. From that time until now, the rebuilding has continued, but it is not yet completed.’

[20]“Now therefore, O king, if you so determine, let a search be conducted in the royal archives of our lord the king in Babylon. [21]If it is discovered that the rebuilding of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem was done with the permission of King Cyrus and approved by our lord the king, let him direct us concerning this matter.”

[22]Then King Darius ordered a search to be conducted in the royal archives that were delivered to Babylon. So a scroll was found in the palace in Ecbatana in the country of Media wherein these words were recorded: [23]“In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus, he commanded that the Lord's house in Jerusalem, where they sacrifice with perpetual fire, be rebuilt. [24]It was to be sixty cubits high and sixty cubits wide, with three

layers of polished stones and one layer of new native wood. The expenses were to be paid from King Cyrus's treasury. [25]The sacred vessels of the Lord's house, those of both gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had carried from the house in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, these were to be returned to the house in Jerusalem and replaced where they were previously."

[26]Darius therefore commanded Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes and their officers, and those chosen as leaders in Syria and Phoenicia, to stay away from the place, and to allow Zerubbabel the servant of the Lord and governor of Judea, and the elders of the Jews to erect the Lord's house on its former site.

[27]"I also command," he continued, "that the building be completed and that you be fully intent on helping the captives who returned to Judea until the completion of the Lord's house. [28]Furthermore, care must be taken to give a contribution from the regular tribute of Coelesyria and Phoenicia to these men, that is, to Zerubbabel, for bulls, rams, and lambs for sacrifices to the Lord. [29]Likewise, a regular contribution must be given every year, without complaining, of wheat, salt, wine, and oil for daily consumption, as the priests in Jerusalem may dictate, [30]so they may offer drink offerings to God Most High on behalf of the king and his children, and pray concerning their lives."

[31]Moreover he commanded, "As many as transgress or void anything written herein, wood should be taken from his own house and he will be hanged upon it. His possessions are then to be given over to the king.

[32]“Therefore, may the Lord whose name is invoked there destroy any king and nation that shall reach forth their hands to prevent or ruin the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. [33]I, King Darius, declare as herein decreed that this be accomplished diligently.”

7 Then Sisinnes, governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes and his associates followed the command of King Darius, [2]and took diligent care of the holy works, and worked together with the elders of the Jews and the governors of the temple. [3]The sacred works were free from difficulty while the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied. [4]So they completed these by the command of the Lord God of Israel; [5]and with the consent of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the Persian kings, the house was completed the twenty-third day of the month of Adar during the sixth year of King Darius.

[6]Then the children of Israel, and the priests, the Levites, and the rest of those from the captivity who joined them did according to what is recorded in the book of Moses. [7]For at the dedication of the Lord's temple, they offered one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, [8]and twelve young goats as a sin offering for all Israel, with reference to the number of the twelve chiefs of Israel's tribes. [9]The priests, clothed in their vestments according to their own people, attended to the works of the Lord God of Israel in accordance with the book of Moses, and the doorkeepers stood at each gate.

[10]The children of Israel who came from the captivity kept Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, following the priests and the Levites

being purified together. [11]But although all the Levites were purified together, not all the children of the captivity were purified. [12]Nevertheless they sacrificed Passover for all the children of the captivity, for their brother priests, and for themselves. [13]The children of Israel who came from the captivity and all who sought the Lord and separated themselves from the abominations of the people of the land ate the paschal lamb. [14]They also observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days and rejoiced before the Lord. [15]For He changed the counsel of the king of the Assyrians regarding them to make their hands strong in the works of the Lord God of Israel.

Ezra Returns to Jerusalem

8 Now Ezra was born after these events, when King Artaxerxes of the Persians was reigning. Ezra was the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Shallum,[†] [2]the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, the son of Amariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, the son of Abishua, the son of Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the high priest. [3]This Ezra came up out of Babylon as a scribe well-versed in the Law of Moses given by the God of Israel. [4]The king gave him honor, for he found favor before him in all his petitions.

[5]Some of the children of Israel, and some of the priests, Levites, temple singers, doorkeepers and temple servants also came up with him to Jerusalem. This took place in the seventh year of Artaxerxes’ reign, in the fifth month (this was his seventh year as king). [6]For they departed from Babylon on the new moon of the first month and entered Jerusalem on the

new moon of the fifth month, according to the prosperous journey given them by the Lord. [7]For Ezra had such great skill that he left out nothing from the law and commandments of the Lord. He taught all Israel the complete ordinances and judgments.

Artaxerxes’ Letter to Ezra

[8]A written ordinance from King Artaxerxes came to Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Lord. A copy of it is as follows:

[9]“King Artaxerxes, to Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Lord: Greetings. [10]I have decided to be benevolent and to order that any among the Jews, the priests and Levites, and those in our kingdom who wish and choose to do so may sojourn with you to Jerusalem.

[11]“As many therefore as have so determined, let them go out together with you (as this has seemed good to me and the seven friends who are my advisors) [12]so they may take care of matters concerning Judea and Jerusalem, as recorded in the law of the Lord, [13]and also carry gifts to the Lord of Israel which I and my friends have vowed for Jerusalem. If any gold and silver is found in the country of Babylon for the Lord in Jerusalem, let this also be collected, along with any gifts from the nation for the temple of their Lord in Jerusalem, [14]both of gold and silver for bulls, rams, and lambs, and whatever is needed with them, [15]to offer sacrifices upon the altar of their Lord in Jerusalem.

[16]“Whatever you and your brethren decide to do with the silver and gold, do it according to the will of your God, [17]as well as with the holy vessels of

the Lord given to you for the needs of the temple of your God in Jerusalem. [18]Whatever else remains that you may happen to need for the temple of your God, it will be given you from the king's treasury.

[19]“I, King Artaxerxes, have ordered the treasurers of Syria and Phoenicia that whatever Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Almighty God requests, they are to be diligent to give him, up to the sum of one hundred talents of silver, [20]and likewise, up to one hundred measures of wheat, one hundred measures of wine, and an abundance of salt. [21]Let all these things be performed carefully according to the law of God for the Most High God, that His anger may not descend on the kingdom of the king or his sons. [22]I also say to you that no tribute or penalty is to be imposed upon any priests, Levites, temple singers, doorkeepers, temple servants, or anyone having duties in this temple. Nor does anyone have the authority to levy any taxes upon them.

[23]“As for you, Ezra, appoint judges and justices in all Syria and Phoenicia according to the wisdom of God, that they may judge everyone who knows the law of your God; but you shall instruct those who do not know it. [24]For whoever transgresses the law of your God and the royal law will be severely punished, either by death or another punishment, or by a monetary penalty or imprisonment.”

Return of the Leaders

[25]So Ezra the scribe said, “Blessed is the only Lord God, who put these things into the king's heart to glorify His house in Jerusalem, [26]and who gave me honor before the king and before his advisors, friends, and nobles.

[27]I was very encouraged by the help of my Lord and God and brought together men of Israel to journey with me."

[28]Here are the officers according to their paternal families and the governors who came up with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes: [29]Of the sons of Phineas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Gamael; of the sons of David, Hattush the son of Sechenias; [30]of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah, and with him one hundred fifty men from the register; [31]of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred men; [32]of the sons of Zattu, Secheniah the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred men; of the sons of Adin, Obed the son of Jonathan, and with him two hundred fifty men; [33]of the sons of Elam, Josiah son of Gotholiah, and with him seventy men; [34]of the sons of Shephatiah, Zeraiah the son of Michael, and with him seventy men; [35]of the sons of Joab, Obadiah son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred twelve men; [36]of the sons of Bani, Shelomith the son of Josiphiah, and with him one hundred sixty men; [37]of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight men; [38]of the sons of Azag, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him one hundred ten men; [39]of the sons of Adonikam, the last ones, and these are their names: Eliphalat, Jeuel, and Shemaiah, and with them seventy men; [40]of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai the son of Istalcurus, and with him seventy men.

[41]I gathered them together at the river called Theras. We camped there for three days, and I carefully observed them. [42]When I did not find among them any sons of priests or Levites, [43]I sent word to Eleazar, Iduel,

Maasmas, Jarib, Nathan, Elnathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were officers and men of understanding. [44]I directed them to go to Iddo, who was the leader over the place of the treasury, [45]and commanded them to reason with Iddo and his brothers and those at the place of the treasury to send us those who would serve as priests in the house of our Lord. [46]By the mighty hand of our Lord, they brought us skilled men of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, that is, Sherebiah and his eighteen sons and brothers; [47]and also Asebiah and Annunus, and Hosaiah his brother, of the sons of Chanounaius, and their sons, twenty men; [48]and of the servants of the temple whom David and the officers appointed for the work of the Levites, two hundred twenty temple servants. The list of all their names was made known.

[49]There I declared a fast before our Lord for the young men, [50]to seek from Him a safe journey for us and for those coming with us, for our children and cattle. [51]I was ashamed to ask the king for infantry, cavalry, and an escort for safety against our enemies. [52]For we said to the king, “The strength of our Lord shall be with those who seek Him for any correction.” [53]Again we implored our Lord about all this, and we obtained His mercy.

[54]Then I separated twelve men, Serebiah and Asabiah, chief leaders among the priests, and also ten men from among their brothers with them. [55]I weighed out to them silver and gold, and the sacred vessels from the house of our Lord, which the king himself, his advisors, the nobles, and all Israel had given us. [56]After weighing it, I delivered to them six hundred fifty talents of silver, silver vessels worth one hundred talents, one hundred

talents of gold, twenty bowls of wrought gold, and twelve vessels made of fine bronze that glistened like gold. [57]I said to them, “You are set apart to the Lord, as are the sacred vessels and the silver and gold. They are a vow to the Lord, to the Lord of our fathers. [58]Be alert and keep guard until you hand them over to the chief leaders among the priests and Levites, and to the heads of the paternal families of Israel in Jerusalem, to be put in the chambers of the house of our Lord.” [59]Then the priests and Levites took the silver, the gold, and the vessels that had been in Jerusalem and carried them into the house of the Lord.

[60]We broke camp at the river Theras on the twelfth day of the first month and came to Jerusalem, the mighty hand of our Lord with us. He delivered us on the way from every enemy, and we entered Jerusalem. [61]After we had been there three days, the gold and silver were weighed and brought to the house of our Lord to Marmuth the priest, son of Uriah. [62]Eleazar the son of Phineas was with him, as well as the Levites, Josabad the son of Joshua and Moeth the son of Sabannus. They counted the number and weight of everything, which was recorded at that very moment.

[63]Those who arrived from the captivity offered sacrifices to the Lord, the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-two lambs, and twelve male goats as a thank offering—all as a sacrifice to the Lord. [64]Then they presented the king's ordinances to the royal stewards and governors of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, and they honored the people and the temple of the Lord.

[65]After this was done, the leaders came to me and said,[†] [66]“The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated from the foreign

peoples of the land and from their uncleanness: the Caananites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Edomites. [67]For they and their sons have married their daughters, and the holy seed has been mingled with the foreign peoples of the land; and from the beginning of this situation the leaders and the nobles have participated in this sin."

[68]The moment I heard this, I tore my garments and my sacred apparel, pulled out hair from my head and beard, and sat down deep in turmoil and great sadness.[†] [69]Then as many as ever were moved by the word of the Lord of Israel, these gathered around me as I mourned over this lawlessness and sat in deep distress until the evening sacrifice. [70]Then I rose up from the fast with my garments and sacred apparel torn, bowed down on my knees, and stretched out my hands to the Lord, saying:

Ezra's Prayer to God

[71]"O Lord, I am shamed and hesitant before Your face. [72]For our sins abound far above our heads, and our ignorance has risen up to heaven. [73]From the time of our fathers until this day, we are in great sin. [74]Because of our iniquities and those of our fathers, we with our brothers, our kings, and our priests were handed over to the kings of the earth, to the sword, to captivity, to foraging, in shamefulness until this very day.

[75]"Now how great is the mercy that has come to us from You, O Lord! For You have left us a root and a name in this place of Your sanctuary, [76]to unveil a light to us in the house of our Lord and God and to give us food in the time of our captivity. [77]Even in our servitude we were never forsaken

by our Lord, but He gave us favor with the kings of Persia, [78]who gave us food and honored the temple of our Lord. They also raised up Zion from destruction and gave us a firm footing in Judea and Jerusalem.

[79]“So now, what are we to say, O Lord, since we have these things? For we disobeyed Your ordinances which You gave by the hand of Your servants the prophets, who said, [80]‘The land into which you are entering as an inheritance is a land made unclean by the defilement of the foreign peoples of the land, for they have filled it with their impurity. [81]Thus, you are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons. [82]Never seek to live in peace with them, that you may be strong and partake of the good things of the land, giving it to your children as an inheritance forever.’

[83]“Everything that happened to us came about because of our evil works and our many sins. [84]You, O Lord, lightened the burden of our iniquities and gave us so great a root. But we turned back once more to transgress Your law, to mingle with the impurity of the foreigners in the land. [85]Were You not furious with us to destroy us until there was no root left, nor a seed, nor our name? [86]You are faithful, O Lord of Israel, for we were left as a root to this very day. [87]Behold, we are now before You in our lawlessness, for because of this there is no place for us to stand before You.”

[88]As Ezra was praying and giving thanks, weeping and prostrate on the ground before the temple, a very large crowd gathered around him—men, women, and young men from Jerusalem—for there was great lamentation among the people.

Foreign Wives Are Put Away

[89]Then Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Israel, called out and said to Ezra, “We sinned against the Lord in taking foreign wives from among the peoples of the land, but now there is hope in Israel. [90]Let us swear an oath to the Lord in this, to put away all our foreign wives with their children, as decided by you and by as many as obey the law of the Lord. [91]Stand up and complete this task; for it is in your hands, and we are with you to take firm action.” [92]So Ezra stood up and commanded the leaders of the priests and the Levites of all Israel to act accordingly. Thus they swore an oath.

9 Then Ezra arose from the court of the temple and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib. [2]He spent the night there and ate no bread nor drank any water, but mourned over the great lawlessness of the people.

[3]A proclamation went forth throughout all Judea and Jerusalem that everyone from the captivity should gather in Jerusalem.[†] [4]But for those who would not meet in two or three days, according to the presiding elders, their cattle would be confiscated for sacrifice and the men themselves would be excluded from the people who returned from exile. [5]So the men from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin gathered in Jerusalem on the third day, which was on the twentieth day of the ninth month. [6]Because of the inclement weather, all the people sat down, shivering together in the spacious court outside the temple.[†]

[7]Ezra stood to his feet and spoke to them, saying, “You acted lawlessly and married foreign women, so you added to the sin of Israel. [8]Now therefore, make your confession and glorify the Lord God of our fathers. [9]Do His will and be separate from the peoples of the land and from your foreign wives.”

[10]Then all the people cried out and said with a loud voice, “Thus as You have said, we will do. [11]But our number is great and it is wintertime, so we cannot stand in the open air and find a way to do this work in one or two days; for we have sinned greatly in these matters. [12]So let the leaders of the people remain, and let those in our communities who have foreign wives return at an appointed time [13]to meet with the elders and judges of each settlement until we are delivered from the Lord's wrath in this matter.” [14]Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jehziah the son of Thokanos accepted their conditions, and Meshullam, Levi, and Shabbethai agreed to be fellow arbitrators with them. [15]All those from the captivity also were in agreement with this.

[16]Then Ezra the priest chose for himself leading men of their paternal families, naming all of them, and on the first day of the tenth month they sat down together to begin their examinations [17]of the men who had taken foreign wives. These cases were brought to a conclusion on the new moon of the first month.

[18]Those priests who were found to have foreign wives were: [19]from the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak and his brethren, Maseiah, Eliazar, Jarib, and Jodan. [20]They swore under oath to put away their wives and to make

atonement with rams for their ignorance. [21]The priests from the sons of Immer were Ananias, Zebadiah, Manes and Shemaiah and Jehiel and Azariah. [22]And from the sons of Pashur: Elionai, Maasiah, Ishmael, Nathanael, Okideilus, and Salthas.

[23]From the Levites there were Jozabad and Shimei and Kolaiah, who was Kalitah, and Pethaiah and Judah and Jonah; [24]and from the temple singers there were Eliashib and Bacchurus; [25]and from the gatekeepers there were Shallum and Tolbanes.

[26]And from Israel: from the sons of Phorus, there were Jermas, Izziah, Melchiah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Asibias, and Benaiah. [27]From the sons of Elam there were Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jezrielus and Obadiah, Jeremoth and Elijah. [28]From the sons of Zamoth there were Eliadas, Eliasimus, Othoniah, Jeremoth, Sabathus, and Zerdaiah. [29]From the sons of Bebai, there were Johannes, Ananias, Zabdus, and Emathis. [30]From the sons of Mani there were Olamus, Mamuchus, Jedaiah, Jashub, Asaeilus, and Jeremoth. [31]From the sons of Addi there were Naathus, Moossiah, Laccunus, Naidus, Bescaspasmas, Sestheel, Balnouas, and Manasseh. [32]From the sons of Annan there were Elionas, Asaias, Melchias, Sabbaias, and Simon Chosamaias. [33]From the sons of Asam there were Maltannias, Mattathias, Zabannias, Eliphalat, Manasseh, and Shimei. [34]From the sons of Bahni there were Jeremiah, Mamdias, Maerus, Joel, Mamdai, Paedias, Vaniah, Carabasian, Eliasibas, Mamnitanaimas, Eliasis, Bannous, Elialis, Shomeis, Shelemiah, and Nethaniah. [35]From the sons of Ezora there were Shessis, Ezriel, Azeilas, Samatus, Zambris, and Joseph; and from the sons of Noomah there were Mazitias, Zabadias, Iddo, Joel, and Benaiah. [36]All

of these married foreign women, whom they sent away along with their children.

The Reading of the Law

[37]The priests, the Levites, and those from Israel settled in Jerusalem and in the countryside on the new moon of the seventh month. So the children of Israel were in their dwelling places. [38]Then all the people gathered with one accord in the spacious place before the east gate of the temple. [39]They asked Ezra the high priest and reader to bring the Law of Moses, which had been handed down by the Lord God of Israel. [40]So Ezra the high priest brought the law for all the people—both men, women, and all the priests—to hear the law on the new moon of the seventh month. [41]He read aloud in the open place before the temple gate from early morning to noonday in the presence of both men and women; and all the people paid attention to the law. [42]Ezra the priest and reader of the law stood upon the wooden judgment seat that had been made ready.[†] [43]Mattathias, Shammous, Ananias, Azariah, Uriah, Hezekiah, and Baalsamus stood beside him at his right side. [44]At his left side stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Melcaiah, Lothasubus, Nabariah, and Zechariah.

[45]Then Ezra took in hand the book of the law in the presence of the people, for he had the seat of honor before all of them; [46]and when he opened the law, all of them stood up straight. Ezra then blessed the Lord God Most High, the God of Hosts, the Almighty. [47]All the people cried out, “Amen!” They raised up their hands, then fell prostrate on the ground and worshiped the Lord.

[48]The Levites, Jeshua, Anniuth, Sarabiah, Jadinus, Jakoubas, Sabbateus, Autias, Maiannas, Kalitas, Azariah and Jozabdas, Ananias, and Pelaiah, taught the law of the Lord. At the same time, they explained what was being read.

[49]Attarates then spoke to Ezra the high priest and reader, and to the Levites who taught the people, and to the multitude, saying, [50]“This day is holy to the Lord” (now all were weeping when they heard the law), [51]“so go therefore and eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send a gift to those who have none. [52]For this day is holy to the Lord. Do not be grieved, for the Lord will honor you.” [53]So the Levites gave a command to all the people, saying, “This day is holy; do not be grieved.”

[54]Then everyone went on their way to eat and drink, to gladden themselves, to give gifts to those who were lacking, and to heartily rejoice. [55]For they were inspired by the words which were taught to them, and they gathered together.[†]

2 EZRA (EZRA/2 ESDRAS)

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The Second Book of Ezra

Author—Ezra

Date—Dated at the return from exile in Persia from 538 to 410 BC.

Major Theme—*The God of heaven Himself will prosper us* (12:20). Ezra warns the people in Jerusalem that God requires absolute faithfulness to the Law of Moses and the prescribed temple worship. The future of the Israelites depends on their removal of all corrupting influences and cultures, especially the pagan practices of the Philistines, Samaritans, and Egyptians.

Another unifying theme is a reminder that the chosen people of God are to trust in Him and not in their military strength, because God delivers those that obey His laws and trust Him. Therefore, this book is considered a book of theology and not strictly history, since the emphasis is on the connection between sin and punishment for not following God, and faithfulness and blessing when God's commands are kept.

Background—Cyrus the Persian overthrew Babylon in 539 BC and issued his decree allowing the Jews to return in 538. The return to their homeland occurred in three waves over the next one hundred years. Ezra returned in the second group, in 457 BC.

Outline

I. The Exiles Return from Babylon (1:1–2:70)

II. Building of the Temple Begun (3:1–4:24)

III. The Temple Is Finally Finished (5:1–6:22)

IV. Ezra Goes to Jerusalem (7:1–8:36)

V. The Great Confession, Repentance, and Reform (9:1–10:44)

Cyrus's Order to Rebuild the Temple

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord from the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, and he made a proclamation throughout his entire kingdom, and even put it in writing, saying,[†] [2]“Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: ‘The Lord God of heaven gave to me all the kingdoms of the earth. And He commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem in Judea. [3]Who is there among you from all His people? For his God shall be with him, and he shall go up to Jerusalem in Judea and rebuild the house of the God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem.[†] [4]And each one remaining from all the places where he lives as a stranger, the people from where he lives shall help him with silver and gold, and goods, and livestock, along with freewill offerings for the house of the God which is in Jerusalem.’ ”[†]

[5]Then the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God stirred up arose to go up and rebuild the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem.[†] [6]And all those around them encouraged them with vessels of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and by gifts, in addition to the freewill offerings. [7]King Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar took away from Jerusalem and then placed in the house of his god,[†] [8]and Cyrus king of the Persians brought them out by the hand of

Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar, a ruler of Judah. [9]And this is their number: thirty gold basins, one thousand silver basins, twenty-nine knives, [10]thirty gold bowls, two hundred silver bowls, and one thousand other vessels. [11]All the vessels of gold and silver going up with Sheshbazzar from the land of exile, from Babylon into Jerusalem, totaled five thousand four hundred.

The Census of Those Returning to Judea

2 And these are the sons from the places of the people who had gone up from the captivity, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away and settled in Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judea, every man into his city.[†] [2]Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jesus, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel: [3]the sons of Parosh were two thousand one hundred seventy-two; [4]the sons of Shephatiah were three hundred seventy-two; [5]the sons of Arah were seven hundred seventy-five; [6]the sons of Pahath-Moab belonging to the sons of Jesus and Joab were two thousand eight hundred twelve; [7]the sons of Elam were one thousand two hundred fifty-four; [8]the sons of Zattu were nine hundred forty-five; [9]the sons of Zaccai were seven hundred sixty; [10]the sons of Bani were six hundred forty-two; [11]the sons of Bebai were six hundred twenty-three; [12]the sons of Azgad were three thousand two hundred twenty-two; [13]the sons of Adonikam were six hundred sixty-six; [14]the sons of Bigvai were two thousand fifty-six; [15]the sons of Adin were four hundred fifty-four;

[16]the sons of Ater belonging to Hezekiah were ninety-eight; [17]the sons of Bezai were three hundred twenty-three; [18]the sons of Jorah were one hundred twelve; [19]the sons of Hashum were two hundred twenty-three; [20]the sons of Gibbar were ninety-five; [21]the sons of Bethlehem were one hundred twenty-three; [22]the sons of Netophah were fifty-six; [23]the sons of Anathoth were one hundred twenty-eight; [24]the sons of Azmaveth were forty-two; [25]the sons of Kirjath Arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth were seven hundred forty-three; [26]the sons of Ramah and Geba were six hundred twenty-one; [27]the men of Michmas were one hundred twenty-two; [28]the men of Bethel and Ai were four hundred twenty-three; [29]the sons of Nebo were fifty-two; [30]the sons of Magbish were one hundred fifty-six; [31]the sons of Elam were one thousand two hundred fifty-four; [32]the sons of Harim were three hundred twenty; [33]the sons of Lod, Aroth, and Ono were seven hundred twenty-five; [34]the sons of Jericho were three hundred forty-five; [35]the sons of Senaah were three thousand six hundred thirty; [36]the priests: the sons of Jedaiah belonging to the house of Jesus were nine hundred seventy-three; [37]the sons of Immer were one thousand fifty-two; [38]the sons of Pashhur were one thousand two hundred forty-seven; [39]the sons of Harim were one thousand seven; [40]the Levites, the sons of Jesus and Kadmiel, belonging to the sons of Hodaviah were seventy-four; [41]the singers: the sons of Asaph were one hundred twenty-eight; [42]the sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, and the sons of Shobai were one hundred thirty-nine in all; [43]the Nethinim: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, [44]the sons of Keros, the sons of Siaha, the

sons of Padon, [45]the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah, the sons of Akkub, [46]the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shalmai, the sons of Hanan, [47]the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah, [48]the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, [49]the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai, [50]the sons of Asnah, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephusim, [51]the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, [52]the sons of Bazluth, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, [53]the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Tamah, [54]the sons of Neziah, and the sons of Hatipha; [55]the sons of Abdeselma: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Peruda, [56]the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, [57]the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the sons of Ami; [58]all the Nethinim and the sons of Abdeselma were three hundred ninety-two.

[59]And these came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer; but they could not identify their father's house or their seed, whether it was of Israel: [60]the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Bua, the sons of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda were six hundred fifty-two; [61]and of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, and the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. [62]These sought their names among those registered by genealogy, but they were not found. Therefore they were excluded from the priesthood. [63]And Athersatha told them not to eat from the holy things until a priest should arise with the Lights and Perfections.[†]

[64]And the whole assembly together counted forty-two thousand three hundred sixty, [65]besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven; and there were two hundred men and women singers. [66]They had seven hundred thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules, [67]four hundred thirty-five camels, and six thousand seven hundred twenty donkeys.

[68]And some from the heads of the families, when they came up to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to erect it in its place.[†] [69]According to their ability, they gave to the treasury for the work sixty-one thousand pieces of pure gold, five thousand pieces of silver, and one hundred garments of the priests. [70]So the priests and the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants settled down in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

The Feast of Tabernacles Observed

3 And when the seventh month had come and the children of Israel were in their cities, the people gathered together as one person in Jerusalem.[†] [2]Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.[†] [3]And they set up the altar on the place, for fear had come upon them because of the neighboring peoples of the land, and they offered whole burnt offerings upon it to the Lord, both morning and evening. [4]They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. [5]Afterwards they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the Lord. [6]On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord, although the foundation of the house of the Lord had not yet been laid. [7]They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.[†]

Temple Restoration Begins

[8]Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak began the work, together with the rest of their people, the priests and the Levites, and all those returning from exile to Jerusalem. They appointed the Levites from twenty years and above to oversee the work of the house of the Lord.[†] [9]And Jeshua with his sons and brothers, and Kadmiel with his sons, and the sons of Judah arose to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad, their sons, and their brethren the Levites.

[10]And they laid the foundation for the building of the house of the Lord. And the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. [11]And they sang antiphonally in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord that He is good, that His mercy is upon Israel forever. And all the people shouted with a loud voice to give praise to the

Lord, for the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. [12]But many of the priests and the Levites and the elders and the heads of the father's houses, who had seen the first temple on its foundation and with their own eyes saw this house, wept with a loud voice. But the multitude, shouting with joy and gladness, lifted up their voices in song,[†] [13]and the people could not distinguish the shouting voices of joy and gladness from the wailing of the people weeping, for the people shouted out with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.

Opposition to Restoring the Temple

4 Now when those oppressing Judah and Benjamin heard that the sons of the captivity were building a house to the Lord God of Israel,[†] [2]they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of the father's houses and said to them, “We will rebuild with you, for we seek as you do, and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.” [3]But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the father's houses of Israel said to them, “It is not for us and you to rebuild a house to our God, for we ourselves will rebuild it to the Lord our God, as King Cyrus the king of the Persians commanded us.” [4]But the people of the land were weakening the hands of the people of Judah, and were hindering them from building, [5]and hiring people to work against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Resistance to Rebuilding Jerusalem

[6]In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote a letter against the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem. [7]And in the days of Artaxerxes, Mithradites, and Tabeel, along with their fellow servants, they wrote in peace to Artaxerxes the king of Persia. The one levying tribute wrote a letter, one having been translated from the Syrian language. [8]Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote one letter against Jerusalem to the king, Artaxerxes:

[9]Thus has judged Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of our fellow servants the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarphalaeans, Apharsaeans, the Archuaeans, the Babylonians, the people of Susa—who are Elamites, [10]and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnapper sent out to colonize the land, and he resettled them in the cities of Samaria, and the rest of them on the other side of the River.

[11]This is the substance of the letter they sent him:

To Artaxerxes the king, from your servants the men beyond the River Jordan. [12]Let it be known to the king that the Jews coming up from you to us came to Jerusalem, and they are rebuilding this rebellious and wicked city, and repairing its walls and raising up its foundations.[†] [13]Now let it be known to the king that if that city is rebuilt and if its walls are restored, you will not collect any taxes, nor will they pay anything, and this wrongs the king. [14]And because of this dishonor of the king, one not fitting for us to witness, we send this letter to inform the king, [15]that a search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. There you will discover and know that this city is a rebellious city, one that is harmful to kings and provinces, and one having a longstanding history of harboring runaway slaves in the midst of her. It is for this reason the city was destroyed. [16]We therefore point out to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls restored, there will not be peace.

[17]The king sent an answer:

Peace.[†] [18]The tax assessor you sent to us was summoned before me, [19]and a command was given by me, and we examined for ourselves and found that this city in previous days raised up in opposition to kings, and that rebellions and desertions take place in it. [20]There have also been mighty kings over Jerusalem who have ruled over all the region beyond the River; and tax, tribute, and custom were paid to them. [21]Now give the command to make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the command is given by me. [22]Take heed now that you do not fail to do this. Why should damage increase to the hurt of the kings?

[23]Then the tax assessor for King Artaxerxes read the letter before Rehum the chancellor, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions. And they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease.

[24]Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Reconstruction of the Temple Resumes

5 Then Haggai the prophet and the prophet Zechariah the son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of

the God of Israel over them.[†] [2]At that time, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.

[3]At the same time, Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came there and spoke thus to them: “Who commanded you to build this house and repair this wall?” [4]Then they said this to them, “What are the names of the men, the ones building this city?” [5]But the eyes of God were upon the exiles of Judah, and they were unable to stop them till a report was taken to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.[†]

[6]This is a copy of the letter which Tattenai the governor of the province beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and their fellow servants the Apharsachites, the ones in the province beyond the River Jordan, sent to King Darius. [7]They sent a letter to him in which was written thus:

All peace.[†]

[8]Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea, to the temple of the great God, which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls; and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands. [9]Then we asked those elders and spoke thus to them: “Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?” [10]We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who were chief among them. [11]And thus they returned us an answer, saying, “We are the servants of the God of heaven

and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. [12]But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon. [13]However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God. [14]Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that was in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon—those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. [15]And he said to him, ‘Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple site that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.’ [16]Then the same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished.” [17]Now therefore, if it seems good to the king, let a search be made in the king's treasure house, which is there in Babylon, whether it is so that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this matter.

King Cyrus’ Order Is Rediscovered

6 Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon.[†] [2]And at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record was written thus:

[3]In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: “Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, [4]with three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury. [5]Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God”—

[6]Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who are beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there. [7]Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site. [8]Moreover I issue a decree as to what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes on the region beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered.[†] [9]And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who are in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail, [10]that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. [11]Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this. [12]And may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy

this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.

[13]Then Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent. [14]So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia.[†]

Dedication of the Temple

[15]Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.[†] [16]Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. [17]And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. [18]They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.

[19]And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.[†] [20]For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were ritually clean. And they slaughtered the Passover lambs for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brothers

the priests, and for themselves. [21]Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the Lord God of Israel. [22]And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the Lord made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Ezra Arrives in Jerusalem

7 Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,[†] [2]the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, [3]the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, [4]the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, [5]the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest— [6]this Ezra came up from Babylon, and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. [7]Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. [8]They came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was the seventh year of the king. [9]On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, since the good hand of his God was upon him. [10]For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.[†]

The Favorable Decree of Artaxerxes

[11]This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the Lord and of His statutes to Israel:

[12]Artaxerxes, king of kings,

To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect peace, and so forth.[†] [13]I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem may go with you. [14]And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God which is in your hand; [15]and whereas you are to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem; [16]and whereas all the silver and gold that you may find in all the province of Babylon, along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests, are to be freely offered for the house of their God in Jerusalem— [17]now therefore, be careful to buy with this money bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them on the altar of the house of your God in Jerusalem. [18]And whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do it according to the will of your God. [19]Also the articles that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem. [20]And whatever more may be needed for the house of your God, which you may have occasion to provide, pay for it from the king's treasury. [21]And I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are in the region beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently, [22]up to one hundred talents of silver, one hundred kors of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribed limit. [23]Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it diligently be done for the house of the God of heaven. For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? [24]Also we inform you that it shall not be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or custom on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God. [25]And you, Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom, set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who are in the region beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach those who do not know them.[†] [26]Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether it be death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.

[27]Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem,[†] [28]and has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty princes.

So I was encouraged, as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me.

Families Who Returned from Exile

8 These are the heads of their fathers’ houses, the leaders who went up with me in the reign of Artaxerxes the king of Babylon: [2]of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush; [3]of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah, and a group of one hundred fifty men with him; [4]of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males; [5]of the sons of Zathoe, Shechaniah, the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males; [6]of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males; [7]of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males; [8]of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him eighty males; [9]of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred eighteen males; [10]of the sons of Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah, and with him one hundred sixty males; [11]of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him seventy-eight males; [12]of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him one hundred ten males; [13]of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these—Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah—and with them sixty males; [14]also of the sons of Bigvai and Uthai, and with him seventy males.

Temple Servants

[15]Now I gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there for three days. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi. [16]Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, and also to Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding.[†] [17]And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia, and I told

them what they should say to Iddo and his brethren the Nethinim at the place Casiphia—that they should bring us servants for the house of our God. [18]And as the hand of our God was good upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men; [19]and Hashabiah, and Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and his sons, twenty; [20]and from the temple servants of the Levites, whom David and the leaders had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred twenty temple servants. All of them were designated by name.

Ezra Proclaims a Fast

[21]Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and for our little ones and all our possessions.[†] [22]For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, “The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him.” [23]So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.

Gifts for the Temple

[24]And I separated twelve of the leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them— [25]and weighed out to them the silver, gold, and the articles, the first fruits of the house of our God, which the king, his counselors, his princes, and all Israel who were present had offered. [26]I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty

talents of silver, silver articles weighing one hundred talents, one hundred talents of gold, [27]twenty gold basins worth a thousand drachmas, and two vessels of fine polished bronze, precious as gold. [28]And I said to them, “You are holy to the Lord; the articles are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the Lord God of your fathers.[†] [29]Watch and keep them until you weigh them before the leaders of the priests and the Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses of Israel in Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord.” [30]So the priests and the Levites received the silver and the gold and the articles by weight, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

The Return to Jerusalem

[31]Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road.[†] [32]So we came to Jerusalem and stayed there three days.

[33]Now on the fourth day, the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; with them were the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, [34]with the number and weight of everything. All the weight was written down at that time. [35]The children of those who had been carried away captive, who had come from the captivity, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve male goats as a sin offering. All this was a burnt offering to the Lord.

[36]And they delivered the king's orders to the king's satraps and the governors in the region beyond the River. So they gave support to the people and the house of God.

Intermarriage with Foreigners

9 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, “The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Moserites, and the Amorites.[†] [2]For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass.” [3]So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. [4]Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

[5]At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment, I trembled and bowed down on my knees and spread out my hands unto the Lord God, [6]and I said, “O Lord, I am too ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, for our iniquities have multiplied above our heads, and our guilt has grown up to heaven. [7]Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of

the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day.[†] [8]And now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.[†] [9]For we are slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. [10]And now, O our God, what shall we say in response to this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, [11]which You gave us by Your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land which you are entering to inherit for yourself is a changing land in the removal of the people of the lands for their abominations with which they filled it from one end to the other with their impurity.[†] [12]Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever.’

[13]“And after all of this which has come against us for our evil deeds and our great trespasses, there is not anyone such as our God, for You have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this, [14]even though we kept breaking Your commandments and intermarried with the people of the land. Do not be greatly upset with us to our utter destruction, to the point that there not be a remnant or survivor. [15]O Lord the God of Israel, You are righteous, for we remain, being preserved to this day. Behold, we are in Your presence in our trespasses, though it is not possible to stand in Your presence because of this!”

Confession of Sin for Intermarriage

10 And as Ezra prayed, and as he confessed, weeping and praying before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept bitterly.[†] [2]Shechaniah son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, “We have broken the covenant with our God and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land, yet now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. [3]Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, as you advise. Arise and alarm them with the commands of our God, and let it be done according to the law. [4]Arise, for this matter is your responsibility. We also are with you. Be of good courage, and do it.”

[5]Then Ezra arose, and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear an oath that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath. [6]Then Ezra rose up from in front of the house of God and went over to the treasury of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib and entered there. He ate no bread and drank no water when he arrived, for he mourned because of the unfaithfulness of those of the exile. [7]And they issued a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the descendants of the captivity that they must gather at Jerusalem, [8]and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the instructions of the leaders and elders, all his property would be confiscated, and he himself would be separated from the assembly of those from the captivity.

[9]So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered at Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month; and all the people sat in the open square of the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of the weather. [10]Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have broken the covenant and taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel.[†] [11]Now therefore, give praise to the Lord God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the pagan wives.” [12]And all the assembly answered and said, “This word of yours is powerful upon us to do it. [13]But there are many people; it is the season for heavy rain, and we are not able to stand outside. Nor is this the work of one or two days, for there are many of us who have transgressed in this matter. [14]Please, let the leaders of our entire assembly stand; and let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter.” [15]Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite gave them support.

[16]Then the descendants of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain heads of the fathers’ households, were set apart by the fathers’ households, each of them by name; and they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. [17]By the first day of the first month they finished questioning all the men who had taken pagan wives.

Intermarriages Are Ended

[18]And among the sons of the priests who had taken pagan wives, the following were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. [19]And they gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they presented a ram of the flock as their trespass offering.[†] [20]Also of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah; [21]of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah; [22]of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah. [23]Also of the Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (the same is, Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer. [24]Also of the singers: Eliashib; and of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri. [25]And others of Israel: of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, Jeziah, Malchiah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Asabia, and Benaiah; [26]of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Eliah; [27]of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza; [28]of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai; [29]of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Ramoth; [30]of the sons of Pahath-Moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh; [31]of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, [32]Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah; [33]of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei; [34]of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, [35]Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluh, [36]Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, [37]Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasai, [38]Bani, Binnui, Shimei, [39]Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, [40]Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, [41]Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, [42]Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph; [43]of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel,

Mattithiah, Zebed, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah. [44]All these had taken pagan wives, and some of them had wives by whom they had children.

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The Book of Nehemiah

Author—Nehemiah

Date—445 to 425 BC

Major Theme—*The promises of God are fulfilled through His faithful ones.*

Background—In the same spirit as Ezra, Nehemiah held a deep faith in God's promises. He was committed to the well-being of his fellow Jews and to the shaping of the Jewish religious community after the return from the Babylonian exile. He helped restore their hope as God's chosen people.

The book is about rebuilding the walls and gates of Jerusalem. Nehemiah, inspired by God, was the motivator and driving force behind this restoration. Serving as governor, he introduced administrative reforms needed to restore political stability. This occurred during the time that Ezra, priest and scribe, was working to reestablish the Mosaic Law as the spiritual center of the newly forming Jewish communities. Nehemiah was neither priest nor prophet, but a layman dedicated to God and to serving His people. He sets an example of discernment and dedication, patience and perseverance, being guided by prayer and love. And all this in the face of treacherous external enemies, and even some enemies opposed to the will of God from within.

Outline

- I. Return of Nehemiah and the Jewish Exiles to Jerusalem (1:1–10:39)
    - A. Nehemiah's visit to Jerusalem and inspection of the wall (1:1–2:20)
    - B. Rebuilding of the wall (3:1–6:19)
    - C. Return of the exiles to Jerusalem (7:1–73)
    - D. Renewing the Mosaic Covenant (8:1–10:39)
- II. Nehemiah's Reforms in Jerusalem (11:1–13:31)

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel,[†] [2]that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.[†] [3]And they said to me, “The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province live there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.”[†]

Nehemiah's Intercessory Prayer

[4]So it was, when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and I mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.[†] [5]And I said, “No indeed, O Lord, the mighty, the great and the awesome God of heaven, who keeps the covenant and mercy for those who love Him and who keep His commandments.[†] [6]Let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel, Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we sinned against You. Both I and my father's house have sinned. [7]We have departed

from You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

[8]“Remember, I pray, the word You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, [9]but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, even if your dispersion be to the farthest part of heaven, yet I will gather them from there and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.’

[10]“Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power and Your strong hand. [11]Rather, O Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper today, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.” (For I was cupbearer to the king.)

Nehemiah Is Sent to Judah

2 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of the reign of King Artaxerxes, when the wine was before me, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. There was no one else present before him.[†]
[2]And the king said to me, “Why is your countenance sad, and why are you not self-controlled? This is nothing but sickness of the heart.” So I was greatly afraid.

[3]Then I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the home of the tombs of my fathers, lies

waste, and its gates destroyed by fire?”[†] [4]Then the king said to me, “What is it that you request concerning this?” So I prayed to the God of heaven,[†] [5]and I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, send me to Judah, to the city of the tombs of my fathers, that I may rebuild it.”[†]

[6]Then the king (his queen sitting beside him) said to me, “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” And my request found favor before the king, and he sent me, and I gave him a time. [7]Then I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let him give me letters for the governors beyond the River, that I may be given safe passage until I come to Judah,[†] [8]and also a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And the king granted these to me as the good hand of God was upon me.

[9]And I came to the governors beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. [10]And for Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant, it was distressing to them that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.[†]

Nehemiah Surveys Damage to the Wall

[11]So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days.[†] [12]Then I rose up in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart for me to do for Israel, nor was there any animal with me except the one on which I rode. [13]And I went out by night through the Valley Gate

to the mouth of the spring of the fig tree and to the Dung Gate. And I was viewing the wall of Jerusalem which they had broken down and its gates which they had destroyed by fire. [14]Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and went to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal I was riding to pass. [15]So I went up to the wall by the brook at night and viewed the wall. Then I was at the Valley Gate, and I returned. [16]The sentries did not know why I had gone or what I was doing. And I did not tell the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others doing the work until my return.

[17]Then I said to them, “You see the distress we are in, how Jerusalem is laid waste and its gates are destroyed with fire. Come and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be a reproach.”[†] [18]And I told them of the hand of God which is good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So I said, “Let us rise up and let us build!” And their hands were strengthened for good work.

[19]But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite servant, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed us to scorn and came to us and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king regarding this?”[†] [20]So I answered and said to them, “The God of heaven will Himself prosper us; and we His servants are innocent and we will build, but you have no part or right or memorial in Jerusalem.”

The Builders of the Wall

3 Then Eliashib the high priest and his brothers the priests rose up and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and hung its doors, and they sanctified it even as far as the Tower of the Hundred and to the Tower of Hananel.[†] [2]Next to them, the men of Jericho rebuilt, and next to them the sons of Zaccur the son of Imri rebuilt.

[3]The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. [4]And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, made repairs. Next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs. Next to them Zadok son of Baana made repairs. [5]Next to them the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles did not put their shoulders to the work.

[6]Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors along with its bolts and bars. [7]And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite and the men of Gibeon and Mizpah repaired the throne of the governor of the region beyond the River. [8]And next to them Hananiah the son of Rekem made repairs to the wall, and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. [9]And next to them Rephaiah, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. [10]Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs. [11]Malchijah the son of Harim and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab repaired a second section as well as the Tower of the Ovens. [12]And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs.

[13]Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired a thousand cubits

of the wall as far as the Dung Gate. [14]Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, repaired the Dung Gate along with his sons. He built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars, [15]and they repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. [16]After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as the place in front of the tomb of David, to the manmade pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty. [17]After him the Levites, under Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. [18]After him their brothers, under Bavai the son of Henadad, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs. [19]And next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section in front of the Ascent to the Armory at the buttress. [20]After him Baruch the son of Zabbai repaired the other section, from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. [21]After him Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, repaired another section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib. [22]And after him the priests, the men of Achechar, made repairs. [23]After him Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs by their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs by his house. [24]After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the buttress, even as far as the corner. [25]Palal the son of Uzai made repairs opposite the buttress and on the tower that projects from the king's upper house by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh made repairs. [26]And the Nethinim who dwelt in Ophel made repairs as far as the place of the Water Gate toward the east, and on to the projecting tower. [27]After them the Tekoites repaired a second section, next to the great projecting tower and as far as the wall of Ophel.

[28]Beyond the Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house. [29]After them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs in front of his own house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs. [30]After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs in front of his dwelling. [31]After him Malchijah the son of Saraphi made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants, in front of the Miphkad Gate, and as far as the upper chamber at the corner. [32]And between the upper chamber to the corner and the Sheep Gate, the bronze workers and the merchants made repairs.

The Workers Are Ridiculed

[33]Now it came to pass, when Sanballat heard we were rebuilding the wall, he was distressed, and he was furious and was mocking the Jews.[†] [34]And before his brothers and the army of Samaria he asked, “These Jews are rebuilding their city?” [35]And Tobiah the Ammonite, who was with him, said to them, “Surely they will not sacrifice or eat in this place of theirs, will they? For even if a fox goes up on it, will it not break down their stone wall?”

[36]Hear, O our God, for we have become a scorn. Return this reproach of theirs upon their own head, and make them a scorn in a land of captivity.[†] [37]Do not cover their lawlessness.

Conspiracy against Jerusalem

4 Now it happened that when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, and the Ammonites heard that the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was progressing and the gaping holes were being filled in, a great evil came over them.[†] [2]For they all conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem. [3]And we prayed to our God and set watchmen to observe their presence day and night.

[4]Then Judah said, “The strength of the enemy is broken, but there is so much rubbish that we will be unable to do work on the wall.” [5]And our adversaries said, “They will neither know nor see anything till we come into their midst and kill them and cause this work to cease.” [6]And so it was that the Jews, the ones dwelling near them, came and said to us, “They are coming up against us from all sides.” [7]Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall in the sheltered areas, and I positioned the people by families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.[†] [8]And I looked and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember our God, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”

[9]And when our enemies heard their plan was known to us, and that God brought their plot to nothing, we returned, all of us, to the wall, each man to his own work. [10]So it was from that day forward, half of them did the work, and half of them took up defensive positions with spears, shields, bows, and breastplates. The rulers stood with the entire house of Judah.[†]

[11]Those who built on the wall and those who carried burdens loaded themselves in such a way that with one hand they held a weapon, and with the other hand they did the work. [12]Every one of the builders, as he built, had his sword girded at his side, while next to him was the one who sounded the trumpet.

[13]Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, “The work is great and extensive, and we are scattered across the entire wall, each man far from his brother.[†] [14]Therefore, wherever you are, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally together to meet us there. Our God will fight for us.”

[15]So we labored in the work while the other half of the men held spears from daybreak until the stars appeared. [16]And at that time I said to the people, “Spend the night within the midst of Jerusalem; let the night be a guard for you, and let the day be for work.” [17]And I was there along with the watchmen behind me, and there was not one man of us who removed his clothing.

Internal Strife

5 Now there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brothers.[†] [2]For there were those who said, “We, our sons and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live.” [3]There were even some who said, “We pledged our lands and vineyards, even our houses, that we might receive grain and be able to eat.” [4]Some even said, “We borrowed money for the king's tax, pledging our lands and vineyards. [5]Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards.”

[6]And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. [7]After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers and said to them, “Each of you is exacting usury from his brother.” So I called a great assembly against them.[†] [8]And I said to them, “According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brothers? Or should they be sold to us?” Then they were silenced and found nothing to say.

[9]Then I said, “What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? [10]I also, with my brothers and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury! [11]Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine, and the oil that you have charged them.” [12]So they said, “We will restore it and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say.” So I called the priests and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. [13]Then I shook out the fold of my garment and said, “So may God shake out each man from his house and from his property who does not perform this promise. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.” And all the assembly said, “Amen!” and praised the Lord. Then the people did according to this promise.

Nehemiah's Unselfishness

[14]Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions.[†] [15]But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even the outcasts bore rule over the people, but I did not do so because of the fear of God. [16]Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants were gathered there for the work. [17]And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. [18]Now that which was prepared daily was one ox and six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people. [19]Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.[†]

The Opposition Intensifies

6 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that no gaps remained in the wall (though at the time I had not hung the doors in the gates),[†] [2]Sanballat and Geshem sent a letter to me, saying, “Come, let us meet among the villages in the plain of Ono.” But they were plotting to do harm to me. [3]So I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing so great a work that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease? As soon as I finish it I will come down to you.” [4]And they sent me the same message again, and I answered them in the same manner. [5]Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, with an open letter in his hand.[†] [6]In it was written:

It is reported among the nations that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall that you may be their king. [7]And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, “There is a king in Judah!” Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.[†]

[8]Then I sent to him, saying, “No such things as you say are being done, but in your own heart you invent them.” [9]For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, “Their hands will be weakened in the work, and the work will not be done.” Now, therefore, I have strengthened my hands.[†]

[10]Afterward I came into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, and he, being distressed, said, “Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the door of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed at night they are coming to kill you.”[†] [11]And I said, “Who is the man that shall enter the house in order to live?” [12]Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. [13]For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might have cause for an evil report that they might reproach me.

[14]My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would

have made me afraid.

The Wall Is Completed

[15]So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.[†] [16]And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

[17]Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them.[†] [18]For many in Judah were pledged to him because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. [19]Also they reported his good deeds before me and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

7 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed,[†] [2]I gave charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many, along with Hananiah the leader of the citadel. [3]And I said to them, “Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house.”

Those Who Returned from Captivity

[4]Now the city was large and spacious, but the people in it were few, and the houses were not rebuilt. [5]Then my God put it into my heart to gather the

nobles, the rulers, and the people that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return and found written in it:

[6]These are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his city.[†] [7]Those with Zerubbabel, not only Jeshua, but also Nehemiah, Azariah, Raaemia, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Ezra, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah, and Masphar, men of the people of Israel; [8]the children of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; [9]the children of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; [10]the children of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two; [11]the children of Pahath-Moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen; [12]the children of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; [13]the children of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five; [14]the children of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; [15]the children of Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight; [16]the sons of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-eight; [17]the children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two; [18]the children of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven; [19]the children of Bigvai, two thousand and sixty-seven; [20]the children of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five; [21]the children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; [22]the children of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight; [23]the children of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four; [24]the children of Hariph, one hundred and twelve; [25]the sons of Gibeon, ninety-five; [26]the children of Bethlehem, one hundred and twenty-three, and Netophah, fifty-six; [27]the children of

Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight; [28]the children of Beth Azmaveth, forty-two; [29]the children of Kirjath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; [30]the men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; [31]the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; [32]the men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred and twenty-three; [33]the men of Nebo, fifty-two; [34]the sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; [35]the children of Harim, three hundred and twenty; [36]the sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; [37]the children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one; [38]the children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

[39]The priests: the sons of Jedaiah of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three; [40]the sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; [41]the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; [42]the sons of Harim were one thousand and seventeen.

[43]The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, of the house of Kadmiel, and of the sons of Hodevah, seventy-four. [44]The singers: the children of Asaph, one hundred and forty-eight. [45]The gatekeepers: the children of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the children of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-eight.

[46]The Nethinim: the children of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth, [47]the children of Keros, the sons of Sia, the children of Padon, [48]the children of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the children of Salmai, [49]the children of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the children of Gahar, [50]the children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, [51]the children of

Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, [52]the children of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim, [53]the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, [54]the children of Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harhur, [55]the children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah, [56]the children of Neziah, and the children of Hatipha.

[57]The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida, [58]the children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, [59]the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the children of Amon. [60]All the Nethinim and the children of Solomon's servants were three hundred ninety-two.

[61]And these were the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not identify their father's house nor their lineage, whether they were of Israel: [62]the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, six hundred forty-two.

[63]And of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name. [64]These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled. [65]And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things until a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

[66]Altogether the whole assembly was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, [67]besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five men and women singers. [68]Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, [69]their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

[70]Some of the heads of the fathers’ houses gave to the work of Nehemiah for the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and thirty priestly garments. [71]Some of the heads of the fathers’ houses gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold drachmas and two thousand two hundred silver minas. [72]And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand two hundred silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

[73]So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities. When the seventh month came, the sons of Israel were in their cities.

The People Hear the Law

8 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel.[†] [2]So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.[†] [3]Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the

Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

[4]So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. [5]And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.[†] [6]And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, “Amen, amen!” while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.[†] [7]Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place.[†] [8]So they read distinctly from the book in the Law of God; and they gave the sense and helped them to understand the reading.

[9]Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law. [10]So he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”[†] [11]Thus the Levites quieted all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.” [12]And all the people went

their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

Feast of Booths Restored

[13]Now on the second day the heads of the fathers’ houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe in order to understand the words of the Law. [14]And they found written in the Law which the Lord had commanded by Moses that the sons of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,[†] [15]and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem. And Ezra said, “Go out to the mountain and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees to make booths, as it is written.”

[16]Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. [17]So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the sons of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. [18]Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner.[†]

The Worshipers Confess Their Sins

9 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month, the sons of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads.[†] [2]Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. [3]And they stood in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God, and they were confessing to the Lord and worshiping the Lord their God. [4]Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the Lord their God.

[5]And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, “Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever! Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise!”

Confession of the Sins of Israel

[6]And Ezra said, “You are the only Lord. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all, and the host of heaven worships You.[†] [7]You are the Lord God who chose Abram and brought him out of the land of the Chaldeans, and gave him the name Abraham. [8]You found his heart faithful before You and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Girgashites—to give it to his descendants. You fulfilled Your words, for You are righteous.

[9]“You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry by the Red Sea. [10]And in Egypt You showed signs against Pharaoh, against all his servants, and against all the people of his land. For You knew that they acted proudly against them. So You made a name for Yourself as it is this day. [11]And You divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land; and their persecutors You threw into the deep, as a stone into the mighty waters. [12]Moreover You led them by day with a cloudy pillar, and by night with a pillar of fire, to give them light on the road which they should travel.

[13]“You came down also on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven. You gave to them just ordinances and true laws, good commandments and precepts. [14]You made known to them Your holy Sabbath and commanded them statutes and commandments and the Law by the hand of your servant Moses. [15]You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought them water out of a rock for their thirst. You told them to go in to possess the land which You had sworn to give to them. [16]But they and our fathers acted proudly, hardened their necks, and did not heed Your commandments. [17]They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and they appointed a leader to return to their bondage in Egypt. But You are God, gracious and compassionate, long-suffering, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them.

[18]“Even when they made a molded calf for themselves and said, ‘These are the gods that brought us up out of Egypt,’ and worked great provocations, [19]yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in

the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day to lead them on the road; nor the pillar of fire by night to show them light and the way they should go. [20]You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst. [21]Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

[22]“Moreover You gave to them kingdoms and You divided nations to them. So they took possession of the land of Sihon, the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. [23]You also multiplied their children as the stars of heaven and brought them into the land which You had told their fathers to go in and possess. [24]You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hands, with their kings and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they wished. [25]And they took strong cities and possessed houses full of all goods, cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled, and grew fat, and delighted themselves in Your great goodness.

[26]“Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against You, cast Your law behind their backs, and killed Your prophets, who testified against them to turn them to You, and they worked great provocations. [27]Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their enemies, who oppressed them; and in the time of their trouble, when they cried to You, You heard from Your heaven; and according to Your abundant mercies, You gave them deliverers who saved them from the hand of their enemies.

[28]“But after they had rest, they again did evil before You. Therefore You left them in the hands of their enemies so that they had dominion over them. Yet again they cried out to You, You heard from heaven; and You delivered them according to the multitude of Your mercies, [29]and testified against them, that You might bring them back to Your Law. Yet they did not heed Your commandments, but sinned against Your judgments, ‘which if a man does, he shall live by them.’ But they stubbornly turned their backs, stiffened their necks, and would not hear. [30]Yet for many years You had patience with them and testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. [31]Nevertheless in Your great mercy, You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; for You are mighty and gracious and merciful.

[32]“Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, the powerful and awesome God, who keep Your covenant and Your mercy: do not let all the trouble seem small before You that has come upon us, our kings and our princes, our priests and our prophets, our fathers and all Your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until this day. [33]However, You are just in all that has befallen us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have done wickedly. [34]Neither our kings nor our princes, our priests nor our fathers, have kept Your Law, nor heeded Your commandments and Your testimonies with which You testified against them. [35]For they have not served You in their kingdom, or in the many good things that You gave them, or in the large and rich land which You set before them; nor did they turn from their wicked works.

[36]“Behold! We are slaves today! And the land which You gave to our fathers to eat its fruit and its bounty, here we are, servants in it! [37]And it yields much increase to the kings You have set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies and our cattle at their pleasure; and we are in great distress. [38]And because of all this, we make a sure covenant and write it; and all our rulers, our Levites, and our priests seal it.”[†]

Those Who Signed the Covenant

10 Those who sealed it were: Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah,[†] [2]Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, [3]Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, [4]Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, [5]Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, [6]Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, [7]Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, [8]Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the priests. [9]The Levites: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the children of Henadad, and Kadmiel. [10]Their brothers: Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, [11]Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, [12]Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, [13]Hodijah, the children of Beninu. [14]The leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, the children of [15]Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, [16]Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, [17]Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, [18]Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, [19]Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, [20]Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, [21]Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, [22]Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, [23]Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, [24]Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, [25]Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, [26]Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, [27]Malluch, Harim, and Baanah.

The Covenant Which Was Sealed

[28]And the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all those separating from the peoples of the land to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding— [29]these, joining with their brothers, bound themselves with a curse and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of our Lord and His statutes:[†] [30]not to give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons; [31]and if the peoples of the land brought wares to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day; and we would forgo the seventh year's produce and the exacting of every debt. [32]Also we will make ordinances for ourselves to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: [33]for the showbread, for the regular grain offering, for the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts; for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God. [34]We—the priests, the Levites, and the people—cast lots for bringing the wood offering into the house of our God according to our fathers' houses, at the appointed times year by year, to burn on the altar of the Lord our God as it is written in the Law. [35]And we made ordinances to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, to the house of the Lord; [36]to bring the firstborn of our sons and our cattle, as it is written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God; [37]to bring the firstfruits of our grain, the fruit from all kinds of trees, the new wine and oil to the

priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God; and to bring the tithes of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all the cities of our servitude. [38]And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse. [39]For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the grain, of the new wine and the oil to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary are, where the priests who minister and the gatekeepers and the singers are; and we will not neglect the house of our God.[†]

The People in Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine-tenths were to dwell in other cities.[†] [2]And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

[3]These are the heads of the province who dwelt in Jerusalem. (But in the cities of Judah, everyone dwelt in his possession in their cities—Israelites, the priests, and the Levites, the Nethinim, and the descendants of Solomon's servants.)[†] [4]Also in Jerusalem there dwelt some of the children of Judah and of the children of Benjamin.

Of the children of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, of the children of Perez; [5]and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of

Theziah, the son of Shiloni. [6]All the sons of Perez who dwelt at Jerusalem were four hundred sixty-eight valiant men.

[7]And these are the children of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiah; [8]and after him Gabbai and Sallai, nine hundred twenty-eight. [9]Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer, and Judah the son of Asana was second over the city.

[10]Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, and Jachin; [11]Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, was the leader of the house of God. [12]Their brethren who did the work of the house were eight hundred and twenty-two; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, [13]and his brethren, heads of the fathers' houses, were two hundred and forty-two; and Amashai the son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, [14]and their brethren, mighty men of valor, were one hundred and twenty-eight. Their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men.

[15]Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; [16]Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, the leader who began the thanksgiving with prayer; Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. [17]All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred and eighty-four.

[18]Moreover the gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon, and their brothers who kept the gates, were one hundred and seventy-two. [19]Also the overseer of the Levites was Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Micha, of the sons of Asaph, the singers in charge of the service of the house of God. [20]For it was the king's command concerning them that a certain portion should be for the singers, a quota day by day. [21]Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, was the king's deputy in all matters concerning the people.

Those Outside Jerusalem

[22]With regard to the villages within their rural districts, some of the children of Judah dwelt in Kirjath Arba and [23]in Jeshua, [24]and in Beersheba, [25]and their villages, and Azekah and its villages; and they set up tents in Beersheba. [26]The children of Benjamin dwelt around Geba of Michmash, [27]and some of the Levites of Judah were in Benjamin.

The Priests and Levites

12 Now these are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, [2]Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, [3]Shechaniah, [4]Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, and Jedaiah. These were the heads of the priests and their brothers in the days of Jeshua.

[5]Moreover the Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah who led the thanksgiving psalms, he and his brothers. [6]Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brothers, stood across from them in their duties.

[7]Jeshua begot Joiakim, Joiakim begot Eliashib, Eliashib begot Joiada, [8]Joiada begot Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua.

[9]Now in the days of Joiakim, the priests, the heads of the fathers' houses, were: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; [10]of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; [11]of Melichu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; [12]of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; [13]of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; [14]of Abijah, Zichri, the son of Minjamin; of Moadiah, Piltai; [15]of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; [16]of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; [17]of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; [18]of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; and of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

[19]The Levites in the days of Eliasib, Joida, Jaddusa and Joanan, and Idua, were being recorded as heads of families, even those priests within the kingdom of Darius of Persia. [20]The sons of Levi, heads of the families until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib, were written in the Book of the Chronicles. [21]And the leaders of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel. With their brothers across from them, they offered praise and gave thanks, each group alternating with the other, according to the command of David the man of God.

[22]Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers keeping the watch at the storerooms of the gates. [23]These lived in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

Dedication of the Wall

[24]Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought out the Levites in all their places in order to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and singing, and with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps. [25]And the sons of the singers gathered together from the countryside around Jerusalem, and from the villages of the Netophathites, [26]from the house of Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth. For the singers had built villages for themselves all around Jerusalem. [27]The priests and Levites purified themselves, and then purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

[28]So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. One went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate.[†] [29]After them went Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah, [30]and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, [31]Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, [32]and some of the priests' sons with trumpets—Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, [33]and his brothers, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. Ezra the scribe went before them. [34]By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David as far as the Water Gate eastward.

[35]The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite way, and I was behind them with half the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, [36]and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the

Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by the Gate of the Prison. [37]So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me; [38]and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Minjamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; [39]also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director. [40]Also that day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

Temple Appointees

[41]And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who ministered.[†] [42]Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept the charge of their God and the charge of the purification according to the command of David and Solomon his son. [43]For in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were chiefs of the singers and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. [44]In the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, all Israel gave portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for each day. They also consecrated holy things for the Levites, and the Levites consecrated them for the children of Aaron.

The Last Reforms of Nehemiah

13 On that day they read in the Book of Moses, in the hearing of the people, and it was found to be written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God,[†] [2]for they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but instead hired Balaam to bring a curse against them. But our God turned the curse into a blessing. [3]So it was, after hearing the Law, they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

[4]Now before this, Eliashib the priest, living in the storeroom of the house of our God, was allied with Tobiah. [5]And he had prepared for him a large room where previously they had stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, the tithes of grain, the new wine and oil, which were commanded to be given to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, as well as the firstfruits for the priests. [6]But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king [7]and came to Jerusalem. Here I discovered the evil thing Eliashib had done for Tobiah. He had prepared a room for him in the courts of the house of God. [8]This grieved me bitterly; therefore I tossed out from the room all the household goods of Tobiah. [9]Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms, at which time I brought the articles of the house of God back into them, along with the grain offering and the frankincense.

Tithes Are Restored

[10]I also realized that the portions for the Levites were held back from them. For each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. [11]So I contended with the rulers and said, “Why is the

house of God forsaken?” And I gathered them together and set them in their place. [12]Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse. [13]I appointed Shelemiah the priest and Zadok the scribe as treasurers over the storehouse, along with Pedaiah of the Levites. Next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah. They were chosen for they were counted as faithful, and it was their duty to distribute to their brothers.

[14]Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for its services!

The Sabbath Is Restored

[15]In those days I saw in Judah people treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, and figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. [16]Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah and in Jerusalem. [17]Then I contended with the free sons of Judah and said to them, “What evil thing is this that you do by which you profane the Sabbath day? [18]Did not your fathers do this, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.”

[19]So it was, when the gates of Jerusalem stood open before the Sabbath, that I commanded, and they shut the gates; and I charged that they must not be opened until after the Sabbath day. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day.

[20]Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. [21]So I warned them and said to them, “Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you!” From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath. [22]Then I told the Levites who were cleansing themselves, who came to guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day.

Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

Pagan Marriages Forbidden

[23]In those days I also saw Jews who married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab. [24]And half their children spoke in the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. [25]So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, “You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons. [26]Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. [27]Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?”

[28]And one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me.

[29]Remember them, God, because of the rights of inheritance of the priesthood and of the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

[30]And I cleansed them of every pagan thing. I assigned the daily courses to the priests and the Levites, each to his own service,[†] [31]and to bringing the wood offering and the firstfruits at the appointed times.

In goodness, remember me, O our God!

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The Book of Tobit

Author—Unknown

Date—Between the fourth and second centuries BC

Major Themes—*The Book of Tobit is a love story.* A father sends his only son into the world so that he may find a bride, save her, and bring her back rejoicing to his parents. The same story is told by the Lord in John 3:16.

From the beginning, God has been working in history to bring man out of the darkness of sin and death and into the glorious light of Christ. This is the story of salvation, and the Book of Tobit is an icon of that story. Within Tobit's narrative lies a shadowy outline of God working in history from the beginning to the end of the age, as He makes preparation for the uniting of man and all creation to God in Christ.

Background—The story of Tobit is set against the backdrop of the Assyrian exile in Nineveh. Family tragedy, hope, and divine intervention are interwoven to communicate the presence of God's providence.

Outline

I. Tobit's Life before the Exile, His Early Days in Nineveh (1:1–22)

II. Tobit's Charity, His Blindness, and His Prayer for Help (2:1–3:6)

III. Tobiah's Quest and Marriage (3:7–9:6)

    A. Sarah's predicament and prayer (3:7–17)

        - B. Tobit sends Tobiah on his quest with Raphael in disguise (4:1–5:23)
        - C. Tobit marries Sarah and breaks the curse (6:1–9:6)
- IV. Tobiah's Return and Conclusion (10:1–14:15)
    - A. Tobiah returns and heals his father (10:1–11:19)
    - B. Raphael reveals his identity (12:1–22)
    - C. Tobit praises God (13:1–14:1)
    - D. Final Days of Tobit (14:2–15)

Tobit's Early Years in Israel and Nineveh

1 This is the book of the words of Tobit, the son of Tobiel, the son of Hananiel, the son of Aduel, the son of Gabael, of the seed of Asiel, from the tribe of Naphtali.[†] [2]He was led captive out of Thisbe in the days of Shalmaneser, king of the Assyrians. Thisbe is south of Kedesh Naphtali, in Galilee above Asher.[†]

[3]I, Tobit, walked in the paths of truth and righteousness all the days of my life. I did much almsgiving to my brethren and to the people who journeyed with me as exiles to Nineveh, in the country of the Assyrians.[†] [4]In my young days, when I was in my own country, the land of Israel, the entire tribe of my father Naphtali turned away from the house of Jerusalem, which was chosen from all the tribes of Israel, to sacrifice for all the tribes. This temple, the habitation of the Most High God, was sanctified and built for all generations forever.

[5]Now all the tribes that joined in the revolt sacrificed the heifer to Baal. The house of Naphtali, the tribe of my father, also revolted. [6]But I alone traveled frequently to Jerusalem for the feast days, as it is written for all of

Israel in an everlasting ordinance. I would carry the firstfruits and the tithes of my harvest and the first-shearing.[†] [7]These I would give to the priests, the sons of Aaron, at the altar. I would offer the tenth of all the harvest to the sons of Levi who served at Jerusalem. I would also sell off the second tenth and go and spend it at Jerusalem each year. [8]The third tenth I would give to whom it was fitting, as Deborah the mother of my father commanded me, for I was left an orphan by my father. [9]When I became a man, I took Anna for a wife from my own kindred. With her I became the father of Tobias.[†]

[10]When I was taken captive to Nineveh, all my brothers and those from my race ate from the bread of the Gentiles.[†] [11]But I protected myself by not eating it. [12]For I remembered God with all my soul. [13]So the Most High gave me grace and comeliness before Shalmaneser, and I became his purchasing agent. [14]I would go into Media. And one time in Rages of Media, I entrusted to Gabael, the brother of Gabrias, ten talents of silver.[†]

[15]When Shalmaneser died and his son Sennacherib reigned in his place, the roads were unstable and I could no longer travel to Media. [16]In the days of Shalmaneser, I did much almsgiving to my brothers. [17]I would give my bread to the hungry and my clothing to the naked. If I saw anyone of my people dead, cast outside the wall of Nineveh, I would bury him.[†] [18]If King Sennacherib put someone to death when he came trying to escape from Judea, I buried them secretly. For in his anger, he put many to death, and the bodies were sought by the king; but they were not found. [19]But one of the men of Nineveh went and made known to the king concerning my burying them. So I hid, and when I knew I was being sought to be put to

death I was frightened and ran away. [20]All of my possessions were seized and I had nothing left, except Anna my wife and Tobias my son.

[21]But not even fifty days passed before two of King Sennacherib's sons had killed him and escaped into the mountains of Ararat. Thus Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. He appointed Ahikar, the son of my brother Anael, to be over all the accounts of his kingdom and over the entire government. [22]Ahikar then entreated on my behalf, so I came to Nineveh. Now Ahikar was the wine-pourer, the keeper of the signet ring, the administrator and the accountant. Esarhaddon appointed him second to himself, and he was my nephew.[†]

The Charitable Tobit Becomes Blind

2 When I arrived at my house, my wife Anna and my son Tobias were given back to me. It was the Feast of Pentecost, which is the holy feast of the seven weeks. A good dinner was prepared for me, so I sat down at the table to eat.[†] [2]When I saw the abundance of meat, I said to my son, “Go and bring whomever you may find of our needy brethren who are mindful of the Lord. Behold, I will wait for you.” [3]But he came back and said, “O father, one of our people was strangled and thrown into the marketplace.” [4]So before I even tasted anything, I jumped up and carried the corpse into a room until sunset. [5]Then I returned, bathed myself, and ate my bread in sorrow. [6]Then I remembered the prophecy of Amos, how he said,

> “Your feasts will be turned into mourning,
>
> And all your gladness into a song of grief.”

So I wept.[†] [7]When the sun went down, I departed, and after digging a grave, I buried him. [8]My neighbors laughed at me and said, “He is no longer afraid to be put to death for doing such a thing. He ran away before, and now, behold, he is burying the dead again.”

[9]On the same night that I buried him, I returned home. But since I was defiled, I slept by the wall of the courtyard with my face uncovered. [10]However, I did not see the sparrows on the wall, for while my eyes were open the sparrows discharged their droppings into my eyes, and they became white films in my eyes. I went to physicians, but they could not help me. Then Ahikar supported me until he left for Elymais.

[11]Then my wife Anna worked for hire at what women do.[†] [12]She would send her work to the owners and they would pay her. On one occasion they paid her wages and also gave her a small goat. [13]But when she returned to me, it began to bleat. So I said to her, “Where did this goat come from? Is it not stolen? Return it to the owners, for it is unlawful to eat what is stolen.” [14]But she replied, “It was given to me as a gift. It was in addition to my wages.” But I did not believe her, telling her to return it to its owners. I blushed in embarrassment for her sake. So she answered and said to me, “Are your acts of charity and righteous deeds lawful? Behold, you are a know-it-all!”[†]

Tobit's Prayer

3 Then I wept in my sorrow, and with pain I prayed, saying:

[2]“O Lord, You are righteous. So too are all Your works. All Your ways are mercy and truth. Your judgments are true and just forever.[†] [3]Remember me and look upon me with favor. Do not punish me for my sins and my ignorance, nor those sins of my fathers which they committed against You. [4]Because they disobeyed Your commands, so You gave us as spoil, captivity and death. You made us a byword of disgrace among all the nations in which we were scattered. [5]Now Your judgments concerning my sins are many and they are true, because I did them, and so did my fathers. For we did not keep Your commandments. Indeed we did not walk in truth before You. [6]Now do with me as is best before You. Command that my spirit be taken up, so I may be released and become soil, since it is better for me to die than to live. For I have heard false insults, and there is much sorrow within me. Command that I be freed from distress to now enter into the eternal place. Do not turn Your face away from me.”[†]

[7]On the same day, in Ecbatana of Media, Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, happened to be insulted by her father's maids.[†] [8]She was married to seven husbands, but before they could be with her as a wife, Asmodeus, the evil demon, killed them. So they said to her, “Do you not recollect that you strangled these husbands? You have already had seven husbands, but you received no profit from any of them.[†] [9]Therefore, why punish us? If they are dead, go with them. May we never see a son or daughter of yours.”

[10]When she heard this, she was so distressed that she considered hanging herself. But she said, “I am the only one of my father. If I do this, it will be a disgrace to him, and I will bring down his old age with sorrow into Hades.” [11]So she prayed by her window and said:

Sarah's Prayer

“Blessed are You, O Lord my God. Blessed is Your holy and precious name unto the ages. May all Your works bless You forever.[†] [12]Now, O Lord, I offer myself completely to You. [13]Command that I be released from the land, that I may not hear such disgrace any more. [14]O Lord, You know that I am innocent of any sin with a man. [15]I have not defiled my name nor the name of my father in the land of my captivity. I am my father's only offspring. He has no other child who will be his heir. Neither does he have a brother close at hand, nor an adopted son that I might keep myself as a wife to him. Seven of my husbands have already perished. What should I live for? But if it does not seem good to You to kill me, command that I be looked upon with favor, and that mercy be shown to me, so I may no longer hear disgrace.”

[16]The prayer of both was heard in the presence of the great glory of Raphael,[†] [17]and he was sent to heal the two of them: to remove the white films from Tobit; to give Sarah of Raguel to Tobias the son of Tobit as a wife; and to bind Asmodeus the evil demon, for it fell upon Tobias to inherit her. At that same time Tobit returned and entered his house, and Sarah of Raguel came down from her upstairs room.

Tobit Instructs Tobias

4 On that day Tobit remembered the silver he had entrusted to Gabael at Rages of Media. [2]So he said to himself, “I requested death for myself. Why do I not call my son Tobias to make this known to him before I die?”

[3]So he summoned him and said, “My son, if I die, bury me, but do not disregard your mother. Honor her all the days of your life. Do what is pleasing to her, but do not grieve her. [4]Remember, my son, that she experienced many dangers for you while you were in the womb. When she dies, bury her beside me in the same grave. [5]My son, remember the Lord our God all your days, and do not desire to sin or to disobey His commandments. Do righteousness all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing.[†] [6]For if you walk in the truth, you will be successful in your works. [7]Do almsgiving from your possessions to all who do righteousness. When you do almsgiving, do not let your eye be envious. Do not turn your face away from any poor man, so the face of God will not be turned away from you.[†] [8]Do almsgiving based on the quantity of your possessions. If you possess only a few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. [9]You are storing up a good treasure for yourself in the day of necessity. [10]For almsgiving delivers us from death and prevents us from entering into the darkness. [11]Indeed, almsgiving is a good gift for all who do it before the Most High.

[12]“My son, guard yourself from all fornication, and above all take a wife from among the seed of your fathers. Do not take a foreign woman who is not from the tribe of your father, for we are sons of the prophets. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are our fathers from of old. Remember, my son, that all these took wives from among their brothers and were blessed in their children. Their seed will inherit the land.[†] [13]So now, my son, love your brothers and do not be arrogant in your heart against your brothers, the sons and daughters of your people. Take a wife for yourself from them, for

arrogance brings destruction and great disorder, and in such worthlessness there is loss and great defect. For worthlessness is the mother of famine.

[14]“Do not keep overnight the wages of any man who works for you, but pay him immediately. If you serve God, He will pay you. Give heed to yourself, my son, in all your works, and be disciplined in all your conduct. [15]What you yourself hate, do not do to anyone. Do not drink wine unto a state of drunkenness, and do not let drunkenness become your traveling companion. [16]From your bread, give to him who is hungry, and from your clothing, give to the naked. If you have more than you need, do almsgiving, and do not let your eye envy the almsgiving when you do it. [17]Spread out your bread on the grave of the righteous, but do not give it to sinners.

[18]“Seek counsel from every sensible man, and do not treat any useful advice with contempt. [19]At every opportunity bless the Lord God, but more than this ask that your ways may become straight, and that all your paths and purposes may prosper. For not every nation has understanding. But the Lord Himself gives all that is good, and as He desires He humbles whomever He will. Now my son, let none of my commandments be removed from your heart.

[20]“Now let me point out to you the ten talents of silver I entrusted to Gabael the son of Gabrias, in Rages of Media.[†] [21]Do not fear, my son, that we have become poor. For you are very rich if you fear God. Stay away from every sin, and do what is pleasing before Him.”

Tobias Obeys His Father

5 Tobias answered him and said, “O father, I will do everything you have commanded me. [2]But how will I be able to obtain the silver, for I do not know him?” [3]Then he gave him the record of the debt and said to him, “Find for yourself a man who will travel with you, and I will pay him his wages as long as I remain alive. Now go and obtain the silver.”[†]

[4]Then Tobias went to look for a man and found Raphael, who was an angel. But he did not know it. [5]So Tobias said to him, “Can you go with me to Rages of Media? Are you acquainted with those places?” [6]The angel said to him, “I will go with you. I am acquainted with the roadways and I have lodged with our brother Gabael.” [7]Tobias said to him, “Wait for me and I will tell my father.” [8]He said to him, “Do so, but do not delay.”

[9]So he went to his father and said, “Behold, I have found someone who will go with me.” But his father said, “Call him to me, that I may know what tribe he belongs to, and if he is trustworthy enough to go with you.” [10]So he invited him, and Raphael came in. They greeted one another cordially.

[11]Tobit then said to him, “Brother, to what tribe and kindred do you belong?” [12]Raphael responded, “Do you seek a tribe and a family, or a hired man to go with your son?” Tobit replied, “Brother, I wish to know your people and your name.” [13]Then he said, “I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the Great, one of your relatives.” [14]So Tobit said to him, “You are most welcome, my brother. Do be not angry with me for seeking to learn of your tribe and your family. As it turns out, you are a brother of mine from a good and upright family. For I knew Ananias and Jonathan, the sons of

Shemiah the Great, since we would journey in common to Jerusalem to worship and to offer the firstborn and the tenth of our harvest. They were not led astray in the deception of our brothers. My brother, you are from a good root.

[15]“But tell me, what shall I give you as wages? A drachma a day and expenses for you and my son? [16]I will even add more to your pay, if you both return in good health.” [17]Thus they were well pleased. Then he said to Tobias, “Prepare for the journey, and may it be prosperous.” So his son prepared the things for the journey. Then his father said to him, “Go with this man, and may the God who dwells in heaven prosper your journey. May His angel journey with you.” They both departed, and the young man's dog went with them.[†]

[18]But Anna his mother wept and said to Tobit, “Why have you sent our son away, or is he not the staff of our hands when he goes in and out before us? [19]Do not attain silver upon silver, but may it be dirt compared to our son. [20]For as he was given to us to live by the Lord, this is sufficient for our existence.” [21]Tobit said to her, “My sister, do not be concerned. He shall return in good health, and your eyes will see him. [22]For a good angel will go with him, and his journey shall be prosperous. He will return in good health.” [23]So she ceased weeping.

The Journey to Rages

6 They went on the journey and came to the Tigris River. So they spent the evening there.[†] [2]The young man went down to wash himself, and a fish jumped up from the river and was determined to swallow the young man.

[3]The angel said to him, “Take hold of the fish.” So the young man grabbed the fish and put it on the bank. [4]Then the angel said to him, “Cut open the fish. Take the heart, the liver, and the gall and put them in a safe place.” [5]The young man did as the angel commanded him. Then they cooked the fish and ate it.

[6]After this, they traveled together until they came near to Ecbatana. [7]Then the young man said to the angel, “Brother Azarias, what is the purpose of the liver, the heart, and the gall of the fish?” [8]He replied, “If a demon or an evil spirit troubles anyone, the heart and the liver must be used to make smoke before the man or woman, and that person will never be troubled again. [9]As for the gall, use it to anoint a man who has white films on his eyes, and he will be healed.”

[10]As they came near Rages, [11]the angel said to the young man, “Brother, we will spend the night with Raguel. He is your relative and with him is his only child, a daughter named Sarah. [12]I will speak for her that she might be given to you as a wife, because her inheritance belongs to you; for you alone are from her people. The girl is beautiful and she is sensible.

[13]“So now listen to me, for I will speak to her father. When we return from Rages, we will celebrate the wedding. For I know that Raguel cannot give her to any other man according to the rule of Moses, or he will be subject to death. Thus it is proper that you receive the inheritance rather than another man.”[†]

[14]Then the young man said to the angel, “Brother Azarias, I have heard the girl was given seven husbands, and they all perished in the bridal

chamber.[†] [15]Now I am the only son of my father, and I fear for myself lest, entering the bridal chamber, I may die even as those before me. For a demon loves her, and he does not harm anyone except those who approach her. Now I fear for myself lest I die and bring the life of my father and mother down into their tomb with grief and sorrow upon me. They have no other son who will bury them."

[16]But the angel said to him, "Do you not remember the words your father commanded you, to take a wife for yourself from among your people? Now listen to me, brother, for she will be a wife to you. As for the demon, have no concern, for this night she will be given to you as a wife.[†] [17]If you enter the bridal chamber, you will take with you ashes of incense, and lay some of it on the heart and liver of the fish. Then you will make smoke, and the demon will smell it and flee and never return. [18]When you approach her, both of you will rise up and cry out to the merciful God. He will save you and be merciful. Do not fear for yourself, for she has been prepared for you from of old. You will save her and she will go with you. I believe that you will have children by her."

[19]As Tobias heard these words, he loved her and his soul was very much united to her.

At the House of Raguel

7 Then they went to Ecbatana and came to the house of Raguel. Sarah went ahead to meet them, and after they greeted one another, she escorted them into the house. [2]Raguel said to Edna his wife, "How the young man resembles my cousin Tobit!" [3]Then Raguel asked them, "Where

are you from, brothers?” They answered, “We are from the sons of Naphtali who are captives in Nineveh.”[†] [4]Then he said to them, “Do you know Tobit our brother?” They responded, “We know him.” [5]Then he asked, “Is he in good health?” They answered, “He is alive and in good health.” Tobias then added, “He is my father.”

[6]Raguel jumped up and kissed him and wept. He blessed him and said to him, “You are the son of a good and noble man!” But when he heard that Tobit had lost his eyesight, he was grieved and wept. [7]Edna his wife and Sarah his daughter also wept, and they received them eagerly. [8]And they killed a ram from the sheep and set many dishes before them.

[9]Then Tobias said to Raphael, “Brother Azarias, speak about what you said on the way, and let the matter be completed.” [10]So he told Raguel what he said, and Raguel said to Tobias, “Eat, drink, and be glad, for it is fitting for you to marry my child. However, I must tell you the truth.[†] [11]I gave my daughter to seven men, and when they went in to her, they died during the night. But for now, be glad!” [12]But Tobias said, “I will not eat anything until after you establish an agreement with me.” So Raguel said, “Receive her according to the decree, for you are her relative and she is yours. The merciful God will prosper you in what is good.”

Tobias and Sarah Are Wed

[13]So he called Sarah his daughter, and taking her by the hand, he gave her to be a wife for Tobias. Then he said, “Behold, receive her according to the decree of Moses, and bring her before your father.” He then blessed

them [14]and summoned his wife Edna. She took a scroll and wrote out the agreement. They sealed it, and then they began to eat.

[15]After this, Raguel called his wife Edna and said to her, “Sister, prepare the other room and lead her into it.” [16]She did as he said and led her there. Then Sarah wept, but Edna understood the tears of her daughter and said to her, [17]“Be courageous, my child. May the Lord of heaven and earth give you grace instead of this sorrow of yours. Be courageous, my daughter.”

8 When they finished dining, they led Tobias to her. [2]As he went, he remembered the words of Raphael, and put the heart and the liver of the fish upon the embers of the incense and made smoke.[†] [3]When the demon smelled the fragrant scent, he fled to the upper parts of Egypt, and there the angel bound him. [4]While both were enclosed in the room, Tobias rose up from the bed and said, “Arise, sister, and let us pray that the Lord will have mercy upon us.” [5]So Tobias began to pray, saying:

“Blessed are You, O God of our fathers, and blessed is Your holy and glorious name unto the ages. The heavens and all Your creatures bless You.[†] [6]You made Adam and gave him Eve as a helper, his wife as a support. From them the seed of mankind came to be. You said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. Let Us make a helper for him like himself.’[†] [7]O Lord, I now take this my sister as my wife, not on account of fornication, but in truth. Command that she and I may have mercy, and in this grow old together.”[†]

[8]And with him she said, “Amen.” [9]Then both fell asleep for the night.

[10]But Raguel rose up and went outside and dug a grave, saying, “He, too, may have died.”[†] [11]Raguel then went back into his house [12]and said to his wife Edna, “Send one of the maids and let her see if indeed Tobias is alive. If he is not, let us bury him that no one may know.” [13]So the maid went to the door, and when she opened it she found both of them sleeping. [14]She came out and told the two of them that he was alive.

[15]Then Raguel blessed God, saying:

“Blessed are You, the God, with every pure and holy blessing. Your holy ones and all Your creatures bless You. All Your angels and Your chosen ones bless You unto all the ages.[†] [16]Blessed are You, for You have made me glad, and it did not turn out for me as I suspected. Rather, You did with us according to Your abundant mercy. [17]Blessed are You, for You had mercy on our two only children. O Lord, show them mercy, and complete their life in health and with gladness and mercy.”

[18]Then he ordered his household servants to fill in the grave.

[19]After this he provided a wedding feast for them lasting fourteen days.[†] [20]Before the time of the wedding feast was over, Raguel swore an oath and said to Tobias, “You are not to leave from here unless the two of you stay the fourteen days of the wedding feast. [21]At that time take half of my belongings and go in good health to your father. The remainder will be yours when I and my wife die.”

Gabael Returns the Silver

9 Then Tobias called Raphael and said to him,[†] [2]“Brother Azarias, take a servant and two camels with you and journey to Rages of Media. Find Gabael and bring the silver back to me and bring him to the wedding feast. [3]For Raguel has sworn an oath for me not to go away. [4]But my father is counting the days, and if I delay much longer he will be very distressed.” [5]Then Raphael went and spent the night with Gabael, and gave him the handwritten receipt. So Gabael brought the small sealed bags and gave them to him. [6]They both rose early in the morning and went to the wedding feast. Then Tobias blessed his wife.

Anna's Distress

10 Tobit his father was counting each day. But when the days needed to complete the journey ended and they had not returned,[†] [2]he asked, “Has he perhaps been dishonored? Or has Gabael died and no one gave him the silver?” [3]So he was very distressed. [4]Then his wife told him, “The young man has perished. That is why he is delayed.” Then she began to weep for him and said, [5]“Nothing matters to me, my child, the light of my eyes, for I permitted you to go.” [6]So Tobit said to her, “Be silent and have no more thoughts about it. He is in good health.”

[7]She replied to him, “You be quiet. Do not deceive me. My child has perished.” Then throughout the day she went outside to the road by which he departed, and during the day she did not eat bread. At night she did not cease lamenting for her son Tobias until the fourteen days of the wedding feast were over, the days Raguel swore him to celebrate there.

The Bride and Groom Depart

[8]Then Tobias said to Raguel, “Send me back, for my father and my mother no longer hope they will see me.”[†] [9]But his father-in-law said to him, “Stay with me, and I will send messengers to your father. They will make clear to him how you are doing.” But Tobias said, “No indeed. On the contrary, send me back to my father.”

[10]Then Raguel arose and gave Sarah his wife to him, and half of his belongings in servants, cattle, and silver. [11]Then he blessed them and sent them on their way, saying, “May the God of heaven prosper you, my children, before the day I die.” [12]To his daughter he said, “Honor your husband's mother and father, for they are now your parents. Let me hear a good report of you,” and he kissed her. [13]Then Edna said to Tobias, “My beloved brother, may the Lord of heaven bring you back and grant me to see your children from my daughter Sarah, that I may rejoice before the Lord. Behold, I am entrusting my daughter to your care. Do not grieve her.”[†] [14]With this, Tobias went on his way blessing God that He had prospered his journey. Then he blessed Raguel and Edna his wife.

Tobit's Blindness Is Healed

11 He traveled until they approached Nineveh. Here Raphael said to Tobias,[†] [2]“My brother, are you not aware of how you left your father? [3]Let us run ahead of your wife and prepare the house. [4]Take the gall of the fish in your hand.” So they proceeded, and the dog followed behind them.

[5]Meanwhile Anna sat gazing upon the road for her boy. [6]She perceived that he was coming and said to the father, “Behold, your son is coming, and the man traveling with him!”

[7]Raphael said, “I know that the eyes of your father will open. [8]Rub the gall on his eyes. When the eyes sting, he will rub them and cause the white film to fall away. He will then see you.”

[9]Then Anna ran up to her son and fell upon his neck and said to him, “I have seen you, my child. From this day, I am now ready to die!” So they both wept. [10]Then Tobit came out of the door. He stumbled, but his son ran up to him. [11]He took hold of his father and dabbed the gall on the eyes of his father, saying, “Father, take courage!”[†] [12]Then as his eyes stung, he rubbed them, and the white films peeled off from the corners of his eyes. [13]When he saw his son, he fell upon his neck, weeping, and said, [14]“Blessed are You, O God, and blessed is Your name unto the ages. Blessed are all Your holy angels, for You scourged me but had mercy on me. Behold, I see Tobias my son.” [15]His son went in rejoicing and told his father the great things that had happened to him in Media.

[16]Then Tobit rejoiced and blessed God as he went to meet his daughter-in-law at the gate of Nineveh. But those who saw him as he walked along were amazed that he could see. Tobit gave thanks before them, because God had mercy on him.[†] [17]Then as Tobit drew near to meet Sarah, his daughter-in-law, he blessed her, saying, “May you be in good health, my daughter! Blessed is God who brought you to us, and blessed are your father and your mother.”

[18]So there was rejoicing among all his brethren in Nineveh. [19]Even Ahikar and his nephew Nadab came, for the wedding feast for Tobias was kept with gladness for seven days.

Raphael Reveals His Identity

12 Tobit summoned his son Tobias and said to him, “My son, see to the wages of the man who went with you, and we must add to them.”† [2]He replied to him, “My father, it is no harm for me to give him half of what I brought. [3]For he brought me safely to you, healed my wife, and brought me the silver. Likewise he healed you.” [4]The elderly man replied, “He more than earned it.” [5]So he called the angel and said to him, “Take half of everything you brought.”

[6]Then Raphael secretly called the two of them, and said to them, “Bless God and give Him thanks. Ascribe greatness to Him and give thanks in the presence of all the living for what He has done for you. It is good to bless God and to exalt His name. Make known the words of God's works honorably and do not delay to give thanks to Him. [7]It is noble to keep hidden the secret of a king, but glorious to unveil the works of God. Do good, and evil will not find you. [8]Prayer is good with fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A few prayers with righteousness are better than many with wrongdoing. It is better to do almsgiving than to lay up gold.† [9]For almsgiving rescues one from death, and it will wash away every sin. Those who do almsgiving and are righteous will be full of life. [10]But those who sin are enemies of their own life.

[11]“I will not hide anything from you. Indeed, I did say that it is good to conceal the secret of a king, but to reveal gloriously the works of God. [12]Now when you and your daughter-in-law Sarah prayed, I brought the remembrance of your prayer before the Holy One. When you also buried

the dead, I was likewise present with you.[†] [13]Then too, when you did not hesitate to stand up and leave your dinner so as to depart and care for the dead, your doing what is good did not escape me; but I was with you. [14]Now God sent me to heal you and Sarah your daughter-in-law. [15]I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who report the prayers of the saints and who enter before the glory of the Holy One.”[†]

[16]The two of them were troubled and fell upon their faces, for they were afraid. [17]But he said to them, “Do not be afraid, for peace shall be with you. But bless God forever. [18]For I did not come of my own good will, but rather by the will of our God. Therefore bless Him forever. [19]All these days I appeared to you I did not eat or drink; but you were seeing a vision. [20]Now give thanks to God, because I am ascending to Him who sent me. Write in a book everything that was accomplished.”[†]

[21]Then they stood up, but no longer saw him. [22]They acknowledged the great and wondrous works of God, and how the angel of the Lord had appeared to them.

Tobit Exalts the Lord

13 Then Tobit with exceeding joy wrote a prayer, saying:[†]

[2] “Blessed is God
Who lives unto the ages,
And blessed is His kingdom,
For He scourges, and is merciful;
He brings down into Hades,

And leads up.

There is no one who will escape His hand.[†]

[3] Give thanks to Him before the nations,

O children of Israel,

For He scattered us among them.[†]

[4] Make known His greatness there;

Exalt Him in the presence of all the living,

For He is our Lord and God;

He is our Father unto all the ages.

[5] He will scourge us for our wrongdoings,

But He will again have mercy

And gather us from all the nations,

Wherever you were dispersed among them.

[6] If you return to Him with all your heart

And with all your soul,

To do the truth before Him,

Then He will turn to you

And not hide His presence from you.[†]

[7] Behold for yourself what He will do for you,

And give thanks to Him fully with the organ of speech.

Bless the Lord of righteousness,

And exalt the King of the ages.

[8] In the land of my captivity, I give thanks to Him,

And make known His might and majesty to a nation of sinners.

Be converted, you sinners,

And do righteousness before Him.

Who knows if He will desire you

And have mercy on you?

9 I exalt my God,

And my soul exalts the King of heaven

And will rejoice exceedingly in His majesty.

10 Let all speak of His majesty

And give thanks to Him in Jerusalem.

O Jerusalem, the holy city,

He will scourge you for the deeds of your sons,

But He will again show mercy to the sons of the righteous.

11 Give thanks to the Lord with goodness

And bless the King of the ages,

That His tabernacle may be restored again to you in joy.[†]

12 May He rejoice in you, the captives,

And may He love those who are distressed among you

Unto all generations forever.

13 Many Gentiles will come from afar

To the name of the Lord God,

Bearing gifts in their hands

And offerings to the King of heaven.

Generations of generations will offer You joyful worship.[†]

14 Cursed are all who hate You;

Blessed are all who love You forever.

15 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for the children of the righteous,

For they will be gathered together

And will bless the Lord of the righteous.

Blessed are those who love You.

They will rejoice in Your peace.

[16] Blessed are the many who grieved over all Your scourges,
For they will rejoice when they see all Your glory
And will rejoice forever.
Let my soul bless God the great King.
[17] For Jerusalem will be built with sapphire and emerald,
And her walls with precious stones,
And her towers and battlements with pure gold.
The streets of Jerusalem will be paved
With beryl, onyx, and stones from Ophir.[†]
[18] All her streets will proclaim, ‘Alleluia!’
And will give praise, saying,
‘Blessed is God, who exalted you unto all the ages.’”

14 Then Tobit ceased giving thanks.

Tobit's Final Words

[2]He was fifty-eight years old when he lost his sight, and eight years later he regained it. Tobit did almsgiving, and continued to fear the Lord God, and gave thanks to Him. [3]He grew very old, and called his son and his son's sons, and said, “My son, take your sons. Behold, I have grown old, and I am departing from this life. [4]Depart to Media, my son, for I trust all the words Jonah the prophet spoke concerning Nineveh, that it will be overthrown. But in Media there will be more peace for a time. For our brethren in the land will be dispersed in the earth from the good land. Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God therein will be burned up. It shall be desolate for a time.[†]

[5]“But God will again have mercy on them, and He will return them to the land. They will build the house, but not as it was before, until the times of the age are fulfilled. After this, they will return from the captivity and build Jerusalem honorably. The house of God within her will be built as a glorious building for every generation forever, as the prophets said concerning her.[†] [6]All the Gentiles shall return to truly fear the Lord God. They shall bury their idols in the earth, and all the Gentiles will bless the Lord.[†] [7]His people will offer thanks to God, and the Lord will exalt His people. All who love the Lord God in truth and righteousness will rejoice. They will show mercy to our brethren.

[8]“So now, my son, depart from Nineveh, since what the prophet Jonah said will doubtless come to pass. [9]But keep the law and the ordinances. Be merciful and righteous, that it may be well with you. Bury me decently and your mother with me, but lodge no longer in Nineveh. [10]My son, observe what Aman did to Ahikar who reared him, how he led him from light into darkness, and how greatly he repaid him. Indeed Ahikar was saved, but as for that man, he was repaid with retribution and descended into the darkness. Manasseh did almsgiving and was saved from the trap of death that was set for him. But Aman fell into the trap and perished.[†] [11]Now then, my children, observe what almsgiving does, and how righteousness delivers us.”

After he said these things, his soul departed as he lay on his bed. He was one hundred and fifty-eight years old, and Tobias buried him gloriously.[†] [12]When Anna died, he buried her with his father. Then Tobias departed with his wife and his children to Ecbatana, to Raguel his father-in-law.

[13]He grew old honorably and buried the parents of his wife most respectfully. They inherited their estate and that of Tobit his father.

[14]Tobias died at Ecbatana of Media when he was one hundred and twenty-seven years old. [15]Before he died, he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, taken by Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus. Thus before his death he rejoiced over Nineveh.

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The Book of Judith

Author—The identity of the author is not known.

Date—Although the story occurs during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and the Assyrian domination of the Near East, the ideas and language place it somewhere in the second century BC. The work was probably composed sometime during the reign of John Hyrcanus I (135–105 BC), high priest and king of Israel.

Major Theme—*God protects His people from their enemies*. The Lord God works in mysterious ways throughout history through the agency of human beings, both evil and good, powerful and weak. Judith's lesson to us is that our worship of God, trust in Him, and obedience to His commandments result in divine protection and salvation from our enemies, no matter how powerful those enemies seem to be in this world.

Background—The heroine of this story is Judith, meaning Jewess, the beautiful widow of a wealthy farmer, pious and of good reputation among her countrymen. She single-handedly takes on Holofernes, the enemy of Israel, a general in Nebuchadnezzar's army.

Outline

I. The Conquests of the Assyrian Armies (1:1–7:32)

II. Judith Saves Israel from the Assyrian Invasion (8:1–16:25)

  A. Judith's family information and her husband's untimely death (8:1–8)

  B. Judith and the elders of Bethulia (8:9–36)

C. The prayer of Judith (9:1–14)

D. Judith leads Israel to victory over the Assyrians (10:1–15:11)

E. Judith and Israel give thanks to God in triumphant praise (15:12–16:20)

F. Judith's old age and death (16:21–25)

King Nebuchadnezzar's Victories

1 It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned in the great city of Nineveh. In those days Arphaxad, who reigned over the Medes in Ecbatana,[†] [2]built a wall around Ecbatana of hewn stones which were three cubits wide and six cubits long. He made the wall seventy cubits high and fifty cubits wide.[†] [3]At its gates he set its towers, a hundred cubits high and sixty cubits wide at their foundations. [4]And he made its gates raised to seventy cubits high and forty cubits wide, for the marching out of his mighty armies and his infantry in battle array. [5]In those days King Nebuchadnezzar waged war against King Arphaxad in the great plain, the plain in the region of Ragau. [6]And all those who inhabited the hill country and all those who lived along the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Hydaspes rallied to him, including those from the plain of Arioch, king of the Elamites. Many nations of the sons of Chaldea gathered in battle array.[†]

[7]Then Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian king, sent envoys to all those dwelling in Persia, to all living in the west, and to those who dwelled in Cilicia, Damascus, Lebanon, and Antilebanon, and to all those who lived on the seacoast, [8]and those among the nations of Carmel and Gilead, and Upper Galilee and the great plain of Esdraelon, [9]and to all those in Samaria and its cities, and beyond the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, Bethany, Chelous and Kadesh and the river of Egypt, and to Tahpanhes and Rameses and the

whole land of Goshen, [10]even beyond Tanis and Memphis and to all the inhabitants of Egypt as far as the boundaries of Ethiopia.[†] [11]But all who lived in that area scorned the summons of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, and refused to join with him in the war because they were not afraid of him. They regarded him as but one man, and they sent his messengers away empty-handed and dishonored.[†]

The Defeat of Arphaxad

[12]Then Nebuchadnezzar was extremely angry with all that land, and swore by his throne and his kingdom that he would take vengeance on all the regions of Cilicia and Damascus and Syria; that he would slay with the sword all the inhabitants of the land of Moab, and the sons of Ammon, and all Judea, and all those in Egypt as far as the borders of the two seas.[†] [13]So in his seventeenth year, he marched with his army against King Arphaxad and defeated him in battle. He routed the whole army of Arphaxad and all his cavalry and all his chariots; [14]he ruled over his cities. Then he came to Ecbatana, and took over its towers and plundered its marketplaces and put its adornments to shame. [15]He captured Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragau and ran him through with his spears, totally destroying him that day.[†] [16]Then he returned, he and all his sundry multitude of a great many warriors, and they rested there and feasted sumptuously for one hundred twenty days.[†]

Nebuchadnezzar's Secret Plan for War

2 In the eighteenth year, on the twenty-second day of the first month, in the house of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians, it came about there was talk that it was time to take vengeance on all the land, just as he had said.† [2]So he summoned all his officers and all his nobles, and he laid out verbally all the wickedness of the land. [3]They determined to destroy everyone who had not obeyed his summons.

[4]When he finished his plan, Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians called Holofernes, the chief captain of his army, second in command to him, and said to him, [5]“Thus says the great king, the lord of all the earth: Behold! You shall go out from my presence and take men confident in their strength with you, a hundred twenty thousand foot soldiers and twelve thousand cavalry.† [6]March against all the land of the west, because they disobeyed my commands. [7]You shall order them to prepare the earth and water, for I will come out in wrath, and I will cover the whole face of the land with the footprints of my army, and I will give them over to my army as plunder.† [8]Their wounded will fill the valleys, and their brooks and rivers shall be overflowing with their dead.† [9]I will lead them away as captives to the end of the whole earth. [10]And going out ahead of me, you shall seize all their territory. They will surrender themselves to you, and you shall hold them for me until the day of their punishment. [11]Against the ones who refuse, let your eye not spare them, and give them over to slaughter and plunder throughout all your territory. [12]For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, what I have spoken I will do by my hand.† [13]Take heed and do not transgress any of the orders of your lord, but carry them out fully just as I have commanded you, and do it without any delay.”

Holofernes’ March through the West

[14]So Holofernes went out from the presence of his lord and called all the generals, captains, and officers of the Assyrian army. [15]And as his lord had commanded him to do, he mobilized one hundred twenty thousand select men for the battle, together with twelve thousand archers on horseback, [16]and he set them in formation as any great army is organized in time of war. [17]He brought a great number of camels, donkeys, and mules to transport their baggage; innumerable sheep, goats, and oxen for their food supply;[†] [18]ample provisions for every man, and a great quantity of gold and silver from the king's palace. [19]He marched out with his entire army to go in advance of Nebuchadnezzar the king to cover the entire face of the land to the west with their chariots, cavalry, and their select infantry. [20]And along with them went a great mixed crowd, like a swarm of locusts, like the dust of the earth, for the multitude could not be numbered.[†]

[21]And they went out from Nineveh three days’ journey to the plain of Bectileth, and they camped over against Bectileth, near the mountain to the left of Upper Cilicia. [22]Then he took his entire army—his infantry, the cavalry, and his chariots—and went from there into the hill country. [23]He ravaged Put and Lud, and he plundered all the Rassisites and the Ishmaelites along the desert towards the south of the Chelleans. [24]Then he followed the Euphrates and passed through Mesopotamia, destroying all the fortified cities along the river Abron, until he came to the sea.[†] [25]He captured the region of Cilicia and killed everyone who resisted him, and came as far as the southern borders of Japheth, opposite Arabia. [26]He encircled all the Midianites and torched their tents and plundered their sheepfolds.[†] [27]Next he marched down into the plain of Damascus at the

time of the wheat harvest and burned all their fields, destroying their flocks and herds. He sacked their cities, ravaged their lands, and struck down all their youths with the edge of the sword.[†]

[28]Thus fear and dread of him came upon all the inhabitants of the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre, and those living in Sur and Ocina, and all those living in Jamnia. Those residing in Azotus and Ashkelon also greatly feared him.

3 They sent messengers to him to sue for peace, saying, [2]“Behold! We the servants of Nebuchadnezzar the great king lie prostrate before you. Do to us as is pleasing in your sight. [3]Behold! All our dwellings, all our land, all our fields of wheat, our flocks and herds, and all our tents are before you; do with them as you desire. [4]Behold! Our cities also and their inhabitants are your slaves; come and deal with them as is fitting in your sight.”

[5]These men came to Holofernes and reported all these things to him. [6]He went down to the seacoast with his army and stationed garrisons over the fortified cities, and selected chosen men from them as allies.[†] [7]These people, and all their surrounding countryside, received him with garlands and dancing and timbrels.[†] [8]But he destroyed all their borders and cut down their sacred groves, for he had been given orders to demolish all the gods of the land, so all nations would worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and so all their tongues and tribes would call upon him as god.[†] [9]Then he came to Esdraelon, near Dothan, facing the great ridge of Judea.[†] [10]He camped

between Geba and Scythopolis, and remained there for a month to bring together all the supplies for his army.

Israel Prepares Its Defense

4 When the Israelites residing in Judea heard everything Holofernes, the commander of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians, had done to the nations, and how he stripped and demolished all their temples, [2]they were greatly terrified at his presence. They were troubled for Jerusalem and also for the temple of the Lord their God. [3]For they had just recently come back from exile, and all the people of Judea had only recently been regathered, and the holy vessels, the altar, and the temple had been consecrated, having been profaned. [4]So they sent word into all the region of Samaria, and to Kona, Beth Horon, Belmen, and to Jericho and Choba and Aesora, and to the valley of Salem.[†] [5]Immediately they seized all the hilltops and fortified the villages in them, and stored up provisions in preparation for war, having just harvested their fields.

[6]Joakim the high priest, who was in Jerusalem at that time, wrote to those dwelling in Bethulia and Betomesthaim, which faces Esdraelon opposite the plain near Dothan.[†] [7]He ordered them to occupy the mountain passes, since Judea could be invaded through them. They were easy to defend because the approach was narrow, with space for only two men at the most to pass.

[8]The Israelites did as instructed by Joakim the high priest and the council of all the people of Israel, which met in Jerusalem. [9]And all the men of Israel cried to God with great fervor and humbled themselves in great

somberness. [10]They, their wives and children, their cattle, and all the strangers, the hired servants and the purchased slaves, put sackcloth around their waists. [11]All the men of Israel and the women and the children living in Jerusalem prostrated themselves before the temple, and put ashes on their heads and spread out their sackcloth before the face of the Lord.[†] [12]They also covered the altar with sackcloth, and cried out fervently with one accord to the God of Israel that He would not allow their infants to be prey and their wives to be seized; that the cities they inherited not be destroyed; that their sanctuary not be desecrated and be a reproach to the gloating of the Gentiles.

[13]The Lord heard their cry and looked down on their affliction, for the people were fasting many days in all Judea and Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty. [14]And Joakim the high priest and all the priests who stood before the presence of the Lord and served the Lord, having girded their waists with sackcloth, offered the continual whole burnt offerings and the votive and the freewill offerings of the people.[†] [15]With ashes on their turbans, with all their strength they cried out to the Lord to look with favor upon all the house of Israel.

Holofernes Hears of Israel's Preparations

5 It was told to Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, that the Israelites were prepared for war and had blocked the passes in the mountains, fortified all the hilltops, and placed barricades in the plains.[†] [2]He was very angry, and he called all the princes of Moab and the captains of Ammon and all the governors of the seacoast together. [3]He said to them, “Tell me, sons of Canaan, who are these people who live in the hill country?

What cities do they inhabit? How large is their army? In what does their power and strength consist? And who is the king who rules them and leads their army?[†] [4]Why have they alone refused to come and meet with me along with all those dwelling in the west?”

An Ammonite's History of Israel

[5]Then Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, said to him, “Let my lord hear now the word that comes from the mouth of your servant, and I will tell you the truth concerning this people who dwell in this hill country near you; no falsehood will come out of the mouth of your servant.[†] [6]These people are descended from the Chaldeans.[†] [7]They previously sojourned in Mesopotamia because they did not wish to follow the gods of their fathers, who were in Chaldea. [8]For they had departed from the way of their ancestors and worshiped the God of heaven, the God they had come to know. As a result, they cast them out from the presence of their gods, and they fled to Mesopotamia and sojourned there for a long time.[†] [9]Then their God commanded them to depart from the place of their sojourn and go to the land of Canaan. They settled there and became very wealthy in gold, silver, and abundant livestock. [10]But when a famine spread through all of Canaan, they went down into Egypt and sojourned there as long as there was food; and there they became a great multitude, so great they could not be numbered.

[11]“Then the king of Egypt rose against them and, taking advantage of them, forced them to make bricks; he humbled them and made them slaves. [12]So they cried out to their God, and He struck the whole land of Egypt

with deadly plagues. The Egyptians cast them out from their presence. [13]So God dried up the Red Sea before them. [14]He led them by way of Sinai and Kadesh-Barnea, and they drove out all those living in the desert. [15]They settled in the land of the Amorites, and by their strength they utterly destroyed all the residents of Heshbon. And crossing over the River Jordan, they occupied all of the hill country. [16]Then they drove out the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Shechemites, and the Gergesites, and they dwelled there for a long time.

[17]“If they did not sin before their God they prospered, because their God, who hates sin, was with them. [18]But when they strayed from the path which He prescribed for them, they were destroyed in numerous battles, and they were exiled to a land not their own, and the temple of their God was brought down to the ground, and their cities were seized by their adversaries. [19]Yet now they have come back to their God and returned from their dispersion, and they have taken back Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is. They have settled in the hill country, for it was not inhabited.

[20]“Now my lord and master, if there is any sin of ignorance in this people and they sin against their God, then we will identify their offense and will go up to defeat them. [21]But if there is no lawlessness in their nation, then let my lord leave them alone, lest their Lord shield them, and their God defend them, and we will become a reproach before the whole earth.”

[22]Now when Achior finished speaking these things, all the people standing around the tent started to grumble. Then Holofernes’ officials and

all those dwelling in the seacoast and Moab insisted Achior be put to death. [23]They said, “We will not be afraid of the Israelites. For behold! They are people in whom there is no might nor the power to wage war. [24]Now therefore, we will go up, Lord Holofernes, and they will be devoured by your whole army.”

Holofernes’ Response

6 As the disruption of the men outside the council calmed down, Holofernes, the Assyrian army commander, spoke to Achior in the presence of all the crowd of foreigners and to all the sons of Moab: [2]“Who are you, Achior, and you mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy among us as you did today, to tell us we should not wage war against the Israelite people because their God will shield them? Who is god besides Nebuchadnezzar? He will send his power and will utterly destroy them from the face of the earth, and their God will not deliver them.[†] [3]Rather we, the servants of the king, will strike them down as one man. They will not withstand the strength of our cavalry. [4]We will subdue them with it; their high hills will be drunk with their blood, and their plains will be filled with their bodies. Their footprints will no longer remain, but they will utterly perish, says King Nebuchadnezzar, lord of all the earth. It is he who has spoken; none of his words will be in vain.

[5]“But you, O Achior, and your mercenaries of Ammon who spoke these words in the day of your wrongdoing, you will not see my face from this day forth until the time I will punish these people who came up out of Egypt. [6]When I return, the sword of my forces and of my servants will pass through your sides, and you will fall among their wounded men. [7]Now my

servants will take you back to the hill country, and they will put you in one of the cities of the hill passes. [8]You will not die until you perish alongside them, [9]and if you really suppose in your heart that they will not be taken by us, then do not be downcast. I have spoken, and no word of mine shall fail."[†]

[10]Now Holofernes commanded his servants, who were standing by in his tent, to capture Achior and remove him to Bethulia and turn him over to the sons of Israel. [11]Then the servants took hold of him and led him outside the camp toward the plain. They traveled from the plain into the hill country to the springs below Bethulia. [12]When the men of the city saw them, they took up their weapons and hurried out of the city to the crest of the mountain. The slingers kept the servants from ascending by hurling stones at them. [13]Taking shelter down at the base of the mountain, they tied up Achior and left him at the foot of the mountain, and went back to their master.

[14]When the Israelites went down from their dwelling, they found and loosed him and brought him to Bethulia. They set him before the leaders of the city, [15]who in those days were Uzziah the son of Micah of the tribe of Simeon, and Chabris the son of Gothoniel, and Charmis the son of Melchiel.[†] [16]They summoned all the city elders, and all their young men and the women rushed to the assembly, and they set Achior in the midst of all the people. Uzziah asked him what had happened. [17]He reported to them the events of the council of Holofernes, and all the many words he had spoken in the midst of the Assyrian officials, and all that Holofernes arrogantly boasted against the house of Israel.

[18]Then the people fell down and worshipped God and cried out, saying, [19]“O Lord God of heaven, look down upon their arrogance, and have mercy on the humble state of our people. Look with favor upon those who are sanctified unto You this day.” [20]Then they encouraged Achior and praised him exceedingly. [21]Then Uzziah took him from the assembly to his house and gave a feast for the elders. And all that night they called upon the God of Israel for help.[†]

Israel Is Attacked at Bethulia

7 On the next day, Holofernes commanded his entire army and all his allies who joined with him to move against Bethulia and occupy the passes up in the hill country, and to attack the Israelites. [2]So their soldiers broke camp, and their army numbered a hundred seventy thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry (not including the baggage handlers), a great multitude. [3]They camped beside the spring in the valley near Bethulia. They were spread out in width over Dothan as far as Belbaim and in length from Bethulia to Cyamon, facing Esdraelon.[†]

[4]When the Israelites saw their great numbers, they were exceedingly distressed, each saying to his neighbor, “Now they will ravage the entire land. Neither the high hills, nor the valleys, nor the foothills will support their weight.” [5]Still each one took up his weapons, and having lit fires on the their watchtowers, they stood guard that whole night.

[6]Then on the second day, Holofernes brought all his cavalry out in full view of the Israelites in Bethulia.[†] [7]He carefully inspected the approaches leading to the city, and then he came upon the springs which were their

water source and seized them. He placed soldiers there to guard over them, and returned to his encampment.

[8]Then all the chief men of the sons of Edom, and all the leaders of the people of Moab, and the commanders of the seacoast region came to him, saying, [9]"Let our lord now hear our word, that there be no losses in your army. [10]For this people, the Israelites, do not put their trust in spears, but in the height of the mountains where they dwell, since it is not easy to reach their mountain peaks. [11]Indeed, master, do not engage them in battle formation, and not one man of your forces will fall.[†] [12]Stay instead in your camp, and keep all the men of your army there. Have your servants take control of the spring which comes from the base of the mountain, [13]for this is where the citizens of Bethulia draw their water. Their thirst will consume them, and they will surrender their city. Then we and our forces will go up to the peaks of the mountains nearby and camp there to make sure no one departs from the city. [14]They and their wives and their children will waste away from starvation, and before the sword can come against them they will already be struck down in the streets where they live. [15]So you will repay them an evil recompense, because they rebelled and did not meet with you in peace."

[16]And their words pleased Holofernes and all his servants, and he gave command that they do just as they said. [17]So the forces of the Ammonites departed, along with five thousand Assyrians, and they set up camp in the valley and captured the springs, the water supply for the Israelites. [18]Then the Edomites and the Ammonites came up and camped in the hills facing Dothan, and from there they dispatched some of their troops to the south

and east, toward Egrebeh, near Chusi beside the brook Mochmur. The remainder of the Assyrian forces camped on the plain and spread out over the whole countryside, and their tents and the supply lines expanded everywhere, an enormous array.

[19]Then the children of Israel were disheartened, and they cried out to the Lord their God. Their enemies had them surrounded, and there was no way for them to escape. [20]The entire army of Assyrians—their infantry, chariots, and their cavalry—encircled them for thirty-four days, and all the water containers of the citizens of Bethulia stood empty.[†] [21]Their cisterns were dried up, and there was not one day in which there was enough water to drink, for the water was rationed. [22]Their children became listless, and their women and youths fainted from thirst and collapsed in the city streets and in the gateways, for there was no longer any strength in them.

The People Want Surrender

[23]Then all the people, the youths, the women, and the children, crowded around Uzziah and the leaders of the city. With loud voices they cried out before all the elders, saying, [24]“May God judge between you and us! For you have done us a great wrong by not making peace with the Assyrians.[†] [25]For now there is none to help us. And God has delivered us into the hands of them who laid us low in thirst and in great destruction. [26]So call to them and surrender the whole city to be plunder to the army of Holofernes and all his forces. [27]For it is better for us to be plunder to them, for we shall become their slaves, but our lives will be saved, and we will not have to watch our infants die before our eyes, and our wives and

children breathing their last. [28]We call all of heaven and earth to witness against you and entreat our God, the Lord of our fathers, who is punishing us according to our sins and the sins of our fathers, do according to these words spoken this very day.”

[29]And with one accord, a great mourning broke out in the midst of the whole assembly, and with a loud voice they cried out to the Lord God. [30]But Uzziah spoke to them, “Brothers, take courage, and let us endure yet five more days, in which the Lord our God will return His mercy to us. He will not utterly forsake us. [31]But if these days come and go, and no help reaches us, I will do as you say.”

[32]Then he dismissed the people to their various posts, and they went up on the walls and watchtowers of their city, and he sent the women and children home. And they were in great misery in the city.

Judith Upbraids the Rulers of Bethulia

8 In those days, Judith got word of this matter. She was the daughter of Merari, the son of Ox, the son of Joseph, the son of Oziel, the son of Elkiah, the son of Ananias, the son of Gideon, the son of Raphaim, the son of Ahitub, the son of Elijah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Eliab, the son of Nathanael, the son of Salamiel, the son of Sarasadai, the son of Israel.[†] [2]And her husband was Manasseh, of her own tribe and family. He had died at the time of the barley harvest. [3]For as he supervised those binding the sheaves in the field, he was overcome with heat stroke and fell on his bed and died in his city of Bethulia. They buried him with his fathers in the field lying between Dothan and Balamon.

[4]Judith remained a widow in her house for three years and four months, [5]setting up a tent for herself on the rooftop of her house, and she wrapped sackcloth around her waist and wore the garments of her widowhood.[†] [6]She fasted every day of her widowhood, except for the day preceding the Sabbaths, the Sabbath days themselves, the eves of the new moons and the new moons, and the feasts and days of celebrations of the house of Israel.[†] [7]Beautiful in stature, she was very lovely to look upon. Manasseh, her husband, left her gold and silver, men and women servants, and livestock and fields. She kept up this property, and [8]no one spoke ill of her, for she feared God and was devoted to Him.

[9]When Judith heard the angry words the people spoke against the rulers, being weak for want of water, and the things Uzziah said to them, by oath promising them after five days to surrender the city to the Assyrians, [10]she sent her faithful maid, who was responsible for all her possessions, to call on Chabris and Charmis, elders of the city.[†] [11]They came to her, and she said to them, “Listen to me now, rulers of the people of Bethulia! Your words spoken today to the people are not right, nor is the oath you have sworn and pronounced between God and yourselves, promising to surrender the city to our adversaries unless the Lord turns and helps you in so many days.

[12]“Now who are you to have put God to the test this day, setting yourselves up as God's equal among the sons of men? [13]You are testing the Lord Almighty, but you will never come to know anything! [14]You cannot plumb the depths of the heart of man, nor grasp the thoughts of his mind. How then do you expect to search out God, who made all these things, and

come to understand His mind or comprehend His purpose? No, brothers! Do not provoke the Lord our God to anger. [15]For if He does not wish to come to our aid within five days, He has the power to protect us anytime He pleases, or even to destroy us before the face of our enemies. [16]But do not put a time bind on the purposes of the Lord our God, for He is not to be threatened as is a man, nor to be coaxed as a human being.

[17]“Therefore, while we await His deliverance, let us call upon Him to help us, and if it pleases Him He will hear our voice.[†] [18]For there has not arisen in our generation, nor has there been in this present time any tribe or family or people or city of ours that bowed down to gods made with hands, as happened in earlier times. [19]Because of this, our fathers were given over to the sword and to pillage, and that is why they suffered a great defeat before our enemies. [20]But we know no other god but Him; therefore we have hope He will not disregard us nor any of our nation. [21]For if we are seized, all Judea will fall, and our sanctuary will be plundered, and He will make us accountable for its profanation with our blood. [22]For the slaughter of our brethren, the captivity of our land, and the desolation of our inheritance He will bring upon our heads, regardless of where we are enslaved among the Gentiles. We will be an offense and a reproach in the eyes of those who master us. [23]For our servitude will not be to our benefit; rather, the Lord our God will turn it to humiliation.

[24]“Now my brothers, let us set an example for our people, for their very lives depend upon us. Furthermore, the sanctuary, the temple, and the altar rest upon us. [25]Besides all this, let us be thankful to the Lord our God, who is testing us just as He did our fathers. [26]Remember His actions toward

Abraham and how He put Isaac to the test. Recall what happened to Jacob in Mesopotamia of Syria while shepherd to the sheep of Laban, the brother of his mother. [27]For He has not tested us with the fire, even as He did them, to search out their hearts. Nor has He punished us. Rather, the Lord scourges those drawing near to Him as a warning.”

Uzziah's Answer

[28]Then Uzziah said to her, “All that you said you spoke with a good heart, and there is no one who will oppose your words. [29]This is not the first day on which your wisdom has been evident, but from your earliest years all the people have recognized your understanding, because the disposition of your heart is good. [30]But the people are very thirsty, and they compelled us to do just as we spoke to them and caused us to take an oath which we will not break. [31]Now pray for us, since you are a devout woman, that the Lord will send rain to fill our cisterns, and we shall not faint from thirst again.”

[32]Then Judith replied to them, “Hear me, and I will do something which will be known unto all the generations of our descendants.[†] [33]You must stand at the gate tonight, and I will go out with my maid, and within these days in which you promised to surrender the city to our enemies, the Lord will deliver Israel by my hand. [34]But you must not ask me what I am going to do, because I will not tell what I am going to do until I complete the task.”

[35]So Uzziah and the rulers said to her, “Go in peace, and may the Lord God go before you to take vengeance upon our adversaries.” [36]So they left

the tent and returned to their posts.

The Prayer of Judith

9 Then Judith prostrated herself, put ashes upon her head, and uncovered the sackcloth which she had put on. And at the time of the evening incense being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem, Judith cried out to the Lord with a loud voice and prayed:[†]

[2]“O Lord God of my father Simeon, to whom You gave a sword for vengeance against the foreigners who loosened the girdle of the virgin to defile her, and disgracefully exposed her thighs, and violated her body to humiliate her, for You had said, ‘It shall not be done,’ and yet they did it.[†] [3]So You gave their rulers over to be killed, and their bed, which was ashamed of their deceit, they themselves being deceived, to be stained with blood. You struck down the servants along with their princes, and princes on their thrones. [4]You gave their wives over to plunder and their daughters to captivity, and all their spoils You divided among Your beloved sons, those who were zealous with Your zeal and abhorred the defilement of their blood, and called upon You to help. O God, my God, hear me also, a widow!

[5]“For You did those things and the things that occurred before and those that followed after; and You have planned the ones present, and the ones for the future. [6]And the things You have determined present themselves and say, ‘Behold, we are here’; for all Your ways are prepared beforehand, and Your judgment is by foreknowledge.

[7]“For behold, the Assyrians are multiplied in their strength. They are exalted with horses and riders. They glory in the strength of their infantry; they hope in shield and spear, in bow and sling, but they do not know that You the Lord crush wars; [8]the Lord is Your name. Break their might by Your might, and tear down their power in Your anger; for they intend to defile Your sanctuary and desecrate the tent where Your glorious name rests, and to cut off the horns of Your altar with the sword. [9]Behold their arrogance. Send Your wrath upon their heads. Grant to the hand of the widow to do what I plan. [10]By the deceit of my lips, strike down the slave with the ruler and the ruler with his servant. Crush their pride by the hand of a woman.

[11]“For Your might is not in numbers, nor Your power in men who are strong, but You are the God of the lowly; You are the helper of the oppressed, the defender of the weak, the protector of those who are forsaken, the savior of those without hope. [12]Yes, O God of my father and God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all Your creation, attend to my prayer![†] [13]Cause my deceitful words to be their wound and a bruise to those who planned cruelty against Your covenant, and Your holy house, and Mount Zion, and against the house Your sons possess.[†] [14]Make Your entire nation and every tribe to know and understand that You are God, the God of all power and might, that there is none other who protects the people of Israel but You only.”[†]

Judith Begins to Execute Her Plan

10 When she had ceased crying to the God of Israel and had completed all her words, [2]she arose from where she had prostrated herself, and summoned her maid and went down into the house, where she lived on the Sabbaths and her feast days.[†] [3]There she took off the sackcloth she was wearing and removed her widow's garments. She washed her body with water and anointed herself with precious ointment. She braided her hair and put a headdress on her head, and put on festive attire she had worn when her husband Manasseh was alive. [4]She placed sandals on her feet, and put on her bracelets, her anklets, her rings, earrings, and all her jewelry. She made herself very beautiful, inviting to the eyes of all the men who might look on her.[†] [5]Then she gave her maid a flask of wine and a cruse of oil, and filled a bag with grain and a cake of dried fruit and a loaf of bread; all these items she wrapped up together and gave them to her maid.

[6]Then they went out to the gate of the city of Bethulia and found Uzziah standing there with the elders of the city, Chabris and Charmis. [7]And they saw her, and her face was changed and her clothing was different, and they marveled at her beauty and said to her,[†] [8]“May the God of our fathers grant you favor and fulfill your pursuits, to the exaltation of the sons of Israel and the glory of Jerusalem.”

[9]She bowed down to God and said to them, “Order the gates of the city to be opened, and I will go out to fulfill the words you spoke with me.” They commanded the young men to open the gates as she had requested.[†] [10]And so they did, and Judith went out along with her maid, and the men of the city watched her until she went down the mountain and crossed the valley, until they could no longer see her.

[11]The women traveled straight through the valley, and an Assyrian patrol met her. [12]They seized her and asked, “Who are you, and where are you coming from, and where are you going?” She replied, “I am a daughter of the Hebrews, and I am fleeing from them, because they are about to be given over to you to be devoured.[†] [13]I have come to see Holofernes, the commander of your forces, to give him an accurate report. I will show him the way he can go out and take all the hill country captive without losing the body or the life of any of his men.”

[14]And as the men listened to her words, and beheld her face—for she was wondrously beautiful in their eyes—they said to her, [15]“You have spared your life by hastening to come down to see our lord. Now come with us to his tent, and we will escort you to him, to deliver you to him. [16]When you stand before him, do not be fainthearted, but report to him just as you said, for he will treat you well.” [17]They then chose a hundred men from among them to escort her and her maid, and they brought them to Holofernes’ tent.

[18]There came about quite a commotion throughout the entire camp, for the rumor of her arrival quickly spread among the tents. They came and gathered around her as she stood outside the tent of Holofernes while they announced her presence to him. [19]They marveled at her beauty, and because of her, they wondered about the Israelites. Each said to his neighbor, “Who will dare despise this people with a woman like this among them? Surely it is not wise to leave even one of their men alive, for if we let them go they will be able to outwit the whole world!”

Judith Meets Holofernes

[20]Then those guarding Holofernes and all his servants came out and led her into the tent. [21]Holofernes was reclining on his couch under a canopy of purple and gold, emeralds and other precious stones.[†] [22]When they told him of her being there, he came out, preceded by silver lamps, to the entrance of the tent. [23]And when Judith came in before him and his servants, they were taken by the beauty of her face. She prostrated herself, paying homage to him, but his servants lifted her up.

11 Then Holofernes spoke to her, saying, “Woman, take courage; do not be fearful in your heart. I have never hurt anyone who chooses to serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of the whole earth. [2]Even now, if your people inhabiting the hill country had not held me in such low regard, I would not have lifted my spear against them. Rather, they did this to themselves. [3]Now tell me why you have fled from them and come to us, for you have come to a safe place. Take courage! You shall live tonight and from this day forward. [4]No one will harm you, but they will treat you well, as they do all the servants of my lord, King Nebuchadnezzar.”[†]

[5]Then Judith said to him, “Receive the words of your servant, and permit your handmaid to speak in your presence. I will say nothing untrue to my lord tonight.[†] [6]And if you carry out all the words of your handmaid, God shall do something great through you, and my lord shall not fail in his pursuits.[†] [7]For Nebuchadnezzar, king of all the earth, lives, and the power of him who sent you to set aright every soul prevails. Not only does all mankind serve him because of you, but because of your strength even the wild animals of the field, the beasts of burden, and the birds of the heaven

shall live for Nebuchadnezzar and his whole house. [8]For we heard of your wisdom and the great accomplishments of your life, and it is spoken throughout the whole earth that you alone are noble in all the kingdom, competent in knowledge, and remarkable in military strategy.

[9]“Now as for the words Achior spoke in your council, we have heard these things. For the men of Bethulia spared his life, and he told them all the things he had spoken to you. [10]Therefore, master and lord, do not dismiss his words, but bear them in mind, because they are true. Thus our nation is not punished, nor does the sword prevail against them, unless they sin against their God.

[11]“And now, so that my lord not be defeated and unsuccessful, death will come upon them, for a sin has overtaken them by which they will provoke their God, when they do that which is not proper. [12]Since their food supply gave out and water is scarce, they have determined to kill their animals and to consume all that God in His laws specifically told them not to eat. [13]They further resolved to consume the firstfruits of the grain and the tithes of wine and oil they sanctified and reserved for the priests in Jerusalem, who serve in the presence of our God—things not lawful for any person to touch with his hands. [14]And they have sent people to Jerusalem to bring permission back from the council of elders, because those living there have done these things. [15]And it will come to pass when the response is reported to them, and they act on it, on that same day they will be delivered over to you to be crushed.

[16]“When I, your handmaid, learned of this, I fled from these people. And God sent me to do some things with you, by which all the earth will be

astonished when they learn of them. [17]For your servant is God-fearing, serving the God of heaven night and day. Now, my lord, I will stay here with you, but each night your handmaid will go out in the valley, and I will pray to God, and He will tell me when they have committed their sins.[†] [18]At that hour I will come and inform you, and you shall go out with all your army, and none of them will be able to resist you. [19]Then I will bring you through the midst of Judea until you reach Jerusalem. There I will place your chariot in their midst, and you will guide them like sheep who have no shepherd; not even a dog shall growl at you. This was made known to me as a gift of foreknowledge, and I have been sent to report this to you."

Holofernes Is Taken by Judith's Plan

[20]What she said pleased Holofernes and all his servants. They admired her wisdom and said, [21]"There is not such a woman of beauty and with the wisdom of words from one end of the earth to the other." [22]Holofernes spoke to her, saying, "It is good that God sent you here, ahead of your people. You bring strength to our hands and demise to those who disparaged my lord. [23]You not only look beautiful, but you are wise in your words. If you will do as you said, your God will be my God, and you will dwell in the house of King Nebuchadnezzar, and you will be known in all the earth."[†]

12 He then gave the order to have her brought into where his silver service was kept, and he commanded them to prepare some of his own delicacies for her and his wine to drink. [2]"I will not eat any of this," Judith said, "lest it cause offense. But I will be supplied by the provisions I brought with me."[†] [3]Then Holofernes told her, "If your provisions run out, where do we obtain more of the same? For no one from your people is with us.” [4]Then Judith answered him, “My lord, even as you live, your handmaid will not use up what I brought with me until the Lord completes by my hand what He has purposed.”

[5]Then Holofernes’ servants led her into the tent, where she slept until midnight. She rose as the morning watch approached,[†] [6]and sent a message to Holofernes, saying, “My lord, let the command be given to allow your handmaid to go out and pray.” [7]So Holofernes ordered his guards not to detain her. So she stayed in the camp for three days, but each night she went out into the valley of Bethulia and washed in the water from the spring of the camp.[†] [8]When she came up out of the water, she prayed to the Lord God of Israel to guide her way for the victory of His people. [9]So, returning cleansed, she remained in the tent until her evening meal was offered to her.

Holofernes’ Feast

[10]It came to be on the fourth day that Holofernes hosted a banquet just for his personal staff. None of the officers were invited.[†] [11]He spoke to Bagoas, a eunuch who was in charge of his private affairs, saying, “Now go and persuade the Hebrew woman you care for to join us to eat and drink. [12]It would be disgraceful to us if we allowed such a woman to be neglected, for if we do not seduce her she will laugh at us.”[†]

[13]Then Bagoas departed from Holofernes’ presence and came to her and said, “Let not this beautiful handmaiden hesitate to come to my lord in the honor of his presence, and to drink wine with us in merriment. On this day you will be like one of the daughters of the Assyrians who serve in the

house of Nebuchadnezzar.” [14]Then Judith answered, “Why would I refuse my lord? For whatever is pleasing to him I will do immediately, and this will be a delight to me until the day I die.”[†] [15]So she arose and dressed herself in all her womanly finery. Her maid went on ahead to spread out the lambskins on the ground for her in front of Holofernes, which she had received from Bagoas for her use to recline on each day when she ate.[†]

[16]Now when Judith came in and reclined, the very heart of Holofernes was ravished by her, and his deepest feelings were aroused. He was exceedingly desirous of her, and had been waiting for the moment to seduce her since the first time he saw her.[†] [17]Then Holofernes said to her, “Drink and be merry with us.” [18]Judith replied, “Indeed, my lord, I will happily drink now, for this is the best day of my entire life.” [19]Then taking what her maid prepared, she ate and drank before him. [20]Holofernes was delighted because of her, and he drank more wine than in any one day since birth.

Judith Beheads Holofernes

13 When evening came, his servants quickly departed, and Bagoas shut the tent from the outside and dismissed the waiters from the presence of his lord. They all went to bed, being very tired, for the banquet had lasted a long time. [2]Judith was left alone in the tent as Holofernes was sprawled out on his bed, for he had become unconscious from the wine.[†] [3]Now Judith had instructed her faithful maid to remain outside the bedchamber and wait for her to emerge, just like she did on other days, for she said she would go out to pray, and she had told Bagoas the same thing.

[4]So everyone left, with no one great or small remaining in his bedchamber. Then Judith stood next to his bed and said in her heart, “O Lord, God of all strength, look down at this hour on the works of my hands for the glory of Jerusalem.[†] [5]For now is the time to aid Your inheritance, and to help carry out my plan for the destruction of the enemies who have risen against us.” [6]Then she approached the bedpost, near the head of Holofernes. She took out his sword which hung there.[†] [7]She then came closer to the bed, and taking hold of the hair on his head, she said, “O Lord God of Israel, at this moment strengthen me.” [8]Then she struck his neck twice with all her might and cut off his head. [9]She then rolled his body off the bed and tore down the canopy from the posts. Next she stepped outside and gave the head of Holofernes to her maid, [10]who put it into her food bag.

Judith Returns to Bethulia

Then the two of them together went out to pray, as was their custom. Passing through the camp, they went down around the valley, and up the mountain of Bethulia until they reached its gates. [11]And from a distance Judith cried out to the guards at the gates and said, “Open! Open the gate! God, our God, is with us! He yet shows His strength in Israel and His might against our adversaries, just as He has done this day!” [12]When the men of her city heard her voice, they ran with haste down to the gate of the city and called the elders of the city together. [13]From the least to the greatest they quickly gathered, for they considered it incredible that she had come back, and they thrust open the gate and welcomed the women. They then built a fire for light, and everyone crowded around them.[†]

[14]Then with a loud voice Judith said to them, “Praise God! Praise Him! Praise God! For He has not taken away His mercy from the house of Israel, but by my hand He has shattered our enemies this very night!”[†] [15]Then she took the head out of the bag, displaying it to them, and said, “Behold the head of Holofernes, commander of the Assyrian army. And this is the canopy under which he lay in his drunkenness. The Lord struck him dead by the hand of a woman.[†] [16]As the Lord lives, who guarded me in the path I have walked, my face deceived him to his demise. Yet he committed no sin toward me, either to defile me or shame me.”[†]

[17]All the people were completely astounded, and they bowed down to worship God, saying with one voice, “Blessed are You, our God, who this very day brought the enemies of Your people to nothing.”

[18]Uzziah said to her, “You are blessed by the Most High God, O daughter, above all other women on the earth. Blessed be the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who led you to sever the head of the chief of our adversaries.[†] [19]Your hope in Him will never depart from the hearts of men as they call to mind the power of God. [20]May God grant this to you as an everlasting honor and reward you with blessings. For you did not spare your life on account of the humble state of our nation. Rather, you avenged our calamity, walking a straight path in the presence of our God.” And all the people responded, “Amen! Amen!”

Judith's Plan Continues

14 Then Judith said to them, “Hear me, my friends; take this head and hang it at the top of the city wall at daybreak.[†] [2]Then when the sun comes up on the horizon, let every able-bodied man take up his weapons and appoint a captain over them. March out of the city as though you were going down to the plain against the outposts of the Assyrians, but do not go down. [3]Then they will take up their weapons and head into their camp and awaken the officers of the Assyrian army. They will hurry together to Holofernes' tent, but they will not find him. Panic will overcome them, and they will run from you. [4]Then you and all those who dwell inside the boundaries of Israel shall pursue them and kill them as they flee. [5]But before you do these things, call Achior the Ammonite to me so he may look upon and recognize the man who hated the house of Israel and sent him to us as though to his death."[†]

[6]So they sent for Achior from Uzziah's house, and when he came he saw the head of Holofernes held in the hand of a man in the assembly of the people. He fell on his face and fainted. [7]But when they picked him up, he fell prostrate at the feet of Judith, and bowing before her, said, "Blessed are you in all the tents of Judea. Those who hear your name in every nation will tremble. [8]But for now, explain to me everything you did during these days."

Then, in the midst of the people, Judith told him the many things she had done since the day she departed until the time she was speaking with them. [9]And as she completed her report, the people shouted loudly, making jubilant noise in the city. [10]And when Achior saw all the things the God of Israel had accomplished, he believed in God profoundly, was circumcised, and has been membered with the house of Israel until this day.[†]

[11]At daybreak, they hung the head of Holofernes on the wall, and every man seized his weapons. They then marched out in companies to the mountain passes. [12]And when the Assyrian forces saw them, they notified their captains, and they went in turn to the generals, the captains, and all their officers. [13]They went to the tent of Holofernes and said to the man in charge of all his affairs, “Awaken our lord at once, for the slaves dare to come down to wage war against us, to their total destruction.”

[14]Then Bagoas went in and knocked at the door of the tent, for he presumed Holofernes was sleeping with Judith. [15]When there was no answer, he opened the door and entered the bedchamber. He found him sprawled out on the floor, a corpse without a head. [16]With a loud voice he cried out, weeping and groaning. Shouting out, he tore his garments. [17]He then went to the tent where Judith had lodged. Unable to find her, he ran out to the people and cried out, [18]“The slaves deceived us! A single woman of the Hebrews has brought shame upon the house of King Nebuchadnezzar! Come and see—Holofernes is sprawled on the ground and his head is gone.” [19]When the Assyrian army officers heard these words, they tore their tunics and were in a state of great turmoil. They cried aloud, shouting in the midst of the camp.

The Assyrian Army Is Decimated

15 When those in their tents heard the wailing, they were utterly astounded at what had happened. [2]Fear and trembling came over them, and not waiting for each other, they all impulsively ran out of the camp and fled in every direction through the valley and the hill country.

[3]Even those who had been camping in the hill country outside Bethulia arose and fled. Then every warrior amongst the Israelites rushed out against them. [4]Uzziah dispatched his men to Betomasthem, and to Bebai and Choba and Kola and to all the regions of Israel to report on what had happened, in order that they would all hurry out to face their enemies and destroy them. [5]So when word came to the Israelites, they came upon them with one accord and smote them as far away as Choba. Likewise, when told what had happened in the enemy camp, even those from Jerusalem and the surrounding hill country came out. And those from Gilead and Galilee outflanked them, inflicting massive slaughter, well beyond Damascus and its boundaries. [6]The inhabitants of Bethulia who remained there descended on the Assyrian camp, plundering it, and were greatly enriched. [7]Soon the Israelite forces came back from the slaughter, taking possession of the spoils, as did those in the villages and towns of the hill country and the plain. They took much of the plunder, for it was there in great quantity.

[8]Then Joakim the high priest and the elders of Israel dwelling in Jerusalem came to observe the great things the Lord had done for His people, and to see Judith and to greet her.[†] [9]When they met with her, with one accord they blessed her and told her, “You are the glory of Jerusalem, the heroine of Israel, the pride of our people! [10]You accomplished all these things by your own hand. You brought about good things for Israel, and God is well pleased with them. May you be eternally blessed by the Almighty Lord.” And the people all said, “Amen!”

[11]The people pillaged the camp for thirty days, giving Judith Holofernes’ tent, all his silver service, his couches, his bowls, and all his furnishings.

Some of these she loaded on her mules, and she harnessed them to her wagons and stacked the rest on them. [12]Then all the women of Israel assembled to see her. They blessed her and performed a dance to honor her. And she took woven branches in her hands, and presented them to these women. [13]And she and those with her crowned themselves with garlands of olive wreaths. She stepped out before all the dancers, leading all the women. At the same time, the men of Israel followed, bearing their weapons, clothed with garlands and singing songs of praise.[†] [14]Then Judith began singing a hymn of thanks before all Israel, and the people responded heartily with this song of praise.

Judith's New Song

16 And Judith said: “Begin a hymn to my God with tambourines,

Sing to the Lord with cymbals;

Lift to Him a new psalm,

Exalt Him, and call upon His name.

[2] For God is the Lord who makes wars cease,

For into His camps, into the midst of His people,

He rescued me from the hands of those pursuing me.[†]

[3] The Assyrian descended from the mountains of the north;

He came with the countless numbers of his army,

Whose multitude blocked up the rivers,

And his cavalry covered the hills.[†]

[4] He said he would set my territory on fire,

And slaughter my young men with the sword,

And dash my nursing babies on the ground, And take my children as plunder

And my virgins as spoils of war.

5 But the Lord Almighty has thwarted them

By the hand of a woman.[†]

6 For their mighty man did not fall by our young men,

Nor did the Titans' sons strike him down,

Nor did tall giants attack him,

But Judith, daughter of Merari,

In the beauty of her appearance disabled him.[†]

7 For she took off the garment of her widowhood

To exalt those afflicted in Israel,

And anointed her face with perfume,

8 And bound her hair with a headband,

And put on a linen garment to entice him.

9 Her sandals caught his eyes,

Her beauty captured his mind,

And the sword slashed his neck.

10 The Persians shuddered at her courage,

And the Medes were disturbed at her daring.[†]

11 Then my downhearted people raised the war cry,

And my weak ones cried out, and the enemies were terrified;

They raised up their voices, and the enemy was overthrown.

12 The sons of the handmaidens stabbed them,

And wounded them as the offspring of fugitives;

They were destroyed by the army of the Lord.

13 I will sing a new song to my God:

Great are You, O Lord, and glorious,

Marvelous in power and unsurpassable.

[14] Let all Your creation serve You,

For You spoke, and they were created;

You sent Your Spirit, and He formed them.

There is nothing which can resist Your voice.[†]

[15] For the mountains with the waters shall be shaken at their foundations,

And at Your presence, the rocks shall be melted as beeswax.

And yet You are merciful to those who fear You.

[16] For every sacrifice as a sweet-smelling offering is like nothing,

And the fat in the whole burnt offerings is like nothing to You;

But he who fears the Lord is great in all things.

[17] Woe to the nations that rise up against My people;

The Lord Almighty will punish them on the day of judgment;

He will give them over to fire and worms in their flesh;

In pain they shall weep forever.

[18]When they came to Jerusalem, they worshiped God; and when they were purified, they offered their burnt offerings, freewill offerings, and their gifts. [19]And Judith dedicated all the property of Holofernes that the people gave to her, along with the canopy which she herself had taken from his bedchamber, as a votive offering to God.[†] [20]For three months, the people in Jerusalem feasted continually before the sanctuary, and Judith stayed with them.

The End of Judith's Days

[21]After these days everyone returned home, and Judith went to Bethulia and lived at her estate. She was honored throughout the entire country for the rest of her days. [22]Many men desired her, but she married no man

during the remaining days of her life, after Manasseh her husband died and was buried with his people.[†] [23]She became greatly renowned, and she grew old in the house of her husband until she reached the age of one hundred five years. She freed her maid, then died in Bethulia. They buried her in the tomb of Manasseh, her husband, [24]and she was mourned by the house of Israel for seven days. Before her death, she gave her possessions to all who were nearest of kin to her husband Manasseh, and to her own nearest of kin. [25]And no one again brought fear to the people of Israel in the days of Judith, nor for a long while after she died.

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The Book of Esther

Author—By tradition, Mordecai (9:20, 29).

Date—About 450 BC, after the fall of Babylon.

Major Theme—*Divine providence of God in taking care of His people in adversity* when they pray to Him and trust in Him. The Jews fasted and prayed when they learned of an evil plot to destroy them. Esther, an orphan, was chosen by King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) to replace the Persian queen. It was because of her royal position that she was able to persuade the king to save her people. Similar patterns to the rise of Esther as queen may be seen in the rise of Joseph to the court of the Pharaoh and the rise of Daniel in the court of Babylon.

Background—The Book of Esther is an account of the Jews who chose to remain in Susa, Persia, after Cyrus gave them a decree to return to Jerusalem (2Ez 1:1–4). Thus, 2 Ezra fits in time between chapters 6 and 7 of Esther, linking the Book of Esther to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Haman's effort to eradicate the Jews is the last major effort to destroy them before the time of the Maccabees. God promised to give rest to the Israelites (Dt 25:19), and with Haman's execution the Jews have rest from their enemies.

Outline

I. The Feasts of Xerxes (1:1–2:18)

II. The Feasts of Esther (2:19–7:10)

III. The Feasts of Purim (8:1–10:3)

A. King Xerxes’ edict favoring the Jews (8:1–9:16)

B. The institution of Purim (9:17–30)

C. The exaltation of Mordecai (10:1–3)

Introduction: Mordecai's Prophetic Dream

1 [1a]In the second year of the reign of the great King Artaxerxes, on the first day of Nisan, Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a dream.† [1b]He was a Jewish man living in the city of Susa, a great man who served in the court of the king. [1c]He was from the captives Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had deported from Jerusalem with Jechoniah the king of Judah. [1d]And this was his dream:

Behold, there was noise and tumult, thunder and earthquake—confusion on the earth.† [1e]Two great dragons came forth, both ready for combat. A great roar came forth from them, [1f]and at the sound of them, every nation prepared to wage war against the nation of the just. [1g]And indeed, it was a day of gloom and of darkness, tribulation and anguish, oppression and great confusion upon the earth. [1h]The entire upright nation was troubled, fearing the evils against them; they were prepared to perish, and they cried out to God. [1i]And at their cry there came forth, as it were from a small spring, a great river having abundant water. [1j]There was light, and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted, and they devoured the esteemed.

[1k]Mordecai, who had seen this vision and what God was planning to do, awoke. [1l]He kept it in his heart and wished to ponder it until night.

A Plot against the King

[1m]Then Mordecai rested in the courtyard with Gabatha and Tharra, the king's two eunuchs who guarded the courtyard.[†] [1n]He overheard their words and considered their anxieties, and he realized they were preparing to lay hands upon the king, and he informed the king about them. [1o]Then the king interrogated the two eunuchs, and they confessed and were led away to be executed. [1p]The king made a memorandum of these matters, and Mordecai also wrote about these matters. [1q]And the king commanded Mordecai to serve in the court, and he gave him gifts for this service. [1r]But Haman, the son of Hamadatha the Agagthite, was held in high honor before the king, and he sought for ways to bring harm to Mordecai and his people because of the two eunuchs of the king.

King Artaxerxes' Banquet

[1]It came to pass, after these matters, in the days of Artaxerxes (this is the same Artaxerxes who reigned over the hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia),[†] [2]in the days when King Artaxerxes sat on the throne in the city of Susa, [3]that in the third year of his reign he gave a feast for his friends and the rest of the nations, and for the nobles of the Persians and the Medes and the chiefs of the satraps. [4]And after these things, that is after he had displayed the wealth of his kingdom and the glory of the joy of his riches for one hundred eighty days, [5]when the days of the celebration were completed, the king set forth a banquet in the court of the king's palace for six days for the people living in the city. [6]The courtyard was adorned with fine white linen curtains stretched out on cords

of purple and fastened to square gold and silver studs, on pillars of marble and stone. And the couches were of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of emerald stone, mother of pearl, and marble, and transparent coverings variously adorned with colorful flowers and encircled with embroidered roses. [7]There were gold and silver cups, and a ruby goblet set out, worth thirty thousand talents, and there was an abundance of sweet wine, which the king himself drank.[†] [8]Now this banquet was not in keeping with established law; but this is what the king desired, and he ordered all the stewards of his household, those of his men, to do his will. [9]Queen Vashti also provided a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Artaxerxes.

Queen Vashti Dishonors the King

[10]Now on the seventh day, the king was merry and told Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas—the seven eunuchs, the servants of King Artaxerxes— [11]to bring the queen before him, to enthrone her and to place the royal crown upon her, to show her beauty to the rulers and the nations, for she was beautiful. [12]But Queen Vashti did not heed his words and refused to come with the eunuchs. The king was distressed and angry.[†]

[13]The king said to his friends, “Thus has Vashti spoken; follow the law and justice concerning this.” [14]And Arkesaios, Sarsathaios and Memucan, the nobles of the Persians and Medes, those near to the king and first in rank by the king, went to him. [15]They reported to him what according to the laws was to be done to the queen Vashti, because she did not do as

commanded by King Artaxerxes by way of the eunuchs. [16]And Memucan said to the king and the princes, “Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the king's rulers and nobles.”[†] [17]He reported the words of the queen, and how she contradicted the king, and how she disobeyed King Artaxerxes: [18]“Thus today the royal ladies of the rulers of the Persians and the Medes, hearing the words which were spoken to the king, will dare to dishonor their husbands in the same way. [19]If it pleases the king, let him make a royal decree, and let it be written according to the laws of the Persians and the Medes, and let it not be declared otherwise, that the queen no longer come before him, and let the king give her royal position to a woman better than she. [20]And let the decree of the king, which he shall have made, be proclaimed throughout his kingdom, and thus all wives will honor their husbands, from the poor to the rich.” [21]And the word pleased the king and the nobles, and the king did just as Memucan said. [22]He then sent out to his entire kingdom, throughout the provinces, according to their own language, that husbands be feared in their own houses.[†]

The Search for a New Queen

2 And after these words the wrath of the king subsided, and he no longer mentioned Vashti, remembering either what she had said or how he had condemned her.[†] [2]Then the king's servants who attended him said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king, [3]and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to the city of Susa into the women's quarters, under the custody of the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them. [4]And let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

[5]Now there was a Jewish man in the city of Susa whose name was Mordecai, son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, [6]who was an exile from Jerusalem, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had taken captive. [7]He had raised the daughter of Abihail, his father's brother, and her name was Esther; and when her parents died, he brought her up to be his wife, and she was beautiful.[†]

Esther Chosen Queen

[8]So when the king's ordinance was heard, many young maidens were gathered together in the city of Susa, under the custody of Hegai, and Esther was brought to Hegai, the custodian of the women. [9]And the young woman pleased him and found favor in his sight. He hastened to give beauty treatments to her, and her portion, and the seven young maidens appointed to her from the palace. He himself treated her and her maidservants well in the women's quarters. [10]But Esther did not reveal her people or her family, for Mordecai charged her not to reveal it. [11]And every day Mordecai walked about the courtyard of the women to see what would happen to Esther.

[12]Now this was the time for a young woman to go in to the king, after she had completed twelve months, for thus are the days of preparation fulfilled: six months being anointed with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and beauty treatments for women.[†] [13]After this, she goes to the king, and she shall be allowed to bring whatever she asks with her from the

women's quarters into the royal palace. [14]She enters in the evening, and towards daybreak she departs quickly to the second women's quarters, where Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, is the guardian of the women, and she does not go in to the king again unless she should be called by name.

[15]Now when the time came for Esther the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, to go in to the king, she neglected nothing which the king's eunuch, the guardian of the women, commanded. Now Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her. [16]So Esther went in to King Artaxerxes in the tenth month, which is Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. [17]And the king loved Esther, and she found favor beyond all the other virgins, and he placed the queen's crown on her. [18]And the king gave a banquet for all his friends and nobles for seven days, and he exalted the marriage feast of Esther and granted a release to those under his reign.[†]

[19]And Mordecai was serving in the courtyard. [20]Now Esther had not revealed her heritage, just as Mordecai commanded her when she was with him, which is to fear God and to keep His commandments, and Esther did not change her manner of life.[†]

A Plot against the King

[21]Now two of the king's eunuchs, the chiefs of the bodyguards, were furious because Mordecai had been promoted, and they sought to kill King Artaxerxes. [22]And the matter was made known to Mordecai, and he informed Esther, and she made the details of the plot known to the king. [23]The king examined the two eunuchs and hanged them. The king then

ordered that a record remembering the good will of Mordecai be placed in the royal library.[†]

Haman's Hatred of Mordecai

3 After these things King Artaxerxes honored Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and elevated him and set his seat above all his friends.[†] [2]All those in the court bowed to him, for thus the king commanded, but Mordecai refused to bow to him. [3]Then those in the court said to Mordecai, “Mordecai, why do you ignore the king's command?” [4]They said this to him daily, but he did not listen to them. And they informed Haman that Mordecai resisted the words of the king, and that Mordecai had revealed to them that he was a Jew. [5]When Haman learned that Mordecai did not bow to him, he became exceedingly angry, [6]and he determined to destroy all the Jews of the kingdom of Artaxerxes. [7]And he made a decree in the twelfth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and he cast lots to determine the precise day and month to destroy the race of Mordecai on a single day, and the lot fell on the fourteenth day of the month, which is the month of Adar.[†]

[8]Then Haman spoke to King Artaxerxes, saying, “There is a certain people scattered among the peoples throughout your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people, and they disregard the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.[†] [9]If it pleases the king, let him make a decree to destroy them. If so, I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the king's treasury.” [10]So the king took off his signet ring and placed it into the hand of Haman in order to seal what was written

against the Jews. [11]And the king said to Haman, “Keep the silver, and deal with those people as you wish.”

[12]Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and they wrote, as Haman commanded, to the commanders and the governors in the one hundred twenty-seven provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia, and to the rulers of the nations, in their own language. They wrote in the name of King Artaxerxes, [13]The letter was sent by couriers throughout the kingdom of Artaxerxes to utterly destroy the race of the Jews on a single day, in the twelfth month, which is Adar, and to plunder their possessions.

The Letter Sent to Destroy the Jews

[13a]The following is a copy of the letter:

The great King Artaxerxes, to the rulers in the hundred twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia, and who hold authority under him, thus decrees:[†] [13b]Ruling over many nations, and having gained dominion over all the world, not motivated by the power of authority, but ever conducting myself in moderation and unceasing gentleness, I was desiring to make the lives of my subjects continually tranquil and to maintain the kingdom calm and safe to its furthest borders, and to restore the peace desired by all men. [13c]But when I inquired of my counselors how this should be done, Haman, who excels in good sense among us, and has been shown unwavering in good will and unshakeable in fidelity, and has attained the second place in the kingdom, [13d]made known to us that there is a race of people full of ill will who are mixed in with all the other races throughout the whole world, whose laws are contrary to all the other nations, and they continually disregard the ordinances of the kings. Thus the joint administration, blamelessly administered by us, cannot be performed.

[13e]Therefore, we have determined that this people alone is in opposition to every other person, entertaining a strange code of laws, and not disposed to our affairs and perpetrating the worst evils, and thus the kingdom is not able to experience stability. [13f]Therefore, we have designated all those made known to you in the letters written by Haman, who is appointed over such matters and who is our second father, to root out and destroy all of them, with their wives and children, without any mercy, sparing no one, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month Adar of this present year— [13g]that this race of people, both from before and until now hostile to us, violently going down to death in one day, may afterwards secure for us a time that is tranquil and an undisturbed state of affairs.

[14]Copies of the letters were published throughout every province, and an order was given to all nations to be ready on that day. [15]The matter was quickly dispatched also in Susa. And the king and Haman were drinking, but the city was troubled.

Mordecai Enlists Esther's Aid

4 But Mordecai, learning what had happened, tore his clothes and put on sackcloth, and sprinkled ashes on himself, and running through the square of the city he cried out with a loud voice, “A people who have done no wrong are about to be destroyed!”[†] [2]He went as far as the king's gate, and there he waited, for it was not allowed for him to enter the courtyard wearing sackcloth and covered in ashes. [3]And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. [4]The queen's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and she was deeply distressed upon hearing of this situation. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them.[†]

[5]Then Esther called Hathach, her eunuch who attended to her, and sent him out to learn for herself the details from Mordecai. [7]Mordecai made known to him what had happened, and the offer Haman had made to the king to put ten thousand talents into the treasury to destroy the Jews. [8]He also gave him a copy of the decree posted in Susa concerning their destruction to show it to Esther. He told him to instruct her to go in to the king and make supplication before him, and to plead before him for the people, remembering, said he, “the days of your low estate and how you were raised by my hand; because Haman, second to the king, spoke against us for our death. Call upon the Lord and speak to the king concerning us, and to deliver us from death!” [9]So Hathach came and told her all these words.

[10]Then Esther said to Hathach, “Go to Mordecai and say, [11]‘All the nations of the kingdom know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king who has not been summoned, there is no deliverance for him unless the king holds out his golden scepter to save that person. And I have not been called to go in to the king for thirty days.’ ” [12]So Hathach related all Esther's words to Mordecai.

[13]And Mordecai said to Hathach, “Go and say to Esther, ‘Do not say to yourself that you alone will be saved in the kingdom apart from all the other Jews.[†] [14]For if you choose not to heed this request at this time, help and deliverance for the Jews will arise elsewhere, but you and your father's house will perish. Besides, who knows whether it is for this occasion you reign as queen?’ ” [15]Then Esther dispatched the one who came to her to Mordecai, saying,[†] [16]“Go and assemble together the Jews in Susa. Fast for me; do not eat or drink for three full days and three full nights. I and my maids will also fast. Then I will go to the king, contrary to the law, even if I am to perish.” [17]So Mordecai went and did all that Esther commanded him.

The Prayer of Mordecai

[17a]He then beseeched the Lord, remembering all the works of the Lord, and said,[††] [17b]“O Lord, Lord, almighty King, all things are under Your power, and there is no one to oppose You in Your desire to save Israel. [17c]For You have made heaven and the earth, and every wondrous thing under heaven, and You are the Lord of all, and there is no one who shall resist You, Lord. [17d]You know all things: You know, O Lord, that it is not out of disrespect or arrogance or love of honor that I did this, to refuse to bow down to the haughty Haman, for I would have been happy to kiss the soles of his feet for the salvation of Israel. [17e]For I did this in order that I not place the glory of man above the glory of God. I will not bow down to anyone but You, my Lord, and I will not do these things out of arrogance.[†]

[17f]“And now, O Lord God, King, God of Abraham, save Your people, for they look upon us for our destruction, and they desire to destroy Your

inheritance from the beginning. [17g]Do not disregard Your portion which You redeemed for Yourself out of the land of Egypt. [17h]Hear my prayer and be merciful to Your inheritance. Turn our mourning into feasting so we may live and hymn Your name, O Lord. Do not destroy the mouth of those who praise You.”

[17i]Then all Israel cried out with all their might, for their death was before their eyes.

The Prayer of Esther

[17j]And Queen Esther, seized with the agony of death, fled to the Lord for refuge. And removing her royal garments, she put on the garments of distress and mourning. Instead of the magnificent perfumes, she covered her head with ashes and dirt. She humbled her body exceedingly. She set aside everything of her worldly joy, and her hair was unkempt. She implored the Lord God of Israel, and said:[†]

[17k]“O My Lord, You alone are our King. Help me, who am alone and have no help but You! For my risk of danger is in my hand. [17l]I have heard from my birth in the tribe of my family that You, O Lord, chose Israel out of all the nations, and our fathers out of all their ancestors, for an everlasting inheritance, and do for them whatever You have spoken. [17m]Now we sinned before You, and You have delivered us into the hands of our enemies because we have worshiped their gods. O Lord, You are righteous. [17n]But now they are not satisfied with the bitter state of our bondage, but they have pledged to their idols to abolish the decree You have spoken and to destroy Your inheritance, to close the mouths of those who

praise You, and to extinguish the glory of Your temple and Your altar, [17o]and to open the mouths of the heathen to proclaim the virtues of their false gods, and to extol a human king forever.

[17p]"O Lord, do not give Your scepter over to those who are not. Do not let them laugh at our fall, but turn their counsel against themselves, and make an example of the one who rules against us. [17q]Remember us, O Lord. Manifest Yourself in the time of our affliction, and encourage me, O King of gods and ruler over every power. [17r]Grant to my mouth proper words in the presence of the lion, to turn his heart to a hatred of our enemy, so that he and those agreeing with him may perish. [17s]Save us by Your hand, and help me who am alone and have no one but You, O Lord.

[17t]"You know all things, and You know I hate the glory of the lawless and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of every foreigner. [17u]You know my necessity, for I abhor the symbol of my proud station which is upon my head on the days when I appear in public, as if it were a menstrual rag, and I do not wear it on the days I am alone. [17v]Your handmaid has not eaten at the table of Haman, nor have I honored the banquet of the king, nor drunk the wine of libations. [17w]Neither has Your handmaid rejoiced since the day of her elevation, except in You, O Lord, God of Abraham. [17x]O God, who have power over all, hear the voice of us in despair, and deliver us from the hand of those acting wickedly, and deliver me from my fear."

Esther Goes before the King

5 And it happened on the third day, when she ceased praying, she took off the garments of the solemnity, and put on her glorious apparel.[†] [2]And

having become resplendent, appealing to the all-seeing God and Savior, she took with her two of her favorite maids. Upon the one she leaned as an elegant woman and the other maid followed behind her, bearing her train.† [3]She was aglow in the perfection of her beauty. Her face was as radiant as it was lovely, but her heart shrank with fear.† [4]And having entered through all the doors, she stood face to face with the king. He was sitting on his royal throne, clothed in all his glorious apparel, covered with gold and precious stones. He was awesome. [5]And as he looked up, resplendent in his glory, at the very edge of anger, the queen collapsed, her complexion paled, and she slumped against the head of the maid who went before her. [6]But God changed the spirit of the king to gentleness. And full of great concern, he leapt from his throne and held her in his arms until she recovered. He comforted her with calming words and said to her, [7]“Esther, what is it? I am your brother. Be of good cheer! You are not going to die because of this usual ordinance. Come near!” [8]And lifting his golden scepter, he laid it upon her neck, and he embraced her and said, “Speak to me.”

[9]And she said to him, “I saw you, my lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of your majesty, for you, my lord, are awesome, and your face is full of kindness.” [10]But while she was speaking to him, she fainted. And the king was troubled, and all his servants comforted her.

[11]And the king said, “What do you want, Esther? What is your request? It shall be granted to you, even up to half my kingdom.”† [12]Then Esther said, “Today is my special day. If, therefore, it pleases the king, let both you and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for today.”† [13]And

the king said, “Have Haman hasten here that we may do what Esther asks.” They both came to the banquet of which Esther spoke.

Esther's First Banquet

[14]So at the banquet, the king said to Esther, “What is it, Queen Esther? Whatever you desire will be granted to you.” [15]And she said, “My request and my petition is this: [16]If I find favor in the sight of the king, let the king and Haman also come tomorrow to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do the same.”[†]

[17]So Haman went out from the king overjoyed and cheerful, but when Haman saw Mordecai the Jew in the court, he was enraged.[†] [18]And having entered his own home, he called his friends and his wife, Zeresh. [19]And he showed them his wealth and the honor the king had bestowed upon him, how he made him to be first and chief in the kingdom. [20]Haman added, “The queen invited no one else to be with the king at the banquet except me, and I am also invited tomorrow. [21]But these things do not please me when I see Mordecai the Jew in the courtyard.”

[22]Then Zeresh his wife and friends said to him, “Have a tree cut down, fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the king and let Mordecai be hanged on the tree. But go with the king to the banquet and be merry.” Haman liked what they said, and the tree was made ready.[†]

The King's Sleepless Night

6 But the Lord made it difficult for the king to sleep that night, and the king commanded his servant to bring in the written records of notable events.[†] [2]And he found the written records about Mordecai, how he had told the king about the two eunuchs of the king when they were keeping guard and sought to lay hands on Artaxerxes. [3]Then the king said, “Has any honor or favor been granted Mordecai?” And the king's servants said, “Nothing was done for him.”

[4]And at the same time the king asked about the good will of Mordecai, behold, Haman entered the courtyard. The king said, “Who is in the courtyard?” Haman had come in to talk to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared. [5]And the king's servants said, “Behold, Haman is standing in the courtyard.” And the king said, “Let him come in.”

The King Honors Mordecai

[6]The king said to Haman, “What should I do for a man whom I wish to honor?” And Haman thought to himself, “Whom would the king wish to honor but me?”[†] [7]So Haman said to the king, [8]“As for the man whom the king wishes to honor, have the king's servant bring the royal robe the king wears, along with the horse he rides, [9]and let these be given to one of the king's honored friends, and let him clothe the man whom the king loves and then mount him upon the horse. And let it be proclaimed in the city square, saying, ‘Thus it shall be done for every man whom the king honors!’ ” [10]Then the king said to Haman, “You have spoken well; thus you shall do to Mordecai the Jew, the one serving in the courtyard, and let no word you have spoken be overlooked.” [11]So Haman took the robe and the horse and arrayed Mordecai with the robe, and mounted him on the horse; and he

went throughout the city square, and proclaimed, saying, “Thus shall it be done to every man whom the king honors.”[†]

[12]Mordecai returned to the courtyard, but Haman returned to his own quarters grieving, with his head down. [13]And Haman related these events to his wife Zeresh and his friends. Then his friends and wife said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you are beginning to fall, is of the Jewish race, you will not be able to defend against him, for the living God is with him.” [14]While they were still speaking, the king's eunuchs came to hasten Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Esther's Second Banquet

7 So the king and Haman came to the banquet to drink together with the queen.[†] [2]And the king said to Esther on this second day of the banquet, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? What is your petition? Let it be granted to you, even up to half my kingdom.” [3]She said in reply, “If I have found favor in the sight of the king, let my life be given to me at my request, and my people at my petition. [4]For both I and my people are sold into destruction, pillage, and bondage. We and our descendants have already been enslaved as male and female slaves, and I refuse to listen to this, for the accuser of my people is not worthy of the king's court.”[†] [5]Then the king said, “Who is this who dared to do this thing?” [6]And Esther said, “The enemy is this wicked man, Haman.” Then Haman was troubled before the king and the queen.

Haman Is Hanged

[7]The king arose from the banquet and went into the garden, but Haman was pleading with the queen, for he realized that he was in desperate circumstances. [8]The king returned from the garden, and Haman, while entreating the queen, had fallen upon the couch. And the king said, “So! Will you force yourself upon my wife in my own house?” And hearing this, Haman changed in his countenance. [9]Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, “Look! Haman has prepared a gallows for Mordecai, the one who spoke for the benefit of the king. A gallows fifty cubits high has been set up at Haman's place.” Then the king said, “Hang him on it!”[†] [10]And Haman was hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king was appeased.

Haman's Plot Is Thwarted

8 On that day, King Artaxerxes gave Esther everything belonging to Haman the accuser. And Mordecai was summoned before the king, because Esther made known his relationship to her. [2]The king then took the signet ring he had taken from Haman and gave it to Mordecai. Then Esther appointed Mordecai over everything that belonged to Haman.

[3]Again she fell down at the feet of the king, and she implored him to remove all the evils Haman had done to the Jews. [4]Then the king held out his golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood beside the king and said, [5]“If it seems good to you, and I have found favor, let a letter be sent out to revoke the letters sent out by Haman, which were written to annihilate all the Jews in your kingdom.[†] [6]For how can I be able to look

upon the oppression of my people? How will I endure the destruction of my countrymen?”

[7]Then the king said to Esther, “Since I granted you everything that belonged to Haman, and hung him from the gallows because he laid hands on the Jews, what else do you want? [8]Write it yourselves in my name, as it seems good to you, and seal it with my ring; for whatever is written by command of the king and sealed with my ring cannot be revoked.”

[9]So the scribes were summoned in the first month, which is Nisan, on the twenty-third day of that same year. For whatever was ordered was written to the Jews, to the local governors, and to the chiefs of the satraps from India as far as Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every place according to their own language.[†] [10]So it was written by the authority of the king and sealed with his ring, and the letters were dispatched by couriers. [11]As he commanded by these letters, the Jews were to exercise their own laws in every city, to be of help to each other, and to treat their adversaries and those opposing them as they wished. [12]This was to take effect beginning on one day throughout all the kingdom of Artaxerxes—the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar.

The New Decree

[12a]The following is a copy of the letter:[†]

[12b]The great King Artaxerxes, to the governors of the provinces in the hundred twenty-seven satrapies, from India to Ethiopia, and to the faithful to our interests: Greetings!

[12c]Many of those who have been frequently honored in the great kindness of their benefactors have become high-minded; not only do they seek to do harm to our subjects, but being unable to bear such a measure, they undertake to plot against their own benefactors.[†] [12d]Not only do they drive out gratitude from among men, but also being puffed up by those who are unacquainted with goodness, they suppose they will escape the vengeance of the all-seeing God. [12e]And often, many of those who have been appointed to positions of authority, being entrusted to manage the affairs of friends and having been given a position of authority as an encouragement, have become accessories to the shedding of innocent blood; [12f]and they have involved them in circumstances without remedy by deceiving with false arguments the benign kindness of the rulers. [12g]And it is possible to observe this, not so much from examining the ancient traditions, as by your learning from the wicked deeds accomplished in your midst by the pestilential influence of those unworthy of holding power. [12h]We must be on guard for the future, that we may maintain the kingdom undisturbed and peaceful for all the people, [12i]making the most of changes, and always judging fairly in the matters coming to our attention.

[12j]Thus Haman, the son of Hammedatha, a Macedonian, certainly not of Persian blood, but differing greatly from our kindness, and having been hospitably received by us, [12k]received such a large share of the benevolence which we have for all peoples that he was even publicly proclaimed to be our father, reverenced by all; he attained the rank of second to the royal throne. [12l]But unable to bear his dignity, he endeavored to deprive us of our kingdom and our life. [12m]And by very twisted methods of deception, he demanded the destruction of our deliverer and

constant benefactor, Mordecai, and Esther, the blameless consort of our kingdom, together with their whole race.[†] [12n]For through these ways, he expected to catch the nation of the Persians undefended, and to guide the Macedonians to victory. [12o]However, we find that the Jews, who have been consigned to destruction by this terribly wicked man, are not criminals, but live by most just laws. [12p]We find them to be children of the Most High, Most Mighty, Living God, who has guided the kingdom both for us and our forefathers in the most excellent manner.

[12q]Therefore, you will do well to disregard the letters sent by Haman the son of Hammedatha, because he who has produced these has been hanged at the gates of Susa, along with his whole household. For God Almighty, who rules over all things, swiftly rendered a just judgment on him.

[12r]Therefore, post a copy of this document publicly in every place, making it known that the Jews are to follow their own customs; and join in supporting them, so that on the day set for their destruction, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month Adar, they may defend themselves against those who would attack them.[†] [12s]For God, who holds power over all things, has made this a day of gladness for them instead of a day of the destruction of a chosen race.[†] [12t]Therefore, celebrate this outstanding day among your named feasts with all rejoicing, so that both now and in the future it may be deliverance for us and for the well-inclined Persians; and for those who plot destruction against us, a remembrance of destruction. [12u]And every city or province whatsoever which shall not act in accordance with these things shall be mercilessly destroyed with spear and fire; it shall be made impassable not only to men, but even to wild animals and birds forever.

[13]Let copies of the decree be posted conspicuously throughout the kingdom, and let all the Jews be ready on that day to fight against those who oppose them.

The Posting of the New Decree

[14]So horsemen were sent out quickly to carry out the king's commands, and the decree was also posted in Susa.

[15]Then Mordecai went out robed in royal raiment, having a gold crown and a diadem of fine purple linen; and seeing him, the people of Susa rejoiced.[†] [16]And there was light and gladness for the Jews.[†] [17]In every city and province where the decree was published, where the proclamation was posted, there was joy and gladness among the Jews—feasting and good cheer. And many of the Gentiles were circumcised and lived in the Jewish way, because of fear of the Jews.[†]

The Jews Defeat Their Enemies

9 Now in the twelfth month, on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, the decree written by the king arrived.[†] [2]On that day those in opposition were destroyed by the Jews, for fearing them, no one resisted. [3]For the leaders of the satraps, the sovereigns, and the royal scribes honored the Jews, and the fear of Mordecai weighed on them, [4]for the order of the king had come down that Mordecai should be acknowledged throughout the kingdom. [5]And in the city of Susa, the Jews killed five hundred men. [6]These included Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, [7]Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, [8]Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha— [9]the ten sons of

Haman, son of Hamadatha, the enemy of the Jews. They ravaged them. [10]On that day, the number of those killed in Susa was reported to the king.

[11]Then the king said to Esther, “The Jews have killed five hundred men in the city of Susa. How do you think they have made out in the surrounding lands? What more do you yet desire, so that it will be done for you?” [12]Esther said to the king, “Let the Jews be granted the opportunity to do the same tomorrow in order to hang the sons of Haman.” [13]And he permitted this to be done, and he set out for the Jews of the city the bodies of the sons of Haman to hang. [14]Then the Jews gathered together in Susa on the fourteenth of Adar and killed three hundred men, but they plundered nothing.

[15]The rest of the Jews throughout the kingdom assembled and came to the aid of one another, and they had rest from their enemies, for they killed fifteen thousand of them on the thirteenth of Adar, but they plundered nothing. [16]Then they rested on the fourteenth of that month, and observed it as a day of rest with joy and gladness.

[17]And the Jews in the city of Susa also gathered together on the fourteenth, but did not rest from their enemies, but they observed the fifteenth with joy and gladness. [18]This is why the Jews scattered in every foreign land observe the fourteenth of Adar with gladness as a holiday, sending parcels to their neighbors. But those living in the major cities keep the fifteenth of Adar as a holiday, sending parcels to their neighbors.

The Feast of Purim

[19]Mordecai wrote these things in a book and sent it to all the Jews in the kingdom of Artaxerxes, to those both near and far,[†] [20]to establish these days as holidays, and to observe both the fourteenth and fifteenth day of Adar— [21]for on these days the Jews had rest from their enemies. Thus Adar is the month which was turned from mourning into joy, and from grief into a holiday; to celebrate the whole time with feasting and gladness, sending parcels to friends and to the poor.

[22]The Jews accepted everything just as Mordecai wrote to them: [23]how Haman the son of Hamadatha, the Macedonian, warred against them; how he had made a decree and cast lots to exterminate them; [24]how he had gone to the king telling him to hang Mordecai; and how all the evils he plotted against the Jews came upon himself, and how he was hanged, he and his children. [25]Therefore these days were called Purim—on account of the lots (because in their language they are called *pur*), because of the words of this letter, and because of all they had suffered on account of these things and all that had happened to them.[†]

[26]Mordecai established it, and the Jews took it upon themselves, their descendants, and upon those joining with them not to do otherwise. And these days are to be a memorial throughout every generation, and city, and family, and province. [27]Thus these days of Purim shall be observed forever, and their remembrance shall not cease in any generation. [28]Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew wrote down the many things they had done and the truthfulness of the command of Purim. [29]And Mordecai and Queen Esther established it for themselves, establishing it at

that time according to their soundness of mind and their purpose. [30]Esther established it by a command forever, and it was written for a memorial.

10 And the king levied tribute upon his kingdom both by land and sea. [2]And his power and valor, the riches and the glory of his kingdom, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Persia and Media for a memorial. [3]And Mordecai was next to King Artaxerxes, and he was great in the kingdom and honored by the Jews; and being beloved, he set forth in detail the way of life to all his people.

Epilogue

[3a]And Mordecai said, “These things were from my God.[†] [3b]For I recall the dream which I had concerning these things, and not one detail of them has failed.

[3c]“There was a small spring that became a river; there was light and the sun and much water. The river is Esther, whom the king married and made queen. [3d]The two serpents are Haman and I. [3e]The nations are the Gentiles gathering together to destroy the name of the Jews. [3f]And my nation, which cried out to God and was delivered, is Israel. For the Lord has saved His people, and the Lord has rescued us from all these evils. And God performed signs and great wonders, which have not happened among the Gentiles.

[3g]“On account of this, He made two lots, one for the people of God and one for the Gentiles. [3h]And these two lots came in the hour, and in the time, and in the day of judgment before God and among all the Gentiles. [3i]And

God remembered His people and vindicated His inheritance. [3j]And they shall observe these days in the month of Adar, the fourteenth and fifteenth day of that month. They shall gather together with joy and gladness before God throughout all generations forever among His people Israel.”

[3k]In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said he was a priest and a Levite, and Ptolemy his son brought in the letter of Purim, which they declared existed, and that Lysimachus, the son of Ptolemy, who was in Jerusalem, had translated it.[†]

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The First Book of the Maccabees

Author—Although the author of 1 Maccabees never identifies himself, it may reasonably be assumed that he was an orthodox Jew familiar with both the geography and the topography of Judea.

Date—About 104 BC, according to the last two verses of the book (16:23, 24). The work was compiled during or shortly after the reign of John Hyrcanus I (134–104 BC), the high priest and ruler of Israel. It covers the period from the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BC) to the succession of John Hyrcanus.

Major Theme—*God's deliverance of Israel during the Jewish Wars.* The author makes it clear that God chose the Hasmonean family as the instrument of his deliverance (5:62). Their primary objective was the rededication of the temple (4:36–61), an event still celebrated by Jews everywhere as the festival of Hanukkah, from the Hebrew word for “dedication.”

Background—First Maccabees was originally written in Hebrew and was probably called “The Hasmoneans,” after Mattathias of the house of Hashmon (2:1). It was Mattathias who began the Jewish revolt with the help of his five sons. The bulk of the book recounts Judah's war against Antiochus IV, the Seleucid ruler who tried to force Hellenism upon the Jews.

Outline

I. Prologue: The Hellenistic Empire from Alexander to Antiochus IV (1:1–64)

II. The Hasmonean (Maccabean) Revolt (2:1–4:61)

III. Jewish Expeditions against Neighboring Tribes (5:1–68)

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IX. Demetrius II Betrays the Jews (11:20–53)

X. Trypho and the Reign of Antiochus VI (11:54–12:53)

XI. The Emergence of the Jewish Nation under Simon (13:1–16:24)

Alexander the Great

1 After Alexander, the son of Philip the Macedonian, came out of the land of Kittim and conquered Macedonia, and defeated Darius the king of the Persians and the Medes, and reigned in his place—he was already king of Greece—[†] [2]he then fought numerous wars, conquered for-tresses, and slaughtered the kings of the earth. [3]He went to the ends of the earth and took the spoils of many nations. So the earth rested from war before him, and he was exalted; his heart was likewise encouraged. [4]He formed a mighty army and ruled countries, nations, and princes, and they all paid taxes to him.

[5]Then later, he fell sick, and he knew he was dying. [6]So he brought in his trusted servants who had grown up with him from childhood, and parceled out his kingdom to them while he was still living. [7]After Alexander reigned for twelve years, death claimed him. [8]Then his servants began to rule, each in his appointed place.[†] [9]They all put on crowns after

he died, and their sons for many years after them, and the evils they caused multiplied on the earth.

Antiochus Epiphanes and the Lawless Jews

[10]A sinful root came forth from them, Antiochus Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus the king, who was a hostage in Rome. He began his reign in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

[11]In those days lawless men came forth from the sons of Israel, and they persuaded many, saying, “Let us make a covenant with the Gentiles surrounding us, for ever since we were separated from them, many evils have found us.”[†] [12]This proposal found favor in their eyes, [13]and some of the people eagerly desired to enter into this agreement. So they went to the king, and he gave them authority to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. [14]Then they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the customs of the Gentiles, [15]and made themselves as the uncircumcision. So they fell away from the holy covenant, yoked themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil.

Antiochus Conquers Egypt

[16]Thus the kingdom was prepared before Antiochus, and he determined he would reign over the land of Egypt, so as to rule over two kingdoms.[†] [17]Thus he entered Egypt with a strong multitude of chariots, elephants, cavalrymen, and a large army. [18]He engaged Ptolemy king of Egypt in battle, and Ptolemy turned from him in shame and fled. Many were

wounded and fell. [19]So they captured mighty cities in Egypt, and Antiochus took spoils in the land of Egypt.

Antiochus Pillages the Temple

[20]After he conquered Egypt in the one hundred and forty-third year, Antiochus turned and went up to Israel and Jerusalem with a large army.[†] [21]He entered the sanctuary in arrogance and took the golden altar, the lampstand, all the utensils, [22]the table of presentation, the cups and bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the golden ornaments on the face of the temple. He stripped everything, [23]and took the silver and the gold and everything costly, and the hidden treasures he found. [24]Taking all these things, he departed for his own land. He committed deeds of murder and spoke with great arrogance.

[25] There was great mourning everywhere in Israel,

[26] Rulers and elders groaned,

Virgins and young men grew weak,

And the beauty of the women was altered.

[27] Every bridegroom took up a lament

And sat mourning in his bridal chamber.

[28] The land was shaken for its inhabitants,

And all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame.

More Destruction in Jerusalem

[29]After two years, the king sent a revenue official to the cities of Judah, and he entered Jerusalem with a large army.[†] [30]Antiochus spoke peaceable words to them with deceit, and they believed him. Then he fell upon the

city suddenly, struck it a great blow, and killed many people from Israel. [31]He took spoils from the city, set it on fire, and tore down its houses and the city walls. [32]They took captive the women and the children and took possession of the animals.

[33]Then they built the city of David with a great and strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. [34]They placed there a sinful nation of lawless men, and they became strong within it. [35]And they laid up weapons and provisions, and gathered together the spoils they had taken from Jerusalem. Then they returned there and were like a great snare.

[36] It became an ambush against the sanctuary,

An evil accuser against Israel continually.

[37] They shed innocent blood around the sanctuary

And defiled the sanctuary.

[38] The inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them,

And she became a dwelling place of strangers.

She became a stranger to her offspring,

And her children forsook her.

[39] Her sanctuary was laid waste like a desert

And her feasts were turned into mourning,

Her Sabbaths into a disgrace

And her honor into contempt.

[40] Her dishonor prevailed against her glory,

And her high position was turned into mourning.

A Decree of Corruption

[41]Then the king wrote to all his kingdom, that they all were to be as one people,[†] [42]and that each one was to forsake his customs. So all the nations accepted the word of the king. [43]Many from Israel also thought it good to serve him, so they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath.

[44]Then the king sent books to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah by the hand of messengers, and told them to follow foreign customs in the land, [45]to forbid whole burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane the Sabbaths and the feasts, [46]and to defile the sanctuary and the holy ones. [47]These books also told them to build altars, sacred precincts, and temples to idols, to sacrifice swine and common animals, [48]to leave their sons uncircumcised, so they would corrupt their souls by every unclean and profane thing, [49]and forget the law and alter all the ordinances. [50]They also added that whoever did not obey the word of the king would die.

[51]According to all these words he wrote to everyone in his kingdom. He also placed inspectors over all the people and commanded the cities of Judah to sacrifice in each and every city. [52]Thus many of the people, everyone who forsook the law, joined together and did evil things in the land. [53]They forced Israel to hide in every place of refuge they had.

[54]Then on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation on the altar of the whole burnt offerings and built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah.[†] [55]They also burned incense at the doors of houses and in the streets. [56]And when they found books of the law, they tore them to pieces and burned them in

the fire. [57]Whenever a book of the covenant was found in someone's possession, or if anyone sympathized with the law, the judgment of the king was to kill him. [58]They acted with their might against Israel, against those who were found month after month in the cities.

[59]Then on the twenty-fifth day of the month they sacrificed on the altar, which was on top of the altar of the whole burnt offerings. [60]In keeping with the decree, they sentenced to death the women who had their children circumcised, [61]and the families who had circumcised them, and hung the infants from their mothers' necks. [62]Yet many in Israel grew strong, and determined in themselves not to eat unclean things.[†] [63]They chose rather to die than be defiled by foods or profane the holy covenant. So they died, [64]and great wrath came upon Israel.

The Zeal of Mattathias

2 In those days Mattathias, the son of John of the tribe of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, rose up from Jerusalem and settled in Modein.[†] [2]He had five sons: John, called Gaddi; [3]Simon, called Thassi; [4]Judas, called Maccabeus; [5]Eleazar, called Avaran; and Jonathan, called Apphus. [6]He saw the blasphemies taking place in Judah and Jerusalem, [7]and said:

“Alas, why was I born to see this,

The ruin of my people,

The destruction of the holy city,

And to live there when it was delivered

Into the hand of the enemy,

The sanctuary into the hand of foreigners.

[8] Her temple has become like a man without honor.
[9] Her glorious vessels were carried away into captivity;
Her infants have been slain in the streets,
Her young men with the sword of the enemy.
[10] What nation has not inherited her palaces
And taken hold of her spoils?
[11] All her adornment has been removed:
In place of freedom, she has become a slave;
[12] And behold, our sanctuary,
Our beauty and our glory have been laid waste,
And the Gentiles have desecrated it.
[13] Why should we live any longer?”

[14]Thus Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned exceedingly.

Apostasy at Modein

[15]Now those from the king who were enforcing the apostasy journeyed to the city of Modein to make them offer sacrifice,[†] [16]and many from Israel also came with them. So Mattathias and his sons gathered together. [17]Then those from the king spoke to Mattathias, saying, “You are a great and glorious leader in this city and supported by your sons and brothers. [18]Now come, be the first to follow the decree of the king, as all the Gentiles and the men of Judah have done, and those who remain in Jerusalem; and you and your sons will be among the king's friends, and you and your sons will be honored with silver and gold and many rewards.”

[19]Then Mattathias answered, speaking with a loud voice, “Though all the Gentiles in the house of the kingdom of the king obey him, and each turns from the worship of their fathers and chooses to follow his commands, [20]my sons and my brothers and I will continue in the covenant of our fathers. [21]Far be it from us to forsake the law and the ordinances. [22]We will not obey the words of the king to turn aside from our worship to the right or to the left.”

[23]When he finished saying these words, a Jew came forward in the sight of everyone to sacrifice upon the altar in Modein in accordance with the king's decree. [24]When Mattathias saw him, he was filled with zeal, and his heart trembled and poured forth anger in judgment. Then he ran and slew him upon the altar.[†] [25]So he killed the king's man who wanted to offer sacrifice at that time, and he tore down the altar. [26]Thus he had zeal for the law, just as Phinehas had against Zambri the son of Salome.

Warfare in the Wilderness

[27]Then Mattathias cried out with a loud voice in the city, saying, “Every one who has zeal for the law and holds to the covenant, let him follow me.”[†] [28]So he and his sons fled into the mountains and left behind whatever they had in the city.

[29]Then many who sought righteousness and judgment went down to the desert to live there, [30]they, their sons, their women, and their cattle, because evils increased severely against them. [31]It was also announced to the king's men and the soldiers in Jerusalem, the city of David, that certain men who had scattered when the command of the king was made known

had gone into hiding in the desert. [32]Thus, many ran after them, tracked them down, marched against them, and engaged them in battle on the Sabbath day.[†]

[33]Then they said to them, “Now, come out and do the will of the king and you shall live.” [34]But they answered, “We will not come out, nor will we do the will of the king to desecrate the Sabbath day.” [35]So the enemy rushed into battle against them. [36]Yet they did not answer them, nor did they cast a stone, nor did they block up their hiding places, [37]saying, “Let us all die in our innocence. Heaven and earth will testify for us that you destroyed us unjustly.” [38]So the king's men rose against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they died along with their women, children, and cattle, as many as a thousand people.

[39]Then Mattathias and his friends grieved for them exceedingly.[†] [40]So each one said to his neighbor, “If we do as our brothers did and fail to fight against the Gentiles for our life and our ordinances, they will quickly wipe us off the earth.” [41]So they resolved on that day, saying, “Every man who comes against us for battle on the Sabbath day, let us war against him, and we shall not all die as our brothers did in their hiding places.”

[42]Then the synagogue of the Hasideans gathered with them, a mighty army from Israel, everyone who willingly offered himself for the law.[†] [43]Everyone who escaped from evils was added to them and became their support. [44]So they formed an army, and struck the sinners in their wrath and the lawless men in their anger. The rest fled to the Gentiles to be rescued. [45]Mattathias and his allies also surrounded the altars and tore them

down, [46]and they circumcised the uncircumcised boys by force, as many as they found in the mountains of Israel. [47]Thus they pursued the sons of arrogance, and the undertaking prospered in their hand. [48]They took the law out of the hand of the Gentiles and the kings, and did not allow the sinners to dominate them.

Last Days of Mattathias

[49]Then the days approached for Mattathias to die, and he spoke to his sons, saying, “Now arrogance and scorn and the time of destruction and furious anger have been strengthened. [50]Therefore, children, be zealous for the law, and offer your lives for the covenant of our fathers; [51]and remember the deeds our fathers did in their generations, and receive great honor and an everlasting name. [52]Was not Abraham found faithful in trial, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness? [53]And Joseph at the time of his trouble kept the commandment and became ruler of Egypt. [54]Phinehas our father showed true zeal and received a covenant of eternal priesthood. [55]Joshua fulfilled the word and became a judge in Israel. [56]Caleb testified in the assembly and received an inheritance in the land. [57]David, in the mercy shown him, inherited the throne of the kingdom forever. [58]In his great zeal for the law, Elijah was taken up into heaven. [59]Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael believed and were saved from the fiery furnace. [60]In his innocence, Daniel was delivered from the mouth of lions. [61]Thus, understand from generation to generation that all who hope in the Lord will not be weak. [62]Do not fear the words of a sinful man, because his glory is like manure and worms. [63]Today he will be exalted, but tomorrow he will

not be found; for he returned to his dust, and his purpose will perish. [64]Children, be courageous and strong in the law, because you will be honored by it.

[65]“So behold Simeon, your brother. I know he is a man of wisdom. Listen to him every day, and he shall be your father.[†] [66]Judas Maccabeus, mighty in fighting from his youth, he shall be the leader of your army, and he will fight the fight of the people. [67]And you, bring forth with you all those who are doers of the law, and seek justice for your people. [68]Repay the Gentiles in full, and hold fast to the ordinance of the law.”

[69]Then he blessed them and was added to his fathers. [70]So he died in the one hundred and forty-sixth year and was buried in the tomb of his fathers in Modein; and all of Israel mourned him with great mourning.

Judas Maccabeus Succeeds His Father

3 Then Judas his son, who was called Maccabeus, rose up in his place. [2]His brothers all helped him, and everyone who had been allied with his father, and they fought the battle for Israel with gladness.

Eulogy to Mattathias

[3] He enlarged his people's glory

And was clothed with a breastplate like a giant;

And he girded on his weapons And waged war,

Sheltering the camp with his sword.

[4] He was like a lion in his deeds,

Like a young lion roaring for its prey.

[5] For he pursued the lawless and searched them out;

And he set on fire those who troubled his people.

[6] The lawless were humbled from fear of him,

And all the workers of lawlessness were troubled;

For deliverance prospered by his hand.

[7] He embittered many rulers,

And brought joy to Jacob by his deeds;

And may his memory be blessed forever.

[8] He passed through the cities of Judah

And destroyed the ungodly from the land;

And he turned wrath away from Israel.

[9] His name was known to the ends of the earth,

And he gathered those who were perishing.

Judas’ Early Victories

[10]Then Apollonius gathered the Gentiles together and brought a great army from Samaria to wage war with Israel. [11]But Judas knew it and went out to meet him. He struck and killed him, and many wounded fell; and the rest fled. [12]They took their spoils, and Judas took the sword of Apollonius and fought with it every day.

[13]Now Seron, the leader of the army of Syria, heard Judas had gathered a large assembly of faithful men with him, and they were going out into battle. [14]So he said, “I will make a name for myself and be honored in the kingdom. I will fight Judas and his followers who despised the word of the king.” [15]He set forth, and with him went an army of godless men, strong enough to help him take vengeance on the sons of Israel.

[16]So he drew near to the highlands of Beth-Horon, and Judas went out to meet him with only a few allies. [17]As they saw the army coming to meet them, they said to Judas, “How will we, being few, be able to fight against such a powerful number? We who have come out today are weak from lack of food.” [18]Then Judas said, “It is easy to hem in many at the hands of a few, and it makes no difference before heaven to save with many or with few. [19]For victory in battle does not come from the size of the army, but from the might of heaven. [20]These come against us in the abundance of insolence and lawlessness, to seize us and our women and children, and to take spoils from us; [21]but we are fighting for our lives and our laws. [22]God Himself will crush them from before our face; but as for you, do not fear because of them.”

[23]When he was through speaking, Judas suddenly rushed against them, and Seron and his army were destroyed before him. [24]He pursued him into the descent of Beth-Horon as far as the plain. Around eight hundred of their soldiers perished; the remainder fled into the land of the Philistines. [25]Then fear of Judas and his brothers began, and terror fell upon the nations around them. [26]So his fame reached the king, and the Gentiles talked about the battles of Judas.

Syrian Counterattack

[27]When Antiochus the king heard these words, he was very angry, and he sent and gathered all the forces of his kingdom, an exceedingly strong army. [28]He also opened his treasury and gave a year's wages to the troops, and commanded them to be ready for any need. [29]Then he noticed the

silver in the treasury was depleted, and the taxes from the region were small, because of the dissension and misfortune he caused in the land when he took away the laws that existed from the earliest days. [30]So he took care not to pay out expenditures and give gifts as abundantly as he had done before, even more lavishly than the previous kings. [31]He was very disturbed in himself, so he decided to go to Persia and collect taxes from those regions and gather abundant silver.

[32]He left Lysias, a man of distinction from the royal lineage, in charge of all the king's affairs, from the river Euphrates to the boundary of Egypt.[†] [33]He was also to take care of his son Antiochus until his return. [34]Then he handed over to Lysias half of the armies and the elephants. He gave him orders concerning all his wishes and concerning those who lived in Judea and Jerusalem. [35]He ordered him to send an army against them, to destroy them and remove the might of Israel and the remnant of Jerusalem, and to remove their memory from that place. [36]He was also to settle foreigners in all their regions and distribute their land by lot. [37]Then the king took half of the remaining armies and left Antioch, the capital of his kingdom. In the one hundred and forty-seventh year, he crossed over the Euphrates River and entered the regions on the other side.

[38]Lysias appointed Ptolemy, the son of Dorymenes, and Nicanor and Gorgias, valiant men who were loyal to the king, [39]and he sent with them forty thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry to go into the region of Judah and crush it according to the king's orders. [40]So he set out with the whole army, and they went and camped near Emmaus on the plain. [41]When the merchants of the region heard about them, they took a very large

amount of silver and gold and shackles and went into the camp to obtain the sons of Israel as slaves. The army of Syria and of the land of the Philistines joined them as well.

The Jews Prepare for Battle

[42]Now Judas and his brothers saw that evil events were increasing and the armies were encamped at their borders. They learned also the words of the king which he ordered, to bring destruction and annihilation on the people.[†] [43]So each man said to his neighbor, “Let us repair the ruin of our people and battle for our people and the sanctuary.” [44]Then the assembly gathered to prepare for battle and to pray and ask God for mercy and compassion.

[45] Jerusalem was uninhabited like a desert.

No one brought products in or took them out,

And the sanctuary had been trampled down.

The sons of foreigners were in the citadel,

A lodging place for the Gentiles.

Gladness was taken from Jacob,

And flute and harp played no more.

[46]They assembled and went into Mizpah, opposite Jerusalem, because at a former time Mizpah was a place for prayer in Israel. [47]They fasted on that day and put on sackcloth, sprinkled ashes upon their head, and tore their garments. [48]They opened the book of the law to look into those matters about which the Gentiles consulted the likenesses of their idols. [49]They also carried the priestly garments and the firstfruits and the tithe, and they

stirred up the Nazirites who had finished their days. [50]Then they cried aloud to heaven, saying,

“What do we do with these,

And where will we take them?

[51] Your sanctuary has been trampled down and defiled,

And Your priests are in mourning and humiliated.

[52] Behold, the Gentiles have gathered against us to destroy us.

You know what they plan against us.

[53] How will we be able to stand against them

If You will not help us?”

[54]Then they blew the trumpets and cried out with a loud shout. [55]After this, Judas appointed rulers for the people, leaders for thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens. [56]He ordered those who were building houses, or were betrothed to women, or were growing vineyards, or were afraid, to return each one to his own home, according to the law.

[57]Then the army departed and set up camp south of Emmaus. [58]Judas said to them, “Be ready at dawn to fight with these Gentiles who have gathered against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. [59]For it is better for us to die in war than to look upon the evils the Gentiles would bring to us and the sanctuary. [60]But as God's will is in heaven, so He will do.”

Judas Fights the Gentiles at Emmaus

4 Then Gorgias took five thousand men and a thousand choice cavalry, and the army marched out by night, [2]to descend upon the camp of the Judaeans and strike them suddenly. Young men from the citadel served as his guides. [3]But Judas got word of it, and he and his soldiers marched out to strike the king's army in Emmaus [4]while his forces were dispersed from the camp. [5]When Gorgias came into the camp of Judas at night, he found no one. So he sought them in the mountains, saying, “These are fleeing from us.”

[6]At first light, Judas was seen on the plain with three thousand men, but they did not have armor and swords as they wished. [7]They saw the Gentiles’ camp with strong fortification and surrounded by cavalry trained for battle. [8]But Judas said to his men, “Do not be afraid of their numbers or of their attack.[†] [9]Remember how our fathers were saved in the Red Sea, when Pharaoh pursued them with his army? [10]So now, let us cry out to heaven to see if the Lord will be with us, and remember the covenant of our fathers, and crush these forces before us this day. [11]Then all the nations will know that He is the Redeemer and Savior of Israel.”

[12]So the Gentiles lifted their eyes and saw them coming opposite them, [13]and they departed from their camp and went into battle. Then those with Judas sounded the trumpets. [14]Thus they met, and the foreigners were crushed, fleeing into the plain. [15]All those remaining fell by the sword. They pursued them as far as Gazara and as far as the plain of Idumea and Azotus and Jamnia, and about three thousand of their men fell. [16]Then Judas and his army returned from pursuing them, [17]and he said to the people, “Do not desire the spoils, for the battle is before us. [18]Gorgias and his army are in the mountain nearby, but stand firm before our enemies and battle them; and afterwards, take the spoils boldly.”

[19]While Judas was finishing these words, an enemy detachment was seen peeping out from the mountains, [20]and they saw that their army had been put to flight and that the Judeans had set their camp on fire; for the smoke that was seen revealed what had happened. [21]When they became aware of this, they were very afraid, and when they observed the forces of Judas prepared for battle in the plain, [22]they fled to the region of the Philistines. [23]Judas returned to take spoils from their camp, and they took massive amounts of gold and silver, and cloth dyed blue and purple, and abundant wealth. [24]As they returned from battle they sang hymns and blessed heaven, because the Lord is good, for His mercy endures forever. [25]Thus great deliverance happened to Israel on that day. [26]But all the Gentiles who escaped went and reported to Lysias everything that had happened. [27]When he heard this, he was bewildered and disheartened, because things had not happened to Israel as he wished, and had not turned out as the king commanded him.

Judas Defeats Lysias

[28]The following year, Lysias recruited sixty thousand chosen men and fifty thousand cavalry so he could fight them. [29]Then he came to Idumea and camped in Beth-zur, and Judas met them there with ten thousand soldiers. [30]When he saw their mighty camp, he prayed and said, “Blessed are you, O Savior of Israel, who stopped the attack of the giant warrior by the hand of your servant David, and delivered the Philistines’ camp into the hands of Jonathan the son of Saul, his armor-bearer. [31]Even so, besiege this camp by the hand of your people Israel, and let these enemies be ashamed of their army and cavalry. [32]Put cowardice in them and melt the boldness

of their might, and let them be shaken by their defeat. [33]Cast them down with the sword of those who love You, and let all men who know Your name give praise to You with hymns.”

[34]Then they attacked one another, and five thousand men from the camp of Lysias fell, and some fell from the opposite side. [35]When Lysias saw the turn of events for his troops, and the courage shown by those of Judas, and how they were prepared either to live or to die bravely, he returned to Antioch and recruited mercenaries to again invade Judea with an even greater force.

Restoration of the Temple

[36]So Judas and his brothers with him said, “Behold, our foes have been crushed. Let us go up to purify the sanctuary and renew it.” [37]Thus the entire camp gathered and ascended to Mount Zion. [38]They saw there the sanctuary deserted, the altar desecrated, and the doors burned down. In the courtyard they found that bushes had grown up as in a wooded area or on one of the mountains. They also saw the priests’ quarters in ruins. [39]So they tore their garments and lamented greatly, and sprinkled themselves with ashes. [40]They fell on their faces on the earth, sounded the signal on the trumpets, and cried to heaven.

[41]Then Judas ordered his men to fight those in the citadel until he purified the sanctuary. [42]He chose righteous priests, devoted to the law. [43]They purified the sanctuary, and carried the defiled stones to an unclean place. [44]And they discussed what they should do with the altar of whole burnt offerings, which had been desecrated. [45]It seemed to them the best

plan was to tear it down, so it would not be a reproach to them because the Gentiles had corrupted it. So they tore down the altar. [46]They also stacked the stones in an appropriate location on the temple hill until a prophet would come and tell what should be done with them.

[47]Then they took uncut stones, according to the law, and constructed a new altar like the one before. [48]They also repaired the sanctuary and the inside of the temple, and consecrated the courtyards. [49]They made new holy vessels and carried the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. [50]And they burnt incense on the altar and lit the lights on the lampstands, and these gave light inside the temple. [51]Then they set bread on the table, hung the curtains, and completed all the tasks they had begun.

[52]They rose early on the morning of the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-eighth year,[†] [53]and offered sacrifice according to the law on the new altar of whole burnt offerings which they made. [54]It was consecrated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals at the time and on the day the Gentiles had desecrated it. [55]All the people fell down and worshiped and blessed heaven, which had prospered them. [56]They celebrated the consecration of the altar for eight days; and they offered whole burnt offerings with gladness, and the sacrifice of a peace offering and a thank-offering. [57]They also adorned the face of the temple with crowns of gold and small shields, and restored the gates and the priests’ quarters, and installed doors. [58]There was great gladness among the people, and the disgrace of the Gentiles was removed.

[59]Then Judas and his brothers and the congregation of Israel decided that each year at that time the days of the consecration of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight full days, beginning on the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislev.

[60]At this same time they also built high walls and strong towers around Mount Zion, lest the Gentiles come and destroy these things, as they had done before. [61]Then he stationed an army there to guard it, and he fortified the town of Beth-zur, so the people would have a fortress that faced Idumea.

Battles with Surrounding Nations

5 When the surrounding nations heard the altar was repaired and the sanctuary renewed as before, they were extremely angry.[†] [2]So they resolved to kill the race of Jacob who lived among them, and they began to kill and destroy the people. [3]Thus Judas waged war on the sons of Esau in Idumea at Acrabattene, for they were besieging Israel. He struck them a great blow, humbled them, and took spoils from them. [4]He also recalled the evil acts by the sons of Baean, who trapped and snared the people in ambush out on the roads. [5]He shut them up in their towers and encamped around them, vowing to destroy them. So he set their towers on fire with everyone inside. [6]Then he crossed over against the sons of Ammon, and found a strong army and many people, with Timothy as their leader. [7]He fought many battles against them until he struck them down, and they were crushed before him. [8]Then he overpowered Jazer and its villages and came back to Judea.

[9]Now the foreigners in Gilead assembled against the Israelites living within their borders, to destroy them. But they fled into the fortress of Dathema [10]and sent letters to Judas and his brothers, saying, “The Gentiles have gathered against us and surrounded us to destroy us. [11]They have made ready to come here and overpower the fortress where we have taken refuge, and Timothy is in charge of their army. [12]Now therefore, come and deliver us from their hand, for many of our men have perished. [13]All our brothers in the region of Tob have been put to death, and they took their wives and children captive, along with their possessions; and they destroyed about a thousand men there.”

[14]While their letters were being read, behold, other envoys arrived from Galilee with torn garments and reported similar words, [15]saying that those from Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles had assembled themselves together, “to destroy us.” [16]So when Judas and the people heard these words, a great assembly was gathered to decide what to do for their brothers who were in trouble and were being attacked by adversaries. [17]So Judas told Simon his brother, “Choose men for yourself and go and save your brothers in Galilee, while my brother Jonathan and I go to Gilead.” [18]He left Joseph, the son of Zachariah, and Azariah, a leader of the people, with the rest of the army in Judea, to guard it. [19]He ordered them, saying, “Take charge of this people, but do not go into battle against the Gentiles until we return.” [20]Then three thousand troops were chosen for Simon to go to Galilee, and eight thousand men for Judas to take to Gilead.

Victories in Galilee and Gilead

[21]Thus Simon went into Galilee and fought many battles with the Gentiles, and crushed the Gentiles before him. [22]He chased them to the gates of Ptolemais, and three thousand Gentiles perished, and he took their spoils. [23]So he took the Israelites of Galilee and Arbatta, along with their wives and children and everything they possessed, and brought them with great joy to Judea.

[24]Meanwhile, Judas Maccabeus and Jonathan his brother crossed over the Jordan and journeyed three full days into the desert. [25]They came upon the Nabateans, who met them peacefully and told them everything that had happened to their brothers in Gilead: [26]“Many have been imprisoned in Bozrah and Bosor in Alema, Chaspho, Maked, and Carnaim (all these cities were fortified and strong), [27]and some have been imprisoned in the remaining cities of Gilead. Tomorrow your foes will attack the strongholds to destroy and capture all of them in one day.”

[28]Judas and his forces returned at once to Bozrah by the desert road; and he captured the city, killed all the males by the edge of the sword, took all the spoils, and set the city on fire.[†] [29]He marched from there by night, and they kept going until they reached the fortress of Dathema. [30]Then at daybreak they looked up and beheld many people, too many to count, carrying ladders and engines of war to take the fortress and strike the Israelites inside. [31]When Judas saw the battle had started, an outcry went up from the city to heaven with trumpets and loud shouts. [32]So he said to his army of men, “Fight today for the sake of our brothers!” [33]Then he came up behind them in three companies, and they sounded the trumpets and cried aloud in prayer. [34]When Timothy's army saw that they faced

Maccabeus, they fled before him. He struck them a great blow, and on that day eight thousand of them perished.

[35]Judas then made his way to Alema. He waged war and captured it, taking its spoils and setting the city on fire. [36]He marched on from there and captured Chaspho, Maked, and Bosor, and the remaining cities of Gilead.

[37]Timothy, however, called together more troops and set up camp opposite Raphon across the stream. [38]Judas dispatched soldiers to scout the camp, and they returned to him, saying, “All the foreigners have gathered around us, and a very large army is with him. [39]Further, they have hired Arab mercenaries to help, and they are also camped on the other side of the stream, prepared to come against you in battle.” So Judas went out to face them.

[40]Timothy told the officers of his army while Judas and his camp drew near the stream, “If he crosses the stream against us first, we will be unable to withstand him, for he is strong enough to defeat us. [41]But if he is frightened and sets up camp across the stream, we will pass over against him and crush him.”

[42]But as Judas approached the water, he stationed the scribes of the troops near the stream and ordered them, “Do not allow anyone to stay in camp, but make all of them join the battle.” [43]So Judas crossed over to meet them first, with all the men behind him. Then all the Gentiles were crushed by them. They dropped their weapons and fled into the sacred regions of Carnain. [44]So Judas captured the city and set the sacred precinct

on fire, along with all those residing there. Thus Carnain was defeated, for they were not able to stand against Judas.

[45]After this, Judas assembled all the Jews living in Gilead, from small to great, along with their wives and children and their possessions, a great entourage, to return to the land of Judah. [46]They came as far as Ephron, an expansive and fortified city on the highway. They could not pass through, either to the right or the left. The only way to go was through the middle of town. [47]But the men of the city closed it off and barricaded the gates with stones. [48]So Judas sent them a peaceful word, saying, “Let us pass through your land to go to our land. No one will harm you. Merely we will come through on foot.” But they refused to open to him. [49]So Judas gave orders to proclaim to the troops that each man make camp where he was. [50]Then the soldiers in the army made camp, and he fought the men of Ephron all day and all night, and the city was given over into his hand. [51]He killed every male with the edge of the sword, destroyed the city completely, and took its spoils. So he passed through the city, stepping over those who were killed.

[52]Then they came to the Jordan, crossing over into the great plain facing Beth-shan; [53]and Judas gathered the stragglers and encouraged the men along the way until they entered Judah. [54]They marched up to Mount Zion and sacrificed whole burnt offerings, and offered whole burnt offerings with joy and gladness of heart, because not one of them was lost before they returned home in peace.

[55]While Judas and Jonathan had been in Gilead, and Simon his brother was in Galilee facing Ptolemais,[†] [56]Joseph the son of Zacharias, and Azariah, officers of the army, got word of their courageous acts and the victorious battles they fought. [57]They spoke, saying, “Let us make a name for ourselves as well and take on the Gentiles who live around us.” [58]Thus they gave a command to those from the army with them, and they marched to Jamnia. [59]But Gorgias and his army went out from the city to face them in battle, [60]and Joseph and Azariah were routed and chased as far as the boundaries of Judea. That day about two thousand men of Israel perished. [61]It was a great defeat for the people; for expecting to act heroically, they did not follow the orders of Judas and his brothers. [62]And they did not belong to the seed of those men through whom Israel received the gift of deliverance.

[63]So Judas and his brothers were honored greatly throughout all Israel and even by the Gentiles, where their name was being heard. [64]People assembled around them and gave them praise.

[65]Then Judas went out with his brothers and fought the sons of Esau in the land to the south, and attacked Hebron and its towns, and pulled down its many fortresses and set on fire its towers round about. [66]He also marched into the country of the Philistines, and then on to Marisa. [67]Some priests that day who wanted to show their courage perished in battle, for they went out to fight recklessly. [68]But Judas turned aside to Azotus, the country of the Philistines. He destroyed their altars, set the carved idols of their gods on fire, and took spoils in the cities. Then he came back to the land of Judah.

Last Days of King Antiochus IV

6 Now King Antiochus passed through the upper countries and heard that Elymais in Persia was a splendid city for its wealth in silver and gold.[†] [2]Its temple contained great wealth, with shields of gold, breastplates, and weaponry left there by Alexander, the son of Philip, the Macedonian king who first ruled over the Greeks. [3]So he came and sought to defeat the city and take spoils, but he failed because his plot was uncovered by the men of the city. [4]They confronted and fought against him, and he fled and retreated from there very discouraged, and went back to Babylon.

[5]Then a man came and told him while he was still in Persia that his army which had invaded the land of Judah was put to flight; [6]that Lysias had gone first with a strong army, but had been put to shame before Israel; that Israel was growing strong by the weapons, supplies, and abundant spoils they had taken from the armies they had conquered. [7]Moreover, they had pulled down the abomination he built on top of the altar in Jerusalem; and they had encircled the sanctuary with high walls as it had before, as well as Beth-zur, his hometown.

[8]When the king received this report, he was shocked and greatly shaken. He fell upon his bed and was sick with grief, because matters had not gone for him as he hoped. [9]King Antiochus lay there several days, for deepening grief worsened his condition. He concluded he was about to die. [10]Thus he called together his friends, saying, “Sleep has eluded my eyes, and anxiety has devastated my heart. [11]I ask myself, ‘What is this stress I have come to, and into what sea of troubles am I immersed? For I was kind and loved as a

ruler.’ [12]But now I recall the evils I did in Jerusalem; for I took all the silver and gold vessels, and sent to destroy those who lived in Judah for no good reason. [13]I know that because of these things, evils have found me; and behold, I am perishing with deep grief in a foreign land.”

Succession of Antiochus V

[14]He then summoned Philip, one of his friends, and set him over his entire kingdom. [15]He gave him his crown and his robe and ring, that he could take charge of his son Antiochus and raise him to rule. [16]Thus Antiochus the king died in the one hundred and forty-ninth year. [17]When Lysias found out the king had reposed, he established Antiochus his son to reign. Lysias had raised him from youth and called him Eupator.

Siege of the Citadel

[18]Now men from the citadel were confining Israel to the area around the sanctuary. They were attempting by whatever means to injure them, and to bring strength to the Gentiles. [19]So he gathered all the men to defeat them. [20]They assembled the army and attacked the city in the hundred and fiftieth year. He also built engines of war and other instruments of battle.

[21]But some of these enemies escaped from the enclosure, and some ungodly Israelites sided with them. [22]They approached the king, saying, “How long will it be until you render a judgment to avenge our brothers? [23]We were pleased to serve your father, and to follow what he said and obey his orders. [24]Because of this the sons of our people attacked the citadel and became our enemies. Besides this, they killed as many of us as

they found, and our inheritances were taken away. [25]But they have not stretched out their hand against us alone, but also against all the lands on their borders; [26]and behold, today they have surrounded the citadel in Jerusalem to defeat it. They have strengthened the sanctuary and Beth-zur as well. [27]So unless you quickly overtake them, they will do worse things than these, and you will be unable to stop them.”

Campaign of Antiochus V and Lysias

[28]The king was angered greatly when he heard this, so he assembled all his friends, the military leaders, and those who ruled. [29]Armies of mercenaries came to him as well from other nations and from various islands of the seas. [30]So the number of his armies was one hundred thousand foot soldiers, twenty thousand calvary, and thirty-two elephants trained for battle. [31]They arrived through Idumea and marched against Beth-zur, fighting for many days and building engines of war. But Israel went out, set them on fire, and battled heroically.

[32]Judas then marched out from the citadel and set up camp at Beth-zechariah, across from the king's camp. [33]The next morning the king rose at dawn and led his army on a forced march on the highway to Beth-zechariah. His soldiers prepared themselves for warfare and blew the trumpets. [34]They also showed the elephants the juice of grapes and mulberries to ready them for the campaign.[†] [35]Then they stationed the elephants among the phalanxes and set alongside each animal a thousand men, covered with coats of mail and with bronze helmets on their heads. Five hundred horsemen were chosen and assigned to each elephant.

[36]These positioned themselves beforehand wherever the animal was, and wherever it went, they rode alongside and never left it alone. [37]Sturdy covered wooden towers were strapped upon each elephant by a special harness, and four armed men fought from inside each tower with its Indian driver. [38]They positioned the remainder of the horsemen on each side, on the two flanks of the forces, disturbing the enemy while they themselves were protected by the phalanxes. [39]As the sun shined on the golden and bronze shields, the hills glistened from them and lit up like a flaming fire.

[40]While one sector of the king's forces was stretched out on the high hills and some were on the plain, they marched on steadfastly in good order. [41]Everyone trembled when they heard the sounds of the soldiers as they marched along, and the clanging of their weapons, for the army was massive and very strong. [42]But Judas drew near with his army in battle formation, and six hundred of the king's men fell. [43]Then Eleazar, called Avran, saw one of the elephants covered with royal armor. It was taller than the rest, and he reasoned the king was riding it.[†] [44]So he laid down his life to rescue his people and to make an everlasting name for himself. [45]He ran boldly into the center of the phalanx, killing soldiers to the right and left, and they got out of his way on both flanks. [46]Then he crawled under the elephant, struck it from beneath, and killed it. It fell to the ground on top of him, and he died there.

[47]When the Israelites saw the royal might and the fierce attack of the troops, they turned away from them in flight. [48]But the soldiers of the king's army went up to Jerusalem to attack them, and the king set up camp in Judea and on Mount Zion. [49]He reached a peace accord with the men of

Beth-zur, who evacuated the city because they had no food there to withstand a siege, for it was a sabbatical year for the land. [50]So the king captured Beth-zur and set a guard there to secure it. [51]He then set a camp opposite the sanctuary for several days and built siege towers, engines of war which threw fire and stones, machines to fire off arrows, and catapults. [52]The defenders also made engines of war to match theirs. So they battled several days. [53]But with no food stored up, because it was the seventh year, and the men who survived in Judea against the Gentiles had eaten the remaining provisions,[†] [54]few men remained in the sanctuary, for hunger had overtaken them. They scattered, each to his own place.

[55]Now Lysias got word that Philip, whom Antiochus the king had chosen while still alive to raise Antiochus his son to rule, [56]had returned from Persia and Media with the armies that had gone there with the king, and that he was trying to gain control of the kingdom. [57]So Lysias decided immediately to send a message to the king, the commanders, and the men, saying, “We grow weaker each day, our food supply is running out, the force we are fighting against is strong, and governing the kingdom puts pressure on us. [58]Therefore, let us come to agreement with these men and have peace with them and their nation. [59]We should arrange for them to live by their laws as before; for it was because of their laws which we abolished that they became furious and did all the things they have done.”

[60]This word pleased the king and the commanders, so he sent an offer of peace to the Israelites, which they accepted. [61]Thus the king and the commanders gave them their oath. On these conditions the Israelites evacuated the fortress. [62]But when the king came to Mount Zion and saw

the fortification of the place, he broke his promise and commanded his men to pull down the surrounding wall. [63]Then he left hastily and came back to Antioch. There he discovered Philip in charge, so he attacked him and captured the city by force.

Demetrius I Becomes King

7 Demetrius the son of Seleucus set forth from Rome in the one hundred and fifty-first year, sailed with a few men into the city by the sea, and reigned there.[†] [2]As he entered the royal house of his fathers, his army seized Antiochus and Lysias and brought them to him. [3]When he became aware of this action, he said, “Do not show me their faces.” [4]So the soldiers put them to death, and Demetrius occupied the throne of his kingdom.

[5]Then all the lawless and ungodly men of Israel came to him. Alcimus, who wanted to be a priest, led them.[†] [6]They brought charges against the people before the king, saying, “Judas and his brothers have destroyed all your friends and scattered us from our land. [7]Therefore, send a man you trust, and let him see all the destruction he did to us and to the country of the king. Then let him bring punishment to them and all who serve them.”

Bacchides and Alcimus Control Judah

[8]The king then appointed Bacchides, one of his friends, who ruled the province of Beyond-the-River, for he was prominent in the kingdom and loyal to the king. [9]Then he sent him and the ungodly Alcimus, whom he appointed to the priesthood, and ordered him to avenge the sons of Israel. [10]They marched on with a large army and came into the land of Judah, and

sent envoys to Judas and his brothers with peaceful words full of deceit. [11]But they did not heed their words, for they noticed they came with a large army.

[12]Then a delegation of scribes was sent to meet with Alcimus and Bacchides to request justice. [13]The Hasideans were the first among the sons of Israel to seek peace with them. [14]For they said, “A man, a priest from the seed of Aaron, came with their forces, and he will not do us wrong.” [15]The priest spoke peacefully to them and promised them, saying, “We will not seek to injure you or your friends.” [16]They believed him, but he overtook sixty of their men and put them to death in one day, according to the word which was written:

[17] “They poured out the flesh of your saints

And their blood around Jerusalem,

But there was no one to bury them.”

[18]Then fear and trembling fell upon all the people, for they said, “There is no truth and uprightness in them. For they violated the promise and oath they swore.”

[19]So Bacchides departed from Jerusalem and marched to Beth-zaith. He sent for and captured many of the soldiers who deserted him, and some of the people, and he slaughtered them at the great well. [20]He put Alcimus in charge of the region and left an army with him to serve him. Then Bacchides returned to the king.

[21]Alcimus then strove for the high priesthood, [22]and all who harassed their people also gathered with him. They took control of the country of

Judah and damaged Israel greatly. [23]Now Judas saw all the evil Alcimus and those with him had done among the sons of Israel; it was worse than what the Gentiles did.[†] [24]Thus Judas departed to all the regions surrounding Judea and took vengeance on the men who had deserted. He forbade those in the city to journey out to the countryside. [25]But when Alcimus realized Judas and his followers were growing strong and knew that he could not prevail against them, he went back and brought evil charges against them before the king.

Nicanor Marches on Israel

[26]The king then sent Nicanor, one of his renowned commanders who hated and disdained Israel, and ordered him to get rid of the people.[†] [27]Nicanor came up to Jerusalem with a large army, and he sent Judas and his brothers peaceful words full of deceit, saying, [28]"Let there be no quarrel between us. I will come peacefully with a few men to see you in person." [29]So he approached Judas, and they greeted each other peacefully. But the adversaries prepared to seize Judas. [30]Then Judas was aware that Nicanor had come with deceit; and he feared him, so he did not care to meet him again. [31]When Nicanor learned his plot had been discovered, he went into battle with Judas at Caphar-salamah. [32]Some five hundred of Nicanor's soldiers fell; the remainder fled to the city of David.

[33]After this, Nicanor went up to Mount Zion. Then some priests came out of the sanctuary, along with some elders of the people, to greet him in peace, showing him the whole burnt offering which they had sacrificed on behalf of the king. [34]However, he mocked and ridiculed them. He defiled

them and spoke with arrogance to them. [35]He also swore an oath angrily, saying, “Unless Judas and his troops are delivered into my hands now, then if I come back in peace, I will set this house on fire.” Then he stormed out in great rage. [36]The priests then entered and stood facing the altar and the sanctuary. They wept and cried out, [37]“You chose this place to be called by Your name that it might be a house of prayer and supplication for Your people. [38]Take vengeance on this man and on his soldiers, and let them die by the sword. Remember their blasphemies and let them be alive no longer.”

[39]Soon Nicanor left Jerusalem and camped at Beth-horon, and the army of Syria joined him. [40]But Judas took position in Adassa with three thousand troops. Judas prayed, saying, [41]“When the ambassadors from the king uttered blasphemy, Your angel went forth and struck one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians. [42]Crush also this army before us today, and let the others know that he spoke blasphemy against Your sanctuary; and judge him according to his malice.”

Nicanor Falls in Battle

[43]So the armies faced off in war the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and Nicanor's army was scattered. He himself was the first to fall in the war. [44]When his soldiers saw Nicanor die, they dropped their weapons and ran. [45]Israel even chased them a day's journey from Adassa as far as Gazara. As they pursued them, they kept blowing the trumpets, sounding the battle call. [46]Then the Israelites went out from all the villages around Judea and outflanked the adversaries. They drove them back to the pursuing army, and

they all fell by the sword. Not one of them survived. [47]Then Israel captured the spoils and their possessions. They even beheaded Nicanor and severed his right hand, which he had stretched out arrogantly. They carried them and put them on display just outside Jerusalem. [48]So the people were very glad, and they celebrated that day as a day of great joy. [49]A decree came forth to celebrate this day at the same time every year, on the thirteenth day of Adar. [50]Thus the land of Judah had peace for several days.

Pact with the Romans

8 Then Judas learned of the reputation of the Romans, that they were mighty and behaved well toward all who made a pact with them. They could ensure friendship with as many as came to them, indeed, because they were of great strength.[†] [2]People also told him of their warfare and the courageous works they were doing in Gaul—how they conquered them and imposed taxes on them. [3]They also reported what they had done in the country of Spain, to take control of their silver and gold mines, [4]and how they dominated the entire region by their careful planning and forbearance, although the area was a great distance away. The Romans also defeated kings who challenged them from around the world, until they subdued them and struck a deadly blow against them. But the others paid them taxes each year.

[5]They battled and soundly conquered Philip and Perseus, kings of the Macedonians, and others who stood up against them in war. [6]They further conquered Antiochus the great king of Asia, who went to war against them with a hundred and twenty elephants and cavalry and chariots and a

massive army. But his troops were destroyed by them. [7]They captured him alive, and ordered that he and those who would rule in the future should pay large taxes along with hostages. [8]They also took from him the countries of India, Media, and Lydia. Then they gave some of the best of all these territories to King Eumenes.

[9]The Greeks also plotted to come against them, [10]but this became known to the Romans, and they sent one of their generals against them. He fought with them, and many wounded fell, and the Romans took their wives and children captive. They robbed them, took their land, pulled down their fortresses, and have to this day enslaved them. [11]They crushed and captured the remaining kingdoms and the islands, as many as would oppose them. But they secured a relationship with their friends and those people who relied on them. [12]Thus they conquered rulers far away and nearby; as many as had heard of their reputation feared them. [13]Those the Romans desire to help and to raise up as kings, they establish; and those kings they wish to depose they depose, for they have great power. [14]But despite all this, none of the Romans has donned a crown or vested in purple, so as to be magnified by it. [15]Instead they formed a council for themselves, and three hundred and twenty senators constantly deliberate concerning the people, to help them behave in an orderly fashion. [16]They trust one man to govern them for a year, and to rule over their land. Everyone heeds this one leader, and there is no jealousy or strife among them.

[17]Now Judas appointed Eupolemus the son of John, son of Accos, and Jason the son of Eleazar, and dispatched them to Rome to build friendship and an alliance [18]and to free their people from a yoke of bondage, because

they realized the Greek kingdom was subjecting Israel to total servitude. [19]So they journeyed to Rome—a very long trip. When they came to the senate chamber, they said the following: [20]“Judas, also named Maccabeus, his brothers, and the Jewish people sent us here to you to build an alliance and have peace with you, that you may enlist us as your friends and allies.”

Terms of the Alliance

[21]The proposal pleased the senate. [22]So this is the copy of the message they issued in reply, inscribed on bronze tablets and sent to Jerusalem, to be kept there as a record of peace and friendship:

[23]“May it be well with the Roman people, and the Jewish nation shall respond wholeheartedly as their allies, as the occasion may dictate. [24]If war comes first to Rome or to any of their allies in all their dominion, [25]the Judean nation shall act as their allies, wholeheartedly, as the occasion may dictate to them. [26]As to any enemy who wages war, the Jews shall not donate or supply grain, weapons, money, or ships, as Rome has stated, and they shall honor these commitments without getting anything in return. [27]Similarly, should war break out first against the Jewish nation, the Romans shall freely respond as their allies, as is appropriate for them. [28]Further, no grain, weapons, money, or ships will be given to allies of the enemy, as Rome has decided, and they shall hold to these obligations and do so with no deception. [29]Thus the Romans offer a treaty with the Jews on these terms. [30]If after these agreements take effect, both parties should decide to add or subtract anything, they shall do so by agreement, and whatever they add or subtract shall be binding.

[31]“Now regarding the evils Demetrius the king is doing to them, we have sent to him this word: ‘If therefore they appeal to us against you again, we will defend their rights and oppose you, be it on the sea or on land.’ ”

Judas Dies in Battle

9 Now Demetrius got word that Nicanor and his men had fallen in battle, so he authorized Bacchides and Alcimus to go a second time into the land of Judah and take the right-hand flank of the army with them. [2]Thus they traveled the highway into Gilgal and camped at Mesaloth in Arbela. They captured it, and many people died. [3]Then in the first month of the one hundred and fifty-second year, they encamped opposite Jerusalem. [4]But they departed there and went to Berea, twenty thousand foot soldiers and two thousand cavalry with them.

[5]Now Judas set up camp in Elasa, and three thousand chosen men accompanied him. [6]When they saw how large the number of the enemy forces was, they were very afraid, and many sneaked out of the camp. Just eight hundred men remained among them.

[7]When Judas realized his troops had run away and the battle was pressing upon him, he was greatly discouraged and had no time to rally them. [8]Though weary, he said to those who remained, “Let us arise and move out against our enemies. We may yet be able to fight them.” [9]But they kept trying to turn him back, saying, “We are not able. Let us rather save our lives now. Let us return with our brothers and fight against them later, for we are too few.” [10]But Judas answered, “May it be far from us to do such a thing, to run away from them. If our time has come to die, then let

us die courageously for the sake of our people. We will not leave behind a charge against our honor.”

[11]Then the forces of Bacchides moved out from the camp in formation and stood to encounter them. The mounted troops were divided into two parts, and the sling-throwers and the archers advanced before the army, along with all the chief warriors; Bacchides was on the right flank. [12]Then the phalanx drew near between the companies on both sides and sounded their trumpets. The army of Judas also blew its trumpets. [13]The ground shook by the clamor of the troops, and the battle raged on from morning until nightfall.

[14]Judas realized that Bacchides had the strength of his forces on the right flank. So all the stouthearted men came together with Judas. [15]They demolished the right flank, and pursued Bacchides’ men all the way to Mount Azotus. [16]When those on the left flank saw that the right flank was broken, they reversed course and followed closely behind the army of Judas. [17]The battle was fierce, and many men on both sides suffered wounds and fell. [18]Judas also fell, and his men fled.

[19]Jonathan and Simon took Judas their brother and buried him in the tomb of his fathers in Modein. [20]They wept for him, and all Israel mourned him with great lamentation for many days, saying,

[21]“How the mighty is fallen, Israel's savior.”

[22]Now the abundant acts of Judas—his wars, the brave things he did, and his greatness—are not recorded, for there were far too many.

Jonathan Succeeds His Brother

[23]After Judas's death, the lawless emerged in all the regions of Israel, and all those rose up who worked evil. [24]In those days, there was a very great famine, and the nation deserted with the evildoers to Bacchides, [25]He chose godless men and appointed them lords of the country. [26]These men sought out and searched for the allies of Judas, bringing them to Bacchides. He took vengeance on them and mocked them. [27]There was great perplexity in Israel, such as had not been seen since the days when the prophets ceased to be seen in their midst.

[28]Then all of Judas's friends came together and spoke to Jonathan.[†] [29]“Since your brother Judas died, a man like him has not come out to take on our enemies, namely Bacchides and those from our country who hate us. [30]Therefore, we have now chosen you this day to replace him as our ruler and be our leader in battle.” [31]So Jonathan accepted the command at once and rose up in the place of Judas his brother.

Jonathan Takes on Bacchides

[32]When Bacchides heard this, he sought to kill him. [33]But Jonathan, Simon his brother, and everyone with him knew of this, and they escaped to the desert of Tekoa and camped near the waters of the pool of Asphar. [34]Bacchides discovered this on the Sabbath, and he and his army all crossed over the Jordan.

[35]So Jonathan sent John his brother as leader of the people, and he begged his Nabatean friends for approval to store their huge amount of

baggage with them.[†] [36]But the sons of Jambri from Medeba came out and seized John, and left with everything he had.

[37]After these things happened, they told Jonathan and his brother Simon, saying, “The sons of Jambri are holding a great marriage feast, and they are bringing the bride from Nadabath, a daughter of one of the great noblemen of Canaan, with a huge convoy.” [38]They remembered the blood of John their brother, and went up and hid under the cover of the mountain. [39]They raised their eyes and looked, and behold, there was a noisy crowd coming with much baggage. The bridegroom also came forth with his friends and brothers to meet them with tambourines, the musicians—and many weapons. [40]Jonathan's men rose up against them from an ambush and killed them. Many of the wounded also fell, and the rest fled to the mountain. So they took all their spoils. [41]The wedding was changed to mourning, and the sound of the musicians became like a dirge. [42]Thus they avenged their brother's blood and returned to the low ground of the Jordan.

[43]Bacchides then heard of this and arrived with a large army on the Sabbath at the banks of the Jordan. [44]So Jonathan said to those with him, “Let us stand and fight for our lives, for today is not as yesterday or the day before. [45]Behold, the battle is before us and behind us. The water of the Jordan is on this side and that, and the low ground and thicket is not the place to turn aside. [46]Now therefore, cry out to heaven that you may be saved from the hand of our adversaries.” [47]So the battle was joined, and Jonathan reached out his hand to strike Bacchides, who ducked aside and went behind him. [48]Then Jonathan and his forces jumped into the Jordan River, swimming to the other side. Bacchides and his army did not cross

over the Jordan to strike them. [49]About a thousand of Bacchides' soldiers fell on that day.

[50]Bacchides then returned to Jerusalem and built fortified cities in Judea: the fortresses were in Jericho, and in Emmaus, Beth-horon, Bethel, Timnath, Pharathon and Tephon, all with high walls, gates, and bars. [51]He also placed a guard in them, and they were hostile to Israel. [52]Then he strengthened the cities of Beth-zur and Gazara, and the citadel, and placed armies in them with stores of provisions. [53]He also seized the sons of the rulers of the area, holding them hostage under armed guards at the citadel in Jerusalem.

Attempted Destruction at the Temple

[54]Then in the one hundred fifty-third year, in the second month, Alcimus issued the command to take down the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary. Then he took down the work of the prophets and started to destroy it.[†] [55]At that instant, Alcimus was stricken, his mischief was thwarted, his mouth was shut up, and he became paralyzed. He could not even speak a word so as to give orders concerning his property. [56]So Alcimus died then and there in great pain. [57]When Bacchides saw that Alcimus had died, he returned to King Demetrius. Thus the land of Judah was peaceful for two years.

[58]Soon, all the lawless men deliberated among themselves, saying, "Behold, Jonathan and those with him are living in peace and certitude. Now, therefore, let us bring Bacchides back here, and he will seize them all in one night." [59]So they went and conversed with him, [60]and he departed

to come with a large army, secretly sending letters to all his allies in Judea, telling them to capture Jonathan and those with him. But they could not do so, because their plot had been discovered. [61]So Jonathan and his men caught about fifty of their countrymen who were the leaders of the agitation, and killed them.

Bacchides’ Forces Are Crushed

[62]Then Jonathan, Simon, and those with them departed for Bethbasi in the desert, and rebuilt the outpost that had been destroyed and strengthened it. [63]When Bacchides heard of this, he gathered all his army and sent orders to the men of Judea. [64]Then he arrived and camped at Bethbasi and attacked it for many days, making engines of war. [65]But Jonathan left Simon his brother in the city, and headed out into the country with a handful of men. [66]He struck Odomera and his brothers and the sons of Phasiron inside their tents. Then he launched his attack and entered into battle with his armies. [67]Meanwhile Simon and those with him came out of the city and set on fire the engines of war. [68]Once they took the offensive against Bacchides, he was crushed by them. They upset him greatly because his plan of attack was in vain. [69]Also, he was filled with rage at his advisors, the lawless men who urged him to come into the country. So he killed many of them and then decided to return home.

[70]When Jonathan learned of these events, he sent envoys to make peace with Bacchides and to obtain freedom for the captives. [71]Bacchides accepted the proposal and swore to Jonathan he would not harm him all the days of his life.[†] [72]He returned to him the hostages taken earlier from the

land of Judah. Then he returned to his homeland and made no further attempt to come into their country. [73]Thus the sword was laid down in Israel. Then Jonathan settled down in Michmash, where he began to judge the people and to destroy the ungodly men of Israel.

Alexander Appoints Jonathan High Priest

10 Then in the one hundred and sixtieth year, Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, went forth and conquered Ptolemais. They made him welcome, and he reigned there. [2]But when Demetrius the king learned this, he gathered a huge army and went out to battle him. [3]Demetrius also sent a letter to Jonathan with peaceful words to flatter him. [4]For he said, “Let us act with foresight to make peace with him before he sides with Alexander against us. [5]For he will recall the evils we carried out against him, and against his brothers and his nation.” [6]So the king gave authority to Jonathan to assemble an army, prepare weapons, and be his ally. He also ordered the hostages in the citadel to be released to him.

[7]Then Jonathan entered Jerusalem and read the letter in the presence of all the people and those in the citadel. [8]They were very frightened when they heard the king had given Jonathan authorization to assemble an army. [9]So the men in the citadel returned the hostages to Jonathan, and he brought them back to their parents.

[10]Soon, Jonathan settled in Jerusalem and began to reconstruct the city. [11]He also told the workers to build the walls to surround Mount Zion with square-cut stones for fortification, which they did. [12]Then the foreigners who had been in their fortresses built by Bacchides fled. [13]Each one left his

place and departed into his own land. [14]Only some in Beth-zur who had forsaken the law and the commandments remained, for it was a place of refuge.

[15]When King Alexander heard about the proposals Demetrius had sent to Jonathan, and was told about the battles and the courageous deeds done by Jonathan and his brothers (as well as what they had suffered), [16]he said, “Where will we find another like this man? Let us make him our friend and our ally.” [17]So he wrote a letter and sent it to him, saying:

[18]“Alexander the king to Jonathan his brother, greetings. [19]We have heard you are a mighty warrior and suitable to be our friend. [20]So now we appoint you today as high priest of your people and command that you be called a friend of the king (he also sent him a purple robe and a golden crown). We ask you to agree with our interests and maintain friendship with us.”

[21]So Jonathan, in the seventh month of the one hundred and sixtieth year, put on the holy robe at the Feast of Tabernacles. Then he gathered an army and stockpiled many weapons.

Demetrius I Writes to Jonathan

[22]When Demetrius heard these reports, he was disturbed and said, [23]“What is this that we have done? Alexander has upstaged us by forming a friendship with the Jews for support! [24]I also will write them words of encouragement and promise them glory and gifts, that they may be my support.” [25]So he sent them the following message:

“King Demetrius to the nation of the Jews, greetings. [26]Since you have kept your agreements with us and maintained our friendship, and have not sided with our enemies, we have learned of this and rejoice. [27]Even now, do continue to keep faith with us, and we will repay you good things for your deeds. [28]We will grant you many prerogatives and give you gifts.

[29]“At this time I am releasing and exempting all Jews from tribute and salt taxes and from crown levies. [30]Furthermore, instead of handing over to me a third of the harvest and half of the fruit of the trees, which I am due, I cancel them from this day forward and beyond. I will not extract them from those of Judah, nor from the three provinces annexed to them from Samaria and Galilee from now on. [31]In addition, let Jerusalem and her vicinities be set apart and released from tithes and taxes. [32]I am also releasing my control of the citadel in Jerusalem, and I give it to the high priest, that he may place men in it whom he himself chooses to guard it. [33]So every soul of the Jews taken captive from the land of Judah into all my kingdom I release freely without payment. Let all officials also cancel the duties on their livestock.

[34]“Moreover, all the feasts, the Sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed days, as well as the three days prior to the feast and three after the feast, let all these days be established as exempt and released for the Jews in my kingdom. [35]No one will have the power to exact anything from them or to trouble any of them about anything.

[36]“Let the number of Jews in the army of the king be limited to thirty thousand men, and let the stipend that is due to all the troops of the king be

paid to them. [37]Some of them are to be established in the great fortresses of the king, and some are to be set in positions of trust wherever the kingdom has need. Let their officers and leaders be taken from them, and let them live by their own laws, as the king commanded in the land of Judah.

[38]“As for the three provinces added to Judea from the country of Samaria, let them be considered as one, so it may not be subject to any other authority than the high priest. [39]I have given Ptolemais and the land adjoining it as gifts to the sanctuary in Jerusalem, for regular expenses in the sanctuary. [40]I also grant fifteen thousand silver shekels yearly out of the king's revenues from the appropriate places. [41]Even all the surplus the officials did not pay as in the first years, from now on they will give for the works of the temple. [42]Moreover, the five thousand shekels of silver which the officials received every year from the incomes of the sanctuary, these are also cancelled, because they belong to the priests who minister there. [43]Further, whoever takes refuge at the temple in Jerusalem or in any of its vicinities because he owes a royal payment or any debt, let him be released and receive back all his property in my kingdom.

[44]“The expense of rebuilding and restoring the structures of the sanctuary is also to be paid from the king's revenue. [45]Then too, the expenses of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and the fortifications around it are to be paid from the king's revenue, and also the rebuilding of the walls in Judea.”

Offer Rejected, Demetrius Killed

[46]But when Jonathan and the people heard these words, they did not believe or accept them, because they remembered the great wrongs Demetrius had done in Israel and how badly he had afflicted them. [47]So they favored Alexander, because he was the first to offer peaceable words to them; therefore, they remained allied with him all his days.

[48]Now King Alexander assembled a large army and took position opposite Demetrius. [49]The two kings met in battle, and the army of Demetrius fled. Alexander took pursuit and defeated them. [50]He fought very hard until sunset, and Demetrius fell on that day.

Alexander Weds Cleopatra

[51]Then Alexander sent envoys to Ptolemy the king of Egypt with the following message:

[52]“Since I returned to my kingdom and have taken the throne of my fathers and established my rule (for I defeated Demetrius and secured control of my country; [53]I faced him in war and he and his forces were destroyed by us; and we indeed have sat down upon the throne of his kingdom), [54]now let us build a friendship with each other. Give me your daughter in marriage, and I will become your son-in-law. I will give you gifts worthy of both you and her.”

[55]Then Ptolemy the king answered, saying:

“It was a good day when you went back to your fathers’ homeland and occupied the throne of their kingdom. [56]Now I will do for you what you requested, so meet me at Ptolemais, that we might see each other; and I will be your father-in-law, as you asked.”

[57]Then Ptolemy left Egypt along with his daughter Cleopatra, and reached Ptolemais in the one hundred and sixty-second year. [58]King Alexander met him there, and Ptolemy gave him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. He celebrated her wedding in Ptolemais with great pageantry, in royal manner.

Jonathan Made Governor

[59]Then King Alexander wrote for Jonathan to meet him. [60]So he journeyed with splendor to Ptolemais and there met the two monarchs. He offered them silver and gold, and gave their friends numerous gifts. Thus he found favor with them.

[61]Then some troublemakers from Israel, lawless men, also gathered against Jonathan to accuse him, but the king paid no attention to them. [62]The king then gave command to remove Jonathan's clothes and robe him in purple; and they did. [63]Then the king seated him with himself and said to his leaders, “Go out with him into the midst of the city and proclaim that no one should accuse him concerning any matter; and let no one trouble him for any cause.” [64]So it was that when his accusers saw the honor given him according to the proclamation, and saw him robed in purple, they fled. [65]Thus the king honored him and inscribed him among his close friends. He also appointed him general and provincial governor. [66]Then Jonathan departed to Jerusalem with peace and gladness of heart.

Demetrius II Appoints Apollonius

[67]Now in the one hundred and sixty-fifth year, Demetrius, the son of Demetrius, traveled from Crete to the land of his fathers. [68]When King Alexander heard it, he was very distressed and went back to Antioch. [69]Then Demetrius appointed Apollonius governor of Coele-Syria. Apollonius gathered a large army and marched against Jamnia. He sent word to Jonathan the high priest, saying:

[70]“You alone rose up against us, but I was ridiculed and disgraced because of you. Why do you maintain authority over us in the hill country? [71]Now therefore, if you trust in your army, come down against us in the plain, and let us judge together for ourselves there, for I have an army of the cities. [72]Inquire and learn who I am, and the others who help us. They tell us there is no place for your foot to stand before us, because your fathers were put to flight twice in their land. [73]Even now, you shall not be able to withstand such a cavalry and army in the plain, where there is neither stone nor pebble nor any place to flee.”

Jonathan Defeats Apollonius

[74]But when Jonathan heard the words of Apollonius, he was moved to action. He chose ten thousand men and departed from Jerusalem, and his brother Simon joined to help him. [75]He took up a position at Joppa, but the men of that city shut its gates; for Apollonius had a band of soldiers in Joppa. So Jonathan attacked them. [76]Then the men of Joppa became fearful and opened the gates; and Jonathan captured Joppa.

[77]When Apollonius got word of it, he gathered three thousand cavalry and a sizable army and marched into Azotus, as though he were going beyond. But he went ahead into the plain, since he had a large cavalry and trusted in it. [78]Jonathan chased him to Azotus, and there the armies joined in battle. [79]But Apollonius secretly had left a thousand cavalry behind. [80]Jonathan discovered there was an ambush behind him, for they encircled his army and shot arrows at his troops from morning till sundown. [81]But his army stood their ground, as Jonathan had ordered, and their cavalry grew tired.

[82]Then Simon brought in his army and confronted the phalanx in battle (for the cavalry had grown tired); and they were crushed by him and fled. [83]When the cavalry was scattered on the plain, they retreated to Azotus, entering Beth-dagon, their pagan temple, to hide. [84]Then Jonathan set Azotus and the surrounding cities on fire and took spoils from them. The temple of Dagon and those who took refuge in it were burned up in the fire.[†] [85]So eight thousand men fell by the sword along with those who were killed by the fire.

[86]Then Jonathan left there and camped opposite Ashkelon, and the men of the city came out with great ceremony to meet him. [87]Jonathan and the men with him later went back to Jerusalem with many spoils. [88]Thus when King Alexander heard these reports, he proceeded to honor Jonathan again.[†] [89]So he sent him a golden buckle, as was customary to give to the relatives of kings. He also gave to him Ekron and all its regions as his possession.

Ptolemy IV, Alexander Die

11 Then the king of Egypt gathered together a large army, like sand along the seashore, and many ships; and he sought to obtain possession of Alexander's kingdom by deceit, and to add it to his kingdom. [2]So he set out for Syria with words of peace, and those from the cities were open to him and met with him, because King Alexander ordered them to meet him since he was his father-in-law. [3]But when Ptolemy entered the cities, he set a band of soldiers in every city.

[4]But when they neared Azotus, they showed him the temple of Dagon which had been burned, and Azotus and the surrounding fortifications that were destroyed, and the bodies of those lying about whom Jonathan had burned in the war; for they made heaps of them in his path. [5]They also told the king what Jonathan had done, so as to blame him; but the king remained silent. [6]Jonathan then met the king in Joppa with great ceremony, and they greeted each other and stayed the night there. [7]Jonathan journeyed with the king to the river Eleutherus, and then went back to Jerusalem.

[8]Thus King Ptolemy ruled over the coastal cities as far as Seleucia by the sea, and devised evil plans against Alexander. [9]So he sent ambassadors to King Demetrius, saying, “Come, let us enter into a covenant with one another. I will give you my daughter, Alexander's wife, in marriage, and you will reign over your father's kingdom. [10]For I regret giving him my daughter, since he tried to kill me.” [11]Thus, Ptolemy blamed Alexander because he desired his kingdom. [12]So he took back his daughter and gave

her to Demetrius. Therefore he was estranged from Alexander, and their animosity was evident.

[13]Then Ptolemy entered Antioch and assumed the crown of Asia. So he wore two crowns on his head, that of Egypt and that of Asia. [14]But King Alexander was in Cilicia at this time, for the inhabitants there were in revolt. [15]When Alexander heard of it, he engaged him in battle. So Ptolemy went out with a mighty force and faced him, putting him to flight. [16]Then Alexander took refuge in Arabia, seeking safety. King Ptolemy was held in great honor. [17]So Zabdiel the Arab cut off Alexander's head and sent it to Ptolemy. [18]But King Ptolemy died three days later, and his garrisons in the fortresses were destroyed by the inhabitants of those fortresses. [19]Thus in the one hundred and sixty-seventh year, Demetrius became king.

Jonathan Finds Favor with Demetrius II

[20]In those days, Jonathan gathered men from Judea to attack the citadel in Jerusalem, and he built many engines of war for use against it. [21]But some lawless men who despised their nation came to the king and told him Jonathan would set siege to the citadel. [22]When the king heard this, he was enraged; and he broke camp and went to Ptolemais. He wrote Jonathan that he was to lift the siege, and to meet him in Ptolemais at once for a conference.

[23]But when Jonathan heard this, he issued orders to continue the siege. Then he chose some elders of Israel and some priests, and put himself in danger. [24]For he took silver, gold, clothing, and many other friendly gifts and went to the king in Ptolemais. And Jonathan found favor with him.

[25]Again, some lawless men from the nation accused Jonathan. [26]But the king did to him as those before him had done and exalted him in front of all his friends. [27]He also confirmed him in the high priesthood and whatever other honors he held before, and considered him as one of his best friends. [28]Then Jonathan asked the king to exempt Judea from taxes along with the three provinces and Samaria, and promised him three hundred talents. [29]The king was pleased and wrote Jonathan a letter concerning all these things. Its message was as follows:

[30]"King Demetrius to his brother Jonathan and the nation of the Jews, greetings. [31]The copy of this letter which we wrote to Lasthenes our relative concerning you we have copied also to you, that you might know what it says. [32]'King Demetrius to his father Lasthenes, greetings. [33]To the nation of the Jews, our friends, and who do what is right towards us, we have decided to do good, because of their goodwill toward us. [34]We have established the borders of Judea for them and the three provinces of Aphairema, Lydda, and Rathamin. They were added to Judea from Samaria, as well as all the areas bordering them. All who offer sacrifices in Jerusalem we have released from the royal taxes which the king received from them each year, from the harvest of the earth and fruit of the trees. [35]Any other payments due us from now on from the tithes, the salt pits, and the crown taxes—from all these we grant release. [36]None of these provisions will be cancelled from now on for all time. [37]Now therefore, take heed to make a copy of this, and let it be given to Jonathan and put in a notable place on the holy mountain.' "

Jonathan Aids Demetrius II

[38]When King Demetrius saw the land was peaceful before him and no one was opposed to him, he dismissed his troops, each to their own place, except the foreign soldiers whom he had recruited as mercenaries from the islands of the nations. So all the soldiers who had served his fathers hated him. [39]Now Trypho formerly had been one of Alexander's supporters. He saw that all the soldiers complained against Demetrius. So he approached Imalkue the Arab, who was rearing Antiochus, the young son of Alexander. [40]He insisted that he hand Antiochus over to him, so as to make him king in place of his father. He told Imalkue everything Demetrius had done and the hatred his troops had for him; and he remained there many days.

[41]Meanwhile, Jonathan sent to King Demetrius the request that he remove the soldiers in the citadel from Jerusalem as well as those in the fortresses; for they were at war with Israel. [42]Then Demetrius sent to Jonathan, saying, “Not only will I do these things for you and your nation, but I will greatly honor you and the Jewish nation when I have the opportunity. [43]And you will do rightly to send me soldiers who will ally with me, because all my troops have revolted.” [44]So Jonathan sent three thousand very able men to him at Antioch. When they came to the king, he was very glad at their arrival.

[45]Then men from the city gathered within the city, a hundred and twenty thousand of them, and they wanted to kill the king. [46]But the king fled into the palace, and those from the city seized the streets of the city, and they began to fight. [47]So the king summoned the Jews for help, and they all rallied around him and dispersed throughout the city. On that day they killed about one hundred thousand men. [48]They set the city on fire, took

many spoils on that day, and rescued the king. [49]When the men of the city realized the Jews had gained control of the city at will, they lost their courage and called out to the king with this request: [50]“Restore the peace and make the Jews quit fighting us and the city.” [51]So they threw down their weapons and made peace. Then the Jews were honored before the king and before all those in his kingdom. After this, they returned to Jerusalem with many spoils.

[52]Thus King Demetrius ruled on the throne of his kingdom, and the land was peaceful before him. [53]But he broke his word about everything he promised Jonathan. Thus he became estranged from him, and did not repay Jonathan the favors he had done for him, but greatly afflicted him.

Antiochus VI Honors Jonathan

[54]Later, Trypho returned and had with him the young boy Antiochus, who put on the crown and became king. [55]All the troops who had cursed Demetrius gathered around him. They fought against Demetrius, who was put to flight. [56]Trypho then captured the elephants and gained control of Antioch. [57]So Antiochus the younger wrote to Jonathan, saying, “I confirm you in the high priesthood, set you over the four provinces, and you will be one of the king's friends.” [58]He also sent him gold cups to serve him at table, and gave him authority to drink from these, to dress in purple, and to wear a golden buckle. [59]He then established Simon his brother as general from the Ladder of Tyre to the boundary of Egypt.

[60]Then Jonathan departed and journeyed beyond the river and in the cities. The entire army of Syria gathered around him as allies. When he

went into Askelon, the people of the city met him and honored him. [61]From there, he left for Gaza, but when the inhabitants of Gaza shut him out, he besieged the city, set its surrounding fortifications on fire, and plundered them. [62]Thus the men of Gaza pleaded with Jonathan. He made peace with them, took the sons of their governors as hostages, and dispatched them to Jerusalem. Then he traveled through the country, going as far as Damascus.

[63]Jonathan also got word the officers of Demetrius had arrived in Kadesh in Galilee with a sizable army. They intended to oust him from office. [64]So he set out to meet them, but he left his brother Simon in the country. [65]Then Simon positioned himself at Beth-zur, and for many days fought against it and blocked it off. [66]Then the people begged him for peace, and he granted it to them. So he cast them out from there, took possession of the city, and placed a garrison in it.

[67]Now Jonathan and his soldiers camped by the lake of Gennesaret, and rose early the next morning and marched to the plain of Hazor.[†] [68]Then behold, the foreign army met him in the plain and set up an ambush against him in the mountains. But they themselves met him face to face. [69]Then the men in the ambush rose up from their places and joined the battle. [70]All Jonathan's men fled. None of them remained except Mattathias, the son of Absalom, and Judas, the son of Chalphi, commanders of the armed forces. [71]So Jonathan tore his garments, poured earth on his head, and prayed. [72]Then he turned back to the battle and put the enemy to flight. [73]When Jonathan's men who had run away saw this, they returned and joined him in the pursuit of the enemy as far as Kadesh, and there they set up camp. [74]As

many as three thousand of the foreign army fell that day. Then Jonathan went back to Jerusalem.

Friendship Renewed with Rome and Sparta

12 When Jonathan saw the time was right, he chose envoys and sent them to Rome to validate and renew friendship with them. [2]Also, he sent letters to Sparta and other localities for the same reasons. [3]So they left for Rome, entered the senate chamber, and said, "Jonathan, the high priest, and the nation of the Jews sent us here to renew the former friendship and alliance between ourselves." [4]Then the Romans wrote letters to the citizens in every place, so they might send forth the ambassadors to the land of Judah in peace.

[5]This is the copy of the letters which Jonathan wrote to the Spartans:

[6]"Jonathan the high priest, the elders of the nation, the priests, and the Jewish people to their brothers the Spartans, greetings. [7]Some time earlier, letters were sent to Onias the high priest by Arius, who ruled over you, that you are our brothers, as the attached copy indicates. [8]Onias received the envoy with honor, and he accepted the letters, which plainly showed the alliance and friendship. [9]Therefore, although we do not need these things, since we have the holy books in our hands, [10]we have decided to send and renew our brotherhood and friendship, so we would not be estranged from you. For significant time has elapsed since you sent word to us. [11]Therefore at every opportunity, both on feast days and ordinary days, we remember you unceasingly in the sacrifices we offer and in our prayers, as it is right and proper to remember brothers; [12]for we rejoice in your glory. [13]But

many troubles and many wars have surrounded us, and the kings around us have fought against us. [14]We did not wish to trouble you and our other allies and friends with these wars. [15]For we have had help from heaven assisting us, for we were freed from our enemies, and they were humbled. [16]Therefore we chose Numenius son of Antiochus and Antipater son of Jason, and sent them to Rome to renew our former friendship and alliance with them. [17]We also ordered them to go to you, to greet you and give you these letters from us concerning the renewal of our brotherhood. [18]Now then, please send us a reply."

[19]This is the copy of the letters they sent to Onias:

[20]"King Arius of the Spartans to Onias the high priest, greetings. [21]It has been put in writing regarding both the Spartans and the Jews that they are brothers, and are both of the family of Abraham. [22]So now that we know this, please write us concerning your welfare. [23]Thus we are writing to you that your cattle and possessions are ours, and ours are yours. Therefore we order our ambassadors to report to you accordingly."

Campaigns of Jonathan and Simon

[24]Then Jonathan heard the officers of Demetrius had come back with a larger army than before to make war against him. [25]So he marched out of Jerusalem and engaged them in the area around Hamath, giving them no chance to invade his country. [26]So he sent out spies to their encampment. They later returned and told him the army of Demetrius planned to attack the Jews at night. [27]At sunset, Jonathan ordered those with him to stay awake and to be ready with their weapons for a fight during the night. Then

he sent out an advance guard to surround the camp. [28]When the enemy got word that Jonathan and his soldiers were ready for battle, they were terrified at heart. So they lit fires in their camp and fled. [29]But Jonathan and his men did not know this until it was morning, for they saw the firelight. [30]So Jonathan chased after them, but could not overtake them, because they crossed over the Eleutherus River. [31]Then Jonathan turned aside against the Arabs, called Zabadeans, and struck them and took their spoils. [32]He then broke camp and marched to Damascus and throughout all that country.

[33]Meanwhile, Simon went out and marched as far as Askelon and the fortresses nearby, and turned aside to Joppa and captured it. [34]For he heard they wished to hand over the fortress to the men sent by Demetrius. So he established a garrison there to guard it.

[35]When Jonathan returned, he assembled the elders of the people. Together, they decided to build fortresses in Judea, [36]and to make the walls of Jerusalem even higher, and raise a great high wall between the citadel and the city to separate it from the city, so it would be isolated and its garrison could not buy nor sell goods. [37]So they assembled to rebuild the city and part of the wall on the valley to the east that had fallen; thus he repaired the wall that is called Chaphenatha. [38]Simon also built Adida in the Shephelah. They fortified it and set up bolted gates.

Jonathan Captured, Troops Killed

[39]Then Trypho sought to rule Asia, to wear the crown, and to stretch forth his hand against King Antiochus. [40]He also took precautions lest Jonathan would not permit it, but wage war against him. So seeking to

capture and destroy him, he marched forth to Beth-shan. [41]Then Jonathan went out to meet him with forty thousand soldiers chosen for battle, and he came to Beth-shan. [42]When Trypho saw that he came with a large army, he was afraid to stretch forth his hand against him. [43]So he received him honorably and met him with all his friends. He gave gifts to Jonathan, and ordered his friends and his own troops to obey him as himself. [44]Then he said to Jonathan, “Why have you troubled all these men? We are not at war! [45]Now send them home; but choose a few soldiers for yourself to be with you. Then come with me to Ptolemais, and I will give it over to you along with the rest of the fortresses and the remaining troops and officers. Then I will turn around and go home, for that is why I came here.”

[46]So Jonathan believed Trypho, and did as he had said and sent away the troops, who departed for the region of Judah. [47]But he kept three thousand soldiers with him, two thousand of which he left in Galilee, and a thousand who went with him. [48]But when Jonathan entered Ptolemais, the men of the city shut the gates and captured him, and they slew with the sword all who entered with him.

[49]Then Trypho sent soldiers and cavalry into Galilee and the Great Plain, to kill all Jonathan's men. [50]But when the soldiers learned that Jonathan and those with him had been captured and killed, they encouraged each other to keep marching in close formation, ready for attack. [51]But when the pursuers saw them ready to fight for their lives, they retreated. [52]So they all came safely to the land of Judah and cried out for Jonathan and his men. They were exceedingly afraid, and all Israel mourned greatly. [53]Then all the nations surrounding them tried to defeat them, saying, “There is none to

lead them or to help them. Now then, let us wage war against them and erase them from memory.”

Simon Leads His People

13 Now Simon learned that Trypho had assembled a huge army to march on the land of Judah and crush it.[†] [2]He saw the people were trembling with fear, so he went to Jerusalem and gathered everyone together. [3]He encouraged them, saying, “You know what my brothers and I and my father's house have done concerning the laws and the sanctuary. You know, too, the wars and the crises we have seen. [4]This is why all my brothers perished, all for the sake of Israel, and only I am left. [5]Now may my life never be safeguarded in time of trouble, for I am in no way better than my brothers. [6]Thus I will avenge my nation and this sanctuary and your wives and children, for all the nations have hatefully gathered to destroy us.”

[7]Thus he rekindled the spirit of the people when they heard these words. [8]They responded with a loud voice, saying, “You lead us in place of Judas and your brother. [9]Fight our wars, and we will do everything you tell us.” [10]So he gathered all the men of fighting age and rushed to finish the walls of Jerusalem; he fortified the city on all sides. [11]Then he sent Jonathan son of Absalom with a sizable army to Joppa, and he drove out its people and remained there.

Trypho Kills Jonathan

[12]Meanwhile, Trypho left from Ptolemais with a large force to come into the land of Judah. Jonathan accompanied him under guard.[†] [13]Now Simon

set up camp in Adida, opposite the plain. [14]When Trypho heard that Simon had risen up in place of his brother Jonathan and was about to face him in battle, he sent men to him, saying, [15]“We are detaining your brother Jonathan because of the silver he owed the royal treasury and for which he is responsible. [16]Now send a hundred talents of silver and two of his sons as hostages, that when he is freed he will not rise up against us; then we will free him.” [17]Simon sensed they were speaking to him deceitfully, but he sent for the silver and the sons, lest he arouse great hostility among the people, for they might say, [18]“Because Simon did not give him the money and the sons, Jonathan perished.” [19]Then he sent the sons and the hundred talents. But Trypho acted with deceit and would not free Jonathan.

[20]Later, Trypho arrived to invade Judah to destroy it, and they circled around the road leading to Adora. But Simon and his army advanced along opposite him every place he went. [21]Then men from the citadel sent ambassadors to Trypho, urging him to come to them through the desert and send food for them. [22]Trypho then prepared all his cavalry to come, but there was a heavy snowfall that night, and he could not march through the deep snow. Instead, he departed and went into Gilead.[†] [23]But when he came near Bascama, he slew Jonathan and buried him there.[†] [24]Then Trypho turned and went to his own country.

[25]Simon sent men and gathered the remains of his brother Jonathan and buried him in Modein, the city of his fathers. [26]All Israel mourned him with great lament for many days. [27]Simon also built up the tomb of his father and brothers with polished stone in front and back, making it high enough to be seen. [28]He then built seven pyramids, one opposite the other,

for his father and his mother and his four brothers. [29]Around these pyramids he made engines of war, building massive pillars around them, and upon these pillars he placed suits of armor for a perpetual memorial, and alongside the suits of armor he made carved ships, so they could be seen by everyone sailing the sea. [30]This tomb which he made in Modein exists until this day.

Demetrius II Honors Simon

[31]Now Trypho also dealt wickedly with young Antiochus the king and murdered him.[†] [32]Then he became king in his place and wore the crown of Asia, bringing great adversity to the land. [33]Simon thus strengthened the fortresses in Judea, surrounding them with high towers and with thick walls and gates and bolts, storing provisions in the fortresses. [34]Also Simon selected men and sent them to King Demetrius to bring relief for the country, for all Trypho's actions were violent. [35]Then the king sent him a positive answer and wrote him this letter:

[36]“King Demetrius to Simon the high priest, friend of kings, and to the elders and the Jewish nation, greetings. [37]We received the crown of gold and the palm branch you sent. We are ready to declare general peace with you and to order our officials to cancel your taxes. [38]Indeed, all the grants we made to you stay intact, and let the fortresses you built remain in your keeping. [39]We also forgive the mistakes committed up to the present day as well, and remove the crown tax you owe. If any other tax has been exacted in Jerusalem, let it be no longer exacted. [40]If some of your men are suited

for enrollment in our bodyguard, let them be enrolled. And may there be peace among us."

[41]The yoke of the Gentiles was lifted from Israel in the one hundred and seventieth year. [42]Then the people began to record in their letters and contracts, "In the first year of Simon, the great high priest and commander and ruler of the Jews."[†]

Simon Secures Gazara and Jerusalem

[43]In those days Simon camped at Gazara, surrounding it with soldiers. He also built an engine of war, brought it to the city, and struck and seized one tower.[†] [44]Then the men in the siege engine jumped out and ran into the city, and there was a great commotion in Gazara. [45]The men in the city also climbed up onto the wall with their wives and children, tearing their clothes and crying with a loud voice, pleading with Simon to make peace with them. [46]They said, "Treat us not according to our evil deeds, but according to your mercy." [47]So Simon made an agreement with them and ceased waging war against them. But he cast them out of the city and purified the houses that contained idols. Thus he entered Gazara with hymns and blessings. [48]He also cast out all uncleanness from it and settled men there who would keep the law. Then he fortified it and built a dwelling there for himself.

[49]But the men in the citadel at Jerusalem were prevented from coming and going in the region to buy and to sell. So they were extremely hungry; even the strong among them were dying of hunger. [50]When they called out to Simon to be at peace with them, he did so and then cast them out from

there, purifying the citadel from its defilements. [51]They entered it on the twenty-third day of the second month of the one hundred and seventy-first year with praise and palm branches, and with lyres, cymbals, and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been defeated and cast out of Israel. [52]Thus Simon ordered that each year they should commemorate this day with jubilation. When the temple mount was fortified along with the citadel, he himself and his men lived there. [53]Then Simon noted that his son John had reached adulthood. So he appointed him commander of all the army, and he lived in Gazara.

A Tribute to Simon

14 Then in the one hundred and seventy-second year, King Demetrius gathered his troops and went into Media to enlist help for himself to wage war against Trypho. [2]When Arsaces, king of Persia and Media, learned that Demetrius had entered his borders, he sent one of his officers to capture him alive. [3]So he set out and attacked the camp of Demetrius, and captured him and brought him to Arsaces, who put him in prison.

[4] The land of Judah was peaceful all the days of Simon,

And he sought the good of his nation,

And his leadership and his glory pleased them all his days.

[5] Then in all his glory he took Joppa for a harbor

And made an entrance to the islands of the sea.

[6] He enlarged his nation's borders

And gained control of his country.

[7] He also gathered many captives

And ruled Gazara and Beth-zur and the citadel.

When he removed from it the uncleanness,

No one opposed him.

[8] They farmed their land in peace,

And the land gave forth its produce,

And the trees of the plain their fruit.

[9] Elders sat in the streets,

Talking together of good things;

And the young men wore the glories and apparel of war.

[10] He supplied the cities with food

And furnished them with weapons of defense,

Until his fame spread to the ends of the earth.

[11] He established peace in the land,

And Israel rejoiced with great delight.

[12] Each one sat under his vine and fig tree,

And no one made them afraid.

[13] He caused war to cease in the land,

And kings were defeated in those days.

[14] He fortified all the humble among his people;

He demanded adherence to the law

And removed all the lawless and evil men.

[15] He beautified the sanctuary

And multiplied the vessels of the sanctuary.

Alliances Renewed with Rome and Sparta

[16]When it was heard in Rome and as far away as Sparta that Jonathan had died, they were in great sorrow. [17]But when they heard that his brother Simon had been made high priest in his place and was ruling over the land

and the cities in it, [18]they wrote to him on bronze plaques to renew the friendship and alliance they had built with him and with his brothers Judas and Jonathan. [19]These tablets were read before all the people gathered in Jerusalem.

[20]This is a copy of the letters the Spartans sent:

“The leaders and the city of the Spartans, to Simon, the high priest, and the elders and the priests, and to all the Jewish people, our brothers, greetings. [21]The ambassadors who were sent by you to our people told us about your glory and honor, and we were overjoyed at their coming. [22]So we recorded what was said by them in our public decrees as follows: ‘Numenius, son of Antiochus, and Antipater, the son of Jason, ambassadors of the Jews, came to renew their friendship with us. [23]Our citizens were pleased to receive them honorably and to place a copy of their words in the public archives, so the people of the Spartans might have a record of them. They also sent a copy of this to Simon the high priest.’ ”

[24]Later, Simon dispatched Numenius to Rome with a large gold shield that weighed a thousand minas, to verify the alliance with them.

A Bronze Plaque for Simon

[25]The people heard these words and they said, “How can we show our gratitude to Simon and his sons? [26]For he, his brothers, and his father's house stood strong and waged war with the enemies of Israel by themselves, and secured her freedom.” So they wrote these words on bronze

tablets and put them on the pillars on Mount Zion,[†] [27]and this is a copy of what they wrote:

“On the eighteenth day of Elul, in the hundred and seventy-second year, which is the third year of the great high priest Simon in the court of God's people, [28]at the large gathering of the priests and people and the rulers of the nation and the elders of the land, the following was made known to us:

[29]“Since there have often been wars in the country, Simon the son of Mattathias, priest of the sons of Joarib, with his brothers, placed themselves at risk and opposed their nation's adversaries, so their sanctuary and the law would be protected; and they honored their nation with great glory. [30]Jonathan also rallied their nation, was made their high priest, and was brought before his people. [31]When their adversaries chose to invade their country and seize their sanctuary, [32]Simon set out to wage war for his country. He spent large amounts of his own money, and supplied weapons to the soldiers in his nation's army, and paid them wages. [33]Thus he strengthened the cities of Judea, and Beth-zur on the boundary of Judea, where the weapons of the enemy were kept; and he established there a garrison of Jews. [34]He also strengthened Joppa by the sea and Gazara on the boundary of Azotus, where the enemy had previously lived. He moved the Jews there and supplied them with whatever they needed for their welfare.

[35]“When the people saw Simon's dependability and the glory he was committed to bring to his nation, they chose him as their ruler and high priest, because he did all these things and because of the righteousness and good faith he kept toward his nation. In every way he tried to honor his

people. [36]Under his rule, everything he touched prospered, and he drove out the Gentiles from the land. The men in the city of David in Jerusalem had made a citadel for themselves, from which they went out and defiled the vicinity of the sanctuary and caused great harm to its purity. [37]Then he settled Jews in it and strengthened it for the security of the country and the city, and built up the walls of Jerusalem to greater heights.

[38]“In light of these accomplishments, King Demetrius established him in the high priesthood. [39]He also made him one of his friends and showed him great honor. [40]For he heard the Jews were called friends, allies, and brothers by the Romans and that they had received Simon's ambassadors with honor.

[41]“Thus the Jews and the priests were pleased that Simon should be their ruler and high priest forever, until a faithful prophet should arise. [42]They were also pleased that he should be their governor, and take responsibility for the sanctuary and choose workers to meet its needs, and to look after the country, the weapons and the fortresses. [43]Indeed they decided he should look after the sanctuary and be obeyed by all, that all the contracts of the nation should be drafted with his signature, and that he should be vested in purple and gold.

[44]“None of the people or the priests were to be allowed to repeal any of these things, or say anything in opposition to him, or hold an assembly of the people without him, or be clothed in purple, or wear a gold buckle. [45]Anyone who should do anything contrary to these decisions or nullify any of them was to be held liable.

[46]“All the people resolved that Simon should act according to these decisions. [47]So Simon consented, agreeing to become high priest, and to be the governor and ethnarch of the Jews and priests and the guardian of all.”

[48]They commanded that this decree be inscribed on bronze tablets and be put in a public place near the sanctuary. [49]Copies were also placed in the treasury, accessible to Simon and his sons.

Antiochus VII Seeks Simon's Help

15 Then Antiochus, son of King Demetrius, sent a letter from the islands of the sea to Simon, the high priest and ethnarch of the Jews, and to all the nation. [2]It contained the following:

“Antiochus the King to Simon, high priest and ethnarch, and the nation of the Jews, greetings. [3]Since certain troublemakers gained the mastery over the kingdom of our fathers, I wish to lay claim to the kingdom so I can establish it as it was before. I have recruited a multitude of troops and prepared war ships. [4]I plan to go throughout the nation, that I may pursue those who laid our country to ruin and desolated many of its cities. [5]Now therefore, I validate your tax remissions, which the kings before me forgave you, and whatever other payments they remitted for you. [6]I also authorize you to make your own coinage as money for your nation, [7]and allow Jerusalem and the sanctuary to be free. All the weapons you prepared and the fortresses you built, which you seized, let them remain with you. [8]Every money you owe the royal treasury, as well as future debts, let them be remitted from now on and for all time. [9]As soon as we regain control of our kingdom, we will honor you and your nation and the temple with great glory, that your glory may be evident in all the earth.”

[10]In the one hundred seventy-fourth year, King Antiochus went to the land of his fathers and all his soldiers went with him. Few sided with Trypho. [11]When Antiochus went after him, he fled to Dora by sea, [12]for he knew that calamity had come upon him. His armies deserted him. [13]Then Antiochus set up camp opposite Dora with one hundred and twenty thousand fighting men and eight thousand cavalry. [14]He encircled the city, and the ships joined the battle from the sea. So he pressed hard against the city by land and sea and did not allow anyone to leave or enter.

The Jews Receive Rome's Support

[15]Then Numenius and his men came from Rome with letters to the kings and their countries, in which the following was contained:

[16]“Lucius, the Roman consul, to Ptolemy the king, greetings. [17]The ambassadors of the Jews came to us as friends and allies to renew their longstanding friendship and alliance. They were sent from Simon, the high priest, and by the Jewish people, [18]and brought a gold shield of a thousand minas. [19]Therefore it pleased us to write the kings and their countries, that they not seek to hurt them or wage war against them and their cities and country, or form alignments with those who fight them. [20]It seems right to accept the shield from them. [21]If therefore any troublemakers have escaped from their country to you, give them over to Simon the high priest, that he might prosecute them according to their law.”

[22]The consul wrote identical letters to King Demetrius, and to Attalus, Ariarathes, and Arsaces, [23]and to all the nations, to Sampsames, and the Spartans, and to Delos, Myndos, Sieyon, Caria, Samos, Pamphylia, Lycia, Halicarnassus, Rhodes, Phaselis, Cos, Side, Arados, Gortyna, Cnidus, Cyprus, and Cyrene. [24]They also sent a copy to Simon the high priest.

Antiochus VII Turns on Simon

[25]Meanwhile, King Antiochus besieged Dora a second time, repeatedly launching his forces against it and building engines of war. He put Trypho in confinement, so he could neither go out or go in. [26]Then Simon sent Antiochus two thousand chosen men as allies, along with silver, gold, and considerable weaponry. [27]But Antiochus decided not to accept these things; he broke all the former agreements he had made with Simon, becoming estranged from him. [28]Then he sent Athenobius, one of his friends, to confer with him, saying, “You control Joppa, Gazara, and the citadel in Jerusalem; they are cities of my kingdom. [29]You desolated their territory and caused great damage in the land; and you rule over many places in my kingdom. [30]Now therefore, give back the cities you took and the taxes from the places you rule outside the boundaries of Judea. [31]Otherwise, give me five hundred talents of silver for them, as well as five hundred talents more for the destruction you caused and for the tribute of the cities; or else we will wage war and defeat you.”

[32]When Athenobius, the friend of the king, entered Jerusalem and saw the glory of Simon and the sideboard plated with gold and silver, a magnificent display, he stood amazed. Then he reported the words of the

king to him. [33]Thus Simon answered and said to him, “We have not taken any foreign land, nor have we captured foreign property, but only the inheritance of our fathers, which years ago was seized unjustly by our adversaries. [34]But now that we have occasion, we are holding firmly to the inheritance of our fathers. [35]And as for Joppa and Gazara, which you want, their people were causing great damage to our people and our country. For them we will give you one hundred talents.” [36]Athenobius said not a word in reply, but returned to the king in anger. When he relayed to him these words, plus Simon's splendor and everything he witnessed, the king was extremely enraged.

[37]Now Trypho had boarded a ship and escaped to Orthosia. [38]So the king made Cendebeus his commander-in-chief of the seacoast and gave him infantry soldiers and cavalry. [39]He then ordered him to encamp opposite Judea, and further ordered him to build Kedron and strengthen its gates, and to wage war against the people. But the king himself pursued Trypho. [40]When Cendebeus arrived in Jamnia, he began to harass the people. He also invaded Judea, took people captive, and killed them. [41]Then he built up Kedron and stationed cavalry and soldiers there, so they could march through the roads of Judea, making roads as the king commanded him.

Simon's Sons Defeat Cendebeus

16 Then John traveled from Gazara and told his father Simon the damage Cendebeus was inflicting.[†] [2]So Simon called his two oldest sons, Judas and John, and said to them, “My brothers and I and my father's house have fought Israel's battles from our youth until this very day. Things have gone well for us, so as to rescue Israel many times over. [3]Now I have become old, and you by His mercy are men of maturity. Take over my position and my brother's role and go fight for our country, and may the help sent from heaven be yours.”

[4]Thus John chose twenty thousand fighting men and cavalry from the country. Together they marched toward Cendebeus and encamped overnight in Modein. [5]They arose early, marching to the plain. Behold, a huge army was marching out to meet them, infantry and cavalry, and there was a stream between them. [6]John and his army faced off against them, and when he saw that his troops were afraid to ford the stream, he crossed first. His soldiers saw him and crossed behind him. [7]He then divided up the men, putting the cavalry in the middle of the infantry, for the enemy's cavalry was very large. [8]When they sounded the trumpet, Cendebeus and his army were routed, and numbers of them fell wounded. The rest of them fled into the fortress. [9]Then Judas, the brother of John, was wounded, but John pursued them until Cendebeus reached Kedron, where he had done construction. [10]When they ran into the towers in the fields of Azotus, John set them afire, and roughly two thousand of their men perished. Then he returned to Judea in peace.

John Succeeds Simon

[11]Now Ptolemy, the son of Abubus, had been made governor to rule over the plain of Jericho. He had large hoards of silver and gold, [12]for he was the son-in-law of the high priest. [13]He was optimistic and full of

determination to seize control of the country. So he developed an evil strategy to seize Simon and his sons by trickery.

[14]Now Simon was paying a visit to the cities throughout the country, concentrating on their needs. So he went down to Jericho along with his sons Mattathias and Judas in the one hundred and seventy-seventh year, in the eleventh month, the month of Shebat. [15]The son of Abubus received them with deceit in the little fortress called Dok, which he had erected, and he gave them a grand feast and hid the men there. [16]So when Simon and his sons became drunk, Ptolemy and his soldiers emerged and grabbed their weapons. When they encountered Simon in the banquet hall, they murdered him along with his two sons and certain of his servants. [17]Indeed, Ptolemy committed great treachery, returning evil for good.

[18]Ptolemy then drafted a report to the king about these things and asked that he might send him soldiers to help, and to secure their country and cities. [19]He also dispatched soldiers to Gazara to seize John, and sent letters to military tribunes to come to him, so he might give them silver, gold, and gifts. [20]Then he sent others to capture Jerusalem and the temple hill. [21]But somebody ran ahead and told John in Gazara that his father and his brothers had been killed and that “he has sent men to kill you as well.”[†] [22]When John heard this, he was deeply shocked. He captured the soldiers who came to crush him and killed them; for he discovered they were there to kill him.

[23]The rest of John's words and his war history and brave acts, which he did so courageously, plus the heightening of the walls which he built, and

his other accomplishments,[†] [24]behold, they are written in the book of his high priesthood, from when he was first made high priest following his father.

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The Second Book of the Maccabees

Author—The author is unknown, but it is certainly not the author of 1 Maccabees. This author was most probably a Jew from Palestine who abbreviated or summarized a five-volume work by Jason of Cyrene (2:19–32), who wrote in Greek.

Date—About 124 BC or later. The bulk of Jason's five-volume work spans 180–160 BC.

Major Theme—*God takes care of the Jewish people by rewarding those who are faithful to the Law and punishing evildoers*. This is a story of the weak overcoming the mighty because they pray to God, trust in Him, and obey His laws. The main character, Judas Maccabeus, brings deliverance to the persecuted Jewish community through his victories.

Background—The story begins with two letters from Jerusalem to the Jews in Alexandria, Egypt, urging them to celebrate the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem (the feast of *Hanukkah*) and to resist the pagans. The author then proceeds to summarize the five-volume work of Jason of Cyrene concerning the exploits of Judas Maccabeus and his family.

Outline

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- IV. The reigns of Antiochus V Eupator (164–162 BC) and Demetrius I Soter (161–150 BC): The Later Campaigns of Judas Maccabeus (10:10–15:36)
    - A. Judas's victories against the Idumeans, Timothy, and Lysias (10:10–13:26)
    - B. Plot against Judas's life frustrated (14:1–15:36)
- V. Conclusion and Author's Apology (15:37–39)

Letter to the Jews in Egypt

1 “The Jewish brothers in Jerusalem and the land of Judea, to their Jewish brothers in Egypt: Greetings and good peace.[†]

[2]“May God do good to you, and may He remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, His faithful servants. [3]May He give all of you a heart to worship Him and do His will with a strong heart and willing soul. [4]May He open your heart to His law and His commandments, and may He bring you peace. [5]May He hear your prayers and be reconciled to you, and may He not forsake you in an evil time. [6]We are now praying for you here.

[7]“In the one hundred and sixty-ninth year, in the reign of Demetrius, we Jews wrote to you at the culminating point of the affliction that came upon us, in those years from the time Jason and his followers revolted against the

holy land and the kingdom,† 8and burned the gate and shed innocent blood. We prayed to the Lord and we were heard. So we offered sacrifice and fine flour, lit the lamps, and set out the loaves. 9Now then, celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in the month of Chislev, in the one hundred and eighty-eighth year."†

Letter to Aristobulus and Those in Egypt

10"Those in Jerusalem and in Judea, and the senate and Judas, to Aristobulus, who is from the family of the anointed priests and is the teacher of Ptolemy the king, and to the Jews who are in Egypt, greetings and good health.†

Thanksgiving for Protection

11"Since we were saved by God from great dangers, we thank Him abundantly as those drawn up in battle order against a king. 12For He drove out those who fought against the holy city. 13And when Antiochus their leader reached Persia with a force around him that seemed irresistible, they were cut to pieces in the temple of Nanea through a deception employed by the priests of Nanea.† 14For Antiochus, together with his friends, arrived at the temple to marry her, for the sake of obtaining most of its treasures as a dowry. 15When the priests of the temple of Nanea set out the treasures, and Antiochus, with a few men, had come inside the enclosed wall of the sacred precinct, they closed the temple as soon as he entered it. 16Then they opened the secret door of the ceiling and threw stones. They struck down the governor and his men, dismembered them, and took their heads and threw them to the people outside.[†] [17]Blessed in every way be our God, who delivered up the ungodly men.

The Holy Fire

[18]“Since on the twenty-fifth day of Chislev we will celebrate the purification of the temple, we thought it needful to notify you that you might also celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles and the feast of the fire, when Nehemiah, who built the temple and the altar, offered sacrifices.[†] [19]For when our fathers were led captive to Persia, the pious priests of that time took some of the fire off the altar and hid it secretly in the hollow of a dry well, where they sealed it, so the place would be unknown to anyone. [20]But after enough years had passed, when it pleased God, Nehemiah was sent away by the king of Persia, and he appointed the descendants of the priests who hid the fire to get it. When they reported to us that they had not found the fire but rather a thick liquid, he commanded them to dip it out and bring it.[†] [21]But when the things of the sacrifices were brought to be offered, Nehemiah told the priests to sprinkle the liquid on the wood and the things laid upon it.[†] [22]When this was done and some time had elapsed, and the sun, which had been clouded over, shone forth, a great fire flared up, causing everyone to marvel. [23]While the sacrifice was being consumed, the priests and everyone offered prayer. Jonathan led and all the rest responded, as did Nehemiah.

The Prayer of Nehemiah

[24]“The prayer was offered as follows: ‘O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, fearful, mighty, righteous, and merciful, the only King and Good

One,[†] [25]You only are bountiful, alone righteous, almighty, and eternal. You save Israel from every evil, and You chose our fathers and sanctified them. [26]Accept this sacrifice on behalf of all Your people Israel, and protect Your portion, and sanctify it. [27]Gather our scattered people, free those enslaved among the Gentiles, look upon the rejected and despised, and make the Gentiles know that You are our God. [28]Torment the oppressors and those insolent with arrogance. [29]Plant Your people in Your holy place, as Moses said.'

[30]"Then the priests sang hymns, [31]and when the things of the sacrifice were consumed, Nehemiah ordered that the remaining liquid should be poured upon large stones. [32]When this was done, a flame flared up; but when a light from the altar shone in turn, the flame went out. [33]Now when this became known, the matter was reported to the king of the Persians. He was told that in the place where the exiled priests had hidden the fire, the liquid had appeared from which Nehemiah and his men purified the sacrifice. [34]So the king investigated the matter, enclosed the place, and made it sacred. [35]Then the king exchanged many excellent gifts with those he favored. [36]Nehemiah and his men called this 'nephthar,' which means 'purification,' but by most people it is called 'nephtha.'

Jeremiah Hides the Text

2 "One finds in the records, as it is noted, that Jeremiah the prophet ordered those migrating to take some of the fire.[†] [2]The prophet also gave the law to those migrating and commanded them not to forget the Lord's ordinances, nor be led astray in their thoughts when they happened to see the gold and silver statues and their adornment. [3]He also spoke other such words and urged them not to depart from the law in their hearts.

[4]“It was also written that the prophet received an oracle and ordered that the tabernacle and the ark should accompany him when he went to the mountain where Moses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God. [5]So when Jeremiah went there and found a cave, he brought the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense, and then sealed up the entrance.[†] [6]Some who followed him came to mark the way, but they were unable to find it. [7]Now when Jeremiah learned of this, he rebuked them and said, ‘The place shall be unknown until God gathers His people again and shows His mercy. [8]Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will be seen, as they were shown to Moses, and as Solomon deemed it worthy that the place should be specially consecrated.’

[9]“It was also made clear that Solomon in his wisdom offered sacrifice for the consecration and completion of the temple. [10]Just as Moses prayed to the Lord and fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, so Solomon also prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the whole burnt offerings.[†] [11]Moses said, ‘They were consumed because the sin offering had not been eaten.’ [12]Likewise Solomon also celebrated the eight days.

Memoirs of Nehemiah

[13]“The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah, and also that he founded a library and gathered books about the kings and the prophets, and the writings of David, and letters of kings about

votive offerings. [14]Likewise Judas also collected all the books, lost on account of the war that came upon us; so they are in our possession. [15]Thus if you have need of them, send people to bring them to you.

[16]“Since then we are about to celebrate the purification, we write to you. Therefore you will do well to celebrate the days. [17]For it is God who saved all His people, and gave back the inheritance to all, and the kingdom, the priesthood, and the consecration, [18]as He promised through the law. For we hope in God that He will have mercy upon us soon and gather us from everywhere under heaven into His holy place; for He delivered us from great evils and has purified the place.”

Author's Introduction

[19]Now the account of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, the purification of the great temple, and the consecration of the altar,[†] [20]and moreover, the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator, [21]and the interventions that came from heaven to those who behaved courageously on behalf of Judaism, who although few in number plundered the whole country and pursued the barbarian multitudes, [22]and recovered control of the temple famous throughout the world, freed the city, and restored the laws that were about to be dissolved, while the Lord with great goodness was merciful to them— [23]all this, which was made clear by Jason of Cyrene in five books, we shall attempt to abridge into a single book.

[24]We realize that a confused mass of material and subject matter makes it too hard on most people who wish to plunge into the narrative of history. [25]Thus we have aimed to help those who wish to read with delight, to make

it easy for those who are inclined to memorize, and to appeal to those who read for profit. [26]Therefore for us who have undertaken the difficult task of brevity, this is no easy matter, but one demanding sweat and loss of sleep, [27]as is the case with one who prepares a banquet seeking the benefit of others. All the same, for the sake of the gratitude of many we will gladly endure the uncomfortable toil, [28]leaving the intricate examination of exact details to the compiler, while devoting our labor to arriving at the outlines of the abridgement.

[29]Just as the architect of a new house must be concerned with the whole construction, while the one who decorates it and paints it needs to consider only what is suitable for its adornment, so it seems to me is the case with us.[†] [30]It is fitting for the originator of a history to enter into a thorough discussion of words and be inquisitive about every detail, [31]but one who pursues brevity of narrative must be permitted to forgo exhaustive treatment. [32]Therefore from hereon let us begin our narrative, adding only so much to what has already been said; for it is foolish to lengthen the preface of a history, but cut short the history itself.

Disagreement between Onias and Simon

3 When the holy city was inhabited in complete peace, because the laws were very well observed on account of the godliness of the high priest Onias and his hatred of wickedness,[†] [2]it happened that the kings themselves honored the place and glorified the temple with very magnificent gifts.[†] [3]Even Seleucus, the king of Asia, provided revenue at his own expense for all the services of the sacrifices.[†]

[4]But a certain Simon, from the tribe of Benjamin, who had been made protector of the temple, was at variance with the high priest about the administration of the city market. [5]Thus when he could not prevail over Onias, he went to Apollonius, son of Tarsus, who at that time was governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia.[†] [6]He reported to him the untold wealth in the temple treasury at Jerusalem, so much that the funds could not be counted. Furthermore they did not belong to the account of the sacrifices, and it was possible they could fall under the authority of the king.

Heliodorus Dispatched to Jerusalem

[7]When Apollonius met the king, he informed him about the money that was disclosed to him. So the king chose Heliodorus, who was over his affairs, and sent him with orders to remove the aforesaid money. [8]Thus Heliodorus immediately set out on his journey, seemingly to make an inspection of the cities of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, but actually to carry out the king's purpose.

[9]When he arrived in Jerusalem and was kindly received by the high priest of the city, he told about the disclosure and why he had come, and inquired whether this was truly the case. [10]The high priest informed him of the deposits belonging to widows and orphans, [11]and also some money of Hyrcanus, son of Tobias, a man held in very high regard—the value of which totaled four hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold. All this was contrary to the report of the ungodly Simon. [12]He also told Heliodorus that it was altogether impossible to wrong those who trusted in the holiness of the place and in the dignity and inviolability of the temple

honored throughout all the world. [13]But because of the king's orders, Heliodorus said the money must by all means be taken to the king's treasury. [14]So he set a day to go in and direct the inspection of these funds.

There was no little anguish throughout the whole city. [15]The priests prostrated themselves before the altar in their priestly garments and appealed to heaven, to Him who gave the law concerning deposits, to keep them safe for those who deposited them. [16]To see the appearance of the high priest was to be wounded at heart, for his face and the change of his color revealed the anguish in his soul. [17]For alarm and a trembling of body had come upon the man, through which the pain in his heart became evident to those who saw him. [18]People also rushed out of their houses in crowds to make a public supplication, because the place was about to be brought into contempt.[†] [19]Women, girded with sackcloth beneath their breasts, amassed in the streets. Some of the virgins who were kept inside ran together to the gates, some to the walls, and others peeked out the windows. [20]All stretched out their hands to heaven and made entreaty.[†] [21]There was something pitiable in the prostrations of the entire populace and in the anxiety and great anguish of the high priest.

The Lord Stops Heliodorus

[22]So they called upon the Almighty Lord to keep safe and secure what had been entrusted for those who had placed them in trust; [23]but Heliodorus continued with what had been decided. [24]So when he arrived at the treasury with his bodyguard, the Lord of spirits and all authority was already present. He caused such a great manifestation that all who dared to

accompany him were panic-stricken at God's power. They turned about and fled in feebleness and terror. [25]For a certain horse appeared to them, having a fearful rider. It was arrayed with a very beautiful pack-saddle, and it rushed furiously at Heliodorus and struck at him with its front hooves. He who sat thereon was seen wearing a full armor of gold.[†] [26]Two other young men also appeared to him, remarkable in bodily strength, very beautiful in grandeur, and illustrious in dress. They stood on each side of him and pummeled him continually, inflicting him with many wounds.[†]

[27]Suddenly Heliodorus fell to the ground, and a deep darkness overcame him. His men then picked him up and put him on a stretcher, [28]and carried him away—this man who had just entered the treasury with a great retinue and all his bodyguard, but now was not able to help himself. So they came to know, and it was clearly proven to be the power of Almighty God. [29]He was speechless because of the divine visitation, being thrown on the ground, deprived of all hope of recovery. [30]The people blessed the Lord, who acted marvelously for His own place. The temple, which a little while earlier had been full of fear and trouble, was now filled with joy and gladness, because the Almighty Lord had appeared.

[31]Certain friends of Heliodorus quickly entreated Onias the high priest to call upon the Most High to grant life to him who was lying there, about at his last breath. [32]So the high priest, suspecting the king might think some foul play was perpetrated by the Jews regarding Heliodorus, offered sacrifice for his recovery. [33]While the high priest was making the offering of atonement, the same young men again appeared to Heliodorus, dressed in the same apparel. They stood and said, “Be very grateful to Onias the high

priest, for on his account the Lord has granted you your life. [34]Now since you were punished by heaven, report to all men the majestic power of God.” Then having said this, they became invisible.[†]

Heliodorus Gives Thanks to God

[35]Then Heliodorus offered sacrifice to the Lord and made very great vows to Him who had spared his life. So after he gladly received Onias, he returned with his forces to the king. [36]Then he bore testimony to all men about the deeds of the great God which he had seen with his own eyes. [37]When the king asked Heliodorus what kind of man would be suitable to send on another journey to Jerusalem, he replied, [38]“If you have any enemy or plotter against you, send him there, for you will receive him back thoroughly punished, if he should escape at all. For truly there is some power of God about that place. [39]For He who has His dwelling in heaven watches over that place and aids it, and destroys those who come to do it harm.”

[40]So this was how things turned out concerning Heliodorus and the preservation of the treasury.

Simon's Rage

4 The previously mentioned Simon, who informed about the money and his homeland, spoke evil things against Onias, claiming it was Onias himself who terrified Heliodorus and created the calamity. [2]Simon dared to say that Onias, the man who was the benefactor of the city, the protector of his fellow countrymen, and a zealot for the laws, plotted the whole matter.

[3]But when Simon's hatred progressed to the point that even murders were committed by those he approved, [4]Onias realized the danger of Simon's love of strife, and that Apollonius, son of Menestheus and governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, was even intensifying Simon's malice. [5]So he went to the king, not to accuse his fellow citizens, but to look out for the common good, both public and private. [6]For he saw that without the king's attention, matters could not reach a peaceful settlement, and that Simon would not cease from his fury.

Jason Makes the Jews Learn Greek Customs

[7]When Seleucus died and Antiochus, also called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias obtained the high priesthood by corruption.[†] [8]For through a petition, he promised the king three hundred and sixty talents of silver, and from another source of revenue, eighty talents.[†] [9]In addition to this, he promised to pay one hundred and fifty more if the king gave him permission to establish a gymnasium as a place for training young men, and for enrolling the men of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch. [10]When the king assented and Jason seized the high priesthood, he at once changed his countrymen over to the Greek way of life.[†] [11]He set aside the royal benefits to the Jews brought about through John, the father of Eupolemus, the ambassador who established friendship and alliance with the Romans. He also renounced and destroyed conformity to the laws, and created a new civic life contrary to the customs. [12]For he eagerly founded a gymnasium under the citadel itself, and persuaded the most noble of the young men to wear the Greek cap.[†]

[13]So there was the fullest expression of Hellenization and the adoption of foreign customs because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was ungodly and not a true high priest.[†] [14]Therefore the priests were no longer eager to serve at the altar, but they despised the temple and neglected the sacrifices. Instead, they hastened to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling-school after the invitation to the discus. [15]They counted the honors of their fathers as nothing, but regarded Greek honors as the best. [16]For this reason, difficult circumstances overtook them, and those whose way of life they admired and wished altogether to assimilate became their enemies and punished them. [17]For to act in an ungodly way against the divine laws is no light thing; but the following events will make this clear.[†]

[18]When the quadrennial games were being held at Tyre and the king was present, [19]the vile Jason sent ambassadors, since they were Antiochian citizens from Jerusalem, to carry three hundred silver drachmas for a sacrifice to Hercules. Those who carried the money, however, considered it inappropriate and best not to use the money for sacrifice, but to expend it for another purpose. [20]So this money, intended by the sender for the sacrifice to Hercules, was by the decision of those who carried it applied to the construction of battleships.

[21]When Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent to Egypt to share in the festal proclamation of King Philometor, Antiochus learned that Philometor had become hostile to his government. So he was concerned for his own safety. Therefore, after he reached Joppa, he went on to Jerusalem. [22]He was magnificently received by Jason and the city, being ushered in with torches and shouts. Then he encamped in Phoenicia.[†]

Menelaus Buys the High Priesthood

[23]Then after a period of three years, Jason sent Menelaus, son of the previously mentioned Simon, to carry the money to the king and to complete the records of necessary business. [24]But when he was commended to the king, Menelaus honored him with an appearance of authority and obtained the high priesthood for himself, outbidding Jason by three hundred talents of silver. [25]After he received the king's orders, although in no way worthy of the high priesthood, he returned, carrying the rage and savage cruelty of a tyrant and a wild beast and having the wrath of a barbarian. [26]Thus Jason, after he undermined his own brother, was undermined by another, and was driven as a fugitive into the land of the Ammonites.[†]

[27]So Menelaus took hold of the high priesthood, but he did not pay regularly any of the money promised to the king. [28]Thus when Sostratus the commander of the citadel kept demanding payment, since the collection of revenue was his responsibility, the two of them were summoned before the king on this account. [29]Menelaus left his own brother Lysimachus as his court official in the high priesthood, while Sostratus left Crates in charge of his Cyprian troops.

Onias Is Murdered

[30]While these things were taking place, it came about that the cities of Tarsus and Mallus revolted because they were given as a gift to Antiochis, the king's concubine. [31]So the king went quickly to put down the rebellion. He left Andronicus, a man highly regarded, to act as his regent. [32]But

Menelaus, thinking he had gained a convenient opportunity, pilfered some of the gold vessels from the temple and gave them to Andronicus. As it happened, he had already sold other vessels to Tyre and the neighboring cities. [33]But when Onias found out exactly what had taken place, he condemned these acts, after he departed to a safe place at Daphne, located near Antioch.[†] [34]Therefore Menelaus took Andronicus aside and urged him to kill Onias. Thus Andronicus went to Onias and persuaded him with deceit. He welcomed him with sworn pledges and gave him his right hand. Although Onias was suspicious, Andronicus persuaded him to come out of his place of sanctuary. Then, with no sense of justice, he immediately put him to death.

[35]For this reason, not only the Jews, but also many of the other nations, took offense and were angry at the unjust murder of the man. [36]So when the king returned from the region of Cilicia, the Jews in the city pleaded with him regarding the senseless murder of Onias, and the Greeks also felt the common hatred of the crime. [37]Therefore Antiochus was grieved at heart and filled with pity; and he wept on account of the decency and good behavior of the deceased. [38]Inflamed with anger, he immediately stripped off the purple robe from Andronicus and tore off his garments. Then he led him around the whole city to that very place where he sinned against Onias, and there he put the bloodstained man to death. Thus the Lord repaid him with the punishment he deserved.[†]

Menelaus Tried for Lysimachus's Murder

[39]When much sacrilegious plunder by Lysimachus took place in the city with the consent of Menelaus, and when the report of this spread abroad,

the people gathered together against Lysimachus, because many of the gold vessels had already been carried away. [40]Thus, since the crowds were stirring and completely filled with wrath, Lysimachus armed about three thousand men and began an unjust attack, led by a certain Auranus, a man advanced in years but no less advanced in stupidity. [41]So when the Jews became aware of the assault of Lysimachus, some picked up stones and clubs, and others took handfuls of ashes lying about, and threw them in utter confusion at Lysimachus and his men. [42]As a result, they wounded many of them, killed some, and forced them all to flee. Then they killed the temple robber himself near the treasury.

[43]But a judgment concerning this was presented against Menelaus. [44]For when the king arrived at Tyre, three men sent by the council of elders presented the case before him. [45]But Menelaus, who was already defeated, promised considerable wealth to Ptolemy son of Dorymenes if he won over the king. [46]Therefore Ptolemy took the king aside into a certain courtyard, as if to offer him refreshment, and persuaded him to change his mind. [47]For he indeed acquitted Menelaus, the cause of all the evil, but he sentenced to death those unfortunate men who would have been freed uncondemned even if they pleaded before Scythians. [48]So those who had spoken for the city, the people, and the holy vessels quickly suffered the unjust penalty. [49]For this reason, even the Tyrians were indignant over the crime and provided magnificently for their funeral expenses. [50]But Menelaus, because of the covetousness of those in power, remained in office, increased in malice, and brought about great treachery against his fellow citizens.

5 Around this time, Antiochus set out for his second assault into Egypt. [2]So it came about throughout the entire city of Jerusalem that for almost forty days there were apparitions of horsemen dressed in apparel interwoven with gold and moving quickly through the air, in companies fully armed with spears and drawn swords—[†] [3]troops of horsemen set in battle array and making attacks and counterattacks on this side and on that, with the movement of shields and a multitude of spears, and the shooting of arrows, and the brightness of gold ornaments, and breastplates of all sorts. [4]Therefore all the men prayed that the appearance might be for the good.

Jason's Assault on Jerusalem

[5]But when a false report was circulated that Antiochus was dead, Jason took no less than a thousand men and suddenly made an assault upon the city. When the men on the wall were driven off and the city was finally taken, Menelaus was banished into the citadel. [6]But Jason kept slaughtering his own fellow citizens without mercy, not comprehending that success against his kinsmen was his very unlucky day, for he imagined that he was winning trophies over his enemies rather than over people of the same race.[†] [7]Yet he did not get the upper hand of the government, but in the end gained disgrace from his plot, and took refuge again among the Ammonites.

[8]In the end, his life reached an ugly conclusion. He was accused before Aretas the ruler of the Arabs, but fled from city to city. He was pursued by all, detested as a rebel against the laws, and abhorred as an executioner of his homeland and fellow-citizens. Finally he was cast ashore in Egypt. [9]Thus he who so often banished many from their homelands himself perished in a strange land; for he had set sail to the Lacedaimonians to

obtain protection because of their kinship. [10]So he who cast out many without a burial was unmourned, for he had no funeral of his own, nor did he share a place in the tomb of his fathers.

Antiochus Kills and Desecrates

[11]When the news of what happened reached King Antiochus, he took it to mean that Judea was in revolt. So inwardly he became like a wild beast, left Egypt, and took the city in war.[†] [12]He commanded his soldiers to cut down without mercy whomever they met and to slaughter those who went into their houses. [13]So there was a killing of young and old, a killing of boys, women, and children, and a slaughtering of virgins and infants. [14]Eighty thousand were destroyed in a total of three days, forty thousand in hand-to-hand combat; and no fewer were sold into slavery than were slain.

[15]Not satisfied with these things, Antiochus dared to enter the most holy temple in all the earth. He had as his guide Menelaus, who had become a traitor both to the laws and to his country.[†] [16]With defiled hands he took the holy vessels, and with profane hands he pulled down the things dedicated by other kings to increase the glory and honor of the place. [17]Antiochus was haughty, but was unaware that, because of the sins of those who lived in the city, the Lord was momentarily angered, and therefore was withholding grace as a temporary punishment of the place. [18]However, if the people of the city had not been involved in so many sins, this man would have been scourged and brought to ruin as soon as he had come, as was Heliodorus, whom Seleucus the king had sent to inspect the treasury. [19]But the Lord did not choose the nation because of the place, but

the place because of the nation.[†] [20]Therefore the place also itself shared in the misfortunes that befell the nation, and later had a share in its benefits; and what was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty was restored again in all its glory by the reconciliation of the great Lord.

[21]At any rate, Antiochus carried off eighteen hundred talents from the temple and hurried away to Antioch. In his arrogance he thought he could sail on the land and walk on the sea because of the lifting up of his heart. [22]But he also left governors to afflict the people. In Jerusalem he left Philip, a Phrygian by race, more barbarous in character than the one who appointed him; [23]and in Gerizim, Andronicus. In addition to these he left Menelaus, who lorded it over his fellow citizens worse than did the others, having a hateful disposition toward the Jewish citizens. [24]Antiochus sent Apollonius, commander of the Mysians, with an army of twenty-two thousand men, with orders to slaughter all the grown men and to sell the women and young boys as slaves. [25]After he arrived in Jerusalem and pretended to be peace-loving, this man waited until the holy day of the Sabbath; then, finding the Jews not at work, he commanded his men to take up arms.[†] [26]He put to the sword all those who came out to see them; then he rushed into the city with his armed men and killed great numbers of people.

[27]But Judas Maccabeus, with about nine others, withdrew into the desert so as not to share in the defilement. He kept himself and those with him alive in the mountains as do wild animals, by continually eating food that grew wild.

Persecution of the Jews

6 Not long afterward, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Jews to leave behind the laws of their fathers and not to live by the laws of God. [2]He also insisted they pollute the temple in Jerusalem by calling it the temple of Olympian Zeus, and to call the one in Gerizim the temple of Zeus the Hospitable, as did the people who lived at one time in that place.[†] [3]The intensity of evil was hard to deal with and extremely hateful, [4]for the temple was filled with debauchery and reveling by the Gentiles, who relaxed with friends and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and still further brought unfitting things inside. [5]The altar was filled with disgusting things forbidden by the laws. [6]A man could neither keep the Sabbath, nor observe the feasts of his fathers, nor simply confess himself to be a Jew.

[7]When the month came for the king's birthday, the Jews were led by bitter constraint to partake of the sacrifices; and when the feast of Dionysus came, they were forced to walk in procession for Dionysus wearing ivy wreaths.[†] [8]Moreover, a decree laid down by Ptolemy was sent to the nearby Greek cities that the same manner of conduct be imposed on the Jews to partake of the sacrifices; [9]but they should slaughter those who chose not to change over to Greek customs. One could see, therefore, their present misery.

[10]For instance, there were two women brought for circumcising their children. They publicly paraded these women around the city, with their babes hanging from their breasts, then they threw them down from the city wall. [11]Others who came together in the nearby caves to keep the seventh day secretly were betrayed to Philip and were all burned together, because

they piously kept themselves from crying out for help on account of their regard for the most holy day.[†]

[12]Now I urge those who read this book not to be discouraged by these calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were for the discipline of our people, but not for their destruction.[†] [13]For it is an act of great kindness for the Lord not to allow our people to act ungodly for long, but to punish them immediately. [14]But the Lord does not act the same way with other nations. He waits patiently until they attain the completion of their sins, then punishes them. Thus He does not judge us in this way, [15]so as to take vengeance on us afterwards when we have reached the end of our sinning. [16]For this very reason He never withdraws His mercy from us. Although He disciplines us with calamities, He does not abandon His own people. [17]Let what I have said serve as a reminder, but we must continue the narrative.

Eleazar Is Martyred

[18]Eleazar, one of the scribes in high position, a man already advanced in years and of a noble presence, was forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. [19]But welcoming an honorable death rather than a defiled life, he spat out the flesh and approached the rack of his own accord. [20]He did as men should do who refuse what is not lawful to eat, even for the love of life.

[21]Those in charge of the unlawful sacrifice, because of their longtime acquaintance with him, took the man aside privately and urged him to bring meat proper for him to use, pretending to prepare it for himself as though he

were eating the flesh of the sacrifice commanded by the king. [22]Thus by doing this he might be saved from death, and be treated kindly on account of his long friendship with them. [23]But making an honorable resolve worthy of his years and the dignity of his old age and gray hair, which he had reached through the distinction of his excellent life even from childhood, and moreover according to the holy God-given laws, he turned himself over to them quickly, telling them to send him immediately to Hades.

[24]“For to pretend such things,” he said, “is not worthy of our time of life, lest many of the young should suppose that Eleazar in his ninetieth year has gone over to a foreign religion,[†] [25]and because of my pretense for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they should be led astray through me, while I earn only pollution and defilement in my old age. [26]For even if for the present I should avoid the punishment of men, yet whether I live or die, I shall not escape the hands of the Almighty. [27]Therefore by manfully giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age, [28]and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and bravely for the venerable and holy laws.”

After he said this, he went straight to the rack, [29]and those who had just demonstrated good will toward him now showed hostility, because they took the words he had spoken to be madness. [30]When he was about to die from the blows, he groaned and said, “It is evident to the Lord in His holy knowledge that, though I could have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body from this beating, but in my soul I gladly suffer these things because I fear Him.”

[31]So in this manner he died, leaving in his death an example of his noble character and a memorial of his virtue, not only to the young but to the many people of his nation.

A Mother and Her Sons Are Martyred

7 It came about also that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and forced by the king to be bound and tortured with whips and cords until they partook of the unlawful swine's flesh.[†] [2]One of them, acting as spokesman, said, “What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers.”

[3]The king became enraged, and commanded that pans and caldrons be heated. [4]These were heated immediately; and he commanded them to cut out the spokesman's tongue, and to scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of the brothers and the mother watched. [5]When he was utterly helpless, the king ordered them to take him to the fire, while he was still breathing, and to fry him in a pan. As the smoke from the pan spread out broadly, the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die bravely, saying, [6]“The Lord God is taking notice of us and in truth is encouraging us, as Moses proclaimed in his song which he sang, bearing witness against the people to their faces: ‘And God will have compassion on His servants.’ ”[†]

[7]After the first brother died in this manner, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore away the skin of his head with the hair, and asked him, “Will you eat pork rather than have your body punished limb by limb?” [8]But he replied in the language of his fathers and said to them,

"No." Therefore this brother in turn underwent the same torture as the first. [9]So when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch! You set us free from this present life, but the King of the world will raise us to an everlasting renewal of life, because we die for His laws."[†]

SAINTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Immediately after quoting the Lord's proclamation to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," Jesus asserts, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mt 22:32). Thus He affirms that the great patriarchs of the Old Testament still live, as do all the righteous men and women of old who lived in anticipation of the coming Messiah. Hebrews 11 reviews the wonderful deeds of many of these Old Testament saints, and we then read that "we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1).

For the New Testament Church, then, these "witnesses" were the saints of the Old Testament. Eusebius of Caesarea, the church historian, writing early in the fourth century, called these great saints "Christians in fact, if not in name." He went on to say:

> It is obvious that they knew God's Christ Himself, since He appeared to Abraham, instructed Isaac, spoke to Jacob, and conversed freely with Moses and the Prophets who came later, as I have already shown. Hence, you will find that those divinely favored men were even honored with the name of "Christ," according to the word which says of them, "Touch not my Christs

> [Greek *christoi*, anointed ones], and do My Prophets no harm" (Ps 104:15).

HONORING THE SAINTS

The Church's natural and fitting veneration of the saints of the Old Testament is very evident in a hymn sung on the second Sunday preceding Christmas, the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers:

> Come feast-lovers, let us extol with hymns the assembly of the forefathers—Adam the first father, Enoch, Noah, and Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and those after the Law—Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Samuel; and with them Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve Prophets, with Elijah and Elisha, and all the rest.

Besides being remembered on these two Sundays, many Old Testament saints have their own days of commemoration, such as Jeremiah (May 1); Job (May 6); Isaiah (May 9); Elijah (July 20); Samuel (August 20); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (August 21); Joshua (September 1); Moses (September 4); Baruch (September 28); Hannah (December 9); Daniel (December 17); and Joseph (son of Jacob) and King David (first Sunday after Christmas).

The church fathers often extol these Old Testament heroes. St. John Chrysostom repeatedly urged his flock to emulate the patient endurance of "the great and noble Job." St. Gregory of Nyssa writes, "Noah was a righteous man, the Scriptures say, and Abraham was faithful, Moses meek, Daniel wise, Joseph chaste, Job blameless, and David perfect in patience."

Eleazar and the Maccabean martyrs, whose story is told in 2 Maccabees 6:18—7:42, deserve special attention. This Jewish scribe and seven brothers, along with their mother, Solomonia, valiantly defied the sacrilegious commands of King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was fiercely persecuting the Jews. For their defiance, they were brutally executed in Jerusalem in about 167 BC. These unwaveringly faithful Jews are prototypes of all the Christian martyrs. In their commemoration on August 1, they are called "great martyrs, before the martyrs of Christ."

The Church's high esteem for the Old Testament saints is also seen in her custom of depicting the forefathers and prophets around the base of the interior central dome of a church. And by remembering these saints in her liturgical calendar, the Orthodox Church demonstrates her understanding that the Body of Christ transcends limitations of time and space. This awareness is clearly expressed at every Divine Liturgy: "And again we offer unto You this reasonable service for all those who in faith have gone before us to their rest: patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith."

For Orthodox Christians, it is the experience of worshipping God with all the saints that powerfully confirms their continuing presence in our midst.

[10]After him, the third fell prey to their sport. When it was demanded, he quickly put out his tongue and courageously stretched forth his hands, [11]and said bravely, "I received these from heaven, and because of His laws I disregard them, and from Him I hope to get them back again." [12]As a

result the king himself and those with him were astonished at the young man's spirit, for he regarded his sufferings as nothing.

[13]When he died, they tortured and tormented the fourth in the same way. [14]So when he was near death, he said, “One may be chosen to die at the hands of men and to look for the hope that God gives of being raised again by Him. But for you there shall be no resurrection to life.”[†]

[15]Next they led forward the fifth and tormented him. [16]But he looked at the king and said, “Because you have authority among men, mortal though you are, you do what you please; but do not think that God has forsaken our people. [17]Continue, and behold how His mighty power will torture you and your seed!”

[18]After him they led forward the sixth. When he was about to die, he said, “Do not deceive yourself, for we are suffering these things on our own account because of our sins against our own God. Therefore things worthy of wonder have happened. [19]But do not think that you shall be innocent for trying to fight against God!”

[20]The mother was especially admirable and worthy of good memory. Though she saw her seven sons perish in the span of a single day, she bore it courageously because of her hope in the Lord.[†] [21]She encouraged each of them in the language of their fathers. Filled with a noble spirit, she stirred her womanly reasoning with manly courage, saying to them, [22]“I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you breath and life, nor I who arranged in order the elements within each of you.[†] [23]Therefore the Creator of the world, who formed man in the

beginning and devised the origin of all things, will give both breath and life back to you again in His mercy, since you now disregard yourselves for the sake of His laws.”

[24]Antiochus supposed that he was being treated with contempt, and suspected her speech was insulting him personally. Thus, since the youngest brother was still alive, not only did he appeal to him in words, but at the same time guaranteed him with oaths that he would make him rich and enviable if he would turn away from his fathers, and that he would consider him a friend and entrust him with public affairs.[†] [25]But when the young man refused to pay any attention to him, the king called his mother to him and urged her to advise the boy to save himself. [26]After much urging from him, she agreed to persuade her son. [27]But she leaned close to him and mocked the cruel tyrant, speaking in their native tongue, saying, “My son, have mercy on me. I carried you for nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years. I reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you. [28]I beseech you, my child, to look at heaven and earth and see everything in them, and know that God made them out of nothing; so also He made the race of man in this way.[†] [29]Do not fear this executioner! But be worthy of your brothers and accept death, that in God's mercy I may receive you back again with your brothers.”[†]

[30]While she continued speaking, the young man said to the king, “What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king's command, but I obey the command of the law, given to our fathers through Moses. [31]But you, who have invented all manner of evil against the Hebrews, will not escape the hands of God, [32]for we are suffering because of our own sins. [33]So if for

the sake of reproof and discipline, our living Lord is angry for a little while, He will again be reconciled with His own servants. [34]But you, O unholy man and most defiled of all men, do not be elated in vain and puffed up by uncertain hopes when you raise your hand against the children of heaven. [35]You have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty, all-seeing God. [36]For now our brothers have endured a brief suffering and then passed on into everlasting life under God's covenant. But you, by God's judgment, will receive just punishments for your haughtiness. [37]Like my brothers, I give up body and soul for the laws of our fathers, crying out to God, that He may soon show His mercy to our nation, and by afflictions and calamities make you confess that He alone is God,[†] [38]and through my brothers and me bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty which has justly come upon our entire nation."

[39]Then the king became bitterly enraged at his contempt and treated him worse than the others. [40]So, putting his trust completely in the Lord, he died in his innocence. [41]Last of all, the mother died, after her sons.

[42]Let this be enough, then, about the eating of sacrifices and the extreme tortures.

The Revolt of Judas Maccabeus

8 But Judas, also called Maccabeus, and those with him secretly infiltrated the villages and summoned their kinsmen. They called together those who had continued in the Jewish religion and took them as companions. So they gathered about six thousand men.[†] [2]They invoked the Lord to look upon the people, who were trampled underfoot by all, to have compassion on the temple, which had been profaned by ungodly men, [3]to have mercy on the city, which was being destroyed and was about to be leveled to the ground, and to hearken to the blood that cried out to Him. [4]They also invoked Him to remember the lawless destruction of the sinless babies and the blasphemies committed against His name, and to show His hatred of evil.

[5]As soon as Maccabeus had his army in order, he was not to be withstood by the Gentiles, for the wrath of the Lord had turned to mercy. [6]He came without notice to towns and villages and set them on fire. At opportune times he regained places and put to flight not a few of the enemy. [7]He found the night the best time for such hostilities. So talk of his manliness spread everywhere.

Nicanor Attacks Judea

[8]When Philip realized that Judas was making progress little by little and that he was advancing with more frequent efficiency, he wrote to Ptolemy, the governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, for aid to the king's government. [9]And Ptolemy quickly appointed Nicanor the son of Patroclus, the foremost of his friends. He sent him in command of no fewer than twenty thousand Gentiles of all nations to get rid of all the people of Judea. He sent Gorgias with him, a general and a man experienced in the affairs of war. [10]Nicanor determined to make up for the king the taxes due to the Romans—two thousand talents—from the capture of the Jews. [11]He immediately sent word to the cities by the sea, inviting them to buy Jewish slaves and promising to hand over ninety slaves for a talent, not expecting that the judgment of the Almighty was about to fall upon him.

[12]Now word came to Judas concerning Nicanor's impending attack; and when he told those with him about the arrival of the army, [13]those who were cowardly and distrustful of God's justice ran off and removed themselves from that place. [14]Others sold all their remaining property, and at the same time entreated the Lord to rescue those sold by the ungodly Nicanor before he even met them. [15]They entreated Him, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the covenants made with their fathers, and because they were called by His holy and magnificent name. [16]But Maccabeus gathered those around him, six thousand in number, and exhorted them neither to be panic-stricken by the enemy nor to fear the great multitude of Gentiles who were unjustly coming against them, but to contend bravely.[†] [17]He also exhorted them to keep before their eyes the lawless outrage committed against the holy place by the Gentiles, and the torture of the mocked city, and still more the dissolution of their ancestral way of life. [18]“For they trust in arms and bold acts,” he said, “but we trust in Almighty God, who with only one nod is able to overthrow both those who come against us and the entire world.”

[19]He also spoke to them of the times help came to their forefathers, how the one hundred and eighty-five thousand perished under Sennacherib, [20]and how in the time when the battle took place in Babylonia against the Galatians, eight thousand in all entered the fray, along with four thousand Macedonians. But when the Macedonians were perplexed, the eight thousand destroyed the one hundred and twenty thousand because of the help that came to them from heaven. Then they took many spoils.

Judas’ Victories

[21]With these words he gave them good courage and prepared them to die on behalf of their laws and their homeland. Then he divided his forces into four parts. [22]He appointed his brothers, Simon and Joseph and Jonathan, each to command a division, putting fifteen hundred soldiers under each. [23]In addition, he appointed Eleazar to read aloud from the holy book and gave the watchword, “The help of God.” Then he led the first division himself and joined battle with Nicanor.[†]

[24]When the Almighty became their ally, they slew more than nine thousand of the enemy, and wounded and crippled most of Nicanor's army, and forced them all to flee. [25]They seized the money of those who came to buy them as slaves. After they pursued them for some distance, they were compelled to return because of the hour; [26]for they did not continue their pursuit because it was the day before the Sabbath.[†] [27]So when they had collected their arms and stripped the spoils from their enemy, they kept the Sabbath, greatly blessing and giving thanks to the Lord, who had brought them safely through the day and appointed it for them as a beginning of mercy. [28]Then after the Sabbath they gave a portion of the spoils to those who were tortured and to the widows and orphans, and distributed the rest among themselves and their children. [29]When they had done this, they made a common supplication and besought the merciful Lord to be reconciled at last with His servants.

[30]Moreover, of the forces on the side of Timothy and Bacchides, who contended against them, they killed more than twenty thousand of them and became the masters of exceedingly high fortresses. They divided a great

many spoils, giving shares equal to their own to those who had been tortured and to the orphans and widows, and also to the aged. [31]After they collected the enemy's weapons, they organized them all carefully in convenient places, and carried the rest of the spoils to Jerusalem. [32]They killed the commander of Timothy's forces, a most unholy man and one who had greatly troubled the Jews. [33]While they were celebrating the victory in the city of their fathers, they burned those who had set fire to the temple gates: Callisthenes and some others, who had fled into one small house; so they received a recompense worthy of their impiety.

[34]The thrice-sinful Nicanor had brought the thousand merchants for the purchase of the Jews, [35]but he was humbled with the help of the Lord by the opponents he regarded as of the least account. Thus, after he succeeded primarily in the destruction of his own army, he took off his glorious military apparel and made his way inland alone like a fugitive until he reached Antioch. [36]There, he who had undertaken to establish taxes for the Romans by the capture of the people of Jerusalem proclaimed that the Jews had a Defender, and therefore were invulnerable, because they followed the laws appointed beforehand by Him.

God Punishes Antiochus

9 About that time, it happened that Antiochus returned in dishonor from the region of Persia. [2]For he had entered the city called Persepolis and attempted to rob the temples and control the city. Therefore when the citizens rushed to the city's aid with arms, Antiochus and his men were routed; and it came about that Antiochus was put to flight by the citizens and made a shameful return home. [3]Now while he was in Ecbatana, news came to him about what had happened to Nicanor and the forces of Timothy. [4]Swollen with rage, he supposed that he would also vent upon the Jews the evil done to him by those who had banished him. Wherefore he commanded his charioteer to drive without stopping to complete the journey. But the judgment of heaven came upon him, for in his arrogance he said, “When I arrive there I will make Jerusalem a common burial place of the Jews.”

[5]But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him with an incurable and unseen plague. For as soon as he stopped speaking, a deadly pain seized him in his inward parts, with sharp internal torments— [6]and this very justly, for he had tortured the inward parts of others with many and unusual afflictions. [7]Yet by no means did he cease from his haughtiness, but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Jews and giving orders to hasten the journey. So it came to pass that he fell out of his chariot as it rushed along, and the fall was so hard that it tortured every limb of his body.

[8]He who had just been thinking that he could command the waves of the sea because of his superhuman arrogance, and imagined he could weigh the high mountains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter. Thus he conveyed plainly to all the manifest power of God.[†] [9]Accordingly, worms swarmed up from the ungodly man's body, and his flesh rotted away while he was still alive, anguishing and in pain. Because of his odor, the whole army was repulsed by his rottenness,[†] [10]and because of his intolerable smell no one was able to carry the man who a little while before thought he could touch the stars of heaven. [11]Then he was broken

down, and began to cease from much of his arrogance and to come to a recognition of the divine scourge; for he was bent over with pain at every moment.[†] [12]When he could no longer endure his own stench, he spoke these words: “It is right to be subject to God, and no mortal should think that he is equal with God.”

[13]Then this disgusting man prayed to the Lord, who would no longer have mercy on him, [14]saying that the holy city, which he had been hastening to level to the ground and make into a common burial place, he was now proclaiming to be free. [15]Moreover, the Jews, whom he did not consider worthy of a burial place, but to be thrown out along with their children for the wild animals and the birds to eat, he would make them all equal to citizens of Athens. [16]Furthermore, the holy temple, which he had plundered in times past, he would adorn with the finest offerings, and restore—many times over—all the holy vessels; and the taxes assigned to the sacrifices he would pay from his own revenues. [17]In addition to this, he also would become a Jew and visit every inhabited place to proclaim the might of God.

A Final Letter to the Jews

[18]But when his sufferings did not cease at all, for the judgment of God came upon him justly, he was driven to despair over what had happened to him. Thus he wrote the Jews the letter recorded below, in the form of a supplication. It contained the following words:

[19]“To the good Jewish citizens, Antiochus your king and general sends many greetings and good wishes for your health and welfare. [20]If you and

your children are strong and your interests are served, then I am glad. With my hope in heaven, [21]I kindly remember your respect and goodwill.

“Now as I was returning home from the region of Persia, I was struck with a difficult illness and now consider it necessary to be concerned about the common safety of all. [22]But I am not giving up hope for myself, for I have great hope of escaping from this illness. [23]Nevertheless, I observed that even my father, when he led his army into the upper countries, appointed his successor, [24]that if anything unexpected should arise or any unwelcome news should come, the people throughout the realm would not be troubled; for they would know to whom the government was left.

[25]“In addition to this, I understand how the rulers, close at hand and the neighbors of my kingdom, keep watching for opportunities and waiting to see how things will turn out. Thus I have appointed my son Antiochus to be king. Oftentimes when I hastened off to the upper provinces, I entrusted and commended him to most of you. So I have written to him what is written here.

[26]“Therefore I urge you and request that you remember my acts of kindness for both the common and private good, and maintain your present goodwill toward me and my son. [27]For I am persuaded that he, following my policy, will treat you kindly and considerately.”

[28]So the murderer and blasphemer suffered very grievously, as he had treated others. For he died a miserable death in the mountains of a foreign land. [29]Then Philip, who grew up with him, took his body home. But

fearing the son of Antiochus, he went instead to Ptolemy Philometor in Egypt.

Judas Maccabeus Purifies the Temple

10 With the Lord leading them on, Maccabeus and those with him received back the temple and the city. [2]They took down the altars fabricated in the marketplace by the foreigners, and also destroyed the sacred precincts. [3]When they had purified the temple, they made another altar and, striking fire out of stones, they offered sacrifices—the first in two years. They offered incense and lit lamps and set out the bread of the Presence.

[4]When they had done this, they fell prostrate and besought the Lord so as never again to fall into such calamities, but if they should ever sin, they might be chastised by Him with gentleness and not be handed over to blasphemous and barbarous nations. [5]It happened on the anniversary of the same day the temple was profaned by the foreigners, that the purification of the temple took place: on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chislev.[†] [6]They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the Feast of Tabernacles, remembering how a short time before they had spent the feast living in mountains and caves like wild animals.[†] [7]Therefore, carrying ivy-wreathed wands, beautiful olive branches, and even palm branches, they offered hymns of praise to Him who made possible the purifying of His own place.[†] [8]They decreed by a common edict and vote that the whole Jewish nation should celebrate these days every year. [9]Such then was the end of Antiochus, called Epiphanes.

The Reign of Antiochus V Begins

[10]Now we will tell what took place under Antiochus Eupator, the son of that ungodly man, and will set forth and encompass briefly the calamities of the wars.[†] [11]For this man inherited the kingdom and appointed a certain Lysias as chief governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia. [12]Then Ptolemy, called Macron, led the way in protecting the rights of the Jews because of the wrongdoing that happened to them, and he attempted to maintain peaceful relations with them. [13]For this reason he was accused before Eupator by the king's friends. He heard himself called a traitor at every turn because he abandoned Cyprus, entrusted to him by Philometor, and defected to Antiochus Epiphanes. Since he could not exercise his noble authority honorably, he took poison and ended his life.

The Idumeans Fall to Judas

[14]When Gorgias became governor of the region, he maintained mercenary troops and attacked the Jews at every turn. [15]At the same time, the Idumeans, in possession of vital strongholds, were harassing the Jews. They received fugitives from Jerusalem and endeavored to keep up the war. [16]But Maccabeus and his men made supplication and implored God to be their ally, then rushed against the strongholds of the Idumeans. [17]They attacked them aggressively, gained possession of the places, and drove back all who fought upon the wall. They slaughtered everyone they encountered, killing no fewer than twenty thousand.

[18]But at least nine thousand fled into two very strong towers, which were well equipped, containing everything necessary to withstand a siege. [19]So

Maccabeus left behind Simon, Joseph, and also Zacchaeus and those with him, a force sufficient to besiege them. Then he went to more urgent places. [20]But those around Simon, who were money lovers, were bribed by some of those in the towers. When they had received seventy thousand drachmas, they allowed some of them to slip away. [21]When news of what happened reached Maccabeus, he gathered the leaders of the people and accused them of selling their brothers for money by releasing their enemies to fight against them. [22]Then he killed these men who had become traitors and immediately seized the two towers. [23]Faring well at arms in everything he undertook, he destroyed more than twenty thousand in the two fortresses.

Maccabeus Victorious over Timothy

[24]Now Timothy, who had been defeated previously by the Jews, gathered a very massive and powerful force of mercenaries and assembled cavalry from Asia in no small number. Then he arrived as though he would take Judea captive. [25]As he drew near, Maccabeus and his men made supplication to God as they sprinkled earth on their heads and girded their loins with sackcloth. [26]They fell prostrate before the foot of the altar and implored Him to be merciful to them and to be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries, as the law plainly shows. [27]Then arising from prayer, they took up their weapons and advanced a considerable distance from the city. When they came near the enemy, they were by themselves. [28]But as dawn was breaking, the armies attacked one another. The one had the guarantee of prosperity and victory, with their virtue and the Lord as their place of refuge, but the other depended on rage as their leader in the fight.

[29]When the battle was strongly contested, there appeared to the enemy from heaven five majestic men on horses with golden bridles, and they were leading the Jews.[†] [30]They took Maccabeus between them and shielded him with their own armor. They kept him from being wounded and cast arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy. Wherefore, confused with blindness and full of disorder, they were cut to pieces. [31]Twenty thousand five hundred were slaughtered along with six hundred cavalry.

[32]Timothy himself fled to a stronghold called Gazara, especially well garrisoned, where Chaereas was commander. [33]Maccabeus and his men eagerly besieged the stronghold for four days, [34]but the men within it trusted in the security of the place. So they kept blaspheming beyond measure and uttering disgusting words. [35]Now when the fifth day dawned, twenty young men in the army of Maccabeus burned with anger because of the blasphemies. So they bravely attacked the wall and with savage fury struck down everyone they encountered. [36]Others likewise went up during the distraction against those inside and burned down the towers. They kindled fires and burned the blasphemers alive. Others broke through the gates, let in the rest of the force, and took control of the city. [37]They killed Timothy, who was hiding in a well, and his brother Chaereas and Apollophanes. [38]When they had done this, they blessed the Lord with hymns and praises, thanking Him who shows great kindness to Israel and gives them victory.[†]

The Defeat of Lysias

11 Shortly afterward, Lysias, who was the king's guardian and kinsman and in charge of the government, was greatly upset at what had happened, [2]and gathered about eighty thousand infantry and all his cavalry to come against the Jews. He purposed to make the city a home for Greeks, [3]to levy taxes on the temple, as he did on the sacred places of the other nations, and to put the high priesthood up for sale every year.[†] [4]He took no account at all of God's power, but was elated with his countless thousands of infantry and his thousands of cavalry, plus his eighty elephants. [5]Thus he entered Judea and drew near Beth-zur, a fortified place about twenty miles from Jerusalem, and besieged it.

[6]When Maccabeus and his men heard of this, that Lysias was besieging the strongholds, they and all the people begged the Lord with lamentations and tears to send a good angel to save Israel. [7]Maccabeus himself was the first to bear arms, and he pleaded with the others to join with him in risking their lives to go help their brothers. Then they eagerly set out together. [8]But in that place, while they were still near Jerusalem, a horseman appeared before them, clothed in white and brandishing a full armor of gold.[†] [9]Then together they all blessed the merciful God and were strengthened in heart, ready to bring damage not only on humans but on the most savage of beasts or walls of iron. [10]Because the Lord had mercy on them, they advanced with their weapons, having with them their ally from heaven. [11]They hurled themselves against the enemy like lions and overthrew eleven thousand of them, as well as sixteen hundred cavalry, and forced all of them to flee. [12]Most of them escaped, wounded and naked, and Lysias himself escaped by a disgraceful flight.

A Peace Accord with the Jews

[13]But as Lysias was not lacking in intelligence, he discussed the loss that had happened to him. He realized the Hebrews were unconquerable, because the Almighty God was their ally. [14]So he sent a message and persuaded them to settle everything on just terms. Moreover, perhaps he could also persuade the king and compel him to become their friend. [15]Then Maccabeus agreed to everything Lysias urged, since he was concerned about what was best for all. For whatever Maccabeus gave to Lysias in writing concerning the Jews, the king granted.

[16]Four letters were written to the Jews from Lysias, encompassing the following:[†]

“Lysias to the people of the Jews, greetings. [17]John and Absalom, who were sent by you, have given us your signed communication and asked about the matters addressed in it. [18]Accordingly, I reported to the king whatever was necessary to bring him, and he granted whatever was possible. [19]If you will keep your goodwill toward the government, I will try in the future to promote your welfare. [20]So in behalf of these things and their details, I have ordered that these men and my representatives confer with you. [21]Farewell. The one hundred and forty-eighth year, the twenty-fourth of Dioscorinthius.”[†]

[22]Now the king's letters contained the following:

“King Antiochus to Lysias his brother, greetings. [23]Since our father has departed to the gods, we desire the subjects of the kingdom be undisturbed in caring for their own affairs. [24]We understand the Jews do not approve of our father's change to Greek customs, but choose their own way of life and ask that their customs be granted them. [25]Since therefore we prefer for this nation to be free from disturbance, our decision is for their temple to be returned to them and for them to live according to the customs of their forefathers. [26]Therefore, you will do well to send word to them and give them assurances of friendship, so they may know our policy. Be in good spirits, and continue gladly to help them in their own affairs."

[27]The king's letter to the nation was as follows:

"King Antiochus to the Jewish senate and the rest of the Jews, greetings. [28]If you are healthy, this would be as we desire. We are also in good health. [29]Menelaus has told us you wish to return home and attend to your own affairs. [30]Therefore, those who return home by the thirtieth of Xanthicus will have our pledge of friendship, with freedom from fear, [31]for the Jews to enjoy their own food and laws as before; and none of them shall be troubled in any way for things done in ignorance. [32]I have also sent Menelaus to encourage you. [33]Farewell. The one hundred and forty-eighth year, the fifteenth of Xanthicus."

[34]The Romans also sent them a letter, which read as follows:

"Quintus Memmius and Titus Manius, legates of the Romans, to the people of the Jews, greetings. [35]We also approve of those things concerning which Lysias the kinsman of the king has granted you. [36]But the matters he decided to report to the king, as soon as you have considered these things, send someone promptly that we may explain what is suitable for you, for we are on our way to Antioch. [37]For this reason make haste and send someone to let us know your intentions. [38]Farewell. The one hundred and forty-eighth year, the fifteenth of Xanthicus.”

Judas Prevails in Joppa and Jamnia

12 When these agreements had been made, Lysias returned to the king, and the Jews went back to their farming. [2]But some of the governors of various locales—Timothy and Apollonius son of Gennaeus, as well as Hieronymus and Demophon, and in addition Nicanor the commander of the Cyprians—would not allow the Jews to enjoy tranquility and live in peace.[†]

[3]Then the people of Joppa did so great an ungodly deed as this: they invited the Jews who lived among them, together with their wives and children, to embark on ships equipped for sea, as though they harbored no ill will toward them. [4]Now this was done by the common vote of the city. But when the Jews welcomed this, wishing to live in peace and suspecting nothing, the men of Joppa took them out to sea and drowned at least two hundred of them.

[5]When Judas learned of the cruelty visited on his countrymen, he summoned his men. [6]So when he had called upon God, the righteous judge, he attacked the murderers of his brothers. He set the harbor on fire by night, burned the ships, and put to the sword those who fled there. [7]But since the gates of the city were closed, he departed, intending to come again and root out the whole community of Joppa. [8]However, when he learned that the people in Jamnia intended to wipe out the Jews who were living among them in the same way,[†] [9]he attacked the Jamnian people by night and set

the harbor and the fleet on fire; therefore, the glow of the light was visible as far as Jerusalem, thirty miles away.

Defeat of the Nomads

[10]When they had gone about a mile from there on their march against Timothy, Arabs attacked him with no less than five thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry. [11]After a strongly contested battle, Judas and his men, with God's help, were successful. The defeated nomads pleaded with Judas to grant them pledges of friendship. They promised to give him livestock and to benefit them in other ways. [12]So Judas, supposing they could indeed be useful in varied ways, agreed to make peace with them. Then after he accepted their pledges, they returned to their tents.

[13]He also attacked a certain town named Caspin, strongly fortified with earthworks and walls, and inhabited by a mixed population of Gentiles. [14]Those within it trusted in the security of the walls and their supply of provisions. They behaved very contemptuously toward Judas and his men, insulting them and even blaspheming and saying unlawful things. [15]But Judas and his men called upon the great Lord of the world, who overthrew Jericho without battering rams or engines of war in the times of Joshua. Then Judas and his men assaulted the walls.[†] [16]They overpowered the city by the will of God and inflicted such indescribable slaughter that the adjoining lake, a quarter of a mile wide, seemed to be filled with blood.

Victory over Timothy's Garrison

[17]From there, they went ninety-five miles and continued on to Charax, to the Jews who were called Toubiani. [18]They did not overtake Timothy in that region, for by then he had departed from there without accomplishing anything; but in one place Timothy left a very strong garrison. [19]Dositheus and Sosipater, who were commanders under Maccabeus, marched out and crushed those men Timothy left in the stronghold, over ten thousand soldiers. [20]But Maccabeus organized his army in divisions—setting men in command of the divisions—and hastened after Timothy, who had with him one hundred and twenty thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred cavalry.

[21]When Timothy learned of the approach of Judas, he sent the women and the children ahead with the baggage to a place called Carnaim; for that place was hard to attack and difficult to access because of the narrowness of all its places. [22]But when Judas' first division appeared, alarm and fear came over the enemy at the manifestation to them of Him who sees all things. They ran off in flight, rushing headlong in every direction, so as to be often hurt by their own men and stabbed by the points of their own swords.[†] [23]Judas pursued them with great vigor, piercing the sinful men with the sword and killing as many as thirty thousand of them.

[24]Timothy himself fell into the hands of Dositheus and Sosipater and their soldiers. With great trickery he pleaded with them to let him go safely, because he held the parents of most of them and some of their brothers, to whom no regard would be shown. [25]So when with many words he had confirmed his solemn promise to restore them unharmed, they released him for the sake of rescuing their brothers.

Other Campaigns

[26]Then Judas marched against Carnaim and the temple of Atargatis, and destroyed twenty-five thousand people. [27]After the rout and slaughter of these, he also marched on Ephron, a fortified town where Lysias lived with countless people of all nations. Strong young men were set as guards before the walls and fought mightily. Many provisions of war engines and missiles were stored there. [28]But the Jews called upon the Lord, who with power crushes the strength of His enemies. Thus they took possession of the city and killed as many as twenty-five thousand of those within it.

[29]Moving away from Ephron, they hurried on to Scythopolis, seventy-five miles from Jerusalem. [30]But when the Jews who lived there testified to the goodwill the people of Scythopolis had shown them and their civilized treatment of them in times of trouble, [31]they thanked them and encouraged them also to be favorable to the Jewish race in the future. Then Judas and his men arrived at Jerusalem, the Feast of Weeks being close at hand.[†]

[32]After this feast, also called Pentecost, they marched against Gorgias, the governor of Idumea.[†] [33]He came out against them with three thousand infantry and four hundred cavalry. [34]After they engaged in battle, it happened that a few of the Jews were killed. [35]But a certain Dositheus, one of Bacenor's men, a man on horseback and a strong man, grabbed hold of Gorgias. He took hold of his cloak and was dragging him off by sheer strength. He intended to take the accursed man alive, but one of the Thracian cavalry chased him down and severed his arm. So Gorgias fled to Marisa.

[36]Now Esdris and his men had been fighting for a long while and were tired. So Judas called on the Lord to show Himself as their ally and leader in battle. [37]They began to sound the battle cry in the language of their forefathers and sang hymns. Then he charged against the troops of Gorgias when they least expected it, and set them to flight.

Prayers for the Fallen

[38]Then Judas retrieved his army and entered the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was dawning, they purified themselves according to custom and spent the Sabbath there. [39]The following day, as was now necessary, Judas and his men left to gather up the bodies of those killed in battle, to bring them back to rest with their kindred in the tombs of their forefathers. [40]But under the tunics of each of the dead, they uncovered sacred tokens of the Jamnian idols, which the Jews are forbidden by law to wear. So the reason these men died in battle became clear to everyone.[†] [41]Thus they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who reveals the hidden things. [42]They turned to supplication and prayed that the sin they had committed might be completely blotted out.[†]

The noble Judas exhorted his people to guard themselves from sin, for with their own eyes they had seen what happened to those who died in battle because of their sin. [43]He then took up an offering from his soldiers amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, and sent it to Jerusalem to present as a sin offering. In doing so he acted properly and with honor, taking note of the resurrection.[†] [44]For if he were not looking for the resurrection of those fallen, it would have been utterly foolish to pray for the departed. [45]But since he was looking to the reward of splendor laid up for those who repose in godliness, it was a holy and godly purpose. Thus he made atonement for the fallen, so as to set them free from their transgression.[†]

The Death of Menelaus

13 In the one hundred forty-ninth year, Judas and his men got word that Antiochus Eupator was marching against Judea with a huge army, [2]and with him his guardian, Lysias, who was in charge of the government. Each of them had a Greek army of one hundred ten thousand infantry, five thousand three hundred horsemen, twenty-two elephants, and three hundred chariots armed with scythes.

[3]Menelaus also joined forces with them. It was a great irony that he encouraged Antiochus, not for the preservation of his homeland, but for his expectation to be established in authority. [4]But the King of kings aroused anger in Antiochus against this sinful man. So when Lysias pointed out that this man was the cause of all the trouble, he commanded them to take him to Beroea, to put him to death as was the custom there.[†] [5]For there is a tower in that place, fifty cubits high and filled with ashes. It also has a contrivance continuing around it on all sides that inclines steeply into the ashes. [6]There they all shove anyone guilty of sacrilege or who has done excessive evils to their destruction. [7]Thus it happened that Menelaus the lawbreaker died by such a destiny. He was even deprived of a burial in the ground. [8]Now this was altogether just, for since he committed many sins against the sacred altar, whose fire and ashes were holy, he should get death for himself in ashes.

The Jews Prevail near Modein

[9]The king was coming with barbarous arrogance to face the Jews with things far worse than anything done by his father. [10]But when Judas learned of this, he charged the people to call upon the Lord day and night, asking Him to help them now as He had formerly; for they were about to be deprived of their law, their homeland, and their temple. [11]They prayed He would not allow the people who had just begun a new life to fall into the hands of the blaspheming Gentiles. [12]After they all made the same petition together and constantly implored the merciful Lord with weeping, fasting, and prostrations for three days, Judas encouraged them and commanded them to stand firm.[†]

[13]Then he consulted privately with the elders and determined to march out, to let the matter be decided by the help of God before the king's army could enter Judea and take possession of the city. [14]So, committing the results to the Creator of all and urging those with him to fight nobly to the death for the laws, the temple, the city, the country, and the commonwealth, he positioned his army near Modein. [15]After he gave his men the watchword, “God's Victory,” and chose his best young men, he besieged the royal palace by night, killing as many as two thousand men in the camp. He also slew the leading elephant and its rider. [16]As a result, they filled the camp with terror and disorder and departed victoriously. [17]This all happened by daybreak, because the protection of the Lord was with him.

Antiochus V Makes Peace with the Jews

[18]Thus the king tasted the courage of the Jews and plotted a strategy against their positions. [19]He marched against Beth-zur, a stronghold of the Jews, but was turned back. He attacked again, but was beaten. [20]Judas then sent supplies to the men inside the fortress. [21]But Rhodocus, a man from the Jewish army, tipped off the enemy with secret information. Thus he was sought after, caught, and imprisoned. [22]The king spoke a second time with the people in Beth-zur, gave assurances, received their pledges, and departed. He then attacked Judas and his forces, but was vanquished.

[23]He then learned that Philip, whom he had left in charge of the government in Antioch, had lost his sanity. He was disheartened and summoned the Jews, and yielded and gave an oath to honor all their rights. Thus he settled with them and offered sacrifice, respected the temple, and treated the place humanely. [24]He welcomed Maccabeus, and Hegemonides was left as governor from Ptolemais to Gerar. [25]Then he went to Ptolemais, but the people of Ptolemais were indignant over the treaty with the Jews. In fact, they were so enraged they sought to annul its provisions. [26]But Lysias took the public stage and defended the treaty as best he could. He did persuade them, and gaining their goodwill, he returned to Antioch. This is the outcome of the king's strategy and settlement.

Alcimus Accuses Judas

14 After three years’ time, word reached Judas and his soldiers that Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, had killed Antiochus and Lysias his guardian, then had sailed into the harbor of Tripolis with a powerful army and fleet[†] [2]and taken possession of the country.

[3]Now there was a certain Alcimus, formerly a high priest, who had willfully defiled himself in the times of social and political disturbance. He realized there was no way for him to live in safety or to approach the holy altar ever again. [4]So he went to King Demetrius sometime in the one hundred and fifty-first year and presented him a crown of gold and a palm branch, as well as some of the customary olive branches from the temple. During that day he remained peaceful.[†] [5]But he seized an opportunity in his own stupidity when he was invited by Demetrius to a session of the council and was questioned about the disposition and intentions of the Jews.

Thus he said to the council: [6]“Those of the Jews who are called Hasideans, whose leader is Judas Maccabeus, are maintaining war and stirring up rebellion, and will not allow the kingdom to attain stability.[†] [7]Wherefore I have set aside my paternal glory—meaning my high priesthood—and now have come here. [8]I came here first out of my honest concern for the well-being of the king, and second out of consideration for my own fellow-citizens; for through the rashness of those just mentioned, our entire nation is suffering misfortune. [9]Because you, O king, are acquainted with the details of these things, please take care of our country and our hard-pressed people with the gracious love for mankind that you have for everyone. [10]For as long as Judas is alive, it will be impossible for the government to experience peace.”

Nicanor Sent to Kill Judas

[11]After he said this, the rest of the king's friends who bore malice against Judas aroused even greater anger in Demetrius. [12]Immediately he chose

Nicanor, the commander of a squadron of elephants, appointing him governor of Judea. [13]He sent him off with the charge to kill Judas, scatter his soldiers, and establish Alcimus as high priest of the great temple. [14]The Gentiles who had fled before Judas throughout Judea joined Nicanor, for they thought the setbacks and calamities of the Jews would bring prosperity to themselves.

[15]The Jews got word of Nicanor's coming and the assault of the Gentiles. So they sprinkled their heads with earth and prayed to Him who establishes His people forever, and always helps His own inheritance by making Himself present.[†] [16]At the command of Judas their leader, they immediately moved the army from there and met the enemy in battle at a village called Dessau. [17]Simon, the brother of Judas, had encountered Nicanor in battle, but was halted because of the unexpected silence of those adversaries.

A Short-Lived Alliance

[18]Nevertheless, when Nicanor heard of the bravery of Judas and his men and their courage in battle for their country, he pulled back from deciding the matter by bloodshed. [19]So he sent forth Posidonius, Theodotus, and Mattathias to offer and receive pledges of friendship. [20]After an extensive investigation of the terms, the leader communicated the terms to the people, and it appeared they were of one mind; and they agreed to the treaty. [21]So they set aside a day to meet privately. From each army a chariot came forward, and seats of honor were set in place. [22]Judas appointed battle-

ready men at strategic places lest the enemy attempt sudden trickery, but the consultation was held in a fitting way.

[23]Nicanor remained in Jerusalem and did nothing improper, but he dismissed the crowd of people that had gathered. [24]He also kept Judas in his presence continually, for he was heartily attached to the man. [25]He encouraged him to marry and have children. Thus Judas got married, settled down, and lived a normal life.

A Rekindled Enmity

[26]When Alcimus became aware of their goodwill for each other, he took the treaty that was made and went to King Demetrius. He told him Nicanor was disloyal to the government, since he had appointed Judas, the plotter against the kingdom, to be his successor. [27]The king became enraged. Provoked by the false accusations of that depraved man, he wrote to Nicanor that he was most displeased with the treaty and ordered him to send Maccabeus as a prisoner to Antioch at once.

[28]When this message reached Nicanor, he was upset and very grieved that he had to break the agreement when the man had not done wrong. [29]But since he could not act in opposition to the king, he watched for a strategic opportunity to carry out the command. [30]Maccabeus noticed that Nicanor was becoming more harsh in his treatment of him and more rude when they met than was customary. Judas decided Nicanor's sour behavior was not at all propitious, so he gathered up a good number of his men and hid from him.

[31]When Nicanor realized he had been boldly outmaneuvered by the man, he went to the great and holy temple and found the priests offering the customary sacrifices. He commanded them to hand him over. [32]They declared under oath they did not know the whereabouts of the man he sought. [33]So Nicanor stretched out his right hand toward the temple and swore this oath: “If you will not hand over Judas to me as a prisoner, I will raze this shrine of God to the ground, destroy the altar, and erect at this place a splendid temple to Dionysus.”[†] [34]After he said this, he departed. Then the priests reached out their hands to heaven, calling upon the everlasting Defender of our nation, saying, [35]“O Lord of all, while You have need of nothing, You were pleased to have a temple for Your dwelling in our midst.[†] [36]Now then, O Holy One, O Lord of all holiness, preserve forever undefiled this house so recently purified.”

Razis the Elder Dies

[37]Razis was one of the elders of Jerusalem and was denounced before Nicanor as a man who loved his fellow-citizens, a man held in high esteem and called a father of the Jews because of his goodwill. [38]For in past times when there was isolation from the Gentiles, he was brought to judgment for practicing the Jewish religion. But with all zeal he risked his life, body and soul, for his religion. [39]Nicanor wished to make obvious his ill-will for the Jews. So he sent more than five hundred soldiers to arrest Razis, [40]for he thought that by arresting him he would produce calamity among the Jews. [41]Thus when the soldiers were about to capture the tower and were forcing open the door of the courtyard, they commanded that the doors be set on fire. When Razis was surrounded, he fell upon his own sword, [42]for he

preferred to die bravely rather than fall into the hands of sinners and suffer outrages unworthy of his own noble birth.

[43]However, in the tension of the confrontation, he did not fall with exactness on his sword. As the crowd rushed through the doors, he took courage and jumped up on the wall, bravely throwing himself down into the throng. [44]But as people quickly stepped back, there was an open space, and he landed in the midst of the empty area. [45]He was still alive. In a blaze of anger, he stood up; and though his blood gushed like a spring and his injuries were severe, he darted through the crowd. He climbed up on a steep rock, [46]and with his blood completely drained out of him, he tore out his intestines, took them in both hands and threw them at the crowd as he called on the Lord of life and spirit to return them to him again. Such was the manner of his death.

Nicanor's Failed Plan

15 When Nicanor learned that Judas and his men were in the province of Samaria, he decided to attack them in utter safety on their day of rest.[†] [2]But the Jews who were forced to accompany him said, “By no means should you so cruelly and barbarously bring destruction. Show respect for the Sabbath day, which He who sees all things has honored with holiness above other days.”[†] [3]Then the thrice-sinful man asked if there were a Lord in heaven who ordered the keeping of the Sabbath day. [4]When they declared, “It is the living Lord Himself, the Ruler in heaven, who commanded the keeping of the seventh day,” [5]he responded, “I am a ruler on earth. I command you to take up your weapons and complete the king's business.” Nevertheless, he was unsuccessful in carrying out his heinous plan.

Judas Maccabeus Mobilizes His Men

[6]In his utter vanity and arrogance, Nicanor decided to put up a public monument of victory over Judas and his army. [7]But Maccabeus never ceased to trust the Lord and fully hope that He would help him. [8]So he encouraged his men to have no fear of any attack from the Gentiles, but to bear in mind how help had come to them from heaven in times past. Now they should anticipate the victory the Almighty would give to them. [9]He also exhorted them out of the law and the prophets, calling to mind the battles they had won, making them more eager to fight. [10]Then after he revived their courage, he gave his commands and at the same time emphasized the Gentiles’ faithlessness and their failure to keep their oaths. [11]So he issued each of them armor—not so much of the surety of shields and spears as with the encouragement of courageous speech. Then he inspired them all by telling about a dream, a kind of vision, worthy of believing.

[12]The vision he saw was this: Onias, who had been high priest, a true gentleman of modest and noble manner, one well-spoken and from childhood formed in all that pertains to virtue, was praying with hands outstretched for the whole nation of the Jews.[†] [13]Then in the same manner another man appeared, distinguished by his gray hair and glory, and having about him a certain astonishing and majestic preeminence. [14]Onias then spoke, saying, “This is Jeremiah, the prophet of God, a man who loves his

brothers and prays fervently for the people and the holy city.”[†] [15]Stretching forth his right hand, Jeremiah gave a sword of gold to Judas, and as he presented it to him, he addressed him as follows: [16]“Take this sacred sword, a gift from God, by which you will strike down your enemies.”

[17]Encouraged by Judas’ words, a man so good and able in stirring up virtue and courage in the souls of young men, they determined not to plan out a campaign. Instead they would wage war bravely, at once, deciding the matter with hand-to-hand combat with all manliness, because the city, the sanctuary, and the temple were at risk. [18]Their main concern was not first for wives and children, or even for brothers and relatives; their greatest fear was for the consecrated temple.[†] [19]As for those who remained in the city, they were distressed and worried about the conflict in the open country.

Nicanor's Demise

[20]Everyone was now living in suspense over the outcome of the war. The enemy was nearby; their army was prepared for battle. And their elephants were strategically positioned, and the cavalry was deployed on the flanks. [21]Maccabeus noted carefully the great masses before him, the variety of their armaments, and the savageness of the elephants. So he reached out his hands toward heaven and called on the Lord, the Wonderworker; for he knew it is not by weapons alone, but by the Lord's decision that victory is won by those worthy of it. [22]Thus he cried out to Him in the following manner: “O Lord, in the time of Hezekiah the king of Judea, You sent Your angel, and he killed as many as one hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of Sennacherib.[†] [23]So now, O Ruler of the heavens, send us a noble

angel to go before us spreading fear and trembling. [24]By the strength of Your arm, may those who speak blasphemy as they come against Your holy ones be struck down.” With these words he completed his prayer.

[25]Nicanor and his men marched ahead with trumpets and battle songs, [26]but Judas and his men joined the enemy in battle with invocations and prayers.[†] [27]They fought with their hands and prayed to God in their hearts, and struck down at least thirty-five thousand men. So they were deeply gladdened by God's visitation.

[28]When the battle was ended and they were marching home with joy, they recognized Nicanor, in full armor, lying dead. [29]With tumultuous shouts, they blessed the Lord in the language of their fathers. [30]Then Judas, who was in body and soul ever the chief defender of his fellow-citizens and who from youth maintained goodwill toward his countrymen, commanded them to sever Nicanor's head and arm and take them back to Jerusalem.[†] [31]When he arrived there, he called his countrymen together and stationed the priests before the altar. Then he sent for those in the citadel. [32]Before them, he displayed the head of the defiled Nicanor and that slanderous man's hand, which he had boastfully stretched out against the holy house of the Almighty. [33]He cut out the tongue of the godless Nicanor and announced he would feed it to the birds bit by bit, and hang up the rewards of his folly opposite the sanctuary. [34]Then everyone lifted their eyes to heaven and blessed the Lord who visited them, saying, “Blessed is He who kept His own place undefiled.” [35]Judas then fastened Nicanor's head to the wall of the citadel, a visible symbol to all present of the Lord's help. [36]So they all decreed by public vote never to allow this day to be unobserved, but

to celebrate it on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, called Adar in the Syrian language—the day before Mordecai's day.

The End

[37]This is the way things turned out for Nicanor. So from that time on the city has been controlled by the Hebrews. Thus I will end my story here. [38]If I have written well and made my point in the narrative, this is what I myself desired. But if it was done poorly and is just average, this is the best I could do. [39]For as it is disagreeable to drink wine only or water only, whereas wine mingled with water is pleasing and delightful and brings greater joy, so also the written style of the account delights the ears of those who read it. This then shall be the end.[†]

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The Third Book of the Maccabees

Author—The author is an unidentified Alexandrian Jew who wrote the book in Greek.

Date—Early first century BC is a likely date, considering the book's literary affinities and textual similarities with 2 Maccabees.

Major Theme—As with the previous Maccabean works, the predominant message is that *God remains faithful to His chosen people*, blessing and preserving them in tribulation. The book was written to console, exhort, and teach the Egyptian Jews in the midst of their tribulations, and to inspire faith in the providence of God (4:21) by recounting how the Jews had been delivered from similar trials in the past.

Background—The title of the work is a misnomer, for the contents do not deal with the exploits of the Maccabean heroes. Instead, the book recounts the struggles of Egyptian Jews who suffered under Ptolemy IV Philopater (221–203 BC).

The book begins by describing the attempt of King Ptolemy to enter and desecrate the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple. When the desecration is averted by divine intervention through the prayers of Simon the high priest (1:1–2:24), the king returns to Egypt determined to wreak vengeance on Israel for his humiliation in Jerusalem. The remainder of the work describes the persecution of the Jews, the miracles wrought on their behalf, and their subsequent deliverance by God.

Outline

I. The Battle of Raphia and Ptolemy's Attempt to Desecrate the Temple (1:1–29)

II. The Prayer of Simon the High Priest for God's Help Is Answered (2:1–24)

III. King Ptolemy's Cruel Treatment of the Jews (2:25–5:51)

IV. Eleazar's Prayer of Intercession; Two Angels Rescue the Jews (6:1–29)

V. Ptolemy Repents and Favors the Jews; They Celebrate (6:30–7:23)

The Battle at Raphia

1 When Philopator heard from those who returned that the regions he ruled had been captured by Antiochus, he issued orders to all his infantry and cavalry forces, took his sister Arsinoe along with him, and set out toward the area near Raphia, where the forces of Antiochus were positioned.[†] [2]Now a certain Theodotus, intending to carry out a plan he had developed, took the finest of the Ptolemaic weapons issued earlier to him and crossed by night to Ptolemy's tent with the intention of killing him by himself, and in that way ending the war.[†] [3]But Dositheus, called the son of Drimylos, by birth Jew who afterward changed his religion and apostatized from the traditions of his fathers, removed the king and put in his place a certain unimportant man in the tent. That man suffered the vengeance intended for the king.

[4]When a fierce battle took place and things were going rather well for Antiochus, Arsinoe went and exhorted the soldiers with her cries and tears. With her hair disheveled, she urged them to be brave and to defend themselves and their children and wives. She promised to give each of them two minas of gold if they were victorious.[†] [5]So it happened the enemy was defeated in hand-to-hand combat, and many were taken captive. [6]But

having prevailed against the plot, Ptolemy decided to visit and encourage the neighboring cities. [7]In doing so and by enriching their sacred precincts with gifts, he built up the morale of the conquered people.

Ptolemy Tries to Enter the Temple

[8]When the Jews sent representatives to him from the senate, they greeted him, brought him gifts, and congratulated him on the way things turned out. He was favorable to them and eager to visit them soon. [9]When he came to Jerusalem, he sacrificed to the Almighty God and made thank offerings and did what was appropriate in the place. In coming into the holy place, he was astonished at its excellence and beauty,[†] [10]and he admired the good order of the temple and conceived a desire to enter into the inner sanctuary.[†] [11]They told him, however, it was inappropriate for him to do this, since even citizens of their own nation were not allowed to enter, nor even all the priests. Only the high priest who was first over all of them could enter, but only once a year. Ptolemy, though, was not at all persuaded. [12]Even when the law was read to him, still he would not stop insisting that he should enter, saying, “Even if others are deprived of this honor, I must not be deprived.”[†] [13]Then he asked why nobody ever prevented him from going into all the other shrines.[†] [14]Someone said without thinking that it was improper to take that as a portent. [15]When that happened, he said that he would enter anyway, whether they liked it or not.

[16]Then the priests, fully vested, prostrated themselves and supplicated God Most High to help them in the present circumstances, to turn away the impulse of the man of evil design. The temple was filled with their cries and

tears.† [17]Those who remained in the city rushed out, supposing that something mysterious was happening.† [18]Even the virgins who had remained in their chambers rushed out with their mothers and sprinkled dust on their hair, filling the streets with wailing and groaning. [19]Those, too, who were recently brought to their bridal chambers abandoned the modesty that was appropriate for them and raced through the city in a disorderly manner. [20]At that point, mothers and nurses even abandoned their newborns here and there, some at home and others in the streets, and without looking back crowded into the most high temple.†

[21]The prayers of those gathered were of varied forms because of what the king was plotting in such an unholy way. [22]Besides, more aggressive citizens would in no way tolerate the carrying out of his plan or the fulfillment of his intention.† [23]They shouted to their neighbors to make a run on the weapons and to die courageously for the law of their fathers. They created a great disturbance in the place and were barely restrained by the aged and the elders. They took up the same posture of prayer as the others.

[24]In the meantime, the multitude returned to prayer as before. [25]The elders close by the king made many attempts to divert his haughty mind from the plan he had concocted.† [26]But in his arrogance he dismissed everything they said and began to approach the place, determined to complete his plan. [27]When those around the king observed this, they turned to one another and called upon Him who is all-powerful to come to their aid in this current struggle and not to ignore this lawless and arrogant act.† [28]But because of the continual impassioned shouting of the crowds, it

seemed that not only those present but also the very walls and the earth itself were echoing the cry, for they all preferred death to the profaning of the temple.[†]

A Priestly Prayer Stops Ptolemy

2 The high priest Simon bent his knees before the temple and stretched out his hands with great dignity, calmly offering the following prayer:[†] [2]“O Lord, Lord, King of the heavens and Master of all creation, Holy One among the holy ones, the only Ruler, the Almighty: attend to us who are grievously oppressed by an unholy and irreverent man who is arrogant in his audacity and power.[†] [3]For You, the Creator of all and Ruler over all, are a righteous Master, and You judge those who do anything with insolence and arrogance. [4]In the past You destroyed those who acted unjustly, among whom were the giants who trusted in their physical strength and boldness, whom You destroyed by bringing the great flood of water upon them. [5]You burned up with fire and brimstone the inhabitants of Sodom, who acted in arrogance and were notorious for their evil acts, and You made them an example for those who came after them.[†] [6]You made known Your might and power among men and brought many different acts of punishment on the arrogant Pharaoh, who enslaved Your holy people Israel.[†] [7]For when he chased after them with horse-drawn chariots and a myriad of troops, You overwhelmed him in the depths of the sea, and brought across to safety those who trusted in You, the King of all creation.[†] [8]So when they considered the works of Your hands, they praised You, the Almighty God.

[9]“You, O King, created the endless and measureless earth and chose this city. You sanctified this holy place for Your name and hallowed it by its

magnificent appearance, even though You have no need of anything. You made its structure solid for the glory of Your great and honorable name.[†]

[10]“Because You love the house of Israel, You promised that if we should suffer setbacks and if distress should overtake us, You would hear our supplication when we come into this place to pray. [11]Indeed, You are faithful and true. [12]But often when our fathers were afflicted, You helped them in humility and saved them from great evils. [13]Behold, O holy King, how we are oppressed because of our manifold sins, subjected to our enemies and lying in helplessness.[†] [14]In our downfall this arrogant and ungodly man continues to desecrate the holy place which is dedicated to the name of Your glory on the earth. [15]Your dwelling place, the heaven of the heavens, is unapproachable by men.[†] [16]But since You by Your grace consented to grant Your glory upon Your people Israel, You hallowed this place.[†] [17]Do not punish us for the defilement caused by these men, and do not chastise us for this profanity. Do not allow these lawless people to brag in their anger and exult in the pride of their tongues, saying [18]that they trampled the house of holiness as the houses of abominations are trampled.[†]

[19]“Wipe away our sins, disperse our errors, and display Your compassion at this hour. [20]Let Your mercies come upon us quickly. Grant praise in the mouth of us who have fallen and are crushed in our souls, and bring us peace.”

[21]Then God, who watches over all, our Holy Forefather among the holy ones, heard this lawful supplication and scourged the man who raised himself up in arrogance and audacity. [22]He shook him on one side and the

other, as a reed is shaken by the wind, so that he lay powerless on the ground. Besides being paralyzed in his limbs, he was unable to cry out, since he was struck by a righteous judgment.[†] [23]Therefore his friends and bodyguards alike were struck by an overwhelming fear, seeing the severe punishment that overtook him. Fearing he would die, quickly they dragged him away. [24]Later, when he recovered, he still did not repent after being chastised, but went his way making bitter threats.[†]

Ptolemy Assaults the Jews

[25]Then Ptolemy crossed over to Egypt, where he increased his evil, assisted by the aforementioned drinking companions and comrades, who were unacquainted with anything righteous.[†] [26]He was not content with his countless acts of indecency, but audaciously proceeded to spread many evil reports throughout the region. Many of his friends observed the king's intentions and adjusted themselves to conform to his will. [27]He undertook to spread abroad a public blame against the Jewish nation, and raising a plaque on the tower at the palace, he carved this inscription: [28]“No one shall enter the temple who does not sacrifice, but all the Jews shall be gathered for a census for taxation and reduced to servant status. Those who oppose this will be taken by force and put to death.[†] [29]Those registered are to be branded by fire on their bodies with the ivy leaf symbol of Dionysus, and they will also return to their former status.”[†] [30]But so as not to appear an enemy to all, he wrote underneath: “If some of them prefer to join those initiated into the mysteries, they will have equal rights of citizenship with the Alexandrians.”

[31]Some, then, obviously hated the price required to maintain godliness in the city. So they gave themselves up willingly, for they expected greater glory from the association they were about to have with the king.† [32]But most of them prevailed with a noble spirit and did not abandon their faith. They paid money to save their lives and fearlessly exerted themselves to be saved from the census.† [33]They remained hopeful of finding help, while loathing those who isolated themselves from them. They considered them betrayers of the nation, and therefore, deprived them of friendship and assistance.†

3 When the ungodly king heard this, he reached such a point of rage that he was angry not only at the Jews of Alexandria, but even more so against those in the countryside. So he commanded that they all be brought together in one place and put to death by the worst possible means.† [2]While these things were being organized, an antagonistic rumor was circulated against the Jewish nation by men who conspired to harm them. This was on the pretext the Jews hindered others from the observance of their customs.†

[3]The Jews, though, maintained their goodwill and unswerving faith toward the throne. [4]But because they worshiped God and lived by His precepts, they kept themselves separate from others with regard to food, and therefore appeared hateful to some. [5]But they adorned their way of life with the good deeds of righteous people, and thus established themselves as honorable to all men. [6]Yet those of other nations took no account of the good works the Jews offered the nation, which was the common talk of all men. [7]Instead they droned on about the differences in worship and foods, saying the Jews were not committed to the king or the authorities, but were

hostile and in great opposition to his leadership. Therefore they attached no ordinary blame to them.

[8]Now there were Greeks in the city who had not been harmed in any way by the Jews, yet they observed the growing crowds and unprecedented tumult surrounding these people. But they could not help them because they lived in weakness under tyranny. But they attempted to comfort them and, being grieved, hoped for a change in the situation.[†] [9]For it was incomprehensible to ignore such a large group which had done no wrong. [10]But already certain neighbors and business associates drew them aside, gave them pledges of protection, and offered more serious efforts toward their defense.

Ptolemy's Decree

[11]Then the king, who exalted himself in his current prosperity and did not consider the power of the Almighty God, assumed he could persist continually in the same purpose. So he wrote this letter against them:[†]

[12]“King Ptolemy Philopator, to the commanders and soldiers in Egypt and the surrounding region, greetings and health.[†] [13]I myself and my government are well. [14]When our expedition to Asia took place, as you know, and was brought to completion according to expectation by the help of the gods not lightly given, [15]we thought it fit not by force of the spear, but by equity and great benevolence, to foster the peoples inhabiting Coelesyria and Phoenicia and to willingly treat them well. [16]We distributed large revenues to the priests around the cities, and also went to Jerusalem to honor the temple of those guilty people, who never cease from their folly.

[17]They accepted our presence in word, yet were insincere in their deeds. For when we were eager to enter their inner shrine and honor it with extraordinary and most beautiful votive offerings, [18]we were carried away by arrogant old men who prevented us from entering. But they were spared the exercise of our strength because of the benevolence we have toward all men. [19]Yet as they kept up their obvious hostility toward us, they became unique among the nations, because they lifted their heads against kings and benefactors and did not want to consider any deed as sincere.

[20]“But we adapted ourselves to their foolishness and crossed into Egypt with victory. We met all nations with kindness and did what was proper. [21]Yet in this matter we proclaimed forgiveness to all of their kinsmen in Jerusalem. Then because of our confederacy with them and the many things we entrusted to them in sincerity from of old, we dared to make a change and grant them the honor of Alexandrian citizenship. So in this way they would be partakers of the things that are always sacred.[†]

[22]“They, however, took it in a different spirit. With their innate malice, they rejected it and turned aside to evil. [23]Not only did they reject the priceless citizenship, but they even showed loathing in word and silence toward the few among them who were sincerely disposed toward us. So quite in keeping with their infamous way of life, they suspected that we would quickly reverse our policy.[†] [24]Therefore we placed great trust in the signs that these men were ill-disposed toward us in every way. Thus we took precautions against the possibility that a sudden disturbance might rise up against us later, for we considered these impious men to be betrayers behind our backs and barbarian enemies. [25]So we have ordered that as soon

as this letter arrives, those who live there with their wives and children should be sent to us immediately by force in iron shackles, bound securely on all sides, for a fatal and shameful massacre as is fitting to traitors.[†] [26]When they have been punished, we are certain that our government will be established afterward in tranquility and security.

[27]“But whoever conceals any of the Jews, from old man to infant or even sucklings, will be killed with the cruelest tortures, along with his entire household.[†] [28]Whoever is willing to give information will receive the estate of the one who is punished, as well as two thousand drachmas of royal silver, and will be crowned with freedom. [29]Every place without exception where a Jew is found concealed will become desolate and burned with fire, and will become useless for all time for every mortal creature.”

[30]This is the manner in which the letter was written.[†]

Deportation to Alexandria

4 Wherever this decree arrived, a feast at public expense was arranged for the Gentiles with shouting and rejoicing, as the hatred they had harbored against the Jews before now appeared openly.[†] [2]But for the Jews, there was unceasing sorrow and lamentable crying with tears; everywhere their hearts burned, and with groans they bewailed the unexpected destruction that was suddenly inflicted on them. [3]But was there any district or city, or any inhabited place whatsoever, or any streets, that were not filled with their mourning and wailing? [4]For they were being sent off by the commanders of the city in such a bitter and ruthless spirit that even when some of their enemies saw them receive such unusual punishments before their eyes, they considered them a common object of pity, and wept for their miserable expulsion and the uncertainty of their lives.[†] [5]A large group of old men, covered with gray hair, was forced to march swiftly, despite the sluggishness of their old age. With shameless violence they were driven on a harsh journey.[†] [6]Young women who had just stepped into their bridal chamber to enter married life exchanged delight for wailing. With their perfumed hair sprinkled with dust, they openly raised a lamentation instead of wedding hymns, as they were carried away together by the violence of the Gentiles. [7]In shackles and in view of the public, they were dragged along violently to the boat of embarkation.[†] [8]Their husbands, in their vigorous youthful prime and with nooses encircling their necks instead of flowers, passed the remaining days of their wedding feast in lamentations rather than feasting and youthful celebration, as they saw the grave already before their feet. [9]But they were brought on board like wild animals in iron-bound restraints, some fastened by their necks to the benches of the ships, others with their feet secured in unbreakable fetters. [10]In addition they had the thick deck above them; thus, darkness covered their eyes on all sides, and they were treated like betrayers during the entire voyage.

Death Threat

[11]When they were brought to the place called Schedia and their voyage was completed according to the king's decree, he directed that they be confined outside the city in the hippodrome, which had an immense outside perimeter. He also commanded that at the appointed time, they be made a public example for those returning to the city and those going from the city to the country. Thus they could not communicate with the king's forces, or

in any way claim to be within the boundaries of the city.[†] [12]But as this took place, the king heard that their Jewish compatriots from the city often went out secretly to lament the shameful suffering of their brothers. [13]Growing furious, he commanded that these visitors be treated in precisely the same way as the others, so they would not be spared any of their punishment.[†] [14]He further commanded that every tribe be registered by name, not for the toilsome servitude just mentioned, but so they would suffer the prescribed tortures and be put to death in a single day.[†] [15]Their registration took place, then, with bitter haste and zealous diligence. It took forty days from sunrise to sunset, yet still remained incomplete.[†]

[16]The king was filled with great and constant joy as he established banquets to extol all his idols, with a mind that wandered far away from the truth. With a profane mouth, he praised mute things that were unable to speak or offer help, and spoke improper things against the Almighty God. [17]But after the aforementioned interval of time, the scribes suggested to him that he would no longer be able to accomplish the registration of the Jews because their number was so large.[†] [18]They said that although there were still many of them in the country, some of whom were gathered in their houses and others elsewhere in the region, it was impossible for all the commanders in Egypt to register them. [19]But the king threatened the scribes more harshly, claiming they were bribed to provide the Jews a mechanism of escape. But he was clearly convinced [20]when they proved what they said, for they showed him that the paper and writing pens they used were depleted. [21]This was the activity of God's invincible providence helping the Jews from heaven.

Hermon and His Elephants

5 Then the king, filled with wrath and anger and inflexible in every respect, summoned Hermon, the keeper of the elephants.† [2]On the following day, he ordered that he take all the elephants—five hundred in number—and get them drunk with plenty of unmingled wine and abundant handfuls of frankincense. Then after they had grown wild from the bounteous abundance of drink, he was to lead them where the Jews would meet their fate.† [3]When he had issued these directives, he resumed his feasting, alone with those of his friends and of the army who were particularly hostile toward the Jews. [4]Then Hermon, caretaker of the elephants, obediently carried out all his orders. [5]The servants responsible for the Jews went out at evening, binding the hands of these unfortunate people, and managed to keep them in custody all night. They expected the whole nation would meet a final destruction. [6]But the Jews, thinking they were deprived of all protection from the Gentiles because of being bound on all sides, [7]called out to the Lord Almighty, Sovereign of all authority, their merciful God and Father. With tears and with a cry not easily silenced, they prayed† [8]that He divert the unholy plot against them with a vengeance by a glorious appearance, and save them from the fate now present before them. [9]Their supplication went up earnestly to heaven.

[10]Now Hermon got his pitiful elephants drunk by filling them up with a great abundance of wine and frankincense. Then he came to the court early in the morning to make his report to the king. [11]But God sent on the king a deep sleep, that good gift from the beginning of time which he has cast on those He favors during both night and the day.† [12]Thus the king was

restrained from his awful plan by the sweet and deep sleep from the Lord. He was disappointed in his lawless and unbending scheme. [13]But when the Jews escaped the appointed hour, they praised their holy God, and again beseeched Him who is easily reconciled to show the strength of His almighty hand to the haughty Gentiles.[†]

[14]By now it was almost the middle of the tenth hour, and the man in charge of banquet invitations arranged the guests together, came forward, and nudged the king.[†] [15]As soon as he finally roused him, he made a report about what was happening and informed him that the hour of the banquet had already passed. [16]But as the king considered this, he returned to his drinking, and commanded those around him at the banquet to locate opposite him. [17]When this was done, he urged them to give themselves to still more eating and drinking, so the effect of the banquet would be still more raucous. [18]As the festivities progressed, the king summoned Hermon and with a direct threat asked why the Jews had made it alive through the present day. [19]But when Hermon declared that while it was still night he had done what was ordered, the king's friends confirmed this. [20]Then overcome with a savagery worse than that of Phalaris, the king said that because of the day's sleep they received favor; but without delay on the coming day, Hermon must ready the elephants for the extermination of the godless Jews.[†] [21]So when the king had spoken, all the guests present willingly and joyfully agreed with the plan; then each departed for home. [22]However, they did not use the night for sleep, but to devise all sorts of insults for those they assumed had met their doom.[†]

God Delivers His People

[23]As soon as the cock crowed at dawn, Hermon harnessed the beasts and set them in motion in the great colonnade. [24]Crowds had gathered around the city for this pitiful sight, even before dawn.[†] [25]But the Jews, at their last breath and at the last moment, made a tearful supplication in mournful songs. They stretched out their hands to heaven, and prayed to the Almighty God to quickly help them again. [26]The rays of the sun were not yet spreading when Hermon stood by and called the king and his friends, who were waiting. He pointed to the door and showed that what the king desired was ready. [27]But when the king received the report, he was terrified at the unusual invitation to come out. Completely overcome with bewilderment, he asked what this was which had been done so quickly.[†] [28]This was an act of God, Master over all things, who placed a forgetfulness in the king's mind about what had been plotted before.

[29]But Hermon and all the king's friends told him, “The beasts and the troops are ready, O king, according to your eager purpose.” [30]But at these words, he was filled with deep anger, because his whole plot had been scattered from his mind by God's providence. Then he glared at them and threatened, [31]“If your parents or children were here, I would furnish them as a lavish feast for the wild beasts, instead of these innocent people, who have shown me and my fathers complete and unbending loyalty in everything asked of them.[†] [32]In fact, if it were not for my familiarity with you and your usefulness, you would be deprived of life rather than them.”

[33]Thus, Hermon endured an unexpected and dangerous threat, and his eyes shifted and his countenance fell. [34]Then one by one the king's friends slunk away sullenly, and each one returned to his own business.[†] [35]But

when the Jews heard what the king said, they praised God as the revealed Lord and King of kings, since this happened to them because of His help.[†]

The Ambivalent King

[36]Meanwhile, the king restarted the banquet. He encouraged the guests to resume their merrymaking as before.[†] [37]Then he summoned Hermon and threatened him, saying, “How many times must you be given orders about these same things, you worthless wretch? [38]Equip the elephants once again to crush the Jews tomorrow.” [39]But his administrators who were reclining together with him, curious as to his unstable mind, urged him, saying,[†] [40]“How long, O king, are you going to tease us as if we were irrational, for you commanded now for the third time to destroy them? Then again you took back your command and what seemed good to you. [41]Because of this, the city is in turmoil, expecting you to act, and is in danger of being torn apart by the growing crowds.”

[42]At this point, the king, a Phalaris in every way, was filled with insanity, and counting as nothing his changes of mind concerning the care of the Jews, swore a firm oath to send them to Hades without delay, mangled by the feet and knees of the wild beasts.[†] [43]He would then attack the Jewish land and abruptly level it to the ground with fire and the spear, and burn down for all time the temple where they made sacrifices, which had been made inaccessible to him.[†] [44]Then his friends and officials departed joyfully, and confidently assigned the forces to the key places in the city to keep watch.

[45]Then the keeper of the elephants brought the beasts almost to a state of madness, so to speak, with the sweetest drinks of wine mixed with frankincense; and he equipped them with frightful devices. [46]So about dawn, when the city was filled with countless hordes of onlookers filling the hippodrome, he went into the court and urged the king to fulfill his purpose. [47]The king then worked up his depraved mind into a fit of wrath, and rushed out in full strength with all the beasts. With hardened heart, he wanted to see with his own eyes the lamentable and evil crushing of the Jews.

[48]The Jews saw the cloud of dust stirred up by the elephants as they came out of the gate, the armed forces behind them. They also heard the trampling of the throng and loud, boisterous noise. [49]They considered this the last moment of their lives and the end of their wretched uncertainty. Turning to one another in sorrow, they kissed each other with tears, and embracing their loved ones, they fell on their necks, parents and children and mothers and daughters, women with infants at their breasts drawing their last milk. [50]Nonetheless, when they recalled the help from heaven they had received earlier, they suddenly threw themselves face down, women taking the infants from their breasts,[†] [51]and they cried out in a loud voice, beseeching the Master of all to have mercy on them. For they were standing at the very gates of Hades.

The Prayer of Eleazar

6 Now there was a certain man, Eleazar, famous among the priests of the land, who reached the prime of his life in old age and adorned his life with every virtue. He directed the elders around him to call on the holy God, and he prayed as follows:[†]

[2]“O King, mighty in power, O Most High, the Almighty God, who governs all creation in mercy,[†] [3]look upon the seed of Abraham and the descendants of the saintly man Jacob, because a dedicated portion of Your people, O Father, are being unjustly destroyed as strangers in a foreign land. [4]Pharaoh abounded in chariots and was the master of this Egypt when he arose with unlawful boldness, a boasting tongue, and an arrogant army. But You destroyed him by drowning him in the sea and appeared as a light of mercy to the nation Israel. [5]Sennacherib also boasted in his countless forces, because this oppressive king of the Assyrians had already taken the whole world under his authority by the spear. Then he was lifted up against Your holy city and spoke grievously with pride and insults. But You shattered him, O Master, and made Your power visible to many nations. [6]Then when the three companions in Babylon willingly gave their lives to fire—for they would not bow to vain things—You sent dew upon the fiery furnace and saved them to their last hair. You sent them back unharmed and turned the flames against their adversaries.[†] [7]Daniel was thrown to the lions below ground as food for lions because of jealous slander. But You brought him unharmed back up to daylight.[†] [8]Jonah was decomposing in the belly of the deep-sea monster. But You, O Father, watched over him and returned him unharmed to all his kin.[†] [9]So now, O hater of insolence, O merciful Defender of all, appear speedily to those of the family of Israel, under outrageous abuse by abominable and lawless Gentiles.

[10]“Even if our life has become enmeshed in unrighteousness during our captivity, save us from the hand of our adversaries, O Master, and destroy us by whatever death You choose. [11]Only do not allow these vain-minded men to praise their useless things as they destroy those You love, saying, ‘Not even their God could rescue them.’ [12]But You, who have all strength and authority, O Eternal One, look down on us now. Have mercy on us, who are being deprived of life like traitors by the thoughtless insults of lawless men. [13]Let the Gentiles cower at Your unconquerable power this day, O Honorable One who has the power to save the race of Jacob. [14]This entire multitude of babes and their parents beseech You with tears. [15]Let it be revealed to all the Gentiles, O Lord, that You are with us, and that You did not turn Your face from us. For as You said, ‘Not even in the land of their enemies did I neglect them.’ Do this for us, O Lord.”[†]

The Jews Are Delivered

[16]When Eleazar finished his prayer, the king arrived at the hippodrome with the beasts and with all the haughtiness of his army. [17]Then the Jews who saw him cried out in a loud voice to heaven, so much so that the valleys nearby echoed and brought unrestrained fear on the whole army. [18]Then the Almighty God, most glorious and full of truth, manifested His holy face and thrust open the doors of heaven, from which two glorious angels descended, terrible in form, and visible to all except the Jews.[†] [19]They attacked the enemy forces, filled them with confusion and fright, and bound them with immovable fetters. [20]The king's body was seized with a tremor, and he even forgot his contemptible vocabulary. [21]Then the beasts

turned against the armed forces who were behind them, and they trampled and killed them.[†]

Ptolemy's Change of Heart

[22]The king's wrath was turned to compassion and tears because of the plot he devised earlier, [23]for he heard the wailing and saw all the people who fell to destruction. So, weeping with anger, he threatened his friends, shouting,[†] [24]“You act as if you were the king yourselves, and you exceed tyrants in your savagery and attack even me, your benefactor. You scheme to deprive me of my reign and my life itself with secret plots which are unprofitable to the kingdom. [25]Who drove these people from their houses—who faithfully kept our strongholds—and stupidly gathered all of them here? [26]Who so unlawfully entangled in terrible dangers these, who from the beginning differed from all other nations in their goodwill toward us and repeatedly accepted the worst pitfalls known to man?[†] [27]Release them! Undo their unjust bonds. Send them back home in peace and beg forgiveness for what you did to them. [28]Set free the sons of the heavenly and living Almighty God, who has provided uninterrupted tranquility for our affairs from the time of our fathers until now.” [29]Thus he said these things. So the Jews, who were released immediately, kept praising their holy God and Savior, for they had at last escaped death.

[30]Then the king returned to the city and summoned the man in charge of the treasury. He commanded that he provide wine and everything else necessary so the Jews could feast for seven days. For the king thought it fitting that they celebrate their deliverance and rejoice in the very place they

expected to meet their doom. [31]Then those who had been treated disgracefully and were close to death, or rather stood at death's door, were given a special invitation. They organized a feast of deliverance from the bitter and mournful fate of death. Filled with joy, their celebration took the place of desolation and grave clothes.[†] [32]They ceased their chanting of lamentations and took up an ode of their fathers, praising their wonderworking God and Savior. They halted all wailing and lamenting and formed choirs as a symbol of joy and peace.[†] [33]Similarly, the king called a great feast to celebrate these things, and ceaselessly and magnificently gave thanks to heaven for his unplanned experience of personal salvation. [34]Those who believed previously that the Jews were going to be made food for the birds unto destruction, and thus registered them with glee, sighed as they were covered with shame, for their fire-breathing aggression was shamefully extinguished.

[35]But the Jews, as we said before, formed the aforementioned choir and spent their time feasting with psalms of a joyful thanksgiving.[†] [36]They established a public ritual to commemorate these things within their entire community for the generations to come. They structured this observance as a festival, not for drunkenness and gluttony, but because of the salvation which they received from God. [37]They then requested that the king dismiss them to return back home.

[38]Now their registration took place from the twenty-fifth of Pachon until the fourth of Epiphi, that is, forty days. They faced destruction from the fifth of Epiphi until the seventh, that is, three days.[†] [39]During this time the Lord over all things manifested His mercy with great glory and saved them

all, together and unharmed. [40]Thus they feasted with everything provided by the king until the fourteenth day, when they also petitioned to be sent away. [41]The king immediately granted their request and wrote for them the letter, copied below, to the commanders in each city, magnanimously stating his concern for them:[†]

A Letter of Support from the King

7 “King Ptolemy Philopator, to the commanders in Egypt and to all those in authority in our government, greetings and health. [2]We ourselves are well, as are our children, with the great God guiding our affairs as we desire.[†] [3]Some of our friends through malignity kept urging us and finally persuaded us to gather the Jews in our kingdom to have them punished in a body with unusual punishments, as if they were rebels.[†] [4]They argued that until this was accomplished, our government would never be stable because of their ill-will toward all nations. [5]They led them out cruelly in fetters as slaves, or rather as traitors, and without making any inquiry or investigation, they attempted to attack them, girding themselves with fierceness more savage than that of the Scythians.[†] [6]But because of the fairness we have toward all men, we threatened them severely for these things. Yet we barely spared their lives, because we recognized that the heavenly God surely protects the Jews, as a father protects his sons and fights on their behalf. [7]We considered the steadfast goodwill they had toward us and toward our brothers, and justly acquitted them from every manner of charge. [8]Then we ordered our people to go about their business, each in his own place, with no one harming them or reproaching them undeservedly about what happened. [9]For you know that if we plot any evil

against them or trouble them at all, we will have not man but God the Most High, the Master of all power, unfavorable to us in vengeance for these things and inescapable in everything forever. Farewell.”[†]

The Traitors Are Punished

[10]When they received this letter, the Jews did not hasten to depart immediately, but rather petitioned the king that those of the race of Jews who transgressed the law of the Holy God should receive the punishment they deserved.[†] [11]They proclaimed that those who transgressed the divine commands on account of their appetites would never again be favorable toward the king's government. [12]So he accepted the truth of what they said and deferred to them, giving them permission in all things to destroy those who had transgressed the law of God throughout his kingdom with boldness and without any royal authority or supervision. [13]Then their priests and the whole multitude extolled the king and, as was appropriate, responded with an alleluia, and departed in joy.[†] [14]As they went their way, they punished and killed anyone of their race they encountered who had defiled himself, putting him to public shame.[†] [15]So on that day they killed more than three hundred men, and they held a joyous festival because they had overtaken those who were defiled. [16]Then those who had held firmly to God to the point of death received the pleasure of their deliverance. They left the city wreathed in all sorts of sweet-smelling flowers, with joyful shouts of thanks in praises and melodious hymns to the God of their fathers, the everlasting Savior of Israel.

[17]But when they reached Ptolemais, called the Rose-bearing City because of the special character of the place, the fleet had waited there for

seven days according to the plan they determined.[†] [18]They held a feast of deliverance there for the king, who liberally supplied them with everything they needed for their journey home. [19]When they reached land in peace with proper giving of thanks, they also decided to again set apart these days for joyful festivity during their stay. [20]They marked these days on a column inscribed and set in the banquet site, consecrating it as a place of prayer. Then they went away safely through land, sea, and river, each to his own home, free and overjoyed by the command of the king.[†] [21]They had more honor than before among their adversaries, were held in esteem and awe, and none of them lost any of their belongings. [22]Instead, they reclaimed all of their own things which had been registered. If anyone held something of theirs, they returned it with the greatest fear, since the Almighty God had done perfectly magnificent works to gain their deliverance.[†]

[23]Blessed is the Savior of Israel unto ages of ages! Amen.

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The Book of the Psalms

Authors—Among the authors of the Psalms are David, the temple musicians, and Moses.

Date—Generally from 1000 BC, the time of David, to several centuries thereafter.

Major Theme—*The songs of God's people*. Each psalm has its own theme, as noted in the titles.

Background—

1. *Types of psalms:* The Psalms are of many types, including: (a) prophecies of the coming Messiah, (b) prayers for the king, (c) personal lamentations, (d) songs of praise, and (e) hymns for special feasts.
2. *The prayer book of the Church:* The Psalms have become for the Church, as for ancient Israel, a book of prayer and praise. All find their fulfillment in Christ, the Son of God. Not only do the Psalms predict specific events of Christ's life, but in them He Himself intercedes for and with His people before the Father. The Psalms can also be seen as a dialogue between the Church, the body of Christ, and Christ her Head. Therefore, they make the most sense to us when they are prayed or sung (chanted), not simply read.
3. *Uses in the Church:* The Book of Psalms, or Psalter, is used in the Orthodox Church in three primary ways:
    a. In the daily cycle of prayers. The liturgical tradition appoints certain psalms as “fixed” portions of the daily services. These will be pointed out in the notes throughout the text as psalms for morning prayers, evening prayers, and prayers of the hours.
    b. In the weekly order of the morning and evening services (Matins [Orthros] and Vespers). When these are done in their entirety, as in the monasteries, all the psalms are chanted in the course of each week, staring at Saturday Vespers and concluding at Matins the following Saturday.

c. In the observance of the Church year, the liturgical tradition selects particular psalms or verses for special feasts or seasons as prophetic statements illustrating the work of Christ for us. For example, the Passion Song of Psalm 21 (“They pierced My hands and My feet”) is used in the Church on Great and Holy Friday. Thus, using the Psalms is crucial to our understanding of the fullness of Christ's ministry to His people.

4. *Purpose:* The Psalms serve many functions. They (a) foretell coming events; (b) recall history; (c) frame laws for life; (d) reveal what must be done to obey God's word; (e) are a treasury of good doctrine; and (f) help overcome the passions that exercise dominion over our souls, through the power of poetic expression to capture and gradually transform our thoughts.

Psalm 1

B lessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the way of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the troublesome;[†]

[2] But his will is in the law of the Lord,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

[3] He shall be like a tree

Planted by streams of waters,

That produces its fruit in its season;

And his leaf shall not wither,

And whatever he does shall prosper.

[4] Not so are the ungodly, not so,

But they are like the dust the wind drives from the face of the earth.

[5] Therefore the ungodly shall not rise in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the counsel of the righteous;

[6] For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 2

Why do the nations rage,

And the people meditate on vain things?[†ω]

2 The kings of the earth set themselves,

And the rulers gather together

Against the Lord and against His anointed, saying,

3 “Let us break their bands,

And cast away their yokes from us.”

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh at them;

The Lord shall mock them.

5 Then shall He speak to them in His wrath

And trouble them in His anger,

6 “But I was established as King by Him

Over His holy hill of Zion,

Declaring the Lord's decree.

7 The Lord said to Me,

‘You are My Son,

Today I have begotten You;

8 Ask of Me, and I will give You

The nations for Your inheritance

And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

9 You shall shepherd them with an iron staff;

You shall shatter them like a potter's vessel.’ ”

10 And now, O kings, understand;

Be instructed, all you judges of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear

And rejoice in Him with trembling.

[12] Lay hold of His instruction, lest the Lord be angry,

And you perish from the righteous way

When His fury shall be quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who trust in Him.

Psalm 3

[1] *A psalm by David, when he fled from the face of his son, Absalom.*[†ω]

O Lord, why do those who afflict me multiply?

Many are those who rise up against me.

[3] Many are those who say to my soul,

“There is no salvation for him in his God.” (Pause)

[4] But You, O Lord, are my protector,

My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

[5] I cried to the Lord with my voice,

And He heard me from His holy hill. (Pause)

[6] I lay down and slept;

I awoke, for the Lord will help me.

[7] I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people

Who set themselves against me all around.

[8] Arise, O Lord, and save me, O my God,

For You struck all those who were foolishly at enmity with me;

You broke the teeth of sinners.

[9] Salvation is of the Lord,

And Your blessing is upon Your people.

Psalm 4

[1] *For the End; in psalms; an ode by David.*[†ω]

You heard me when I called, O God of my righteousness.

You strengthened my heart when I was in distress;

Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

3 How long, O you sons of men,

Will you be slow of heart?

Why do you love vain things

And seek after lies?

4 Know that the Lord made His Holy One wondrous;

The Lord will hear me when I cry to Him.

5 Be angry, and do not sin;

Have remorse upon your beds

For what you say in your hearts. (Pause)

6 Offer the sacrifice of righteousness,

And hope in the Lord.

7 There are many who say, “Who will show us good things?”

O Lord, the light of Your face was stamped upon us.

8 You put gladness in my heart;

From their season of wheat, wine, and oil they were multiplied.

9 I will both sleep and rest in peace,

For You alone, O Lord, cause me to dwell in hope.

Psalm 5

1 *For the End; concerning the inheritance; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

Give ear to my words, O Lord,

Hear my cry.

3 Give heed to the voice of my supplication,

My King and my God,

For to You will I pray, O Lord.

[4] In the morning You shall hear my voice;

In the morning I will stand before You,

And I will watch.

[5] For You are not a God who wills lawlessness,

Nor shall the evildoer dwell with You.

[6] The lawless shall not stand before Your eyes;

You hate all the workers of lawlessness;

[7] You shall destroy all who speak falsehood;

The Lord abhors the man of violence and deceit.

[8] But as for me, in the fullness of Your mercy I will come into Your house;

In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.

[9] Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies;

Make straight Your way before me.

[10] For there is no truth in their mouth;

Their heart is vain;

Their throat is an open grave;

They deal deceptively with their tongues.

[11] Judge them, O God.

Let them fall by their false accusations;

Cast them out in the multitude of their ungodliness;

For they provoked You, O Lord.

[12] But let all who hope in You be glad;

They will greatly rejoice forever,

For You will dwell in them;

And all who love Your name will boast in You.

[13] For You will bless the righteous;

O Lord, You crowned us with the shield of Your goodwill.

Psalm 6

[1]*For the End; in hymns, concerning the eighth; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

O Lord, do not reprove me in Your anger, Nor discipline me in Your wrath.

[3] Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak;

Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled;

[4] And my soul is greatly troubled;

But You, O Lord, how long?

[5] Return, O Lord, and deliver my soul.

Save me because of Your mercy.

[6] For there is no remembrance of You in death;

And in Hades who will give thanks to You?

[7] I am weary with my groaning;

Every single night I will dampen my bed;

I will drench my couch with my tears.

[8] My eye is troubled by anger;

I grow old among all my enemies.

[9] Depart from me, all you workers of lawlessness;

For the Lord heard the voice of my weeping;

[10] The Lord heard my supplication;

The Lord received my prayer.

[11] Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled;

Let them turn back and be suddenly ashamed.

Psalm 7

[1]*A psalm by David, which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush, the son of Benjamin.*[†]

O Lord my God, in You I hope; Save me from all who pursue me, and deliver me,

[3] Lest like a lion he snatch away my soul

While there is none to redeem or save.

[4] O Lord my God, if I have done this,

If there is wrongdoing in my hands,

[5] If I dealt back evil to those dealing evil to me,

Then may I fall empty because of my enemies,

[6] Then may the enemy pursue and overtake my soul,

And trample down my life to the ground,

And make my glory settle in the dust. (Pause)

[7] Arise, O Lord, in Your anger;

Be exalted to the very boundaries of my enemies;

Awaken, O Lord my God, in the ordinance You commanded,

[8] So the congregation of the peoples shall surround You,

And because of this, return on high.

[9] The Lord shall judge the people;

Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness,

And according to the innocence within me.

[10] Bring an end to the wickedness of sinners,

And keep straight the righteous;

For God examines hearts and reins.

[11] My righteous help is from God,

Who saves the upright in heart.

[12] God is a righteous, strong, and patient judge,

Not bringing down wrath every single day.

13 If You do not return, he will polish his sword;

He stretched his bow and readied it,

14 And he readied his instruments of death

And prepared his arrows to kindle a fire.

15 Behold, he suffered the pains of childbirth in unrighteousness;

He conceived pain and brought forth lawlessness;

16 He opened up a pit and dug it out,

And he will fall into the hole he made.

17 The pain shall return on his own head,

And his wrongdoing shall come down on his crown.

18 I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness

And will sing to the name of the Lord Most High.

Psalm 8

1 *For the End; concerning the winepresses; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

O Lord, our Lord, how wondrous is Your name in all the earth,

For Your splendor is exalted far beyond the heavens.

3 From the mouths of babies and nursing infants

You prepared praise because of Your enemies,

That You may destroy the enemy and avenger.

4 For I shall look at the heavens, the works of Your fingers,

The moon and stars You established.

5 What is man that You remember him,

Or the son of man that You visit him?

6 You made him a little lower than the angels;

You crowned him with glory and honor.

7 You set him over the works of Your hands;

You subjected all things under his feet,

[8] All sheep and oxen,

And besides these, also the animals of the field,

[9] The birds of heaven and the fish of the sea,

And the things passing through the paths of the seas.

[10] O Lord, our Lord, how wondrous is Your name in all the earth.

Psalm 9 (9, 10)

[1]*For the End; concerning the hidden things of the Son; a psalm of David.*[†]

I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart;

I will tell of all Your wondrous things;

[3] I will be glad and rejoice in You;

I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

[4] When my enemy turns backward,

They shall be feeble and perish before Your face.

[5] For You maintain my judgment and my right;

You sit upon the throne, judging in righteousness.

[6] You rebuke the nations, and the ungodly man destroys himself;

You blotted out their name, in their lifetime and unto ages of ages;

[7] The swords of the enemy are completely forsaken,

And You pulled down their cities;

Their memory was destroyed with a noise.

[8] But the Lord abides forever;

He prepared His throne in judgment,

[9] And He shall judge the world in righteousness;

He shall judge the peoples in uprightness.

[10] The Lord is also a refuge for the poor man,

A helper in seasons of affliction;

11 And let those who know Your name put their hope in You;

For You, O Lord, do not forsake those who seek You.

12 Sing to the Lord who dwells in Zion.

Proclaim His dealings among the nations,

13 For He who avenges blood remembers them;

He does not forget the cry of the poor.

14 Have mercy on me, O Lord, and see how my enemies have humbled me,

You who raise me up from the gates of death,

15 That I may proclaim all Your praises

In the gates of the daughter of Zion.

I will rejoice in Your salvation.

16 The nations are trapped in the destruction they caused;

Their foot is caught in the trap they hid.

17 The Lord is known in the judgments He makes;

The sinner is caught in the works of his hands. (Pause)

18 Let sinners be turned back into Hades,

And all the nations who forget God.

19 For the poor man shall not be forgotten in the end;

The patience of the poor shall not perish forever.

20 Arise, O Lord, and do not let man prevail;

Let the nations be judged in Your presence.

21 Set a lawgiver over them, O Lord,

And let the nations know that they are men. (Pause)

22 Why do You stand afar off, O Lord?

Why do You disregard me in times of affliction?

23 When the ungodly man behaves arrogantly, the poor are set afire;

Let him be caught in the counsels he ponders.

24 For the sinner praises himself in the desires of his soul,

And the unjust man blesses himself.

25 The sinner provokes the Lord;

He will not seek Him out because of the fullness of His wrath;

God is not before him.

26 His ways are defiled in every season;

Your judgments are removed from his face;

He shall rule over all his enemies,

27 For he said in his heart, “I will not be shaken;

From generation to generation I will be without trouble.”

28 His mouth is full of cursing, bitterness and deceit;

Suffering and pain are under his tongue.

29 He lies in ambush with the wealthy;

He kills the innocent in hidden places;

His eyes look intently at the poor;

30 He lies in ambush in a hiding place, like a lion in his den;

He lies in wait to seize the poor man,

To seize the poor man to drag him away;

31 He will humble him in his snare;

But he will bend down and fall when he rules over the poor.

32 For he said in his heart, “God forgets;

He turned His face so as never to see it.”

33 Arise, O Lord God, let Your hand be lifted high,

And do not forget Your poor.

34 Why has the ungodly man provoked God?

For he said in his heart, “You will never call me to account for this.”

[35] But You do see, You do perceive the suffering and pain,

That You might deliver them into Your hands;

Therefore, the poor man will be left to You;

You give help to the orphan.

[36] Break the arm of the sinner and the evil man;

His sin shall be sought, and because of it he will not be found;

[37] The Lord will reign,

But you, O nations, you will perish from His earth.

[38] The Lord hears the desire of the poor;

Your ear heeds the readiness of their heart,

[39] To judge the orphan and the humble,

That man may no longer increase his great boasting upon the earth.

Psalm 10 (11)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†]

In the Lord I trust. How will you say to my soul,

“Flee to the mountains like a sparrow”?

[2] See, the sinners stretch tight their bow;

They prepare their arrows in the quiver,

That in a moonless night they may shoot down the upright in heart.

[3] For the things You created, they destroyed.

But what did the righteous man do?

[4] The Lord is in His holy temple;

The Lord, His throne is in heaven;

His eyes are fixed upon the poor man,

His eyelids examine the sons of men.

[5] The Lord examines the righteous man and the ungodly man,

And he who loves unrighteousness hates his own soul.

[6] He shall rain down snares upon sinners;

Fire and brimstone and a raging wind shall be the portion of their cup.

[7] The righteous Lord loves righteousness;

His face beholds the upright.

Psalm 11 (12)

[1]*For the End, concerning the eighth; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

S ave me, O Lord, for the holy man has ceased;

The truthful are diminished from among the sons of men.

[3] Each one speaks useless things to his neighbor;

Deceptive lips speak with a double heart.

[4] May the Lord destroy all deceptive lips

And the tongue that speaks boastful things,

[5] Saying, “We will make our tongue powerful;

Our lips are our own;

Who is lord over us?”

[6] “Because of the suffering of the needy,

And because of the groaning of the poor,

Now I will arise,” says the Lord;

“I will establish them in salvation;

I will declare it boldly.”

[7] The words of the Lord are pure words,

Like silver fired in a furnace of earth,

Purified seven times.

[8] You shall guard us, O Lord;

You shall preserve us from this generation forever.

[9] The ungodly walk in a circle;

In Your exaltation, You highly exalted the sons of men.

Psalm 12 (13)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

H ow long, O Lord? Will You forget me to the end?

How long will You turn Your face from me?

[3] How long will I take counsel in my soul,

Having grief in my heart daily?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

[4] Look upon me and hear me, O Lord my God;

Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death,

[5] Lest my enemy say,

“I prevailed against him”;

Those who afflict me greatly rejoice, if I am shaken.

[6] But I hope in Your mercy;

My heart shall greatly rejoice in Your salvation;

I will sing to the Lord, who shows kindness to me;

I will sing to the name of the Lord Most High.

Psalm 13 (14)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

T he fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, they are abominable in their habits;

There is none, not even one, who does good.

[2] The Lord stooped down from heaven to look upon the sons of men,

To see if there were any who understood or sought God.

[3] All turned aside and were altogether corrupted;

There was not even one doing good, no, not one.

Their throat is an open tomb;

They deal deceptively with their tongues;

The poison of serpents is under their lips,

Whose mouth is full of curses and bitterness;

Their feet are swift to shed blood;

Affliction and suffering are in their ways,

And the way of peace they have not known;

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

[4] Do all the workers of lawlessness not know?

They eat up my people as they eat bread, and they do not call upon the Lord.

[5] They were in great fear where no fear was,

Because God is in the righteous generation.

[6] You shamed the counsel of the poor man,

Because the Lord is his hope.

[7] Who will bring about the salvation of Israel out of Zion?

When the Lord returns His people from captivity,

Let Jacob greatly rejoice, and let Israel be glad.

Psalm 14 (15)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†ω]

O Lord, who shall dwell in Your tabernacle?

Who shall live in Your holy mountain?

[2] He who walks blamelessly, and works righteousness,

And speaks truth in his heart,

[3] Who does not deceive with his tongue,

Neither does evil to his neighbor;

And does not find fault with those nearest him.

4 He disdains those who do evil in his presence,

But he holds in honor those who fear the Lord;

He swears an oath to his neighbor and does not set it aside.

5 He does not lend his money at interest,

And he does not take a bribe against the innocent.

6 He who does these things shall never be shaken.

Psalm 15 (16)

1 *A pillar inscription; by David.*[†ω]

P reserve me, O Lord, because I hope in You.

2 I said to the Lord, “You are my Lord;

You have no need of my good things.”

3 To the saints on His earth,

In them He magnified all His will.

4 Their diseases were multiplied;

They hastened after these things;

I will not join in their assemblies of blood,

nor will I remember their names with my lips.

5 The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup;

You are He who restores my inheritance to me.

6 Portions fell to me among the best,

And my inheritance is the very finest.

7 I will bless the Lord who caused me to understand;

Moreover, until night my reins also instructed me.

8 I saw the Lord always before me;

Because He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart was glad,

And my tongue rejoiced exceedingly;

My flesh also shall dwell in hope.

10 For You will not abandon my soul to Hades

Nor allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

11 You made known to me the ways of life;

You will fill me with gladness in Your presence;

At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16 (17)

1*A prayer of David.*[†ω]

Listen, O Lord of my righteousness;

Attend to my supplication;

Give ear to my prayer that is not with deceitful lips.

2 From Your face let my judgment come;

Let my eyes behold uprightness.

3 You tested my heart, when You visited me in the night;

You tried me in the fire, and found nothing unjust in me.

4 That my mouth might not speak of the works of men,

I held to hard ways because of the words of Your lips.

5 Restore my steps in Your paths,

That my footsteps may not slip.

6 I cried out, because You listened to me, O God;

Incline Your ear to me, and hear my words.

7 Magnify Your mercies,

O You who save those who hope in You

From those who rise up against Your right hand.

[8] Keep me as the apple of Your eye;

In the shelter of Your wings, You will shelter me

[9] From the face of the ungodly who trouble me.

My enemies surrounded my soul;

[10] Their fat enclosed them;

Their mouth spoke arrogantly.

[11] Casting me out, they now surround me;

They set their eyes to bend down to the earth.

[12] They seized me like a lion ready to tear its prey,

Like a young lion lurking in secret places.

[13] Arise, O Lord, outrun them and trip up their heels;

Rescue my soul from the ungodly,

And Your sword from the enemies of Your hand.

[14] O Lord, destroy them from the earth;

Scatter them in their life.

Their belly is filled with Your hidden things;

They are satisfied with their sons,

And they leave their possessions to their children.

[15] As for me, in righteousness I shall behold Your face;

I shall be satisfied when Your glory is revealed.

Psalm 17 (18)

[1]*For the End; by the child of the Lord, David; what things he spoke to the Lord, even the words of this ode, in the day the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul;*[†ω]

[2]*thus he said:*

“I will love You, O Lord, my strength.

[3] The Lord is my foundation, my refuge, my deliverer;

My God is my helper, on Him I will hope,

My champion, the horn of my salvation, and my protector.

[4] I will call upon the Lord and praise Him,

And I shall be saved from my enemies.

[5] The anguish of death surrounded me;

The floods of the lawless troubled me greatly;

[6] The anguish of Hades encircled me;

The snares of death ran me down.

[7] In my affliction I called upon the Lord,

And I cried out to my God;

He heard my voice from His holy temple,

And my cry shall come before Him, into His ears.

[8] Then the earth was shaken and was trembling;

And the foundations of mountains were stirred up,

And they were shaken, because God was angry with them.

[9] Smoke ascended in His wrath,

And burst into flame from His face;

Coals were kindled by Him.

[10] He bowed heaven and descended,

And darkness was under His feet.

[11] And He rode upon the cherubim, and flew;

He flew upon the wings of the wind.

[12] He made darkness His hiding place;

His tabernacle was around Him,

Dark water in the clouds of the sky.

13 Because of the brightness before Him, the clouds,

The hail and the fiery coals passed through.

14 The Lord thundered from heaven,

The Most High gave forth His voice;

15 And He sent forth His arrows, and scattered them;

And He multiplied lightning, and threw them into utter confusion.

16 Then the springs of the waters were seen,

And the foundations of the world were uncovered

By Your rebuke, O Lord,

By the breathing of the breath of Your wrath.

17 He sent from on high, and He took me;

He drew me out of many waters.

18 He will deliver me from my strong enemies,

and from those who hate me,

Because they were too strong for me.

19 They overran me in the day of my misfortune,

But the Lord became my support,

20 And He led me into a wide place;

He will deliver me, because He willed it for me.

He will deliver me from my strong enemies

and from those who hate me.

21 The Lord will reward me according to my righteousness;

And according to the purity of my hands He will recompense me,

22 Because I kept the ways of the Lord

And did not act impiously against my God;

23 For all His judgments are before me,

And I did not remove His ordinances from me.

24 I will also be blameless before Him,

And I will keep myself from my lawlessness.

25 The Lord will reward me according to my righteousness,

According to the purity of my hands before His eyes.

26 With the holy You will be holy;

And with the innocent man You will be innocent;

27 And with the elect You will be elect;

And with the crooked You will be crooked.

28 For You will save a humble people,

And You will humble the eyes of the arrogant.

29 For You will light my lamp, O Lord;

O my God, You will enlighten my darkness.

30 For in You I shall be delivered from ordeals,

And in my God I shall leap over a wall.

31 My God, His way is blameless;

The teachings of the Lord are tried by fire;

He is the shield of all who set their hope on Him.

32 For who is God besides the Lord?

And who is God besides our God?

33 It is God who girds me with power,

And He made my way blameless;

34 Who makes my feet like a deer

And sets me on high places;

35 Who teaches my hands to make war;

And You make my arms a bronze bow;

36 And You gave me the shield of Your salvation;

And Your right hand supported me;

And Your instruction restored me to the end;

And Your instruction will teach me.

37 You widened my steps under me,

And my footsteps were not feeble.

38 I shall pursue my enemies and overtake them;

And I shall not turn back until they faint;

39 I shall wound them until they cannot stand;

They shall fall under my feet.

40 For You armed me with strength for war;

You entangled under my feet all who rose up against me,

41 And You gave me the back of my enemies;

And You destroyed all who hate me.

42 They cried out, but there was none to save them;

Even to the Lord, but He did not answer them.

43 I will grind them fine, like the dust that blows in the wind;

I will smooth them out, like mud in the streets.

44 Deliver me from the contradictions of the people;

You will establish me as the head of the Gentiles;

A people I never knew served me;

45 The moment they heard, they obeyed me;

Sons who are strangers lied to me;

46 Sons who are strangers became old,

And they became lame because of their beaten path.

47 The Lord lives, and blessed is my God.

Let the salvation of my God be exalted,

48 The God who vindicates me,

And who subdued the peoples under me,

[49] My deliverer from the rage of my enemies;

Because of those who rise up against me, You will exalt me;

You will deliver me from the unrighteous man.

[50] Therefore I will give thanks to You among the Gentiles, O Lord,

And sing to Your name,

[51] He who magnifies the salvation of His king

And shows mercy to His anointed,

To David and his seed forever.”

Psalm 18 (19)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

The heavens declare the glory of God;

The firmament shows the creation of His hands.

[3] Day to day utters speech,

And night to night reveals knowledge.

[4] There is no speech nor language

Where their voices are not heard.

[5] Their proclamation went forth into all the earth,

And their words to the ends of the world.

In the sun He set His tabernacle;

[6] And it rejoices exceedingly

Like a bridegroom coming forth from his bridal chamber,

Like a strong man to run a race.

[7] Its rising is from one end of heaven,

And its circuit runs to the other end;

And nothing shall be hidden from its heat.

[8] The law of the Lord is blameless, converting souls;

The testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making children wise;

[9] The ordinances of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the Lord is bright, enlightening the eyes;

[10] The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring unto ages of ages;

The judgments of the Lord are true, being altogether just.

[11] More to be desired are they than gold and a very precious stone,

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

[12] For indeed Your servant keeps them;

In keeping them there is great reward.

[13] Who will understand his transgressions?

Cleanse me from hidden sins,

[14] And spare your servant from unnatural sins;

If they have no dominion over me, then I shall be blameless,

And I shall be cleansed from great sin.

[15] Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

Be always pleasing before You,

O Lord, my helper and my redeemer.

Psalm 19 (20)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†]

May the Lord hear you in the day of affliction;

May the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

[3] May He send you help from His holy place,

And may He support you from Zion.

[4] May He remember every sacrifice of yours,

And may your whole burnt offering be honored. (Pause)

[5] May He give you according to your heart,

May He fulfill all your counsel.

6 We will greatly rejoice in Your salvation,

And in the name of our God we will be magnified.

7 Now I know the Lord has saved His anointed;

He will hear him from His holy heaven;

The salvation of His right hand is mighty.

8 Some glory in chariots, some in horses,

But in the name of the Lord our God we shall be magnified.

9 Their feet were tied together; so they fell;

But we rose up and were restored.

10 O Lord, save Your King,

And hear us in the day we call upon You.

Psalm 20 (21)

1*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

O Lord, the king shall be glad in Your power,

And in Your salvation he will greatly rejoice.

3 You gave him his soul's desire,

And You did not deprive him of his lips’ request. (Pause)

4 For You anticipated him with blessings of goodness;

You placed a crown of precious stones on his head.

5 He asked You for life, and You gave it to him,

Length of days unto ages of ages.

6 Great is his glory in Your salvation;

Glory and majesty You shall place upon him.

7 For You shall give him blessing unto ages of ages;

You shall fill him with the joy of Your presence.

8 For the king hopes in the Lord,

And in the mercy of the Most High he will not be shaken.

9 May Your hand be found on all Your enemies;

May Your right hand find all who hate You.

10 You shall make them like a fiery furnace

In the time of Your presence;

The Lord shall throw them into confusion in His wrath,

And the fire shall devour them.

11 You shall destroy their offspring from the earth

And their seed from among the sons of men.

12 For they vented all their evils against You;

They reasoned through a counsel they could not establish.

13 For You shall make them turn their back;

Among Your remnants, You shall make ready their countenance.

14 Be exalted, O Lord, in Your power;

We will sing and praise Your mighty deeds.

Psalm 21 (22)

1*For the End; concerning help in the morning; a psalm by David.*†ω

O God, my God, hear me; why have You forsaken me?

The words of my transgressions are far from my salvation.

3 O my God, I will cry out by day, but You will not hear me;

And by night, but not for a lack of understanding in me.

4 But You dwell among the saints, O praise of Israel.

5 Our fathers hoped in You;

They hoped in You, and You delivered them.

6 They cried out to You and were saved;

They hoped in You and were not ashamed.

[7] But I am a worm, and not a man;

A reproach of man and despised by the people.

[8] All who see me mock me;

They speak with their lips and shake their head,

[9] Saying, “He hoped in the Lord, let Him rescue him;

Let Him save him since He delights in him.”

[10] For You are He who drew me from the womb,

My hope from my mother's breasts;

[11] I was cast upon You from the womb,

From my mother's womb You are my God.

[12] Do not stand off from me, for affliction is near;

There is no one to help.

[13] Many young bulls surrounded me;

Fat bulls encircled me.

[14] They opened their mouths against me

Like a raging and roaring lion.

[15] I am poured out like water,

And all my bones are shattered;

My heart is like wax, melting into my stomach.

[16] My strength is dried up like an earthen vessel;

My tongue cleaves to my throat;

And You led me into the dust of death.

[17] For many dogs surrounded me;

An assembly of evildoers enclosed me;

They pierced my hands and my feet.

[18] I numbered all my bones,

And they look and stare at me.

19 They divided my garments among themselves,

And for my clothing they cast lots.

20 But You, O Lord, do not remove Your help from me;

Attend to my aid.

21 Deliver my soul from the sword

And my only-begotten from the hand of the dog;

22 Save me from the lion's mouth,

My humiliation from the horns of the unicorns.

23 I will declare Your name to my brethren;

In the midst of the church I will sing to You.

24 You who fear the Lord, praise Him.

All you seed of Jacob, glorify Him;

Fear Him, all you seed of Israel.

25 For He has not despised nor scorned the beggar's supplication,

Nor has He turned away His face from me;

And when I cried out to Him, He heard me.

26 My praise is from You in the great church;

I will pay my vows before those who fear Him.

27 The poor shall eat and be well-filled,

And those who seek Him will praise the Lord;

Their hearts will live unto ages of ages.

28 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord;

And all families of the Gentiles shall worship before You,

29 For the kingdom is the Lord's;

And He is the Master of the Gentiles.

30 All the prosperous of the earth ate and worshiped;

All going down into the earth shall bow down before Him,

And my soul lives with Him.

[31] And my seed shall serve Him;

The coming generation shall be told of the Lord,

[32] And they will declare His righteousness

To a people who will be born, because the Lord made them.

Psalm 22 (23)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†ω]

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

[2] He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

[3] He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

[4] Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

[5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

[6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord to the end of my days.

Psalm 23 (24)

[1]*A psalm by David; on the first day of the week.*[†ω]

The earth is the Lord's, and its fullness,
The world and all who dwell therein.
[2] For He founded it upon the seas
And prepared it upon the rivers.
[3] Who shall ascend to the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in His holy place?
[4] He who has innocent hands and a pure heart;
He who does not lift up his soul to vanity;
He who does not swear deceitfully to his neighbor.
[5] He shall receive blessing from the Lord
And mercy from the God of his salvation.
[6] This is the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek the face of the God of Jacob. (Pause)
[7] Lift up the gates, O you rulers,
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall enter.
[8] Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord powerful in battle.
[9] Lift up the gates, O you rulers,
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall enter.
[10] Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.

Psalm 24 (25)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†ω]

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul, O my God.

2 I trust in You; let me not be ashamed;

Let not my enemies laugh at me.

3 For all who wait upon You shall not be ashamed;

Let those be ashamed who act lawlessly in vain.

4 Make known Your ways to me, O Lord,

And teach me Your paths.

5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

For You are the God of my salvation,

And on You I wait all the day.

6 Remember Your compassion, O Lord,

And Your mercy, for they are from of old.

7 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor of my ignorance;

But remember me according to Your mercy,

Because of Your loving-kindness, O Lord.

8 Good and upright is the Lord;

Therefore He will instruct sinners in His way.

9 He will guide the gentle in judgment;

He will teach the gentle His ways.

10 All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth

For those who seek His covenant and His testimonies.

11 For Your name's sake, O Lord,

Pardon my sin, for it is great.

12 Who is the man who fears the Lord?

He will instruct him in the way He chooses.

13 His soul shall dwell among good things;

His seed shall inherit the earth.

[14] The Lord is the strength of those who fear Him,

And to those who fear Him, His name is the Lord,

And He will show them His covenant.

[15] My eyes are always toward the Lord,

For He shall pluck my feet out of the trap.

[16] Look upon me and have mercy on me,

For I am only-begotten and poor.

[17] The afflictions of my heart have been widened;

Bring me out of my distresses.

[18] Look on my humiliation and my pain

And forgive all my sins.

[19] Look on my enemies, because they multiply,

And they hate me with unjustified hatred.

[20] Keep my soul, and deliver me;

Let me not be ashamed, because I hope in You.

[21] The innocent and the upright cleave to me

Because I wait upon You, O Lord.

[22] Redeem Israel, O God,

Out of all his afflictions.

Psalm 25 (26)

[1]*Of David.*[†ω]

J udge me, O Lord, for I walk in my innocence,

And by hoping in the Lord, I shall not weaken.

[2] Prove me, O Lord, and test me,

Try my reins and my heart in the fire.

[3] For Your mercy is before my eyes,

And I was well-pleasing in Your truth.

4 I have not sat down with vain councils,

Nor will I go in with those who transgress the law.

5 I hate the assembly of evildoers,

And I will not sit with the ungodly.

6 I will wash my hands in innocence;

So I will go about Your altar, O Lord,

7 That I may hear the voice of praise

And tell of all Your wondrous works.

8 O Lord, I love the beauty of Your house,

And the place where Your glory dwells.

9 Do not destroy my soul with the ungodly,

Nor my life with men of blood,

10 In whose hands is lawlessness;

Their right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me, I walk in my innocence;

Redeem me and have mercy on me.

12 For my foot stands in uprightness;

In the churches I will bless You, O Lord.

Psalm 26 (27)

1 *Of David; before he was anointed.*[†ω]

The Lord is my light and my savior; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the defender of my life; whom shall I dread?

2 When the wicked drew near against me to eat up my flesh,

Those who afflict me and are my enemies, they weakened and fell.

3 Though an army should array itself against me, my heart shall not be afraid;

Though war should rise up against me, in this I shall hope.

4 One thing I ask from the Lord; this I will seek,

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

And behold the delights of the Lord,

And visit His temple.

5 For He hid me in His tabernacle in the day of my troubles;

He sheltered me in the secret place of His tabernacle;

He set me high upon a rock.

6 And now, behold, He has lifted up my head above my enemies;

I went around and offered in His tabernacle a sacrifice of joy;

I will sing to the Lord, and praise Him with the harp.

7 O Lord, hear my voice, wherein I cry;

Have mercy on me and hear me.

8 My heart speaks to You; my face seeks You;

Your face, O Lord, I will seek.

9 Do not turn away Your face from me;

Do not turn away from Your servant in wrath;

Be my helper; do not utterly cast me away,

Nor forsake me, O God my savior.

10 For my father and my mother forsook me,

But the Lord laid hold of me.

11 Instruct me, O Lord, in the way of Your law;

Set me on a straight path because of my enemies.

12 Do not deliver me to the souls of those who afflict me,

For unjust witnesses rise up against me;

And injustice lies to itself.

13 I believe I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.

[14] Wait on the Lord;

Be courageous, and strengthen your heart,

And wait on the Lord.

Psalm 27 (28)

[1]*Of David.*[†ω]

T o You, O Lord, I cry;

O my God, may You not pass over me in silence;

May You never be silent to me,

Else I would become like those who go down into the pit.

[2] Hear the voice of my supplication when I pray to You

And when I lift up my hands toward Your holy temple.

[3] May You not associate my soul with sinners,

Nor destroy me with the workers of injustice,

Who speak peace with their neighbor,

But evil is in their hearts.

[4] Give them according to their works,

According to the wickedness of their pursuits;

Give them according to the works of their hands;

Return to them their due reward.

[5] Because they do not understand the works of the Lord,

Nor the deeds of His hands,

You will destroy them, and never rebuild them.

[6] Blessed is the Lord,

Because He heard the voice of my supplication.

[7] The Lord is my helper and my champion;

In Him my heart hoped, and I was helped,

And my flesh revived;
And I will give thanks to Him willingly.
[8] The Lord is the strength of His people,
And the protector of the salvation of His anointed.
[9] Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance;
And shepherd them, and raise them up forever.

Psalm 28 (29)

[1]*A psalm by David; the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles.*[†ω]

Bring to the Lord, O you sons of God,
Bring to the Lord the sons of rams;
Bring to the Lord glory and honor.
[2] Bring to the Lord the glory due His name;
Worship the Lord in His holy court.
[3] The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
The God of glory thundered;
The Lord is upon the many waters.
[4] The voice of the Lord is strong;
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
[5] The voice of the Lord shatters cedars,
And the Lord shall grind to powder the cedars of Lebanon;
[6] And He shall grind them fine like the young bull, and like Lebanon,
But His beloved shall be like a son of unicorns.
[7] The voice of the Lord cuts through fiery flames;
[8] The voice of the Lord shakes the desert,
And the Lord will shake the desert of Kadesh.
[9] The voice of the Lord causes deer to calve,

And uncovers the thickets;

And in His temple, everyone speaks of His glory.

[10] The Lord shall dwell in the deluge,

And the Lord shall sit as King forever.

[11] The Lord will give strength to His people;

The Lord will bless His people with peace.

Psalm 29 (30)

[1]*For the End; the psalm of an ode at the consecration of the house; by David.*[†ω]

I will exalt You, O Lord, for You lifted me up,

And did not let my enemies rejoice over me.

[3] O Lord my God, I cry to You, and You will heal me.

[4] O Lord, You brought my soul out of Hades;

You saved me from those who go down to the pit.

[5] Sing praises to the Lord, you saints of His,

And give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness;

[6] For there is wrath in His anger,

But life in His will;

Weeping will lodge at evening,

But great joy in the morning.

[7] As for me, I said in my prosperity,

“I shall not be shaken forever.”

[8] O Lord, in Your will, grant beauty and power;

You turned away Your face, and I was troubled.

[9] I shall cry to You, O Lord,

And to God I shall make supplication.

10 What profit is there in my blood,

When I go down into decay?

Will the dust confess You?

Or will it declare Your truth?

11 The Lord heard, and had mercy on me;

The Lord became my helper.

12 You turned my lamentation into dancing for me;

You tore up my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,

13 That my glory may sing praise to You,

And not be pierced with sadness;

O Lord my God, I shall give thanks to You forever.

Psalm 30 (31)

1 *For the End; a psalm by David; of ecstasy.*[†ω]

I n You, O Lord, I hope; may I not be ashamed forever;

In Your righteousness deliver and rescue me.

3 Incline Your ear to me;

Rescue me speedily;

Be to me a God who protects me,

And a house of refuge to save me.

4 For You are my strength and my refuge,

And for Your name's sake You will guide and sustain me;

5 For You will bring me out from the snare they hid for me;

For You are my protector.

6 Into Your hands I shall entrust my spirit;

You redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

7 You hate those who maintain their empty vanities,

But I hope in the Lord.

[8] I will greatly rejoice and be glad because of Your mercy,

For You beheld my humiliation;

You saved my soul from distress,

[9] And did not shut me up into the hands of the enemy;

You set my feet in a wide place.

[10] Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted;

My eye is troubled with anger;

So are my soul and my stomach.

[11] For my life is wasted with grief

And my years with sighing;

My strength is weakened with poverty,

And my bones are troubled.

[12] I became a reproach among all my enemies,

And especially to all my neighbors,

And a fear to all my acquaintances;

Those who saw me outside fled from me.

[13] I am forgotten like one whose heart is lifeless;

I was made like a vessel that is utterly broken.

[14] For I heard the blame of many who dwell round about

When they were gathered together against me,

When they plotted to take my life.

[15] But as for me, I hope in You, O Lord;

I said, “You are my God.”

[16] My times are in Your hands;

Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,

And from those who persecute me.

17 Make Your face shine upon Your servant;

Save me in Your mercy.

18 O Lord, do not let me be ashamed, because I call upon You;

Let the ungodly be ashamed,

And lead them down into Hades.

19 Let deceitful lips become speechless

When they speak lawlessness against the righteous

With arrogance and contempt.

20 How great, O Lord, is the abundance of Your goodness

You hide for those who fear You,

Which You will work for those who hope in You

In the sight of the sons of men.

21 You shall hide them in the secret of Your presence from the disturbance of men;

You will shelter them in Your tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues.

22 Blessed is the Lord,

For He magnified His mercy in a fortified city.

23 But I said in my ecstasy,

“Indeed, I am cast away from the countenance of Your eyes.”

Therefore You heard the voice of my supplication

When I cried to You.

24 Love the Lord, all you His saints,

For the Lord seeks out truth,

And He repays those who act with great arrogance.

25 Be courageous, and let your heart be strengthened,

All who hope in the Lord.

Psalm 31 (32)

1 *By David; concerning understanding.*[†]

B lessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven,

And whose sins are covered.

2 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not take into account,

And in whose mouth there is no deceit.

3 Because I kept silent, my bones grew old

From my groaning all the day long;

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;

I became miserable when the thorn pierced me. (Pause)

5 I made known my sin,

And I did not hide my transgression;

I said, “I will confess my transgression to the Lord,”

And You forgave the ungodliness of my sin. (Pause)

6 For this cause, everyone who is holy will pray to Him in a well-fitted time;

Surely they will not draw near to Him in a flood of many waters.

7 You are my refuge from the oppression of those who surround me;

O my exceeding joy, redeem me from those who encircle me. (Pause)

8 “I will give you understanding, and I will teach you in the way you should walk;

I will fix My eyes on you.

9 Do not be like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding;

You squeeze their jaws with bit and bridle,

Lest they come near you.”

10 Many are the scourges of the sinner,

But he who hopes in the Lord, mercy shall encircle him.

11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice greatly, O righteous ones,

And boast, all you upright in heart.

Psalm 32 (33)

[1]*By David.*[†ω]

Rejoice greatly in the Lord, O righteous ones;

Praise is fitting for the upright.

[2] Give thanks to the Lord on the lyre;

Sing praises to Him on a ten-stringed instrument.

[3] Sing to Him a new song;

Sing praises beautifully with a shout.

[4] For the word of the Lord is right,

And all His works are done in faithfulness.

[5] He loves mercy and judgment;

The earth is full of the Lord's mercy.

[6] By the word of the Lord the heavens were established,

And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth,

[7] Who gathers the waters of the sea together as in a wineskin,

Who put the abysses in storehouses.

[8] Let all the earth fear the Lord,

And let all the world's inhabitants be shaken by Him;

[9] For He spoke, and they were made;

He commanded, and they were created.

[10] The Lord scatters abroad the counsels of the nations,

And He sets aside the reasoning of peoples;

And He rejects the counsels of rulers.

[11] The counsel of the Lord abides forever,

The thoughts of His heart from generation to generation.

[12] Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,

The people He chose as an inheritance for Himself.

[13] The Lord looked attentively from heaven;

He saw all the sons of men.

[14] From His prepared dwelling-place,

He looked upon all who dwell on the earth,

[15] He who alone fashioned their hearts,

He who understands all their works.

[16] A king is not saved by his large army,

And a giant shall not be saved by his immense strength;

[17] A horse is a false hope for salvation,

And it shall not be saved by its enormous power.

[18] Behold, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him,

On those who hope in His mercy,

[19] To deliver their souls from death

And to keep them alive in famine.

[20] Our soul shall wait for the Lord;

He is our helper and protector;

[21] For our heart shall be glad in Him,

And we hope in His holy name.

[22] Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us,

As we hope in You.

Psalm 33 (34)

[1]*By David; when he changed his countenance before Abimelech, who let him go, and he departed.*[†ω]

I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

[3] My soul shall be praised in the Lord;

Let the gentle hear, and be glad.

[4] Oh, magnify the Lord with me,

And let us exalt His name together.

[5] I sought the Lord, and He heard me;

And He delivered me from all my sojourning.

[6] Come to Him, and be enlightened,

And your face shall never be ashamed.

[7] This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,

And saved him from all his afflictions.

[8] The Angel of the Lord shall encamp around those who fear Him,

And He will deliver them.

[9] Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good;

Blessed is the man who hopes in Him.

[10] Fear the Lord, you His saints,

For there is no want for those who fear Him.

[11] Rich men turned poor and went hungry;

But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. (Pause)

[12] Come, you children, listen to me;

I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

[13] Who is the man who desires life,

Who loves to see good days?

[14] Keep your tongue from evil,

And your lips from speaking deceit.

[15] Shun evil and do good;

Seek peace and pursue it.

[16] The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,

And His ears are open to their supplications.

[17] The Lord's face is against those who do evil,

So as to destroy their remembrance from the earth.

18 The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them;

And He delivered them from all their afflictions.

19 The Lord is near those who are brokenhearted,

And He will save the humble in spirit.

20 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

But He will deliver them from them all.

21 The Lord shall guard all their bones;

Not one of them shall be broken.

22 The death of sinners is evil,

And those who hate the righteous shall go wrong.

23 The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants,

And all who hope in Him shall not go wrong.

Psalm 34 (35)

1*By David.*[†ω]

O Lord, judge those who injure me; Make war on those who make war on me.

2 Take hold of weapon and shield, and rise up to my help.

3 Bring forth the sword, and confine those in opposition who pursue me;

Say to my soul, “I am your salvation.”

4 Let those who seek my soul be dishonored and shamed;

Let those who plot evils against me be turned backward and disappointed.

5 Let them be like dust in the wind's face,

And let the Angel of the Lord afflict them.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery,

And let the Angel of the Lord pursue them.

7 For without cause they hid the destruction of their trap for me;

In vain they reproached my soul.

[8] Let a trap they do not know catch them,

And they themselves shall fall into the same trap.

[9] But my soul shall greatly rejoice in the Lord;

My soul shall delight in His salvation.

[10] All my bones shall say, “O Lord, who is like You?

You who deliver a poor man from hands stronger than he,

And a poor and needy man from those who plunder him.”

[11] Unjust witnesses rose up against me,

Asking me things I knew nothing about;

[12] They repaid me evil for good,

And bereavement for my soul.

[13] But I put on sackcloth when they troubled me,

And I humbled my soul with fasting;

And my prayer will return into my bosom.

[14] Like a neighbor, like our brother, so they were well-pleasing;

Like one who laments and is of a sad countenance, so I humbled myself.

[15] But they were delighted, and were gathered together against me;

Whips were gathered together against me, but I did not know it;

They were torn asunder, yet they were not pierced to the heart.

[16] They tempted me; they mocked and sneered at me;

They gnashed their teeth at me.

[17] O Lord, when will You look on this?

Restore my soul from their malice,

My only-begotten from the lions.

[18] I will give thanks to You, O Lord, in the great church;

I will praise You among a mighty people.

[19] Let them not rejoice over me, those who are unjustly my enemies,

Those who hate me without a cause, and wink with their eyes.

20 For they spoke peace to me,

But in their wrath they schemed deceit,

21 And opened wide their mouth at me,

Saying, “Well done! Well done! Our eyes saw it!”

22 You saw this, O Lord; do not keep silence;

O Lord, do not be far from me.

23 Arise, O Lord, attend to my judgment,

My God and my Lord, to my cause.

24 Judge me according to Your righteousness, O Lord my God,

And let them not rejoice against me;

25 Let them not say in their hearts, “Well done! Well done, our soul!”

Let them not say, “We swallowed him up!”

26 May those who rejoice at my troubles be altogether dishonored and shamed;

Let those who boast against me be clothed with shame and humiliation.

27 Let those who desire my righteousness greatly rejoice, and be glad,

And let them say continually, “The Lord be magnified,”

Those who desire His servant's peace.

28 And my tongue shall meditate on Your righteousness,

And on Your praise all the day long.

Psalm 35 (36)

1 *For the End; by David, the servant of the Lord.*[†ω]

The transgressor, so as to sin, says within himself,

“There is no fear of God before his eyes”;

3 For he acts deceitfully before Him,

Lest He discover his lawlessness and hate it.

[4] The words of his mouth are lawlessness and deceit;

He is unwilling to understand how to do good;

[5] He devises lawlessness on his bed;

He sets himself in every way not good,

And he does not abhor evil.

[6] O Lord, Your mercy is in heaven,

And Your truth reaches to the clouds;

[7] Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;

Your judgments are a great deep;

Men and cattle You will save, O Lord.

[8] How You multiply Your mercy, O God!

The sons of men shall hope under the shelter of Your wings.

[9] They shall be intoxicated with the fatness of Your house,

And You will give them drink from the abundant water of Your delight.

[10] For with You is the fountain of life;

In Your light we shall see light.

[11] Extend Your mercy to those who know You,

And Your righteousness to the upright in heart.

[12] Let not the foot of arrogance come against me,

And may the hand of sinners not shake me.

[13] Those who work lawlessness fall there;

They are cast out, and unable to stand.

Psalm 36 (37)

[1] *Of David.*[†ω]

D o not be envious of those who do evil,

Nor be jealous of those who work lawlessness;

[2] For like grass they shall be dried up quickly,

And like green vegetables they shall swiftly wither.

[3] Hope in the Lord, and work goodness;

Dwell in the land, and you shall be nurtured by its riches.

[4] Delight in the Lord,

And He will give you the requests of your heart.

[5] Reveal your way to the Lord,

And hope in Him; and He will do it.

[6] He shall bring forth your righteousness as light,

And your judgment as the noonday sun.

[7] Submit to the Lord, and supplicate Him;

Do not be envious of him who prospers in his way,

Nor of him who transgresses the law.

[8] Cease from wrath and forsake anger;

Do not be envious so as to do evil;

[9] Because evildoers will be destroyed,

But those who wait on the Lord, these shall inherit the earth.

[10] For in a little while the sinner shall no longer be present,

And you will look for his place, but not find it.

[11] But the gentle shall inherit the earth,

And they will delight in the fullness of peace.

[12] The sinner will closely observe the just man

And gnash at him with his teeth.

[13] But the Lord shall laugh at him,

Because He foresees his day will come.

[14] The sinners draw the sword

And stretch their bow,

To cast down the poor and needy,

To slay the upright in heart.

15 May their sword enter their heart,

And may their bows be shattered.

16 Better the little with the just man

Than the great riches of sinners;

17 For the arms of sinners shall be shattered,

But the Lord supports the righteous.

18 The Lord knows the ways of the blameless,

And their inheritance shall be forever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in an evil time,

And in days of famine they shall be filled.

20 But the sinners shall perish,

And the enemies of the Lord altogether,

When they glorify and exalt themselves;

Like smoke they shall vanish away.

21 The sinner borrows, but will not repay;

However, the righteous man is compassionate, and gives;

22 For those who bless Him shall inherit the earth,

But those who curse Him shall be utterly destroyed.

23 The steps of a man are guided aright by the Lord,

And he shall desire His way.

24 When he falls, he shall not be broken to pieces,

For the Lord supports him with His hand.

25 I was young, but indeed I grew old;

Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,

Nor his seed begging bread.

[26] Day in and out, he is merciful and lends,

And his seed shall be a blessing.

[27] Turn away from evil, and do good,

And dwell unto ages of ages;

[28] For the Lord loves judgment,

And He will not abandon His holy ones;

They shall be kept forever.

But the lawless shall be banished,

And the seed of the ungodly shall be utterly destroyed.

[29] The righteous shall inherit the earth

And dwell upon it unto ages of ages.

[30] The mouth of the righteous shall meditate on wisdom,

And his tongue shall speak of judgment;

[31] The law of God is in his heart,

And his steps shall not be tripped up.

[32] The sinner observes the righteous man

And seeks to put him to death;

[33] But the Lord will not leave him in his hands,

Nor condemn him, when He judges him.

[34] Wait on the Lord, and keep His way,

And He shall exalt you to inherit the earth;

You shall see the sinners when they are utterly destroyed.

[35] I saw the ungodly greatly exalted

And lifting himself up like the cedars of Lebanon;

[36] And I passed by, and behold, he was not;

And I sought for him,

But his place was not found.

37 Keep innocence, and behold uprightness,

For this is the remnant for the peaceful man.

38 But transgressors shall be utterly destroyed together;

The remnants of the ungodly shall be utterly destroyed.

39 Now the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord,

And He is their protector in time of affliction;

40 And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them;

And He shall deliver them from sinners,

And save them, because they hope in Him.

Psalm 37 (38)

1*A psalm by David; for remembrance concerning the Sabbath.*[†ω]

O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, Nor chasten me in Your anger.

3 For Your arrows are fixed in me,

And Your hand rests on me;

4 There is no healing in my flesh because of Your wrath;

There is no peace in my bones because of my sins.

5 For my transgressions rise up over my head;

Like a heavy burden they are heavy on me.

6 My wounds grow foul and fester

Because of my folly.

7 I suffer misery, and I am utterly bowed down;

I go all the day long with a sad face.

8 For my loins are filled with mockeries,

And there is no healing in my flesh.

9 I am afflicted and greatly humbled;

I roar because of the groaning of my heart.

10 O Lord, all my desire is before You,

And my groaning is not hidden from You.

11 My heart is troubled; my strength fails me,

And the light of my eyes, even this is not with me.

12 My friends and neighbors draw near and stand against me,

And my near of kin stand far off;

13 And those who seek my soul use violence,

And those who seek evil for me speak folly;

And they meditate on deceit all the day long.

14 But I like a deaf man do not hear,

And I am like a mute who does not open his mouth.

15 I am like a man who does not hear,

And who has no reproofs in his mouth.

16 For in You, O Lord, I hope;

You will hear, O Lord my God.

17 For I said, “Let not my enemies rejoice over me,

For when my foot was shaken, they boasted against me.”

18 For I am ready for wounds,

And my pain is continually with me.

19 For I will declare my transgression,

And I will be anxious about my sin.

20 But my enemies live, and are become stronger than I;

And those who hate me unjustly are multiplied;

21 Those who repaid me evil for good

Slandered me, because I pursue righteousness;

And they threw away my love as though it were a stinking corpse.

22 Do not forsake me, O Lord;

O my God, do not depart from me;

[23] Give heed to help me,

O Lord of my salvation.

Psalm 38 (39)

[1]*For the End, for Jeduthun; an ode by David.*[†]

I said, “I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue;

I set a guard on my mouth

When the sinner stood against me.”

[3] I was deadened and humbled; and I kept silent, even from good;

And my grief was stirred anew.

[4] My heart was hot within me,

And in my meditation, fire will be kindled.

I spoke with my tongue,

[5] “O Lord, make me to know my end,

And what is the measure of my days,

So as to know what I lack.

[6] Behold, You made my days as a handbreadth,

And my existence is as nothing before You;

But all things are vanity, and every man living. (Pause)

[7] “Nevertheless man walks about like a phantom;

Surely in vain they stir themselves up;

He stores up treasure, but does not know for whom he will gather it.

[8] And now what is my patience?

Is it not the Lord?

And my support is from You.

[9] Deliver me from all my transgressions;

You made me a reproach to the undiscerning.

[10] I was dumb and opened not my mouth;

For You are He who made me.

[11] Take away Your scourges from me;

Because of the strength of Your hand I fainted.

[12] With rebukes You chasten a man for his transgression,

And You cause his soul to waste away like a spider web;

But every man stirs himself up in vain. (Pause)

[13] “Hear my prayer, O Lord,

And give ear to my supplication;

Do not be silent at my tears,

For I am a sojourner before You,

And a stranger, as were all my fathers.

[14] Do not forsake me, that I may revive

Before I depart and am no longer here.”

Psalm 39 (40)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†]

I waited patiently for the Lord, and He heeded me;

And He heard my supplication,

[3] And brought me up out of a miserable pit

And from miry clay;

And He established my feet on a rock

And kept straight my steps.

[4] He put a new song in my mouth,

A hymn to our God;

Many will see and be afraid,

And shall hope in the Lord.

[5] Blessed is the man whose hope is the name of the Lord,

And who did not look into vanities and false frenzies.

[6] Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders You performed,

And in Your thoughts there is no one who shall be likened to You;

I declared and said, “They are multiplied beyond number.

[7] Sacrifice and offering You did not will;

But a body You prepared for me;

A whole burnt offering and a sin offering You did not require.”

[8] Then I said, “Behold, I come

(it is written of me in the volume of the book);

[9] I willed to do Your will, O my God,

And Your law in the midst of my heart.”

[10] I proclaimed righteousness in the great church;

Behold, I shall not restrain my lips,

O Lord, You know.

[11] I did not hide Your righteousness in my heart;

I declared Your truth and Your salvation;

I did not hide Your mercy and Your truth from the great congregation.

[12] O Lord, do not remove Your compassion from me;

May Your mercy and Your truth take hold of me continually.

[13] For evils without number surrounded me;

My transgressions overpowered me, and I could not see;

They multiplied more than the hairs of my head,

And my heart failed me.

[14] Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;

O Lord, give heed to help me.

[15] May those who seek my soul to make away with it

Be disgraced and confounded together;

May those who wish evil for me be turned back and disgraced;

[16] May those who say to me, “Well done! Well done!”

Receive their shame immediately.

[17] May all who seek You, O Lord,

Rejoice exceedingly, and be glad in You;

And may those who love Your salvation

Say continually, “The Lord be magnified.”

[18] But I am poor and needy; the Lord will take care of me.

You are my helper and my protector; O my God, do not delay.

Psalm 40 (41)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

B lessed is he who understands the poor and needy;

The Lord will deliver him in an evil day.

[3] May the Lord keep him, and give him life,

And make him blessed on the earth,

And not deliver him into the hands of his enemies.

[4] May the Lord help him on his bed of pain;

You turned his bed from sickness to wholeness.

[5] O Lord, I said, “Have mercy on me;

Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.”

[6] My enemies speak evil things against me,

“When will he die, and his name perish?”

[7] And if he comes to see us, he speaks in vain;

His heart gathered lawlessness to itself;

He went forth and spoke the same.

[8] All my enemies whisper together against me;

Against me they devise evils for me;

[9] They testify a lawless word against me,

“Since he is asleep, will he rise up again?”

[10] For even the man of my peace, in whom I hoped,

He who ate my bread, dealt deceptively with me;

[11] But You, O Lord, have mercy on me,

And raise me up; and I will repay them.

[12] By this I know You are pleased with me,

Because my enemy did not rejoice over me.

[13] And because of my innocence, You supported me,

And established me before You forever.

[14] Blessed is the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.

Amen! Amen!

Psalm 41 (42)

[1]*For the End; for understanding; for the sons of Korah.*[†ω]

A s the deer longs for the springs of waters,

So my soul longs for You, O God.

[3] My soul thirsts for the living God;

When shall I come and appear before the face of God?

[4] My tears were my bread day and night,

When they said to me each day, “Where is your God?”

[5] I remembered these things, and poured out my soul within me;

For I shall enter the place of the wondrous tabernacle, even the house of God,

To celebrate a festival with a voice of great joy and praise.

[6] Why are you so sad, O my soul? And why do you trouble me?

Hope in God, for I will give thanks to Him;

My God is the salvation of my countenance.

[7] My soul within me was troubled;

Therefore I will remember You

From the land of the Jordan and Hermon,

From the small mountain.

[8] Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls;

All Your waves and billows went over me.

[9] By day the Lord shall command His mercy,

And by night His ode will be with me,

A prayer to the God of my life.

[10] I will say to God, “You are my protector. Why have You forgotten me?

Why do I go about with a sad face when my enemies afflict me?”

[11] Those who afflict me revile me when they break my bones,

When they speak to me each day, saying, “Where is your God?”

[12] Why are you so sad, O my soul? And why do you trouble me?

Hope in God, for I will give thanks to Him.

My God is the salvation of my countenance.

Psalm 42 (43)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†]

J udge me, O God, and pass judgment in my cause against an unholy nation;

Deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.

[2] For You, O God, are my strength;

Why do You cast me off?

Why do I go about with a sad face when my enemy afflicts me?

[3] Send out Your light and Your truth;

They guided me and led me to Your holy mountain

And to Your tabernacles.

[4] And I will come to the altar of God,

To the God who makes glad my youth;

I will give thanks to You with the lyre, O God, my God.

[5] Why are you so sad, O my soul? And why do you trouble me?

Hope in God, for I will give thanks to Him;

My God is the salvation of my countenance.

Psalm 43 (44)

[1]*For the End; a psalm for the sons of Korah; for understanding.*[†ω]

O God, we heard with our ears; Our fathers proclaimed it to us,

The work You performed in their days, in days of old.

[3] Your hand utterly destroyed the nations, and You planted them;

You afflicted and cast out peoples.

[4] For they did not inherit the land with their sword,

And their arm did not save them;

But it was Your right hand and Your arm,

And the light of Your countenance,

Because You took pleasure in them.

[5] You Yourself are my King and God,

Who commands salvation for Jacob;

[6] In You we shall push back our enemies,

And in Your name we shall scorn those who rise up against us.

[7] For I will not hope in my bow,

And my sword will not save me;

[8] For You saved us from those who afflict us,

And You disgraced those who hate us.

[9] We shall praise God all day long,

And we shall give thanks to Your name forever. (Pause)

[10] But now You rejected and disgraced us,

And You will not go out with our armies;

[11] You turned us back from our enemies,

And those who hate us took spoil for themselves.

[12] You gave us as sheep to be eaten,

And You scattered us among the nations.

[13] You bound Your people without honor,

And there was no abundance given to ransom them.

[14] You made us a reproach to our neighbors

And a scorn and derision to those around us;

[15] You made us a byword among the nations

And a shaking of the head among the peoples.

[16] All day long my disgrace is before me,

And the shame of my face covers me,

[17] Because of the voice of him who reviles and chatters,

Because of the face of the enemy and persecutor.

[18] All these things came upon us, but we have not forgotten You,

And we did not act unjustly with Your covenant;

[19] Our heart did not draw back,

Yet you turned our steps from Your way.

[20] You humbled us in a place of affliction,

And the shadow of death covered us.

[21] If we forget the name of our God,

And spread out our hands to a foreign god,

[22] Would not God search this out?

For He knows the secrets of the heart.

[23] For Your sake we are put to death all day long,

We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

[24] Awake; why do You sleep, O Lord?

Arise; and do not reject us to the end.

[25] Why do You turn away Your face,

And forget our poverty and our affliction?

[26] For our soul was humbled to the dust,

And our belly was joined to the ground.

[27] Arise, O Lord; help us,

And redeem us for Your name's sake.

Psalm 44 (45)

[1]*For the End, concerning things that shall be changed; to the sons of Korah for understanding; an ode concerning the Beloved One.*[†ω]

M y heart overflowed with a good word;

I tell my works to the King;

My tongue is the pen of a swift-writing scribe.

[3] You are more beautiful than the sons of men;

Grace was poured out on Your lips;

Therefore God blessed You forever.

[4] Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One,

In Your splendor and Your beauty.

[5] And stretch Your bow, and grant prosperity, and reign

Because of truth, gentleness, and righteousness, And Your right hand shall guide You wondrously.

6 Your arrows are sharp, O Mighty One (The peoples shall fall under You),

In the heart of the King's enemies.

7 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;

Your royal scepter is a scepter of uprightness.

8 You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;

Therefore God, Your God, anointed You

With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

9 Myrrh and stacte and cassia pour forth from Your garments,

From the ivory palaces from which they gladdened You.

10 There are daughters of kings in Your honor;

The queen stood at Your right hand in apparel interwoven with gold,

And adorned and embroidered with various colors.

11 Listen, O daughter, behold and incline your ear,

And forget your people and your father's house;

12 For the King desired your beauty,

For He is your Lord.

13 And the daughters of Tyre shall worship Him with gifts;

The rich among the people shall entreat your favor.

14 All her glory as the King's daughter is within,

Adorned and embroidered with golden tassels.

15 The virgins behind her shall be brought to the King;

Her neighbors shall be brought to You;

16 They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing;

They shall be led into the temple of the King.

17 In place of your fathers, sons shall be born to you;

You shall make them rulers over all the earth.

18 They shall remember your name from generation to generation;

Therefore, peoples shall give thanks to you

Forever and unto ages of ages.

Psalm 45 (46)

1*For the End; for the sons of Korah; a psalm concerning hidden things.*[†ω]

God is our refuge and power;

A help in afflictions that severely befall us.

3 Therefore we will not fear when the earth is troubled,

And when the mountains are removed into the hearts of the seas.

4 Their waters roared and were troubled;

The mountains were troubled by His might. (Pause)

5 The torrents of the river gladden the city of God;

The Most High sanctified His tabernacle.

6 God is in her midst; she shall not be shaken;

God shall help her early in the morning.

7 The nations were troubled; kingdoms fell;

He uttered His voice; the earth shook.

8 The Lord of hosts is with us;

The God of Jacob is our protector. (Pause)

9 Come, behold the works of the Lord,

The wonders He wrought on the earth.

10 When He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth,

He will break the bow and shatter the weapon;

And He will burn up the shields in fire.

11 Be still, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations;

I will be exalted in the earth.

12 The Lord of hosts is with us,

The God of Jacob is our protector.

Psalm 46 (47)

1 *For the End; a psalm for the sons of Korah.*[†ω]

O h, clap your hands, all you nations;

Shout to God with the voice of rejoicing;

3 For the Lord Most High is fearsome,

A great King over all the earth.

4 He subdued the peoples under us

And the nations under our feet.

5 He chose us for His inheritance,

Jacob's beauty, which He loved. (Pause)

6 God ascended with a shout,

The Lord with the sound of the trumpet.

7 Sing praises to God; sing praises;

Sing praises to our King; sing praises;

8 For God is King of all the earth;

Sing praises with understanding.

9 God reigns over the nations;

God sits on His holy throne.

10 The rulers of the people gather together

With the God of Abraham,

For God's mighty ones of the earth are greatly exalted.

Psalm 47 (48)

[1]*A psalm of an ode for the sons of Korah; for the second day of the week.*[†]

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised

In the city of our God, in His holy mountain,

[3] Well-rooted in joy throughout the earth,

The mountains of Zion, the sides of the north,

The city of the great King;

[4] God is known in her palaces

When He helps her.

[5] For behold, the kings assembled;

They came together;

[6] They saw her; thus they marveled;

They were troubled; they were shaken;

[7] Trembling laid hold of them;

There were labor pains, like a woman giving birth.

[8] You shall wreck the ships of Tarshish with a violent wind.

[9] As we heard, so we saw

In the city of the Lord of hosts,

In the city of our God;

God established her forever. (Pause)

[10] We pondered Your mercy, O God,

In the midst of Your temple.

[11] According to Your name, O God,

So is Your praise to the ends of the earth;

Your right hand is full of righteousness.

[12] Let Mount Zion be glad;

Let the daughters of Judah greatly rejoice

Because of Your judgments, O Lord.

13 Encircle Zion and embrace her;

Describe her towers in detail;

14 Set your hearts on her power

And observe her palaces,

That you may describe them to another generation.

15 For He is God, our God,

Forever and unto ages of ages;

He will shepherd us unto the ages.

Psalm 48 (49)

1*For the End; a psalm for the sons of Korah.*[†ω]

Hear this, all you nations;

Give ear, all you inhabitants of the world,

3 Both earthborn and the sons of men,

Rich and poor together.

4 My mouth shall speak wisdom,

And the meditation of my heart, understanding;

5 I will incline my ear to a parable;

I will open my riddle on the harp.

6 What should I fear in an evil day?

The lawlessness at my heel surrounds me.

7 Those who trusted in their power

And those who boast in the abundance of their wealth,

8 A brother does not redeem; shall a man redeem?

He will not give his ransom to God

9 And the price of his soul's redemption.

10 And he rested forever, and shall live to the end,

Because he will not see decay when he sees wise men die.

11 Foolish and senseless men die together,

And they leave their wealth to strangers;

12 And their graves will be their homes continually,

Their dwelling places from generation to generation.

They called their lands after their own names.

13 A man being in honor did not understand;

He was compared to the senseless cattle, and became like them.

14 Their road is a snare for them,

Yet afterwards, men will be well pleased with their sayings.

15 Like sheep, they are put in Hades; death will shepherd them;

And the upright shall gain dominion over them in the morning;

And their help shall be made old in Hades away from their glory.

16 Yet God will redeem my soul

From the hand of Hades when He shall receive me. (Pause)

17 Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich,

And when the glory of his house is increased;

18 For when he dies, he shall carry nothing away;

Neither will his glory descend with him.

19 For his soul shall be blessed in his lifetime;

He will acknowledge You when You do him good.

20 He shall enter the generations of his fathers;

He shall not see light forever.

21 A man being in honor did not understand;

He was compared to the senseless cattle, and became like them.

Psalm 49 (50)

1 *A psalm for Asaph.*[†]

The God of gods, the Lord, spoke, and summoned the earth

From the sun's rising to its very setting.

2 From Zion in beauty's splendor,

God will come openly;

3 He is our God, and He shall not be silent;

A fire shall be kindled before Him,

And there shall be a mighty storm round about Him.

4 He shall summon heaven above

And the earth to judge His people;

5 Gather His holy ones to Him,

Who establish His covenant upon sacrifices;

6 And the heavens declare His righteousness,

For God is Judge. (Pause)

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak to you,

O Israel, and I will testify against you;

I am God, your God.

8 I will not find fault with your sacrifices,

Because your whole burnt offerings are continually before Me.

9 I will not accept a young bull from your house,

Nor he-goats from your flocks.

10 For all the wild animals of the forest are Mine,

The cattle and the oxen in the hills.

11 I know all the birds of heaven,

And the ripe fruit of the field is with Me.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you;

For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,

Or drink the blood of goats?
[14] Offer to God a sacrifice of praise,
And pay your vows to the Most High.
[15] Call upon Me in the day of affliction,
And I will deliver you; and you shall glorify Me. (Pause)
[16] To the sinner God says,
“Why do you declare My ordinances,
And take up My covenant in your mouth?
[17] You hate My instruction,
And cast My words behind you.
[18] If you see a thief, you run with him,
And you keep company with adulterers.
[19] Your mouth is filled with evil,
And your tongue weaves deceits.
[20] You sit and speak against your brother,
And place a stumbling block before your mother's son.
[21] You do these things, and I keep silent;
You think I am lawless like you;
But I shall rebuke you, and contradict you to your face.
[22] Understand these things, you who forget God,
Lest He snatch you away, and there be none to deliver;
[23] A sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me,
And there is the way whereby I will show him the salvation of God.”

Psalm 50 (51)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David;*[†ω]

[2]*when Nathan the prophet came to him, at the time he went in to Bathsheba.*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy;

And according to the abundance of Your compassion, blot out my transgression.

[4] Wash me thoroughly from my lawlessness

And cleanse me from my sin.

[5] For I know my lawlessness,

And my sin is always before me.

[6] Against You only have I sinned

And done evil in Your sight;

That You may be justified in Your words,

And overcome when You are judged.

[7] For behold, I was conceived in transgressions,

And in sins my mother bore me.

[8] Behold, You love truth;

You showed me the unknown and secret things of Your wisdom.

[9] You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I will be cleansed;

You shall wash me, and I will be made whiter than snow.

[10] You shall make me hear joy and gladness;

My bones that were humbled shall greatly rejoice.

[11] Turn Your face from my sins,

And blot out all my transgressions.

[12] Create in me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a right spirit within me.

[13] Do not cast me away from Your presence,

And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

[14] Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

And uphold me with Your guiding Spirit.

15 I will teach transgressors Your ways,

And the ungodly shall turn back to You.

16 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation,

And my tongue shall greatly rejoice in Your righteousness.

17 O Lord, You shall open my lips,

And my mouth will declare Your praise.

18 For if You desired sacrifice, I would give it;

You will not be pleased with whole burnt offerings.

19 A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit,

A broken and humbled heart God will not despise.

20 Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion,

And let the walls of Jerusalem be built;

21 Then You will be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness,

With offerings and whole burnt offerings;

Then shall they offer young bulls on Your altar.

Psalm 51 (52)

1*For the End; concerning understanding; by David;*[†]

When Doeg the Edomite came and reported to Saul and said, “David went to the house of Abimelech.”

3 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man,

And in lawlessness all the day long?

4 Your tongue devises wrongdoing;

You work deceit like a sharpened razor.

5 You love evil rather than good,

Wickedness rather than speaking righteousness.

6 You love all the words of destruction;

You love a deceitful tongue.

[7] Therefore, God shall destroy you completely;

He shall pluck you up and remove you from your dwelling,

And uproot you from the land of the living. (Pause)

[8] The righteous also shall see and fear,

And shall laugh at him, saying,

[9] “Behold, this man did not make God his helper,

But hoped in the abundance of his riches;

And he was made powerful in his vanity.”

[10] But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God;

I hope in God's mercy

Forever and unto ages of ages.

[11] I will give thanks to You forever for what You did,

And I will wait on Your name;

For it is good in the sight of Your holy ones.

Psalm 52 (53)

[1] *For the End; for Mahaleth; concerning understanding; by David.*[†]

T he fool said in his heart, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt and abominable in lawlessness;

There is none who does good.

[3] God looked from heaven upon the sons of men

To see if there were any who understood or sought God.

[4] All turned aside; they were all together rendered useless;

There is none who does good, not even one.

[5] Do all the workers of lawlessness not know?

They eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God.

[6] They were in great fear where no fear was,

For God scattered the bones of men-pleasers;

They were put to shame, because God scorned them.

[7] Who will bring the salvation of Israel out of Zion?

When God brings back the captivity of His people,

Jacob will greatly rejoice, and Israel will be glad.

Psalm 53 (54)

[1]*For the End; in hymns; concerning understanding; by David;*[†ω]

[2]*when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, “Is not David hiding with us?”*

S ave me, O God, in Your name,

And judge me in Your power.

[4] O God, hear my prayer;

Give ear to the words of my mouth.

[5] For strangers rise up against me,

And the powerful seek after my soul;

They have not set God before them. (Pause)

[6] For behold, God is my helper;

The Lord is the protector of my soul.

[7] He will return evils to my enemies;

Utterly destroy them in Your truth.

[8] I will sacrifice to You voluntarily;

I will give thanks to Your name, O Lord, for it is good.

[9] You delivered me from all my afflictions,

And my eye looked upon my enemies.

Psalm 54 (55)

[1]*For the End; in hymns; concerning understanding; by David.*[†ω]

G ive ear to my prayer, O God,

And do not despise my supplication;

[3] Attend to me, and hear me.

I am vexed in my prayer, and troubled

[4] By the enemy's voice and by the sinner's affliction;

For they turned their lawlessness upon me,

And in wrath they were indignant with me.

[5] My heart was troubled within me,

And the terror of death fell on me.

[6] Fear and trembling came upon me,

And the darkness covered me.

[7] I said, “Who will give me wings like a dove,

And I will fly away, and be at rest?

[8] Behold, I fled far away,

And lodged in the wilderness.” (Pause)

[9] I wait for the One who saves me

From faintheartedness and storm.

[10] Drown them in the sea, O Lord, and divide their tongues;

For I see lawlessness and strife in the city.

[11] Day and night, it shall surround her upon her walls;

Lawlessness and trouble and wrongdoing are in her midst;

[12] And usury and treachery

Have not ceased from her squares.

[13] For if an enemy reviled me,

I would have endured it;

And if one hating me boasted against me, I would have hidden from him.

14 But it was you, a man my equal,

My guide and my friend,

15 Who together with me sweetened our meals;

In God's house we walked in unity.

16 Let death come upon them,

And let them go down alive into Hades;

Because evils are in their dwellings, in the very midst of them.

17 But I cried out to God,

And the Lord heard me.

18 Evening and morning and midday, I shall tell;

I shall proclaim, and He will hear my voice.

19 He will redeem my soul in peace from those who draw near to me,

For they were with me in abundance.

20 God shall hear, and humble them,

He who exists before the ages. (Pause)

For there is no change in them,

And they have not feared God.

21 He stretched forth His hand in punishment;

They defiled His covenant.

22 They were scattered by the wrath of His face,

And His heart drew near;

His words were softened above oil,

And they are arrows.

23 Cast your care upon the Lord,

And He shall support you;

He will never allow the righteous to be moved.

24 But You, O God, will bring them down into the pit of decay;

Men of blood and deceit

Shall not live even half their days.

But I will hope in You, O Lord.

Psalm 55 (56)

1 *For the End, for the people far from the holy places; by David; for a pillar inscription, when foreigners conquered him in Gath.*[†]

H ave mercy on me, O Lord, for man tramples me down;

All day long he afflicts me in war.

3 All day my enemies trample me down,

For many are those who war against me from on high.

4 I will not fear by day,

But I will hope in You.

5 I will praise God with my words all day long;

In God I hope; I will not be afraid; what will flesh do to me?

6 All day long they make my words repulsive;

All their thoughts are against me for evil.

7 They will dwell near and hide;

They will watch my heel

As they wait for my soul.

8 In no way will You save them;

In wrath You will bring down peoples, O God.

9 I declare my life to You;

You set my tears before You, as also in Your promise.

10 My enemies shall be turned back

In whatever day I may call upon You;

Behold, I know You are my God.

[11] In God I will praise His word;

In the Lord I will praise His word.

[12] In God I hope; I will not be afraid;

What will man do to me?

[13] In me, O God, are vows

I will render in praise to You;

[14] For You delivered my soul from death,

And my feet from slipping;

That I may be well-pleasing before God in the light of the living.

Psalm 56 (57)

[1]*For the End; corrupt not; by David; for a pillar inscription, when he escaped from the face of Saul to the cave.*[†ω]

H ave mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me,

For my soul trusts in You;

And in the shadow of Your wings I will hope,

Until lawlessness shall pass away.

[3] I will cry out to God most High;

My God who is my benefactor.

[4] He sent from heaven and saved me;

He gave over to disgrace those who trample me down. (Pause)

God sent out His mercy and His truth,

[5] And delivered my soul from the midst of young lions.

Although troubled, I fell asleep;

As for the sons of men, their teeth are a weapon and arrows,

And their tongue is a sharp dagger.

6 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,

And Your glory above all the earth.

7 They prepared a trap for my feet,

And they bowed down my soul;

They dug a pit before my face,

But they fell into it. (Pause)

8 My heart is ready, O God,

My heart is ready;

I will sing, and I will sing a psalm.

9 Awake, my glory;

Awake, harp and lyre;

I will arise at dawn.

10 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples;

I will sing to You among the Gentiles.

11 For Your mercy is magnified to the heavens,

And Your truth to the clouds.

12 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;

And Your glory above all the earth.

Psalm 57 (58)

1*For the End; corrupt not; by David; for a pillar inscription.*[†]

If, then, you truly speak of righteousness,

Do you judge rightly, O you sons of men?

3 For in your heart you work lawlessness in the earth;

Your hands weave unrighteousness.

4 Sinners are alienated from the womb;

From birth they are led astray; they speak lies.

[5] Their anger is according to the likeness of a serpent;

Like a deaf asp that stops its ears,

[6] Which will not listen to the sound of charms,

Nor to an enchantment of a skillful charmer.

[7] God shattered their teeth in their mouths;

The Lord broke the teeth of the lions.

[8] They shall pass along like water running through;

He will bend His bow until they are weakened.

[9] Like melting wax they will be destroyed;

Fire fell on them, and they never saw the sun.

[10] Before your thorns are aware of its prickly shrub,

He will swallow you up, as if you were alive, as if in His anger.

[11] A righteous man shall be glad when he sees the vengeance of the ungodly;

He shall wash his hands in the blood of the sinner.

[12] A man will say, “If indeed there is fruit for the righteous man,

Then it is God who judges them on the earth.”

Psalm 58 (59)

[1]*For the End; corrupt not; by David; for a pillar inscription, when Saul sent and watched his house, that he might kill him.*[†]

R escue me from my enemies, O God,

And redeem me from those who rise up against me.

[3] Deliver me from the workers of lawlessness

And save me from men of blood.

[4] For behold, they hunt for my soul;

Mighty men set upon me.

Neither is it for my lawlessness, nor for my sin, O Lord;

5 I run without lawlessness, and keep a straight path;

Rise up and meet me, and see.

6 And You, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel,

Give heed, and examine all the Gentiles;

Do not be merciful to all who work lawlessness. (Pause)

7 They shall return at evening,

And hunger like dogs; and they shall encircle the city.

8 Behold, they shall speak with their mouth,

And a sword is in their lips; for they say, “Who hears?”

9 But You, O Lord, shall laugh at them;

You shall hold all the nations in contempt.

10 O my strength, I shall keep watch with You,

For You are my protector, O God.

11 As for my God, His mercy shall go before me;

God will show it to me among my enemies.

12 Do not kill them, lest they forget my people;

Scatter them by Your power,

And bring them down, O Lord my protector.

13 For the sin of their mouth, for the word of their lips,

Let them also be taken in their arrogance;

And from their vow of evil and lie, their end will be proclaimed

14 In a wrath of destruction, and let them be no more;

And they shall know God is Jacob's Lord,

And the Lord of the ends of the earth.

15 They shall return at evening, and hunger like dogs;

And they shall encircle the city.

16 They shall be scattered to and fro so as to eat,

But if they are not satisfied, they shall also grumble.

17 But I will sing of Your power,

And greatly rejoice in Your mercy in the morning;

For You are my protector,

And my refuge in the day of my affliction.

18 You are my helper; I will sing to You;

For You, O God, are my protector;

You are my mercy, O my God.

Psalm 59 (60)

1*For the End; for things yet to be changed; for a pillar inscription; by David; for teaching,*[†ω]

2*when he burned Mesopotamia of Syria, and Syrian Soba, and Joab returned and struck twelve thousand in the Valley of Salt.*

O God, You drove us off and destroyed us;

You were angry, and had mercy on us.

4 You made the earth quake, and You troubled it;

Repair its ruins, for it was shaken.

5 You showed Your people difficult things;

You made us drink the wine of bewilderment.

6 You gave a sign to those who fear You,

So they may flee from the face of the bow. (Pause)

7 That Your beloved may be rescued,

Save with Your right hand, and hear me.

8 God spoke in His holy place:

I will greatly rejoice, and divide Shechem, And I will measure out the valley of the tabernacles.

9 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine,

And Ephraim is the strength of my head;

Judah is my king.

10 Moab is the cauldron of my hope;

Over Edom I will extend my shoe;

Foreign tribes were subjected to me.

11 Who will bring me into a fortified city?

Who will lead me as far as Edom?

12 Will not You, O God, who drove us away?

And will not You, O God, go out with our armies?

13 Give us help from affliction,

For the salvation of man is useless.

14 But in God we shall work power,

And He will utterly scorn those who afflict us.

Psalm 60 (61)

1*For the End; in hymns; by David.*[†ω]

H ear my supplication, O God;

Attend to my prayer.

3 From the end of the earth I cried out to You

When my heart was discouraged;

You lifted me high on a rock.

4 You guided me, for You became my hope,

A tower of strength from the face of the enemy.

5 I will dwell in Your tabernacle unto the ages;

I will be covered with the shelter of Your wings. (Pause)

6 For You, O God, hear my prayers;

You give an inheritance to those who fear Your name.

7 You will add days to the days of the king,

His years as the days of generation to generation.

8 He will abide before God forever;

Who will seek out His mercy and truth?

9 So I will sing praise to Your name unto ages of ages,

That I may pay my vows day to day.

Psalm 61 (62)

1*For the End, for Jeduthun; a psalm by David.*†

S hall not my soul be submissive to God?

For from Him is my salvation.

3 For He is my God and my savior,

My protector; I shall be shaken no more.

4 How long will you attack a man?

All of you murder him;

You attack him as you would a leaning wall and a broken hedge.

5 They also planned to remove my honor;

They ran with a lie;

They blessed with their mouth, and they cursed with their heart. (Pause)

6 However, be submissive to God, O my soul,

For my patient endurance is from Him.

7 For He is my God and my savior,

My protector; I shall never be moved.

8 In God is my salvation and my glory;

He is the God of my help, and my hope is in God.

[9] Hope in Him, all you congregation of people;

Pour out your hearts before Him;

God is our helper. (Pause)

[10] But the sons of men are useless;

The sons of men are liars with the yokes of wrongdoing;

They are altogether useless.

[11] Do not hope in wrongdoing,

And do not hunger for booty;

If riches flow in,

Do not set your heart on them.

[12] God spoke once;

I heard these two things:

[13] That power is of God, and to You, O Lord, is mercy;

For You will repay every man according to his works.

Psalm 62 (63)

[1]*A psalm by David, when he was in the desert of Judea.*[†ω]

O God, my God, I rise early to be with You;

My soul thirsts for You.

How often my flesh thirsts for You

In a desolate, impassable, and waterless land.

[3] So in the holy place I appear before You,

To see Your power and Your glory.

[4] Because Your mercy is better than life,

My lips shall praise You.

[5] Thus I will bless You in my life;

I will lift up my hands in Your name.

[6] May my soul be filled, as if with marrow and fatness,

And my mouth shall sing praise to You with lips filled with rejoicing.

[7] If I remembered You on my bed,

I meditated on You at daybreak;

[8] For You are my helper,

And in the shelter of Your wings I will greatly rejoice.

[9] My soul follows close behind You;

Your right hand takes hold of me.

[10] But they seek for my soul in vain;

They shall go into the lowest parts of the earth.

[11] They shall be given over to the edge of the sword;

They shall be a portion for foxes.

[12] But the king shall be glad in God;

All who swear by Him shall be praised,

For the mouth that speaks unrighteous things is stopped.

Psalm 63 (64)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

H ear my voice, O God, in my supplication;

Deliver my soul from fear of the enemy.

[3] You sheltered me from the conspiracy of evildoers,

From the multitude of those who work lawlessness,

[4] Who sharpen their tongue like a sword;

They stretched their bow, a bitter thing,

[5] To strike down the blameless man in secret;

Suddenly they will shoot him, and not be afraid.

[6] They made an evil word strong in themselves;

They told of hiding snares;

They said, “Who will see them?”

[7] They searched out lawlessness;

In searching they grew weary.

A man shall draw near, and the heart is deep;

[8] And God shall be exalted.

Their blows became a childish barb,

[9] And their tongues were utterly weakened in them.

All who saw them were troubled,

[10] And every man was afraid.

And they proclaimed the works of God,

And understood His deeds.

[11] The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, and shall hope in Him;

And all the upright in heart shall be praised.

Psalm 64 (65)

[1]*For the End; a psalm by David; an ode; sung by Jeremiah and Ezekiel regarding the situation of the sojourners, when they were about to depart.*[†ω]

It is fitting to sing a hymn to You in Zion, O God,

And a vow shall be rendered to You in Jerusalem.

[3] Hear my prayer;

To You all flesh shall come.

[4] The words of lawless men overpowered us,

And You will show mercy to our ungodliness.

[5] Blessed is he whom You choose and help;

He shall dwell in Your courts.

We shall be filled with the good things of Your house;

Holy is Your temple, wondrous in righteousness.

6 Hear us, O God our savior,

The hope of all the ends of earth

And of those far off at sea,

7 He who prepares mountains in His strength,

Who is girded with power,

8 Who troubles the depth of the sea,

The sounds of its waves.

The nations shall be troubled,

9 And those who inhabit the ends of the earth

Shall be afraid because of Your signs;

You shall gladden the outgoings of morning and evening.

10 You visited the earth and watered it;

You enriched it abundantly;

The river of God is filled with waters;

You prepared their food, for thus is Your preparation thereof.

11 Water its furrows; multiply its fruits;

With its raindrops the earth will be gladdened when it produces fruits.

12 You will bless the crown of the year with Your goodness,

And Your fields will be filled with fatness;

13 The desert fruits will be made fat,

And the hills will be girded with rejoicing.

14 The rams of the sheep are clothed with wool,

And the valleys shall abound in wheat;

They will shout and truly sing hymns.

Psalm 65 (66)

[1]*For the End; an ode of a psalm of resurrection.*[†ω]

S hout to God, all the earth;

[2]Sing now to His name;

Give glory to His praise.

[3] Say to God, “How fearful are Your works;

In the greatness of Your power Your enemies will lie to You;

[4] Let all the earth worship You and sing to You;

Let them sing to Your name.” (Pause)

[5] Come and see the works of God;

He is more fearful in His counsels than the sons of men,

[6] Who turns the sea into dry land;

They will cross over the river on foot.

There we will be glad in Him,

[7] In Him who as Lord shall rule in His power forever;

His eyes will look at the Gentiles;

Let not those who provoke Him be exalted in themselves. (Pause)

[8] Bless our God, you Gentiles,

And make the voice of His praise to be heard,

[9] Who established my soul in life,

And who did not permit my feet to be moved.

[10] For You, O God, tested us;

You tried us in the fire, as silver is purified by fire.

[11] You brought us into the snare;

You laid affliction on our back.

[12] You put men on our heads;

We went through fire and water,

And You led us into a refreshing place.

13 I will go into Your house with whole burnt offerings;

I will pay You the vows

14 My lips uttered,

And my mouth spoke in my affliction;

15 I will offer You whole burnt offerings full of marrow;

With incense and rams,

I will offer oxen with a young he-goat. (Pause)

16 Come and hear, and I will describe to you,

All who fear God,

What things He did for my soul.

17 I cried to Him with my mouth,

And I exalted Him with my tongue.

18 If I regarded wrongdoing in my heart,

Let not the Lord hear me.

19 Therefore God heard me;

He gave heed to the voice of my supplication.

20 Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer,

Nor His mercy from me.

Psalm 66 (67)

1*For the End, in hymns; a psalm of an ode.*[†ω]

M ay God be gracious to us, and bless us;

May He cause His face to shine upon us, (Pause)

3 That we may know His way on the earth,

Your salvation among all the Gentiles.

4 Let the peoples give thanks to You, O God;

Let all the peoples praise You.

[5] Let the Gentiles be glad and greatly rejoice,

For You shall judge the peoples in uprightness,

And lead the Gentiles on the earth. (Pause)

[6] Let the peoples give thanks to You, O God;

Let all the peoples praise You.

[7] The earth yielded her fruit;

May God, our God, bless us.

[8] May God bless us,

And let all the ends of the earth be in fear of Him.

Psalm 67 (68)

[1]*For the End; a psalm of an ode; by David.*[†ω]

L et God arise, and let His enemies be scattered,

And let those who hate Him flee from before His face.

[3] As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish;

As wax melts before the fire,

So let the sinners perish from the face of God.

[4] And let the righteous be glad;

Let them greatly rejoice before God;

Let them be glad with merriment.

[5] Sing to God; sing to His name;

Make ready the way for Him

Who rides upon the sunset;

His name is the Lord;

And greatly rejoice before Him.

Let them be troubled before His face,

[6] He who is the father of orphans and the judge of widows;

God is in His holy place.

[7] God settles the solitary in a house;

With courage He leads out those in bondage,

Likewise those who rebel, who dwell in tombs.

[8] O God, when You went forth before Your people,

When You passed through the desert, (Pause)

[9] The earth shook; truly the heavens let the rain fall,

Before the face of the God of Sinai,

Before the face of the God of Israel.

[10] You, O God, willingly grant rain to Your inheritance,

And it was weakened, but You restored it.

[11] Your creatures are dwelling in it;

In Your goodness, O God, You provide for the poor.

[12] The Lord will give His word

To those proclaiming the gospel with great power,

[13] He who is the King of hosts of the beloved,

That He may divide the booty for the beauty of the house.

[14] If you fall asleep in the midst of your portions,

You will have the wings of a dove, all covered with silver,

And her back with yellow gold. (Pause)

[15] When the heavenly One appoints kings over it,

They shall become as white as the snow on Zalmon.

[16] The mountain of God is a fertile mountain,

A mountain richly curdled with milk, a fat mountain.

[17] Why do you think about other mountains richly curdled with milk?

This is the mountain God consented to dwell in;

Truly the Lord will lodge in it to the end.

18 God's chariot is ten thousand-fold,

Thousands abounding in numbers;

The Lord is among them at Sinai in the holy place.

19 You ascended on high, You led captivity captive;

You received gifts for mankind,

Truly for the disobedient, so they may dwell there.

The Lord God is blessed;

20 Blessed is the Lord from day to day;

The God of our salvation will bring prosperity upon us. (Pause)

21 Our God is the God who saves us,

And the issues of death belong to the Lord's Lord.

22 But God will crush the heads of His enemies,

The hairy head of those who continue in their transgressions.

23 The Lord said, “I will return from Bashan;

I will return in the depths of the sea,

24 So your foot may be dipped in blood,

The tongue of your dogs in the blood of your enemies.”

25 Your processionals were seen, O God,

The processionals of my God and my King in the holy place.

26 The rulers drew near, singers followed after;

In the midst of them came young maidens playing timbrels.

27 Bless God in the churches,

The Lord from the fountains of Israel.

28 There is the young Benjamin in ecstasy;

The rulers of Judea are their leaders,

The rulers of Zebulun and Naphtali.

29 Give command, O God, to Your power;

Strengthen, O God, what You accomplished in us.

[30] Because of Your temple at Jerusalem,

Kings will bring gifts to You.

[31] Rebuke the wild beasts of the reed,

The herd of bulls among the heifers of the peoples,

Lest they shut out those proven in silver;

Scatter the nations that desire wars.

[32] Ambassadors shall come out of Egypt;

Ethiopia shall draw near to stretch out its hand to God.

[33] Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth, sing to the Lord. (Pause)

[34] Sing to God, who rides upon the heaven of heavens towards the east;

Behold, He will speak with His voice, a voice of power.

[35] Give glory to God;

His magnificence is over Israel,

And His power is in the clouds.

[36] God is wondrous in His saints;

The God of Israel shall give power and strength to His people.

Blessed is God.

Psalm 68 (69)

[1]*For the End, concerning things that shall be changed; by David.*[†ω]

S ave me, O God, for the waters flood my soul.

[3] I am stuck in the mire of the sea, and there is no place to stand;

I came into the depths of the sea, and the storm overwhelmed me.

[4] I grow weary with crying; my throat is hoarse;

My eyes fail me from hoping in my God.

[5] Those who hate me without a cause multiplied even more than the hairs of my head;

My enemies who persecute me unjustly have become strong;

Then I paid for things I did not steal.

6 O God, You know my foolishness,

And my transgressions are not hidden from You.

7 O Lord, O Lord of hosts, let not those who wait for You be put to shame because of me;

O God of Israel, let not those who seek You feel ashamed because of me.

8 For Your sake I bore disgrace;

Humiliation covered my face.

9 I am become a stranger to my brothers,

An alien to my mother's sons;

10 For the zeal of Your house consumed me,

And the insults of those who disgraced You fell on me.

11 I bent down my soul with fasting,

And it became a disgrace for me.

12 I also made sackcloth my garment,

And I became a byword to them.

13 Those who sit at the gate were talking against me,

And those who drink wine were singing about me.

14 But I, O Lord, pray with my prayer to You;

It is the time of Your goodwill, O God, in the abundance of Your mercies;

In the truth of Your salvation, hear me.

15 Save me from the mire, that I may not be stuck therein;

Deliver me from those who hate me, and from the depths of the waters.

16 Let not a storm of water drown me;

Neither let the deep swallow me up,

Nor the well enclose its mouth upon me.

17 Hear me, O Lord, for Your mercy is good;

According to Your abundant compassion, look upon me.

18 Turn not Your face from Your child,

For I am afflicted; hear me speedily.

19 Give heed to my soul, and redeem it;

Deliver me because of my enemies.

20 For You know my disgrace

And my shame and humiliation;

All who afflict me are before You.

21 My soul expected disgrace and trouble,

And I waited for someone to sympathize with me; but no one was there,

And for comforters, but I found not one.

22 They gave me gall for my food,

And they gave me vinegar for my drink.

23 Let their table become a snare before them,

And a recompense and a stumbling block.

24 Let their eyes be darkened so they may not see,

And bend down their backs continually;

25 Pour out Your anger upon them,

And let the fury of Your wrath lay hold of them.

26 Let their dwelling place be laid waste,

And let no one live in their tents.

27 For they pursued closely the one You slew,

And they added to the pain of my wounds.

28 Add lawlessness to their lawlessness,

And let them not enter into Your righteousness;

29 Let them be blotted out from the book of the living,

And not be written with the righteous.

[30] I am poor and suffering,

And the salvation of Your presence, O God, lays hold of me.

[31] I will praise God's name with a song;

I will magnify Him in praise,

[32] And this shall be more pleasing to God

Than a young bull with horns and hooves.

[33] Let the poor behold this, and be glad;

Seek God, and your soul shall live,

[34] For the Lord hears the poor,

And does not despise His prisoners.

[35] Let heaven and earth praise Him,

The seas and everything that moves in them.

[36] For God shall save Zion,

And the cities of Judah shall be built;

And they shall dwell therein, and inherit it;

[37] And the seed of His servants shall possess it,

And those who love His name shall dwell in it.

Psalm 69 (70)

[1]*For the End; by David; in remembrance,*[†ω]

[2]*that the Lord may save me.*

O God, make haste to help me.

[3]May those who seek my soul be dishonored and shamed;

May those who plot evils against me be turned back and disgraced;

[4] May those be turned back immediately

Who shame me, saying, “Well done! Well done!”

[5] May all who seek You greatly rejoice and be glad in You,

And let those who love Your salvation always say,

“Let God be magnified.”

[6] But I am poor and needy;

O God, help me.

You are my helper and deliverer, O Lord; do not delay.

Psalm 70 (71)

[1]*By David; of the sons of Jonadab and the first ones taken captive.*[†]

O God, in You I hope; may I never be put to shame.

[2] Deliver me in Your righteousness, and set me free;

Incline Your ear to me and save me.

[3] Be to me a God for protection

And a strong place for salvation,

For You are my foundation and my refuge.

[4] O my God, deliver me from the hand of the sinner,

From the hand of those who transgress the law and act unjustly;

[5] For You are my patience, O Lord;

The Lord is my hope from my youth.

[6] By You I have been supported from birth;

From my mother's womb You have been my protector;

My song shall be always of You.

[7] I am become as a wonder to many,

And You are my strong helper.

[8] Let my mouth be filled with Your praise,

That I may sing of Your glory

And of Your magnificence all the day long.

9 Do not abandon me in the time of old age;

When my strength fails, do not forsake me.

10 For my enemies speak against me,

And those who watch for my soul plot together,

11 Saying, “God forsook him;

Pursue and lay hold of him,

For there is no deliverer.”

12 O God, do not stand far off from me;

O my God, give heed to help me.

13 Let those who falsely accuse my soul be shamed and forsaken;

Let those who seek evils for me be covered with shame and reproach.

14 But I will hope continually,

And I will add to all Your praise.

15 My mouth shall proclaim Your righteousness,

Your salvation all the day,

For I am not acquainted with learning.

16 I shall enter into the power of the Lord;

O Lord, I shall remember Your righteousness, Yours alone.

17 You taught me, O God, from my youth,

And from then until now I will proclaim Your wonders.

18 And even to old age and to my last breath,

O God, do not abandon me,

Until I proclaim Your arm to every coming generation,

Yes, Your mighty deeds and Your righteousness.

19 O God, I proclaim the magnificent things You did,

Even to the highest heaven;

O God, who is like You?

[20] How great and evil are the afflictions You showed me,

And You returned, and made me live;

And You raised me up again from the depths of the earth.

[21] You multiplied Your greatness,

And You returned and comforted me;

You brought me up again from the depths of the earth.

[22] Truly, I will give thanks to You with the instrument of a psalm, O God;

I will sing to You with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

[23] My lips will greatly rejoice when I sing to You;

So will my soul, which You redeemed.

[24] My tongue shall meditate on Your righteousness all the day long,

When those who seek evils for me are dishonored and shamed.

Psalm 71 (72)

[1]*For Solomon.*[†ω]

O God, give Your judgments to the King, And Your righteousness to the King's Son,

[2] That He may judge Your people in righteousness

And Your poor with judgment.

[3] Let the mountains raise up peace for Your people

And the hills in righteousness.

[4] He shall judge the poor of the people,

And shall serve the sons of the poor;

He shall humble the false accuser,

[5] And He shall continue as long as the sun

And before the moon from generation to generation;

[6] And He shall come down like rain on the fleece,

Like raindrops falling on the earth.

[7] In His days, righteousness and abundance of peace shall flourish,

Until the moon is removed.

[8] And He shall rule from sea to sea,

And from the river to the ends of the inhabited earth.

[9] The Ethiopians shall bow down before Him,

And His enemies shall lick the dust.

[10] The kings of Tarshish and their islands will come bearing gifts;

The kings of Arabia and Saba will bring presents.

[11] All the kings of the earth shall worship Him;

All the Gentiles shall serve Him.

[12] For He rescued the poor from the hand of a strong man,

And the needy, for whom there was no helper.

[13] He shall spare the poor and needy,

And He shall save the souls of the needy;

[14] He shall redeem their souls from usury and injustice,

And precious shall be their name in His sight.

[15] He shall live, and there shall be given Him from the gold of Arabia;

They shall pray continually because of Him,

All the day long shall they bless Him.

[16] He shall be a support on the earth upon the summits of the mountains;

His fruit shall be exalted more than Lebanon,

And they shall flourish from the city like the grass of the earth.

[17] Let His name be blessed unto the ages;

His name shall remain before the sun,

And all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed in Him;

All the Gentiles shall bless Him.

[18] Blessed is the Lord God,

The God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

[19] And blessed is the name of His glory forever and unto ages of ages,

And all the earth shall be filled with His glory. Amen! Amen!

[20] The hymns of David the son of Jesse are ended.

Psalm 72 (73)

[1]*A psalm for Asaph.*[†]

H ow good God is to Israel,

To the upright in heart.

[2] But as for me, my feet were almost shaken;

My steps had nearly slipped.

[3] For I was jealous of the lawless

When I beheld the peace of sinners.

[4] For there is no upward gaze at their death

Nor steadfastness in their chastening.

[5] They are not in difficulties as other men,

And they shall not be chastened with other men.

[6] For this reason arrogance mastered them;

They clothed themselves with their wrongdoing and ungodliness;

[7] Their wrongdoing shall go forth as from fatness;

They passed through to their heart's intent.

[8] They thought and spoke in evil;

They spoke in wrongdoing to the height.

[9] They set their mouth against heaven,

And their tongue passed through the earth.

[10] For this reason my people shall return here;

Days of fullness shall be found in them.

11 They said, “How does God know?

Is there knowledge in the Most High?”

12 Behold, these are sinners, and they prosper;

They possess wealth in this age.

13 And I said, “Surely in vain have I kept my heart righteous,

And washed my hands with the innocent.”

14 For all day long I was scourged,

And my reproof persisted through the night.

15 If I should speak, I would describe it thus:

Behold, I am breaking covenant with the generation of your children.

16 And I sought to understand this;

It was difficult in my sight,

17 Until I came into God's holy place

And understood their end.

18 Surely, for their deceits You appointed deceits for them;

You cast them down in their exaltation.

19 Oh, how they came into desolation suddenly!

They ceased to be; they perished in their lawlessness.

20 Like a dream to one who is awakened,

So, O Lord, You shall despise their image in Your city.

21 For my heart was kindled,

And my reins were changed,

22 And I was despised, and did not know;

I became like a beast before You.

23 And I am continually with You;

You hold fast my right hand;

24 With Your counsel You guide me,

And with glory You take hold of me.

[25] For what is there in heaven for me but You,

And what do I desire on earth besides You?

[26] My heart and my flesh fail,

O God of my heart; and God is my portion forever.

[27] For behold, those who keep themselves far away from You shall perish;

You destroy away from You all who act unfaithfully.

[28] But as for me, it is good to cling to God,

To put my hope in the Lord,

That I may proclaim all Your praises

In the gates of the daughter of Zion.

Psalm 73 (74)

1*Of understanding; for Asaph.*[†ω]

O God, why have You rejected us to the end?

Why has Your anger raged against the sheep of Your pasture?

2 Remember Your congregation You acquired from the beginning,

That You redeemed the rod of Your inheritance,

This Mount Zion, where You encamped.

3 Lift up Your hands against their arrogance to the end,

Against everything the enemy prostituted in Your holy places.

4 Those who hate You boasted in the midst of Your feast;

They set up their signs, yes signs, and they did not know.

5 As into an entrance hall,

6 As in a thicket of trees, they cut down its doors with axes;

With battle axes and hammers, they broke it down.

7 They burned down Your sanctuary;

They defiled the tabernacle of Your name to the ground.

8 Their kindred said in their heart together,

“Come, let us abolish all the feasts of God from the earth.”

9 We do not see our signs;

There is no longer any prophet, and He will no longer know us.

10 How long, O God, will the enemy reproach?

Will the adversary provoke Your name to the end?

11 Why do You turn away Your hand,

Your right hand from the midst of Your breast to the end?

12 But God is our King before the ages;

He worked salvation in the midst of the earth.

13 You strengthened the sea by Your power;

You crushed the heads of dragons upon the water.

14 You shattered the heads of the dragon;

You gave him as food for the Ethiopian peoples.

15 You broke apart fountains and torrents;

You dried up the rivers of Etham.

16 The day is Yours, and the night is Yours;

You created the light and the sun.

17 You made all the boundaries of the earth;

Summer and winter, You formed these things.

18 Remember this: the enemy insulted the Lord,

And a foolish people provoked Your name.

19 May You not deliver to wild beasts the soul who gives thanks to You;

May You not forget the souls of Your poor to the end.

20 Look upon Your covenant,

For the dark places of the earth are filled with the houses of lawlessness.

21 Let not the humbled and the disgraced be turned away;

The poor and needy shall praise Your name.

22 Arise, O God, judge Your cause;

Remember the insults against You by the foolish man all the day long.

23 Do not forget the voice of Your suppliants;

The arrogance of those who hate You rises against You continually.

Psalm 74 (75)

1 *For the End; do not corrupt; a psalm of an ode for Asaph.*[†]

W e shall give thanks to You, O God;

We shall give thanks, and call upon Your name.

[3] I shall describe all Your wonders.

“When I seize the opportunity,

I shall judge these rightly.

[4] The earth is dissolved and all its inhabitants;

I made firm its pillars.” (Pause)

[5] I said to those who transgress the law, “Do not transgress the law,”

And to those who sin I said, “Do not exalt yourselves;

[6] Do not boast in yourselves;

Do not accuse God of wrongdoing.”

[7] For judgment comes neither from the sunrise nor the sunset

Nor from mountains of the deserts,

[8] For God is judge;

This one He brings down low, and that one He raises up.

[9] For the cup in the Lord's hand

Is full of unmixed wine, a drink poured out;

And He tipped it from side to side,

But its dregs were not emptied out;

All sinners of the earth shall drink them.

[10] But I shall greatly rejoice forever;

I shall sing to the God of Jacob.

[11] All the horns of sinners I shall crush,

But the horns of the righteous man shall be exalted.

Psalm 75 (76)

[1]*For the End; in hymns; a psalm for Asaph, an ode to the Assyrian.*[†]

I n Judah God is known;

His name is great in Israel.

[3] His place was made in peace

And His dwelling in Zion.

[4] There He broke the power of the bows,

Weapon and sword and battle. (Pause)

[5] You give light wondrously

From the everlasting mountains.

[6] All the foolish in heart were troubled;

All the men of wealth slept their sleep

And found nothing in their hands.

[7] At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,

Those who mounted horses fell asleep.

[8] You are fearsome, and who shall stand against You?

From that time on is Your wrath.

[9] You caused judgment to be heard from heaven;

The earth was afraid, and kept quiet

[10] When God arose for judgment,

To save all the gentle on the earth. (Pause)

[11] For a man shall give thanks to You from his heart,

And he shall celebrate a feast to You with his whole heart.

[12] Pray and return to the Lord Your God;

All around Him shall bring gifts

[13] To the fearsome One, and to Him who takes away the spirits of rulers,

To the fearsome One among the kings of the earth.

Psalm 76 (77)

[1] *For the End, concerning Idithun; a psalm for Asaph.*[†ω]

W ith my voice I cried to the Lord,

With my voice to God, and He gave heed to me.

[3] In the day of my affliction I sought out God

With my hands before Him by night,

And I was not deceived;

My soul refused to be comforted.

[4] I remembered God and was glad;

I complained, and my spirit became discouraged. (Pause)

[5] I stayed awake through all the watches of the night;

I was troubled and did not speak.

[6] I thought of the days of old,

And I remembered the eternal years; and I meditated.

[7] By night I communed with my heart,

And my spirit searched.

[8] Will the Lord cast me off unto the ages?

And will He be favorable no more?

[9] Or will He cut off His mercy completely,

From generation to generation?

[10] Or will God forget to be merciful?

Or will He in His wrath withhold His mercies? (Pause)

[11] I said, “Now I am beginning to see;

This change is by the right hand of the Most High.”

[12] I remembered the Lord's works,

For I will remember Your wonders of old,

[13] And I will meditate on all Your works;

And I will consider Your ways.

[14] O God, Your way is in the holy place;

Who is so great a God as our God?

[15] You are the God who does wonders;

You made known Your power among the peoples;

[16] You redeemed Your people with Your arm,

The sons of Jacob and Joseph. (Pause)

[17] The waters saw You, O God;

The waters saw You and were afraid,

And the depths were troubled,

A multitude like the sound of waters.

[18] The clouds uttered their voice,

For Your arrows passed through them;

[19] The voice of Your thunder was in the wheel;

Your lightning gave light to the world;

It was shaken, and the earth was made to tremble.

[20] Your way is in the sea,

And Your paths are in many waters;

And Your footsteps shall not be known.

[21] You led Your people as sheep

By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 77 (78)

[1]*Concerning understanding; for Asaph.*[†]

G ive heed, O my people, to my law;

Incline your ear to the words of my mouth;

[2] I shall open my mouth in parables;

I shall speak of hidden things from of old.

[3] What things we heard, these we also knew,

And our fathers described them to us.

[4] It was not hidden from their children in a different generation,

Who declare the praises of the Lord

And His mighty deeds

And His wondrous things He did.

[5] He raised up a testimony in Jacob

And appointed a law in Israel,

Whatever He commanded our fathers

To make these things known to their children,

[6] That a different generation may know,

Children yet to be born;

And they will arise, and declare these things to their children,

[7] So they may put their hope in God,

And not forget the works of God,

And seek out His commandments,

[8] So they may not become like their fathers,

A generation rebellious and embittered,

A generation that did not keep its heart right,

And its spirit was not faithful with God.

[9] The sons of Ephraim who bend and shoot their bows

Turned back in the day of battle.

[10] They did not keep God's covenant,

And they did not desire to walk in His law;

[11] And they forgot His good deeds

And His wonders He showed them

[12] In the sight of their fathers,

The marvelous things He did

In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

13 He parted the sea and led them through;

The waters stood like a dam,

14 And He led them with a cloud by day,

And all night by the light of a fire.

15 He split the rock in the desert

And gave them water to drink as in a great deep;

16 And He brought out water from the rock,

And He brought it down like the waters of rivers.

17 And they still continued to sin against Him;

They rebelled against the Most High in a place without water,

18 And they tested God in their hearts

By asking food for their souls;

19 And they slandered God and said,

“Why is God unable to prepare a table in the desert?

20 Since He struck the rock, and waters flowed,

And brooks flooded,

Is He also unable to give us bread

Or to prepare a table for His people?”

21 Therefore, the Lord heard and was enraged,

And fire was kindled in Jacob,

And wrath arose against Israel,

22 Because they did not believe in God,

Nor put their hope in His salvation.

23 And He commanded the clouds above

And opened the doors of heaven;

24 And He rained manna for them to eat

And gave them the bread of heaven;

25 Man ate the bread of angels;

He sent them food in abundance.

26 He took away the south wind from heaven,

And with His power He brought in the southwest wind;

27 He rained flesh on them like dust

And winged birds like the sand of the sea,

28 And they fell in the midst of their camp,

All around their tents;

29 And they ate and were well filled,

And He brought them their own desire;

30 They were not deprived of their desire.

While their food was still in their mouth,

31 The wrath of God rose up against them,

And killed their wealthy ones

And shackled Israel's chosen ones.

32 In all these things they still sinned

And did not believe in His wonders;

33 And their days ended in folly

And their years with haste.

34 When He killed them, they sought Him out,

And turned back, and rose up early before God;

35 They remembered God was their helper,

And the Most High God their redeemer.

36 But they deceived Him with their mouth

And lied to Him with their tongue,

37 For their heart was not right with Him,

Neither were they faithful to His covenant.

38 But He is merciful

And will atone for their sins, and not destroy them;

And He will multiply them, and turn away His anger;

And He will not kindle all His wrath.

39 For He remembered they are flesh,

A spirit that is passing and not returning.

40 How many times did they rebel against Him in the desert,

And provoke Him to wrath in the desert?

41 And they turned away and tempted God,

And provoked the Holy One of Israel.

42 They did not remember His hand

And the day He redeemed them from the hand of those afflicting them,

43 How He wrought His signs in Egypt,

And His wonders in the plains of Zoan,

44 And how He turned their rivers and rainfalls into blood,

So they could not drink;

45 He sent them the dog-fly, and it devoured them,

And the frog, and it destroyed them.

46 He gave their fruit to the mildew

And their labors to the locust;

47 He killed their vineyard with hail

And their mulberry trees with frost;

48 And He delivered their cattle to the hail

And their property to the fire;

49 He sent forth the wrath of His anger to them,

Anger and wrath and affliction,

Sent forth through evil angels;

50 He made a path for His wrath;

He did not spare their souls from death,

And their cattle He enclosed in death;

51 And He struck every firstborn in Egypt,

The firstfruit of their labor in the tents of Ham.

52 And He brought His people out like sheep,

And He led them like a flock in the desert;

53 And He guided them in hope, and they were not afraid;

And the sea covered up their enemies.

54 He brought them into the mountain of His holiness,

This mountain His right hand acquired;

55 And He cast out the nations from before their face,

And distributed them a measure of land as an inheritance;

And He settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.

56 They tested and rebelled against the Most High God,

And did not keep His testimonies;

57 And they turned away and broke His covenant, just as their fathers did,

And they changed into a crooked bow;

58 And they provoked Him to anger with their high places,

And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images.

59 God heard and despised them,

And He utterly disdained Israel;

60 And He rejected the tabernacle at Shiloh,

His dwelling place, where He settled among men.

61 He gave their strength into captivity

And their beauty into the hands of the enemy;

62 And He gave His people over to the sword

And despised His inheritance.

63 Fire consumed their young men,

And their virgins were not lamented;

64 Their priests fell by the sword,

And their widows were not lamented.

65 Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,

Like a strong man drunk from wine;

66 And He struck His enemies from behind;

He gave them eternal reproach.

67 And He rejected the dwelling of Joseph

And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;

68 He chose the tribe of Judah,

This Mount Zion that He loves;

69 And He built His sanctuary as the place of unicorns;

He founded it forever on the earth.

70 He chose David for His servant

And took him from the sheepfolds;

71 He took him from behind sheep that gave birth

To shepherd Jacob His people

And Israel His inheritance;

72 And he shepherded them in the integrity of his heart

And guided them with the skillfulness of his hands.

Psalm 78 (79)

1*A psalm for Asaph.*[†]

O God, the nations entered Your inheritance;

They defiled Your holy temple;

They left Jerusalem in ruins.

[2] They left the dead bodies of Your servants

As food for the birds of heaven,

The flesh of Your saints for the wild animals of the earth;

[3] Their blood flowed like water around Jerusalem,

And there was no one to bury them.

[4] We were made a disgrace to our neighbors,

A scorn and a mockery to those around us.

[5] How long, O Lord? Will You be angry to the end?

Will Your jealousy burn like fire?

[6] Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You,

And on the kingdoms that did not call upon Your name;

[7] For they devoured Jacob

And made his dwelling place desolate.

[8] Do not remember our transgressions of old;

Let Your mercies quickly overtake us,

For we have become very poor.

[9] Help us, O God our savior;

Because of the glory of Your name, O Lord, save us,

And be merciful to our sins because of Your name;

[10] Let the nations never say, “Where is their God?”

And let it be known among the nations before our eyes:

There is vengeance for the shed blood of Your servants.

[11] Let the groaning of those in prison enter before You;

According to the greatness of Your arm,

Preserve the sons of those who were killed.

[12] Repay our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom

Their reproach by which they reviled You, O Lord.

13 For we are Your people and the sheep of Your pasture;

We shall give thanks to You freely and openly forever;

From generation to generation we will proclaim Your praise.

Psalm 79 (80)

1*For the End, concerning things that shall be changed; a testimony for Asaph, a psalm concerning the Assyrian.*[†ω]

Give heed, O You who shepherd Israel;

Reveal Yourself, O You who lead Joseph like a flock,

Who sit upon the cherubim.

3 Raise up Your power

Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,

And come for our salvation.

4 O God, convert us,

And reveal Your face, and we shall be saved.

5 O Lord God of hosts,

How long will You be angry with the prayer of Your servant?

6 Will You feed us the bread of tears,

And will You give us as drink tears in measure?

7 You made us an offense to our neighbors,

And our enemies sneered at us.

8 O Lord God, convert us,

And reveal Your face, and we shall be saved. (Pause)

9 You removed a vineyard from Egypt;

You cast out the nations and planted it;

10 You prepared the way before it,

And You planted its roots; and the earth was filled.

11 Its shade covered the mountains,

And its vines the cedars of God;

12 Its branches reached to the sea

And its shoots as far as the river.

13 Why did You pull down its hedge,

And all who pass on the road gather its grapes?

14 A wild swine from the forest laid it waste,

A solitary wild beast devoured it.

15 O God of hosts, convert us now;

Look down from heaven and behold,

And visit this vineyard

16 Which Your right hand planted, and perfect it.

And visit the son of man, whom You strengthened for Yourself.

17 It was set on fire and uprooted,

But they shall perish at the rebuke of Your face.

18 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,

And upon the son of man, whom You strengthened for Yourself;

19 Then we will not turn away from You;

You will give us life, and we will call upon Your name.

20 O Lord God of hosts, convert us,

and reveal Your face, and we shall be saved.

Psalm 80 (81)

1 *For the End; concerning the winepresses; a psalm for Asaph.*[†]

R ejoice in God our helper;

Rejoice greatly in the living God.

[3] Take up a psalm and sound a timbrel,

a pleasant psaltery with a harp;

[4] Sound a trumpet in the new moon

On this honorable day of our feast;

[5] For this is an ordinance for Israel

And a judgment by the God of Jacob.

[6] He made it a testimony in Joseph

When he went out from the land of Egypt;

He heard a tongue he knew not;

[7] He removed his back from forced labors;

His hands served in the basket.

[8] You called upon Me in affliction, and I delivered you;

I heard you in the secret place of the storm;

I tested you at the water of Rebellion. (Pause)

[9] Listen, O My people, for I testify to you;

Listen, O Israel, if you hear Me:

[10] There shall be no new god among you,

Nor shall you worship an alien god;

[11] I am the Lord your God,

Who brought you up from the land of Egypt;

Open wide your mouth, and I will fill it.

[12] But My people did not hear My voice,

And Israel would pay no attention to Me.

[13] And I sent them away because of the desires in their hearts;

They shall walk in their ways of living.

[14] If My people had heard Me,

If Israel had walked in My ways,

[15] I would have humbled their enemies quickly;

And I would have laid My hand on those oppressing them.

[16] The Lord's enemies lied to Him,

And their time shall be forever.

[17] He fed them with the finest of wheat

And satisfied them with honey from the rock.

Psalm 81 (82)

[1]*A psalm for Asaph.*[†ω]

God stood in the assembly of gods;

He judges in the midst of gods, saying,

[2] “How long will you judge unjustly,

And favor the persons of sinners?” (Pause)

[3] Judge an orphan and a poor man;

Justify a humble and poor man;

[4] Rescue a poor and needy man;

Deliver them from a sinner's hand.

[5] They do not know nor understand;

They carry on in darkness;

All the foundations of the earth shall be shaken.

[6] I said, “You are gods,

And you are all sons of the Most High.

[7] But you die like men,

And like one of the rulers, you fall.”

[8] Arise, O God; judge the earth,

For You shall inherit all the Gentiles.

Psalm 82 (83)

[1]*An ode of a psalm for Asaph.*[†]

O God, who can be likened to You? Be not silent nor appeased, O God,

[3] For behold, Your enemies made a noise,

And those who hate You raised up their heads.

[4] They devised a wicked judgment against Your people,

And they plotted against Your saints.

[5] They said, “Come, and let us destroy them from among the people,

And let the name Israel be remembered no more.”

[6] For they plotted together in unity;

They established a covenant against You:

[7] The tents of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites,

Moab and the Hagarenes,

[8] Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,

And foreigners with the inhabitants of Tyre;

[9] And even Assyria joined with them;

They came to the aid of the sons of Lot. (Pause)

[10] Deal with them as with Midian and Sisera,

As with Jabin at the Brook Kishon;

[11] They were destroyed at Endor;

They became like dung on the earth.

[12] Make their rulers like Oreb and Zeeb,

And all their rulers like Zebah and Zalmunna,

[13] Who said, “Let us inherit the holy place of God for ourselves.”

[14] O my God, turn them like a wheel,

Like straw before the face of the wind,

[15] Like fire that burns through a thicket,

Like a flame that sets mountains on fire;

16 Thus You shall pursue them with Your storm,

And You shall trouble them in your wrath.

17 Fill their faces with disgrace,

And they shall seek Your name, O Lord.

18 Let them be disgraced and troubled unto ages of ages,

And let them be shamed and destroyed;

19 And let them know Your name is the Lord,

That You alone are Most High over all the earth.

Psalm 83 (84)

1*For the End, concerning the winepresses; a psalm for the sons of Korah.*[†ω]

How beloved are Your dwellings, O Lord of hosts.

3 My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord;

My heart and my flesh greatly rejoice in the living God.

4 For even the sparrow found a house for herself,

And the turtledove a nest for herself, where she will lay her young,

Your altars, O Lord of hosts,

My King and my God.

5 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house;

They shall praise You unto ages of ages. (Pause)

6 Blessed is the man whose help is from You, O Lord;

He purposed ascents in his heart

7 In the valley of weeping, into the place he appointed;

For there the lawgiver shall give blessings.

8 They shall go from strength to strength;

The God of gods shall be seen in Zion.

9 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;

Give ear, O God of Jacob. (Pause)

10 O God, our protector, behold,

And look upon the face of Your anointed.

11 For one day in Your courts is better than a thousand;

I chose to be an outcast in the house of my God,

Rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners.

12 For the Lord God loves mercy and truth;

He will give grace and glory;

The Lord's hand will not remove good things from those who walk in innocence.

13 O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who hopes in You.

Psalm 84 (85)

1*For the End; a psalm for the sons of Korah.*[†ω]

O Lord, You were pleased with Your land; You turned back the captivity of Jacob;

3 You forgave the transgressions of Your people;

You covered all their sins. (Pause)

4 You ended all Your wrath;

You turned from the wrath of Your anger.

5 Turn us, O God of our salvation,

And turn away Your anger from us.

6 Will You be angry with us forever,

Or will You prolong Your anger from generation to generation?

7 O God, You will turn and give us life,

And Your people will be glad in You.

8 Show us Your mercy, O Lord,

And grant us Your salvation.

9 I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me,

For He will speak peace

To His people and to His holy ones,

And to those who turn their heart to Him.

10 His salvation is very close at hand to those who fear Him,

That glory may dwell in our land.

11 Mercy and truth met together;

Righteousness and peace kissed each other;

12 Truth arose from the earth,

And righteousness looked down from heaven.

13 For the Lord will give goodness,

And our land shall yield its fruit.

14 Righteousness shall go before Him

And establish His footsteps as our pathway.

Psalm 85 (86)

1*A prayer by David.*[†ω]

I ncline Your ear, O Lord, and hear me,

For I am poor and needy.

2 Guard my soul, for I am holy;

O my God, save Your servant, who hopes in You.

3 Have mercy on me, O Lord,

For all the day long I will cry to You.

4 Gladden the soul of Your servant, O Lord,

For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

5 For You, O Lord, are kind and good,

And very merciful to all who call upon You.

[6] Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer

And heed the voice of my supplication.

[7] In the day of my affliction I cried to You,

For You heard me.

[8] There is none like You among the gods, O Lord,

And there are no works like Your works.

[9] All the Gentiles You made shall come

And worship before You, O Lord,

And they shall glorify Your name;

[10] For You are great, doing wonders;

You alone are the great God.

[11] Lead me in Your way, O Lord,

And I will walk in Your truth;

Gladden my heart so as to fear Your name.

[12] I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,

And I shall glorify Your name forever;

[13] For great is Your mercy to me,

And You rescued my soul from the lowest Hades.

[14] O God, lawless men rose up against me,

And a gathering of strong men sought my soul;

And they did not set You before them.

[15] But You, O Lord, are compassionate and merciful,

Longsuffering and very merciful and truthful.

[16] Look upon me and have mercy;

Give Your strength to Your servant,

And save the son of Your handmaid.

17 Work a sign in my midst for good,

And let those who hate me see it and be disgraced;

For You, O Lord, helped me and comforted me.

Psalm 86 (87)

1*A psalm of an ode for the sons of Korah.*†ω

H is foundations are in the holy mountains;

2 The Lord loves the gates of Zion

More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3 Glorious things were said concerning you, O city of God. (Pause)

4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me;

And behold, foreigners, and the people of Tyre and Ethiopia,

These were born there.

5 A man will say, “Mother Zion,”

And a man was born in her;

For the Most High Himself founded it.

6 The Lord shall describe it in a written account of the peoples

And of the rulers, of those who were born in her. (Pause)

7 How glad are all who have their dwelling in you.

Psalm 87 (88)

1*An ode of a psalm for the sons of Korah; for the End, for the Mahalath to respond; understanding for Heman the Israelite.*†ω

O Lord God of my salvation, I cry day and night before You.

3 Let my prayer come before You;

Incline Your ear to my supplication, O Lord.

4 For my soul is filled with sorrows,

And my soul draws near to Hades;

5 I am counted among those who go down into the pit;

I am like a helpless man, free among the dead,

6 Like slain men thrown down and sleeping in a grave,

Whom You remember no more,

But they are removed from Your hand.

7 They laid me in the lowest pit,

In dark places and in the shadow of death.

8 Your wrath rested upon me,

And You brought all Your billows over me. (Pause)

9 You removed my acquaintances far from me;

They made me an abomination among themselves;

I was betrayed, and did not go forth.

10 My eyes weakened from poverty;

O Lord, I cry to You the whole day long;

I spread out my hands to You.

11 Will You work wonders for the dead?

Or will physicians raise them up, and acknowledge You?

12 Shall anyone in the grave describe Your mercy

And Your truth in destruction?

13 Shall Your wonders be known in darkness,

And Your righteousness in a forgotten land?

14 But I cry to You, O Lord,

And in the morning my prayer shall come near to You.

15 Why, O Lord, do You reject my soul,

And turn away Your face from me?

16 I am poor and in troubles from my youth;

But having been exalted, I was humbled and brought into despair.

17 Your fierce anger passed over me,

And Your terrors greatly troubled me;

18 They compassed me like water all the day long;

They surrounded me at once.

19 You removed far from me neighbor and friend,

And my acquaintances because of my misery.

Psalm 88 (89)

1*Concerning understanding; for Ethan the Israelite.*[†ω]

O Lord, I will sing of Your mercies forever;

I will proclaim Your truth with my mouth from generation to generation;

3 For You said, “Mercy shall be built up forever;

Your truth shall be prepared in the heavens.

4 I made a covenant with My chosen ones;

I swore to David My servant,

5 I shall prepare your seed forever,

And I shall build your throne from generation to generation.” (Pause)

6 The heavens shall confess Your wonders, O Lord,

And Your truth in the church of the saints.

7 For who in the clouds shall be compared to the Lord,

And who among the sons of God shall be compared to the Lord?

8 God is glorified in the counsel of saints;

He is great and fearful toward all round about Him.

9 O Lord God of hosts, who is like You?

You are powerful, O Lord, and Your truth is around You.

10 You are master of the sea's strength,

And You calm the surging of its waves.

[11] You humbled the arrogant man as though he were wounded,

And with the arm of Your power You scattered Your enemies.

[12] The heavens belong to You, and the earth is Yours;

You founded the world and all its fullness.

[13] You created the north wind and the seas;

Tabor and Hermon shall greatly rejoice in Your name.

[14] Your arm rules with power;

Let Your hand be strengthened; let Your right hand be exalted.

[15] The foundation of Your throne is righteousness and judgment;

Mercy and truth shall go before Your face.

[16] Blessed are the people who know glad shouting;

O Lord, they shall walk in the light of Your face,

[17] And shall greatly rejoice in Your name the whole day long;

And they shall be exalted in Your righteousness.

[18] For You are the boast of their power,

And in Your good pleasure our horn shall be exalted.

[19] For our defense is from the Lord

And from the Holy One of Israel, our King.

[20] Then You spoke to Your holy ones in a vision,

And You said, “I established help for a mighty one;

I raised up a chosen one from My people;

[21] I found David My servant;

I anointed him with My holy oil.

[22] For My hand shall support him,

And My arm shall strengthen him.

[23] The enemy shall have no advantage against him,

And the son of lawlessness shall not continue doing evil to him;

[24] I will cut his enemies to pieces before his face,

And I shall put to flight those who hate him.

[25] My truth and My mercy are with him,

And in My name shall his horn be exalted;

[26] I will put his hand in the sea

And his right hand in the rivers.

[27] He shall call upon Me, saying,

‘You are my Father,

My God, and the protector of my salvation’;

[28] I shall make him, my firstborn,

Higher than the kings of the earth.

[29] I shall keep My mercy for him forever,

And My covenant shall be trustworthy with him.

[30] I shall establish his seed unto ages of ages

And his throne as the days of heaven.

[31] If his sons forsake My law

And do not walk in My judgments,

[32] If they profane My ordinances

And do not keep My commandments,

[33] I shall visit their transgressions with a rod

And their sins with a whip;

[34] But I will not turn away My mercy from him,

Nor will I act unjustly with My truth,

[35] Nor will I profane My covenant,

And I will not reject the things that proceeded from My lips.

[36] Once for all I swore in My holy place,

That I would not lie to David:

37 His seed shall remain forever,

And his throne as the sun before Me,

38 And as the moon that is established forever

And is a faithful witness in heaven.” (Pause)

39 But You pushed him away and scorned him;

You rejected Your anointed;

40 You overturned the covenant of Your servant;

You profaned his sanctuary to the ground.

41 You pulled down all his walls;

You put cowardice in his stronghold;

42 All who traveled through there robbed him;

He was a disgrace to his neighbors.

43 You exalted the right hand of his enemies;

You delighted all his adversaries;

44 You turned away Your help from his sword,

And did not support him in his war.

45 You deprived him of purification;

You broke his throne to pieces on the ground;

46 You shortened the days of his time;

You poured down shame upon him. (Pause)

47 How long, O Lord: will You turn away to the end?

Will Your wrath always burn like fire?

48 Let my substance be remembered, as to what sort it is,

For did You create all the sons of men in vain?

49 What kind of man is there who will live and not see death?

Will he deliver his soul from the hand of Hades? (Pause)

[50] Where, O Lord, are Your mercies of old,

Which in Your truth You swore to David?

[51] Remember, O Lord, the reproach of Your servants I bore in my bosom,

The reproach of many nations,

[52] Wherewith Your enemies scorned, O Lord,

Wherewith they scorned the change of Your anointed.

[53] Blessed is the Lord forever.

Amen! Amen!

Psalm 89 (90)

[1]*A prayer of Moses, a man of God.*[†ω]

O Lord, You became a refuge to us in generation and generation;

[2] Before the mountains were made,

And before the earth and the world were formed,

And from everlasting to everlasting, You are.

[3] Do not let man be turned back to humiliation,

And You said, “Return, you sons of men.”

[4] For a thousand years in Your sight

Are like yesterday, which passed,

And like a watch in the night.

[5] Years shall be objects of contempt to them;

In the morning let man pass by like grass;

[6] In the morning let him blossom, and pass by;

In the evening let him fall off, be dried up and withered.

[7] For we fainted in Your wrath,

And in Your wrath we were troubled.

[8] You set our transgressions before You,

Our time in the light of Your face.

[9] For all our days failed,

And in Your wrath we fainted;

Our years were spent in thought like a spider.

[10] As for the days of our years, their span is seventy years,

But if we stay strong, perhaps eighty;

And most of them are labor and pain;

For meekness came upon us, and we shall be chastened.

[11] Who knows the power of Your wrath,

And who knows Your anger because of Your fear?

[12] So make known Your right hand to us, that we may number our days,

And our heart may be bound with wisdom.

[13] Return, O Lord; how long?

And be entreated concerning Your servants.

[14] We were filled with Your mercy in the morning,

And in all our days we greatly rejoiced and were glad;

[15] Gladden us in return for the days You humbled us,

For the years we saw evil things.

[16] And behold Your servants and Your works,

And guide their sons;

[17] And let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us,

And prosper for us the works of our hands.

Psalm 90 (91)

[1] *The praise of an ode by David.*[†ω]

He who dwells in the help of the Most High

Shall lodge in the shelter of the God of heaven.

2 He shall say to the Lord, “You are my protector and my refuge,

My God; I will hope in Him;

3 For He shall free me from the snare of the hunters,

And from every troubling word.”

4 He shall overshadow you with His shoulders,

And under His wings you shall hope;

His truth shall encircle you with a shield.

5 You shall not be frightened by fear at night,

Nor from an arrow that flies by day,

6 Nor by a thing moving in darkness,

Nor by mishap and a demon of noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at your side

And ten thousand at your right hand,

Yet it shall not come near you;

8 But you shall observe with your eyes,

And you shall see the reward of sinners.

9 For You, O Lord, are my hope;

You made the Most High your refuge.

10 Evils shall not come to you,

And a scourge shall not draw near your dwelling;

11 For He shall command His angels concerning you,

To keep you in all your ways;

12 In their hands they shall bear you up,

Lest you strike your foot against a stone;

13 You shall tread upon the asp and the basilisk,

And you shall trample the lion and the dragon.

14 “For he hoped in Me, and I will deliver him;

I will shelter him, because he knew My name.

15 He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him;

I am with him in affliction,

And I will deliver and glorify him.

16 With length of days I will satisfy him,

And show him My salvation.”

Psalm 91 (92)

1 *A psalm of an ode; for the Sabbath day.*[†ω]

It is good to give thanks to the Lord

And to sing to Your name, O Most High,

3 To proclaim Your mercy in the morning

And Your truth at night,

4 On the harp of ten strings, with an ode on the lyre.

5 For You make me glad, O Lord, with Your work,

And I will greatly rejoice in the works of Your hands.

6 How magnificent are Your works, O Lord;

Your thoughts are exceedingly deep.

7 A man without discernment shall not know these things,

And a senseless man shall not understand them.

8 When sinners grow like grass,

And all the workers of lawlessness have arrogant looks,

It is so that they may be destroyed unto ages of ages.

9 But You, O Lord, are Most High forever;

10 For behold, Your enemies shall perish,

And all who work lawlessness shall be scattered abroad;

11 And my horn shall be exalted like the unicorn,

And my old age shall be blessed with rich mercy;

[12] My eye looked upon my enemies,

And my ear shall hear of evildoers who rise up against me.

[13] The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree;

He shall be multiplied like the cedar in Lebanon.

[14] Those planted in the house of the Lord

Shall blossom forth in the courts of our God;

[15] They shall still be increased in a rich old age,

And shall be prospering

[16] So as to proclaim, “The Lord my God is upright,

And there is no wrongdoing in Him.”

Psalm 92 (93)

[1]*For the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was settled; the praise of an ode by David.*[†ω]

The Lord reigns; He clothed Himself with majesty;

The Lord clothed and girded Himself with power;

And He established the world, which shall not be moved.

[2] Your throne is prepared from of old;

You are from everlasting.

[3] The rivers, O Lord, lift up;

The rivers lift up their voices;

[4] Because of the voices of their many waters,

Marvelous are the billows of the sea;

Wondrous is the Lord on high.

[5] Your testimonies are very much believed;

Holiness is proper to Your house, O Lord, Unto length of days.

Psalm 93 (94)

[1]*A psalm by David; for the fourth day of the week.*[†]

The Lord is the God of vengeance;

The God of vengeance declares Himself boldly.

[2] Be exalted, O You who judge the earth;

Render the arrogant their reward.

[3] How long will sinners, O Lord,

How long will sinners boast,

[4] How long will they utter and speak wrongdoing,

How long will all who work lawlessness speak?

[5] They humbled Your people, O Lord,

And they maltreated Your inheritance;

[6] They killed the widow and the resident alien,

And they murdered the orphans,

[7] And said, “The Lord will not see;

Nor will the God of Jacob understand.”

[8] Now understand, all you without discernment among the people,

And all you fools, at length be discerning.

[9] He who planted the ear, shall He not hear?

Or He who formed the eye, shall He not see?

[10] He who chastises the nations, shall He not reprove them,

He who teaches man knowledge?

[11] The Lord knows the thoughts of men are vain.

[12] Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O Lord,

And whom You teach from Your law,

[13] So You may give him rest from evil days,
Until a pit is dug for the sinner.
[14] For the Lord will not reject His people,
And He will not forsake His inheritance
[15] Until righteousness returns to judgment,
And all the upright in heart possess it. (Pause)
[16] Who will rise up for me against evildoers,
Or who will side with me against the workers of lawlessness?
[17] If the Lord had not helped me,
My soul would have almost sojourned in Hades.
[18] If I said, “My foot slipped,”
Your mercy, O Lord, helped me.
[19] O Lord, according to the abundance of grief in my heart,
Your encouragements consoled my soul.
[20] Shall a throne of lawlessness be present with You,
A throne that frames trouble by an ordinance?
[21] They shall hunt for the soul of a righteous man
And shall condemn innocent blood.
[22] And the Lord has become a place of refuge for me,
And my God, the helper of my hope;
[23] And repay their lawlessness to them,
And according to their wickedness,
The Lord our God shall destroy them.

Psalm 94 (95)

[1]*The praise of an ode by David.*[†ω]

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord;

Let us shout aloud to God our savior;

[2] Let us come before His face with thanksgiving,

And let us shout aloud to Him with psalms.

[3] For the Lord is a great God,

A great King over all the gods;

[4] For in His hand are the ends of the earth,

And the heights of the mountains are His;

[5] For the sea is His, and He made it,

And His hands formed the dry land.

[6] Come, let us worship and fall down before Him,

And let us weep before the Lord who made us;

[7] For He is our God,

And we are the people of His pasture

And the sheep of His hand.

Today, if you hear His voice,

[8] “Do not harden your hearts as in the Rebellion,

During the day of testing in the desert,

[9] Where your fathers tempted Me;

They tested Me, and saw My works.

[10] For forty years I was treated with contempt by that generation,

And I said, ‘They always go astray in their heart,

And they do not know My ways’;

[11] So I swore in My wrath,

‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ”

Psalm 95 (96)

[1]*When the house was built after the captivity; an ode by David.*[†]

O h, sing a new song to the Lord,

Sing to the Lord, all the earth;

[2] Sing to the Lord; bless His name;

Proclaim His salvation from day to day;

[3] Declare His glory among the Gentiles,

His wonders among all peoples.

[4] For the Lord is great, and is greatly to be praised;

And He is to be feared above all the gods;

[5] For all the gods of the nations are demons,

But the Lord made the heavens;

[6] Thanksgiving and beauty are before Him;

Holiness and majesty are in His holy place.

[7] Bring to the Lord, O families of the Gentiles,

Bring to the Lord glory and honor;

[8] Bring to the Lord the glory of His name;

Take up sacrifices and enter into His courts;

[9] Worship the Lord in His holy court;

Let all the earth be shaken before Him.

[10] Say among the Gentiles, “The Lord is King,

For He established the world, which shall not be shaken.

He shall judge the peoples with uprightness.”

[11] Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth greatly rejoice;

Let the sea be shaken and all its fullness.

[12] Then the fields and everything in them shall rejoice;

Then all the trees of the forest shall greatly rejoice

[13] Before the face of the Lord; for He is coming,

For He is coming to judge the earth;

He shall judge the world in righteousness,

And the peoples with His truth.

Psalm 96 (97)

[1]*By David; when His earth is restored.*[†]

T he Lord reigns; let the earth greatly rejoice;

Let the many islands be glad.

[2] Clouds and darkness surround Him;

Righteousness and judgment are the right ordering of His throne.

[3] Fire shall go out before Him

And burn up His enemies on every side.

[4] His lightning gave light to the world;

The earth saw and was shaken.

[5] The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord,

At the presence of the Lord of all the earth.

[6] The heavens proclaimed His righteousness;

All the peoples saw His glory.

[7] Let all who worship the carved images be shamed,

All who boast in their idols;

Worship Him, all you His angels.

[8] Zion heard and was glad,

And the daughters of Judah greatly rejoiced

Because of Your judgments, O Lord;

[9] For You are the Lord Most High over all the earth,

Exalted exceedingly over all the gods.

[10] You who love the Lord, hate evil;

The Lord keeps the souls of His saints;

He shall deliver them from the hand of sinners.

[11] Light dawned for the righteous

And gladness for the upright in heart.

[12] Be glad in the Lord, O righteous ones,

And give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

Psalm 97 (98)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†ω]

S ing a new song to the Lord,

For He did wondrous things;

His right hand and His holy arm

Saved peoples for Him.

[2] The Lord made known His salvation;

He revealed His righteousness in the sight of the Gentiles.

[3] He remembered His mercy to Jacob

And His truth to the house of Israel;

All the ends of the earth saw the salvation of our God.

[4] Shout aloud to God, all the earth;

Sing and greatly rejoice, and sing psalms;

[5] Sing to the Lord on a lyre,

On a lyre and with the voice of a psalm;

[6] With trumpets of metal and the sound of a trumpet of horn,

Shout aloud before the Lord our King.

[7] Let the sea be shaken and its fullness,

The world and those who dwell in it.

[8] The rivers shall clap their hands together;

The mountains shall greatly rejoice;

[9] For He comes to judge the earth;

He shall judge the world in righteousness

And the peoples with uprightness.

Psalm 98 (99)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†ω]

The Lord reigns; let the peoples be angry;

The Lord sits upon the cherubim; let the earth be shaken.

[2] The Lord is great in Zion,

And He is exalted above all the peoples;

[3] Let them give thanks to Your great name,

For it is fearful and holy.

[4] The King's honor loves judgment;

You prepare uprightness;

You work judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

[5] Exalt the Lord our God,

And worship at the footstool of His feet;

For He is holy.

[6] Moses and Aaron are among His priests,

And Samuel is among those who call upon His name;

They called upon the Lord, and He heard them;

[7] He spoke to them in a pillar of cloud;

They kept His testimonies

And the ordinances He gave them.

[8] O Lord our God, You listened to them;

O God, You were very merciful to them,

While avenging all their ways of living.

[9] Exalt the Lord our God

And worship at His holy mountain;

For the Lord our God is holy.

Psalm 99 (100)

[1]*A psalm of thanksgiving.*[†]

S hout aloud to the Lord, all the earth;

[2]Serve the Lord with gladness;

Come before Him with great joy.

[3] Know this: the Lord, He is God;

He made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

[4] Enter into His gates with thanksgiving

And into His courts with hymns;

Give thanks to Him; praise His name;

[5] For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting,

And His truth is from generation to generation.

Psalm 100 (101)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†ω]

O Lord, I will sing to You of mercy and judgment;

[2] I will sing and understand in a blameless way;

When will You come to me?

I walked in the innocence of my heart in the midst of my house.

[3] I have not set any lawless thing before my eyes;

I hated those who commit transgressions;

[4] A crooked heart shall not cleave to me;

As for the evil man who turned away from me,

I did not know him.

5 He who secretly slanders his neighbor,

This one I chased away;

The one with an arrogant eye and insatiable heart,

With this one I did not eat.

6 My eyes were on the faithful of the earth, so they might dwell with me;

He who walks in a blameless way, this one ministered to me.

7 He who acts arrogantly did not dwell in the midst of my house;

He who speaks unjustly did not prosper before my eyes.

8 In the morning I slew all the sinners of the earth,

So as to destroy from the city of the Lord all the workers of lawlessness.

Psalm 101 (102)

1 *A prayer by a poor man, when he was depressed and poured out his supplication before the Lord.*[†ω]

H ear my prayer, O Lord,

And let my cry come to You.

3 Do not turn Your face from me;

In the day when I am afflicted, incline Your ear to me;

In the day when I call upon You, hear me quickly.

4 For my days vanished like smoke,

And my bones burned up like firewood.

5 I was cut down like grass, and my heart became withered,

For I forgot to eat my bread.

6 Because of the sound of my groaning,

My bones cleaved to my flesh.

7 I have become like a pelican in a desert;

I have become like an owl in a ruined house;

8 I kept watch, and have become

Like a sparrow alone on a housetop.

9 My enemies reproached me all day long,

And those who praised me swore against me.

10 For I ate ashes like bread,

And mixed my drink with weeping

11 Because of the wrath of Your countenance and Your anger;

For You lifted me up and broke me down.

12 My days were far spent like a shadow,

And I am withered like grass.

13 But You, O Lord, remain forever,

And Your remembrance is from generation to generation.

14 When You rise up, You shall have compassion on Zion,

For it is time to have compassion on her, because the time is come;

15 For Your servants took pleasure in her stones,

And they shall have compassion for her dust.

16 And the Gentiles shall fear the name of the Lord,

And all the kings of the earth Your glory;

17 For the Lord shall build Zion,

And He shall be seen in His glory.

18 He regarded the prayer of the humble,

And He did not despise their supplication.

19 Let this be written for another generation,

And the people who are created shall praise the Lord;

20 For He looked down from the height of His holy place;

The Lord looked upon the earth from heaven,

21 To hear the groaning of those bound,

To set free the sons of the slain,

22 To declare the Lord's name in Zion,

And His praise in Jerusalem,

23 When the peoples and the kingdoms

Are gathered together to serve the Lord.

24 He replied to Him in the way of strength,

“Declare to me the fewness of my days;

25 Take me not away in the midst of my days;

Your years are throughout all generations.

26 In the beginning, O Lord, You founded the earth,

And the heavens are the works of Your hands.

27 They shall perish, but You shall remain,

And all things shall grow old like a garment,

And like a cloak You shall change them,

And they shall be changed;

28 But You are the same, and Your years shall not fail.

29 The children of Your servants shall dwell there,

And their seed shall be led to prosperity forever.”

Psalm 102 (103)

1 *By David.*[†ω]

B less the Lord, O my soul,

And everything within me, bless His holy name.

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,

And forget not all His rewards:

3 Who is merciful to all your transgressions,

Who heals all your diseases,

4 Who redeems your life from corruption,

Who crowns you with mercy and compassion,

5 Who satisfies your desire with good things;

And your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The Lord shows mercies

And judgment to all who are wronged.

7 He made known His ways to Moses,

The things He willed to the sons of Israel.

8 The Lord is compassionate and merciful,

Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

9 He will not become angry to the end,

Nor will He be wrathful forever;

10 He did not deal with us according to our sins,

Nor reward us according to our transgressions;

11 For according to the height of heaven from earth,

So the Lord reigns in mercy over those who fear Him;

12 As far as the east is from the west,

So He removes our transgressions from us.

13 As a father has compassion on his children,

So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him,

14 For He knows how He formed us;

He remembers we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are like grass,

As a flower of the field, so he flourishes;

16 For the wind passes through it, and it shall not remain;

And it shall no longer know its place.

17 But the mercy of the Lord is from age to age upon those who fear Him,

And His righteousness upon children's children,

18 To such as keep His covenant

And remember His commandments, to do them.

19 The Lord prepared His throne in heaven,

And His Kingdom rules over all.

20 Bless the Lord, all you His angels,

Mighty in strength, who do His word,

So as to hear the voice of His words.

21 Bless the Lord, all you His hosts,

His ministers who do His will;

22 Bless the Lord, all His works,

In all places of His dominion;

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Psalm 103 (104)

1 *By David.*[†ω]

B less the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, You are magnified exceedingly;

You clothe Yourself with thanksgiving and majesty,

2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment,

Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain;

3 You are He who covers His upper chambers with waters,

Who makes the clouds His means of approach,

Who walks on the wings of the winds,

4 Who makes His angels spirits

And His ministers a flame of fire.

[5] He established the earth on its stable foundation;

It shall not be moved unto ages of ages.

[6] The deep like a garment is His covering;

The waters shall stand upon the mountains;

[7] At Your rebuke they shall flee;

At the sound of Your thunder, they shall be afraid.

[8] The mountains rise up, and the plains sink down

To the place You founded for them.

[9] You set a boundary they shall not pass over;

Neither shall they return to cover the earth.

[10] You are He who sends springs into the valley;

The waters shall pass between the mountains;

[11] They shall give drink to all the wild animals of the field;

The wild asses shall quench their thirst;

[12] The birds of heaven shall dwell beside them;

They shall sing from the midst of the rocks.

[13] You are He who waters the mountains from His higher places;

The earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Your works.

[14] You are He who causes grass to grow for the cattle,

And the green plant for the service of man,

To bring forth bread from the earth;

[15] And wine gladdens the heart of man,

To brighten his face with oil;

And bread strengthens man's heart.

[16] The trees of the plain shall be full of fruit,

The cedars of Lebanon, which You planted;

17 There the sparrows shall make their nests;

The house of the heron takes the lead among them.

18 The high mountains are for the deer;

The cliff is a refuge for the rabbits.

19 He made the moon for seasons;

The sun knows its setting.

20 You established darkness, and it was night,

Wherein all the wild animals of the forest will prowl about;

21 The young lions roar and snatch their prey,

And seek their food from God.

22 The sun arises, and they are gathered together;

And they shall be put to bed in their dens.

23 Man shall go out to his work

And to his labor until evening.

24 O Lord, Your works shall be magnified greatly;

You made all things in wisdom;

The earth was filled with Your creation.

25 There is this great and spacious sea:

The creeping things are there without number;

The living things are there, both small and great;

26 There the ships pass through;

There is this dragon You formed to play therein.

27 All things wait upon You,

That You may give them food in due season.

28 When You give it to them, they shall gather it;

When You open Your hand, all things shall be filled with Your goodness.

29 But when You turn Your face away, they shall be troubled;

When You take away their breath, they shall die

And return again to their dust.

30 You shall send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created,

And You shall renew the face of the earth.

31 Let the glory of the Lord be forever;

The Lord shall be glad in His works;

32 He looks upon the earth and makes it tremble;

He touches the mountains, and they smoke.

33 I will sing to the Lord all my life;

I will sing to my God as long as I exist;

34 May my words be pleasing to Him,

And I shall be glad in the Lord.

35 May sinners cease from the earth,

And the lawless, so as to be no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Psalm 104 (105)

1*Alleluia.*†

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon His name;

Report His works among the Gentiles;

2 Sing to Him, and play a stringed instrument to Him;

Describe all His wonderful works.

3 Praise His holy name;

Let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad;

4 Seek the Lord and be strengthened;

Seek His face continually.

5 Remember the wonders He performed,

Of His marvels and the judgments of His mouth,

6 O seed of Abraham, His servants,

O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones.

7 He is the Lord our God;

His judgments are in all the earth.

8 Remember His covenant forever,

And His word He commanded for a thousand generations,

9 Which He established with Abraham,

And His oath with Isaac;

10 And He established it as an ordinance with Jacob

And as an everlasting covenant with Israel,

11 Saying, “I shall give you the land of Canaan

As the portion of your inheritance.”

12 When they were few in number,

The smallest and sojourners in the land,

13 And passed through from nation to nation,

From a kingdom to a different people,

14 He allowed no man to wrong them;

And He reproved kings on their behalf:

15 “Do not touch My anointed ones,

And do not act wickedly towards My prophets.”

16 And He called a famine upon the land;

He shattered all their provision of bread;

17 He sent a man before them;

He sold Joseph into slavery.

18 They humbled his feet with fetters;

His soul passed into the iron

19 Until his word came to pass;

The revelation of the Lord tried him in the fire.

20 The king, the ruler of the people, sent and released him,

And he acquitted him.

21 He made him lord of his house

And ruler of all his domain,

22 To instruct his rulers as himself

And to teach his elders wisdom.

23 And Israel came into Egypt,

And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham;

24 He increased His people greatly,

And made them stronger than their enemies.

25 He changed their heart to hate His people,

To deal craftily with His servants.

26 He sent Moses His servant;

He sent Aaron, whom He chose.

27 He put among them the words of His signs

And of His wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and it grew dark;

And they rebelled against His words.

29 He turned their waters into blood,

And He killed their fish.

30 Their land produced frogs

In the chambers of their kings.

31 He spoke and the dog-fly came,

And gnats in all their borders.

32 He gave them hail for rain;

Fire burned up their land;

33 And He smote their vineyards and their fig trees,

And He shattered every tree in their domain.

34 He spoke, and the locust came,

And the caterpillar without number,

35 And ate up all the grass in their land,

And devoured the fruit of their land.

36 And He smote all the firstborn in their land,

The firstling of all their labor.

37 He led them out with silver and gold,

And there was not among their tribes one who was feeble.

38 Egypt was gladdened by their exodus,

For fear of them fell upon them.

39 He spread a cloud as a cover for them,

And a fire to give them light at night.

40 They asked, and the quails came,

And He filled them with the bread of heaven.

41 He split the rock, and the waters flowed;

The rivers ran in the waterless places.

42 For He remembered His holy word

Which He gave to His servant Abraham.

43 He brought out His people with exceeding joy,

And His chosen ones with gladness.

44 And He gave them the lands of the nations,

And they inherited the labors of the peoples,

45 So they might keep His ordinances,

And seek out His law.

Psalm 105 (106)

1 *Alleluia.*

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.

2 Who shall tell the mighty deeds of the Lord,

Who shall make all His praises heard?

3 Blessed are those who keep His judgment,

And do righteousness at all times.

4 Remember us, O Lord, because of the goodwill of Your people;

Visit us with Your salvation,

5 So as to see it in the goodness of Your chosen ones;

So as to be glad with the joy of Your nation,

So as to praise You in the midst of Your inheritance.

6 We sinned with our fathers;

We committed lawlessness; we acted wrongfully.

7 Our fathers did not understand Your wonders in Egypt;

They did not remember the multitude of Your mercy,

But rebelled when they went up to the Red Sea.

8 But He saved them because of His name,

So they might know His power;

9 And He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up;

And He led them in the sea as though it were a desert.

10 He saved them from the hands of those who hated them,

And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy;

11 So the water covered those who afflicted them;

There was not one left among them.

12 Then they believed His words

And sang His praise.

13 They were quick to forget His works;

They did not wait for His counsel;

14 And they desired exceedingly in the desert,

And tempted God in a waterless place.

15 So He gave them their request

And fully satisfied their souls.

16 They also angered Moses in the camp,

And Aaron the holy one of the Lord;

17 The earth was opened and swallowed Dathan,

And buried the assembly of Abiram;

18 A fire kindled in their assembly;

The flame burned up the sinners.

19 They made a calf in Horeb,

And bowed down and worshiped the graven image;

20 Thus they changed their glory

Into the likeness of a calf that eats grass.

21 They forgot the God who saved them,

Who did great things in Egypt,

22 And marvelous things in the land of Ham,

Fearful things at the Red Sea.

23 And He said He would destroy them

Had not Moses His chosen one

Stood among them in the destruction before Him,

To turn away His wrath so as not to destroy them.

24 Then they despised the desired land;

They did not believe His word,

25 But murmured in their tents;

They did not listen to the Lord's voice.

26 So He raised His hand against them,

To overthrow them in the desert;

27 And to overthrow their seed among the nations,

And to scatter them among the countries.

28 They were consecrated to Baal-Peor,

And ate sacrifices of the dead;

29 So they provoked Him with their ways of living,

And destruction multiplied among them.

30 Then Phinehas stood among them and made atonement,

And the destruction ceased;

31 And it was reckoned as righteousness to him

From generation to generation forever.

32 They also provoked Him to anger at the water of Rebellion,

And Moses was afflicted because of them;

33 For they embittered his spirit,

And he spoke offensively with his lips;

34 They did not destroy the nations the Lord said to destroy,

35 But mingled with the nations

And learned their works;

36 And they served their graven images,

And this became a snare for them;

37 They also sacrificed their sons

And their daughters to demons,

38 And shed innocent blood,

The blood of their sons and daughters,

Whom they sacrificed to the graven images of Canaan;

So the land was polluted with their blood;

39 It was also defiled by their works;

Thus they acted unfaithfully in their ways of living.

40 And the Lord was very angry with His people,

And He abhorred His inheritance;

41 Then He delivered them into the hands of the nations,

And those who hated them ruled over them.

42 Their enemies also afflicted them,

And they were humbled under their hands.

43 He delivered them many times,

But they rebelled against Him with their counsel,

And were humbled by their transgressions.

44 And He saw them in their afflictions;

He listened to their supplications,

45 And He remembered His covenant,

And felt regret according to the multitude of His mercy;

46 So He aroused compassion for them

Among all who made them captives.

47 Save us, O Lord our God,

And gather us from the nations,

So we may give thanks to Your holy name,

And boast in Your praise.

48 Bless the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.

And all the people shall say, “Amen! Amen!”

Psalm 106 (107)

1 *Alleluia.*

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.

2 Let those redeemed by the Lord say so,

Whom He redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

3 He gathered them from the countries,

From the east and the west and the north and the south.

4 They were led astray in the desert, in a place without water;

They did not find a road to an inhabited city;

5 While hungering and thirsting,

Their soul fainted in them;

6 And they cried out to the Lord in their affliction,

And He delivered them from their distresses;

7 And He led them in a straight path,

So they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His mercies

And His wonders to the sons of men;

9 For He fed the empty soul

And filled the hungry soul with good things,

10 Those sitting in the darkness and shadow of death,

Bound in poverty and fetters;

11 For they rebelled against the teachings of God

And provoked the counsel of the Most High;

12 Thus their heart was humbled by troubles;

They were weak, and there was no one to help them;

13 Then they cried out to the Lord in their afflictions,

And He saved them from their distresses;

14 And He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,

And broke their chains to pieces.

15 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His mercies,

His wonders to the sons of men;

16 For He crushed the gates of bronze

And shattered the bars of iron.

17 He helped them out of their lawless ways,

For they were humbled because of their transgressions.

18 Their soul abhorred all manner of food,

And they drew near the gates of death;

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their afflictions,

And He saved them from their distresses;

20 He sent His Word and healed them,

And delivered them from their corruptions.

21 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His mercies

And His wonders to the sons of men,

22 And let them offer a sacrifice of praise;

And let them proclaim His works with exceeding joy.

23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,

Who do business in many waters,

24 These see the works of the Lord

And His wonders in the deep;

25 He spoke, and a stormy wind arose,

And its waves were lifted up;

26 They mount up to the heavens

And descend into the deep;

Their soul is consumed with evils;

27 They were troubled; they were shaken like one drunk with wine,

And all their wisdom was consumed;

28 Then they cried to the Lord in their affliction,

And He brought them out of their distresses.

29 He also commanded the storm, and it became a breeze,

And its waves were still;

30 Then they were glad, for they were silent,

And He guided them to the haven of their desire.

31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His mercies

And His wonders to the sons of men;

32 Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people

And praise Him in the seat of the elders.

33 He turned rivers into a desert

And streams of water into dry ground,

34 A fruitful land into salt water,

Because of the evils of those living there.

35 He turned the desert into pools of water,

And a land without water into streams of water;

36 Then He caused the hungry to dwell there

And established a city for habitation;

37 They sowed fields and planted vineyards,

And produced much fruit;

38 So He blessed them, and they were multiplied exceedingly,

And their cattle did not diminish.

39 But they were diminished and maltreated

By the affliction of evils and pain.

40 Contempt was poured out on princes,

And He made them wander in an impassible place, where there was no road.

41 Yet He helped the poor man out of his poverty,

And made his families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see this and be glad,

And all lawlessness shall stop its mouth.

43 Who is wise and shall keep these things,

And shall understand the mercies of the Lord?

Psalm 107 (108)

1 *The ode of a psalm; by David.*[†ω]

My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready;

I will sing and give praise in my glory.

3 Awaken, lute and harp;

I shall awaken early in the morning.

4 I will give thanks to You among the peoples, O Lord,

And I will sing to You among the Gentiles;

5 For great is Your mercy above the heavens,

And Your truth even to the clouds.

6 Be exalted above the heavens, O God,

And Your glory above all the earth.

7 That Your beloved ones may be delivered,

Save with Your right hand, and hear me.

8 God spoke in His place,

“I shall be exalted, and I will divide Shechem,

And measure out the valley of tents;

9 Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine;

And Ephraim is the strength of My head;

Judah is My king.

10 Moab is the cauldron of My hope;

I will stretch out My shoe over Edom;

Foreign tribes were subjected to Me.”

11 Who will bring me into a fortified city?

Who will lead me as far as Edom?

12 Will not You, O God, who drove us away?

And will You not go out with our armies, O God?

13 Give us help from affliction,

For the salvation of man is worthless.

14 In God we shall do a mighty thing,

And He shall despise our enemies.

Psalm 108 (109)

1 *For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

O God, do not pass over my praise in silence,

2 For the mouth of the sinner and the mouth of the deceitful man opened against me;

They spoke against me with a deceitful tongue;

3 And they surrounded me with words of hatred,

And warred against me without cause.

4 Instead of loving me, they falsely accused me,

But I continued to pray;

5 So they repaid me evil for good,

And hatred for my love.

6 Set a sinner over him,

And let the devil stand at his right hand.

7 And when he is judged, may he go forth condemned,

And let his prayer become sin.

8 Let his days be very few,

And may a different man receive his office;

9 Let his children be fatherless

And his wife a widow;

10 Let his children wander about and be beggars;

Let them be cast out of their houses.

11 Let the creditor search out whatever possessions he has;

Let strangers plunder his labors;

12 Let there be no helper for him,

Nor a compassionate one for his fatherless children;

13 Let his children be utterly destroyed;

In a single generation, let his name be blotted out.

14 May the lawlessness of his fathers be remembered before the Lord,

And may the sin of his mother not be blotted out;

15 Let them be continually before the Lord,

And may the remembrance of them be utterly destroyed from the earth,

16 Because he did not remember to show mercy,

But persecuted a poor and needy man,

And one pierced to the heart, that he might kill him.

17 And he loved cursing, and it came to him,

And he did not desire blessing, so it shall be far from him.

18 So he clothed himself with cursing like a garment,

And it entered like water into his bowels

And like oil into his bones;

19 Let it be for him like a garment that clothes him,

And like a belt that girds him continually.

20 This is the work of those who falsely accuse me before the Lord,
And of those who speak evil things against my soul.
21 But You, O Lord, O Lord, deal mercifully with me for Your name's sake,
For Your mercy is good.
22 Save me, for I am poor and needy,
And my heart is troubled within me.
23 I was removed like a shadow when it declines;
I was shaken off like the locusts.
24 My knees were weak from fasting,
And my flesh was changed because of the oil.
25 And I became an object of reproach to them;
They saw me; they shook their heads.
26 Help me, O Lord my God;
Save me according to Your mercy;
27 Then let them know this is Your hand,
And You, O Lord, did this.
28 They themselves shall curse, but You shall bless;
Let those who rise up against me be put to shame,
But let Your servant be glad.
29 Let those who falsely accuse me be clothed with shame,
And let them be covered with their dishonor like a double cloak.
30 I will give thanks to the Lord abundantly with my mouth,
And in the midst of many I will praise Him,
31 Because He stood at the right hand of a poor man,
To save me from those who persecute my soul.

Psalm 109 (110)

1 *A psalm by David.*[†ω]

T he Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,

Until I make Your enemies the footstool of Your feet."

2 The Lord shall send forth the rod of Your power from Zion,

And rule in the midst of Your enemies.

3 With You is the beginning in the day of Your power,

In the brightness of Your saints;

"I have begotten You from the womb before the morning star."

4 The Lord swore and will not repent,

"You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

5 The Lord at Your right hand crushed kings in the day of His wrath;

6 He shall judge among the nations; He shall fill them with dead bodies;

He shall crush the heads of many on earth.

7 He shall drink from the brook on the way;

Therefore, He shall raise His head high.

Psalm 110 (111)

1 *Alleluia.*[†ω]

I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart,

In the council of the upright and in the assembly.

2 Great are the works of the Lord,

Sought out in all things with regard to His will;

3 Thanksgiving and majesty are His work,

And His righteousness continues unto ages of ages.

4 He made a remembrance of His wonders;

The Lord is merciful and compassionate;

5 He gave food to those who fear Him;

He shall remember His covenant forever.

6 He declared the strength of His works to His people,

So as to give them the inheritance of the nations.

7 The works of His hands are truth and judgment;

Faithful are all His commandments,

8 Established unto ages of ages,

Made in truth and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption to His people;

He commanded His covenant forever;

Holy and fearful is His name.

10 The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord;

A good understanding is in all who practice it.

His praise continues unto ages of ages.

Psalm 111 (112)

1 *Alleluia.*[†ω]

B lessed is the man who fears the Lord;

He will delight exceedingly in His commandments;

2 His seed shall be mighty on earth;

The generation of the upright shall be blessed;

3 Glory and riches shall be in his house,

And his righteousness continues unto ages of ages.

4 For the upright, light springs up in darkness,

For he is merciful, compassionate, and righteous.

5 A good man is compassionate and lends;

He will manage his words with judgment,

6 For he shall be unshaken forever;

A righteous man shall be in everlasting remembrance.

[7] He shall not be afraid because of an evil report;

His heart is prepared to hope in the Lord.

[8] His heart is established; he is not afraid

As he surveys his enemies.

[9] He dispersed; he gave to the poor;

His righteousness continues unto ages of ages;

His horn shall be exalted with glory.

[10] The sinner shall see this, and be angry;

He shall gnash his teeth, and be consumed;

The desire of sinners shall perish.

Psalm 112 (113)

[1]*Alleluia.*[†ω]

P raise the Lord, O you servants;

Praise the name of the Lord;

[2] Blessed be the name of the Lord

From this present time and unto the ages;

[3] From the rising of the sun to its setting,

Praise the name of the Lord.

[4] The Lord is high above all the nations;

His glory is above the heavens.

[5] Who is like the Lord our God,

Who dwells in the highest,

[6] And who looks upon the humble things

In heaven and on earth?

[7] He raises the poor man from the earth

And lifts up the poor from the dunghills

8 So as to seat him with rulers,

With the rulers of His people;

9 He settles the barren woman in a home,

To be a joyful mother of children.

Psalm 113 (114, 115)

1 *Alleluia.*†ω

In the exodus of Israel from Egypt,

The house of Jacob from a foreign people,

2 Judah became His sanctuary,

And Israel His authority.

3 The sea saw them and fled,

The Jordan turned back;

4 The mountains skipped like rams,

The hills like flocks of lambs.

5 What is it to you, O sea, that you fled,

And to you, O Jordan, that you turned back?

6 What is it to you, O mountains, that you skipped like rams,

And you, O hills, like flocks of lambs?

7 The earth shook because of the Lord's face,

Because of the face of Jacob's God,

8 When He turned the rock into pools of waters

And flinty ground into fountains of waters.

9 Not to us, O Lord, not to us,

But to Your name give glory,

For Your mercy and Your truth,

10 Lest the nations say,

“Where is their God?”

11 Our God is in heaven above;

And both in heaven and on earth,

All things whatsoever He wills, He does.

12 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,

The work of men's hands;

13 They have a mouth, but they shall not speak;

They have eyes, but they shall not see;

14 They have ears, but they shall not hear;

They have noses, but they shall not smell;

15 They have hands, but they shall not feel;

They have feet, but they shall not walk;

They shall make no sound with their throats.

16 May those who make them become like them,

And all who trust in them.

17 The house of Israel hoped in the Lord;

He is their help and their protector.

18 The house of Aaron hoped in the Lord;

He is their help and their protector.

19 Those who feared the Lord hoped in the Lord;

He is their help and their protector.

20 The Lord remembered us and blessed us;

He blessed the house of Israel;

He blessed the house of Aaron;

21 He blessed those who feared the Lord,

The least with the greatest.

[22] May the Lord increase you,

Both you and your children;

[23] You are blessed by the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth.

[24] The heaven of heaven belongs to the Lord,

But He gave the earth to the sons of men.

[25] The dead shall not praise You, O Lord,

Neither do all who descend into Hades;

[26] But we who live shall bless the Lord,

From this present time and unto the ages.

Psalm 114 (116:1–9)

[1]*Alleluia.*[†ω]

I have loved, because the Lord Shall hear the voice of my supplication;

[2] For He inclined His ear to me,

And in my days I shall call upon Him.

[3] The pains of death surrounded me;

The dangers of Hades found me;

I found affliction and grief.

[4] Then I called upon the Lord's name,

“O Lord, save my soul.”

[5] The Lord is merciful and righteous,

And our God has mercy.

[6] The Lord is He who watches over children;

I was humbled, and He saved me.

[7] Return, O my soul, to your rest,

Because the Lord showed you kindness;

[8] For He delivered my soul from death,

My eyes from tears,

And my feet from slipping.

[9] I shall be well pleasing before the Lord in the land of the living.

Psalm 115 (116:10–19)

[1]*Alleluia.*[†ω]

I believed; therefore, I spoke; I was greatly humbled.

[2] I said in my ecstasy,

“Every man is a liar.”

[3] What shall I give back to the Lord

For all He rendered to me?

[4] I will take up the cup of salvation,

And call upon the name of the Lord.

[5] Precious in the sight of the Lord

Is the death of His holy ones.

[6] O Lord, I am Your servant;

I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid.

You broke apart my bonds;

[7] I will offer a sacrifice of praise;

[8] I shall pay my vows to the Lord

In the presence of all His people,

[9] In the courts of the Lord's house,

In your midst, O Jerusalem.

Psalm 116 (117)

[1]*Alleluia.*[†ω]

P raise the Lord, all you Gentiles;

Praise Him, all you peoples,

[2] For His mercy rules over us;

And the truth of the Lord endures forever.

Psalm 117 (118)

[1]*Alleluia.*[†ω]

G ive thanks to the Lord, for He is good;

For His mercy endures forever.

[2] Let the house of Israel say that He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.

[3] Let the house of Aaron say that He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.

[4] Let all who fear the Lord say that He is good,

For His mercy endures forever.

[5] In affliction I called upon the Lord,

And He heard me in a broad place.

[6] The Lord is my helper;

I shall not be afraid of what man will do to me.

[7] The Lord is my helper;

I shall look upon my enemies.

[8] It is good to trust in the Lord

Rather than to trust in man;

[9] It is good to hope in the Lord

Rather than to hope in rulers.

[10] All the nations surrounded me,

But in the name of the Lord I defended myself against them;

11 They circled and surrounded me,

But in the name of the Lord I defended myself against them;

12 They surrounded me like bees around a honeycomb,

And they were inflamed like fire in a thorn bush;

But in the name of the Lord I defended myself against them.

13 I was shoved and disheartened, that I might fall,

But the Lord took hold of me.

14 The Lord is my strength and my song,

And He became my salvation.

15 The sound of exceeding joy and salvation is in the tents of the righteous;

The right hand of the Lord worked its power;

16 The right hand of the Lord exalted me;

The right hand of the Lord worked its power.

17 I shall not die, but live,

And tell of the Lord's works.

18 The Lord chastened and corrected me,

But He did not give me up to death.

19 Open the gates of righteousness to me;

I will enter therein and give thanks to the Lord.

20 This is the gate of the Lord;

The righteous shall go in through it.

21 I will give thanks to You, for You heard me,

And You became my salvation.

22 The stone the builders rejected,

the same became the head of the corner;

23 And this came about from the Lord,

And it is wonderful in our eyes.

24 This is the day the Lord made;

Let us greatly rejoice, and be glad therein.

25 O Lord, save us now;

O Lord, prosper us now.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord;

We blessed you from the house of the Lord.

27 God is the Lord, and He revealed Himself to us;

Appoint a feast for yourselves, decked with branches,

Even to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God, and I will give thanks to You;

You are my God, and I shall exalt You;

I will give thanks to You, for You heard me;

And You became my salvation.

29 Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;

For His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 118 (119)

1 *Alleluia.*[†ω]

B lessed are the blameless in the way

Who walk in the law of the Lord.

2 Blessed are those who search out His testimonies;

They shall search for Him with their whole heart.

3 For those who work lawlessness

Do not walk in His ways.

4 You commanded us regarding Your commandments,

That we should be very diligent to keep them.

5 Would that my ways were led,

That I might keep Your ordinances.

6 Then I would not be ashamed

When I regard all Your commandments.

7 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with an upright heart,

When I learn the judgments of Your righteousness.

8 I shall keep Your ordinances;

Do not utterly forsake me.

9 How shall a young man keep his way straight?

When he keeps Your words.

10 I searched for You with my whole heart;

Do not drive me away from Your commandments.

11 I hid Your teachings in my heart

So as not to sin against You.

12 Blessed are You, O Lord;

Teach me Your ordinances.

13 With my lips I declared

All the judgments of Your mouth.

14 I delight in the way of Your testimonies

As much as in all riches.

15 I shall meditate on Your commandments,

And I shall understand Your ways.

16 I shall meditate on Your ordinances;

I shall not forget Your words.

17 Reward Your servant;

I shall live, and keep Your words.

18 Unveil my eyes,

And I shall understand the wonders in Your law.

19 I am a sojourner on the earth;

Do not hide Your commandments from me.

20 My soul longed to desire

Your judgments in every season.

21 You rebuke the arrogant;

Those who turn aside from Your commandments are accursed.

22 Take away reproach and contempt from me,

For I searched Your testimonies.

23 For rulers sat and spoke against me,

But Your servant meditated on Your ordinances.

24 For Your testimonies are my meditation,

And Your ordinances are my counsels.

25 My soul cleaves to the earth;

Give me life according to Your word.

26 I made known my ways and You heard me;

Teach me Your ordinances.

27 Cause me to understand the way of Your ordinances,

And I shall meditate on Your wonders.

28 My soul fainted because of its listlessness;

Establish me in Your words.

29 Remove the way of unrighteousness from me,

And with Your law have mercy on me.

30 I chose the way of truth;

I have not forgotten Your judgments.

31 I cleave to Your testimonies;

O Lord, do not disappoint me.

32 I ran on the path of Your commandments,

When You enlarged my heart.

33 Give me as law, O Lord, the way of Your ordinances,

And I shall always search them.

34 Cause me to understand, and I shall search out Your law;

And I shall keep it with my whole heart.

35 Guide me in the path of Your commandments,

For I desire it.

36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies

And not to greediness.

37 Turn away my eyes that I may not see vanity;

Give me life in Your way.

38 Establish Your teaching in Your servant

In regard to Your fear.

39 Take away my blame, which I have suspected,

For Your judgments are good.

40 Behold, I long for Your commandments;

Give me life in Your righteousness.

41 And may Your mercy come upon me, O Lord,

Your salvation according to Your teaching.

42 And I shall answer those who insult me with a word,

For I hope in Your words.

43 Do not take away the word of truth completely from my mouth,

For I hope in Your judgments.

44 So I shall keep Your law always,

Forever and unto ages of ages.

45 And I walk in a broad space,

For I searched Your commandments.

46 I spoke of Your testimonies

Before kings, and I was not ashamed.

47 And I meditate on Your commandments,

Which I love exceedingly.

48 And I raise my hands to Your commandments, which I love,

And I meditate on Your ordinances.

49 Remember Your word to Your servant,

In which You give me hope.

50 This comforted me in my humiliation,

For Your teaching gives me life.

51 The arrogant transgressed exceedingly,

But I did not turn away from Your law.

52 I remembered Your judgments of old, O Lord,

And I was comforted.

53 Despondency held me because of sinners

Who abandon Your law.

54 Your ordinances were sung to me

In the place of my sojourning.

55 I remembered Your name in the night, O Lord,

And I kept Your law.

56 This happened to me in the night,

Because I searched Your ordinances.

57 You are my portion, O Lord;

I said I will keep Your law.

58 I sought Your presence with my whole heart;

Have mercy on me according to Your teaching.

59 I considered Your ways,

And I turned my feet toward Your testimonies.

60 I prepared myself, and I was not troubled,

That I might keep Your commandments.

61 The ropes of sinners ensnared me,

But I did not forget Your law.

62 At midnight I arose to give thanks to You

Because of the judgments of Your righteousness.

63 I am a companion of all who fear You

And keep Your commandments.

64 O Lord, the earth is full of Your mercy;

Teach me Your ordinances.

65 O Lord, You dealt with Your servant in goodness,

According to Your word.

66 Teach me goodness, instruction, and knowledge,

For I believe Your commandments.

67 Before I was humbled, I transgressed;

Therefore, I kept Your teaching.

68 You are good, O Lord, and in Your goodness

Teach me Your ordinances.

69 The unrighteousness of the arrogant multiplied against me,

But I will search out Your commandments with my whole heart.

70 Their heart was curdled like milk,

But I meditated on Your law.

71 It is good for me that You humbled me,

That I might learn Your ordinances.

72 The law of Your mouth is good for me,

Rather than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.

73 Your hands made and fashioned me;

Instruct me, and I will learn Your commandments.

74 Those who fear You will see me and be glad,

Because I hope in Your words.

75 I know, O Lord, Your judgments are righteousness,

And You humbled me with truth.

76 Let Your mercy be for my comfort,

According to Your teaching to Your servant.

77 Let Your compassions come to me, and I shall live;

For Your law is my meditation.

78 Let the arrogant be shamed, for they transgressed unjustly against me;

But I shall meditate on Your commandments.

79 Let those who fear You turn to me,

And those who know Your testimonies.

80 Let my heart be blameless in Your ordinances,

That I may not be disappointed.

81 My soul earnestly longs for Your salvation,

And I hope in Your word.

82 My eyes strained to look at Your teaching,

Saying, “When will You comfort me?”

83 I am like a leather bag in a frost;

I did not forget Your ordinances.

84 How many are the days of Your servant?

When will You execute judgment for me upon those who persecute me?

85 Transgressors described their meditations to me,

But these are not like Your law, O Lord.

86 All Your commandments are truth;

They persecuted me unjustly; help me.

87 They almost ended my life on earth,

But I did not forsake Your commandments.

88 Give me life according to Your mercy,

And I shall keep the testimonies of Your mouth.

89 Forever, O Lord,

Your word continues in heaven.

90 Your truth continues from generation to generation;

You laid the foundation of the earth, and it continues.

91 By Your arrangement each day continues,

For all things are Your servants.

92 If Your law were not my meditation,

I would have perished in my humiliation.

93 I will never forget Your ordinances,

For in them You give me life, O Lord.

94 I am Yours; save me,

For I search Your ordinances.

95 Sinners waited for me to kill me;

I understood Your testimonies.

96 I saw the limit of every accomplishment;

Your commandment is exceedingly broad.

97 How I love Your law, O Lord;

It is my meditation the whole day long.

98 You make me wiser than my enemies with Your commandment,

For it is mine forever.

99 I understand more than all my teachers,

For Your testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the elders,

For I search Your commandments.

101 I withheld my feet from every evil way,

That I might keep Your words.

102 I did not turn away from Your judgments,

For You taught me Your law.

103 How sweet to my taste are Your teachings,

More than honey and the honeycomb in my mouth.

104 I gained understanding because of Your commandments;

Therefore, I hate every unrighteous way.

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet

And a light to my paths.

106 I swore and confirmed

That I would keep the judgments of Your righteousness.

107 I was humbled exceedingly;

O Lord, give me life according to Your word.

108 Be well-pleased with the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord,

And teach me Your judgments.

109 My soul is always in Your hands,

And I have not forgotten Your law.

110 Sinners set snares for me,

But I did not wander from Your commandments.

111 I inherited Your testimonies forever,

For these are the exceeding joy of my heart.

112 I inclined my heart to do Your ordinances

Forever for a reward.

113 Transgressors I hate,

But I love Your law.

114 You are my helper and my protector;

I hope in Your word.

115 Turn away from me, you evildoers,

And I shall search out the commandments of my God.

116 Uphold me according to Your teaching, and give me life;

And may You not disappoint my expectation.

117 Help me, and I shall be saved;

And I shall meditate always in Your ordinances.

118 You set at naught all who departed from Your ordinances,

For their thought is unrighteous.

119 I counted as transgressors all the sinners of the earth;

For this reason I always love Your testimonies.

120 Nail my flesh with the fear of You,

For I fear You because of Your judgments.

121 I work judgment and righteousness;

Do not deliver me to those who wrong me.

122 Take Your servant to that which is good;

Do not let the arrogant falsely accuse me.

123 My eyes strained to look at Your salvation

And at the teaching of Your righteousness.

124 Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy

And teach me Your ordinances.

125 I am Your servant; cause me to understand,

And I shall know Your testimonies.

126 It is time for the Lord to act;

They broke Your law.

127 For this reason I love Your commandments

More than gold and topaz.

128 Therefore I directed myself to all Your commandments;

I hated every unrighteous way.

129 Wondrous are Your testimonies;

For this reason my soul searches them out.

130 The revelation of Your words gives light,

And it causes children to understand.

131 I opened my mouth and drew in my breath,

For I longed for Your commandments.

132 Look upon me and have mercy on me,

According to the judgment of those who love Your name.

133 Direct my steps according to Your teaching

And let no lawlessness rule over me.

134 Ransom me from the slander of men,

And I will keep Your commandments.

135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant

And teach me Your ordinances.

136 My eyes poured down streams of tears

Because they did not keep Your law.

137 Righteous are You, O Lord,

And upright is Your judgment.

138 You commanded Your testimonies exceedingly

In righteousness and truth.

139 The zeal of Your house caused me to yearn for home,

For my enemies forgot Your words.

140 Your teaching is exceedingly purified in fire,

And Your servant loves it.

141 I am young, and beheld as nothing,

But I have not forgotten Your ordinances.

142 Your righteousness is righteousness forever,

And Your law is truth.

143 Affliction and trouble found me,

But Your commandments are my meditation.

144 Your testimonies are righteousness forever;

Give me understanding, and I shall live.

145 I cry out with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord;

I shall search Your ordinances.

146 I cry out to You; save me,

And I shall keep Your testimonies.

147 I arose at midnight and cried out;

I hoped in Your words.

148 My eyes awoke before dawn

That I might meditate on Your teachings.

149 Hear my voice, O Lord, according to Your mercy;

Give me life according to Your judgment.

150 Those who persecute me in lawlessness drew near;

They are far removed from Your law.

151 You are near, O Lord;

All Your commandments are truth.

152 From the beginning I knew Your testimonies,

That You established them forever.

153 Behold my humiliation and deliver me,

For I have not forgotten Your law.

154 Plead my cause and redeem me;

Give me life because of Your word.

155 Salvation is far from sinners,

For they have not searched Your ordinances.

156 Your compassions are many, O Lord;

Give me life according to Your judgment.

157 Many are those who pursue and afflict me,

But I did not turn away from Your testimonies.

158 I saw those acting foolishly, and I yearned for You;

For they did not keep Your teachings.

159 Behold, I love Your commandments;

O Lord, in Your mercy, give me life.

160 The beginning of Your words is truth,

And all the judgments of Your righteousness are forever.

161 Rulers persecuted me without cause,

But my heart feared because of Your words.

162 I shall greatly rejoice in Your teachings,

Like one finding great spoil.

163 I hate and abhor unrighteousness,

But I love Your law.

164 I praise You seven times a day

For the judgments of Your righteousness.

165 Great peace have all who love Your law,

And it is not an offense to them.

166 I long for Your salvation, O Lord,

And I love Your commandments.

167 My soul keeps Your testimonies,

And I love them exceedingly.

168 I keep Your commandments and Your testimonies,

For all my ways are before You, O Lord.

169 Let my supplication draw near before You, O Lord;

Give me understanding according to Your teaching.

170 May my petition come before You;

Deliver me according to Your teaching.

171 My lips shall overflow in song

When You teach me Your ordinances.

172 My tongue shall speak of Your teaching,

For all Your commandments are righteousness.

173 Let Your hand be for saving me,

For I chose Your commandments.

174 I long for Your salvation, O Lord,

And Your law is my meditation.

175 My soul shall live and praise You,

And Your judgments shall help me.

176 I went astray like a lost sheep;

Seek Your servant, for I have not forgotten Your commandments.

Psalm 119 (120)

1 *An ode of ascents.*[†ω]

T o the Lord in my affliction

I cried out, and He heard me.

2 O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips

And from a deceitful tongue.

3 What should be given You, and what added to You,

Against a deceitful tongue?

[4] The arrows of the Mighty One are sharpened

With hot coals from the desert.

[5] Woe is me! My sojourning was prolonged;

I dwelt with the tents of Kedar.

[6] My soul sojourned a long time as a resident alien.

[7] With those who hate peace, I was peaceful;

When I spoke to them, they made war against me without cause.

Psalm 120 (121)

[1]*An ode of ascents.*

I lifted my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come?

[2] My help comes from the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth.

[3] Let not your foot be moved;

Neither let Him who keeps you slumber.

[4] Behold, He who keeps Israel

Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

[5] The Lord shall keep you;

The Lord is your shelter at your right hand.

[6] The sun shall not burn you by day

Nor the moon by night.

[7] The Lord shall keep you from all evil;

The Lord shall keep your soul.

[8] The Lord shall keep your coming in and your going out

From this present time and unto the ages.

Psalm 121 (122)

1*An ode of ascents.*

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.”

2 Our feet stand in your courts,

O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is built as a city

Whose compactness is complete.

4 There the tribes went up,

The tribes of the Lord, a testimony to Israel,

To give thanks to the name of the Lord.

5 For thrones sat there for judgment,

Thrones over the house of David.

6 Ask now for things regarding the peace of Jerusalem,

And there is prosperity for those who love you;

7 Let there now be peace in your power

And prosperity in your citadels.

8 For the sake of my brothers and my neighbors,

I indeed spoke peace concerning you;

9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,

I sought good things for you.

Psalm 122 (123)

1*An ode of ascents.*

I lift my eyes to You, Who dwell in heaven.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hands of their masters,

As the eyes of the maidservant look to the hands of her mistress,

So our eyes look to the Lord our God

Until He shall have compassion on us.

[3] Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us,

For we are greatly filled with contempt;

[4] Our soul is greatly filled with it.

We are a disgrace to those who prosper,

And a contempt to the arrogant.

Psalm 123 (124)

[1] *An ode of ascents.*

“If the Lord had not been with us,”

Let Israel now say,

[2] “If the Lord had not been with us,

When men rose up against us,

[3] Then they would have swallowed us alive,

When their anger raged against us,

[4] Then the water would have drowned us;

Our soul would have passed through a torrent,

[5] Then our soul would have passed through

A water that is overwhelming.”

[6] Blessed is the Lord,

Who did not give us as prey to their teeth.

[7] Our soul was delivered like a sparrow

From the snare of the hunters;

The snare was broken, and we were delivered.

[8] Our help is in the name of the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124 (125)

[1]*An ode of ascents.*

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion;
He who dwells in Jerusalem shall be unshaken forever.
[2] The mountains surround her,
And the Lord surrounds His people
From this present time and unto the ages.
[3] The Lord will not permit the rod of sinners
To be upon the inheritance of the righteous,
Lest the righteous stretch out
Their hands in lawlessness.
[4] Do good, O Lord, to the good,
And to the upright in heart;
[5] But those who turn aside to crooked ways,
The Lord shall lead away with the workers of lawlessness.
Peace be upon Israel.

Psalm 125 (126)

[1]*An ode of ascents.*

When the Lord returned the captives of Zion,
We became like those who are comforted.
[2] Then our mouth was filled with joy,
And our tongue with exceeding joy.
Then they shall say among the Gentiles,
“The Lord did great things with them.”
[3] The Lord has done great things with us;
We were glad.

[4] Return, O Lord, our captivity

Like streams in the south.

[5] Those who sow with tears

Shall reap with exceeding joy.

[6] They went forth and wept,

Carrying their seeds with them;

But they shall return with exceeding joy,

Carrying their sheaves.

Psalm 126 (127)

[1]*An ode of ascents; for Solomon.*

U nless the Lord builds the house,

Those who build it labor in vain;

Unless the Lord guard the city,

Those who guard it stay awake in vain.

[2] It is in vain for you to rise early,

To awaken from your rest,

You who eat the bread of grief,

When He gives His beloved ones sleep.

[3] Behold, children are the Lord's inheritance;

The fruit of the womb His reward.

[4] Like arrows in the hand of a mighty one,

So are the children of those who were outcasts.

[5] Blessed is the man who shall fulfill his desire with them;

They shall not be ashamed, when they speak to their enemies at the gate.

Psalm 127 (128)

1*An ode of ascents.*

B lessed are all who fear the Lord,

Who walk in His ways.

2 You shall eat the fruits of your labor;

You are blessed, and it shall be well with you.

3 Your wife shall be like a vine, prospering on the sides of your house;

Your children like newly planted olive trees

Around your table.

4 Behold, so shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.

5 May the Lord bless you from Zion,

And may you see the good things of Jerusalem

All the days of your life;

6 May you see your children's children.

Peace be upon Israel.

Psalm 128 (129)

1*An ode of ascents.*

“M any times they warred against me from my youth,”

Let Israel now say;

2 “Many times they warred against me from my youth,

Yet they did not overcome me.

3 The sinners schemed behind my back;

They prolonged their lawlessness.”

4 The righteous Lord cut in pieces the necks of sinners.

5 Let all who hate Zion

Be shamed and turned back.

[6] Let them become like grass on the housetops,

Which withers before it is plucked up;

[7] Like grass with which the reaper does not fill his hand,

Nor the gatherer of sheaves, his bosom;

[8] Neither do those who pass by say to them,

“The Lord's blessing be upon you;

In the Lord's name, we bless you.”

Psalm 129 (130)

[1] *An ode of ascents.*

O ut of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord;

[2] O Lord, hear my voice;

Let Your ears be attentive

To the voice of my supplication.

[3] If You, O Lord, should mark transgression,

O Lord, who would stand?

[4] For there is forgiveness with You.

[5] Because of Your law, O Lord, I waited for You;

My soul waited for Your word.

[6] My soul hopes in the Lord,

From the morning watch until night;

From the morning watch until night,

Let Israel hope in the Lord.

[7] For with the Lord there is mercy,

And with Him is abundant redemption;

[8] And He shall redeem Israel

From all his transgressions.

Psalm 130 (131)

[1]*An ode of ascents, by David.*

O Lord, My heart is not exalted, Neither are my eyes raised up;

Neither am I carried along in great things,

Nor in things too marvelous for me.

[2] If I were not humble-minded,

But exalted my soul,

Like a child weaned from his mother,

So You would reward my soul.

[3] Let Israel hope in the Lord

From this present time and unto the ages.

Psalm 131 (132)

[1]*An ode of ascents.*

R emember David, O Lord,

And all his meekness,

[2] How he swore to the Lord,

How he vowed to the God of Jacob,

[3] “I shall not enter my dwelling,

I shall not recline on my bed,

[4] I shall not close my eyes in sleep

Nor my eyelids for dozing,

Nor give any rest to my temples,

[5] Until I find a place for the Lord,

A tabernacle for the God of Jacob.”

[6] Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah;

We found it in the plains of the wood;

[7] Let us enter into His tabernacles;

Let us worship at the place where His feet stood.

[8] Arise, O Lord, into Your rest,

You and the ark of Your holiness;

[9] Your priests shall clothe themselves in righteousness;

Your saints shall greatly rejoice.

[10] For Your servant David's sake,

Do not turn away from the face of Your anointed.

[11] The Lord swore to David this truth, and He shall not reject it,

“I shall set upon your throne one from the fruit of your loins.

[12] If your sons keep My covenant

And these testimonies I shall teach them,

Then their sons shall sit upon your throne forever.”

[13] For the Lord has chosen Zion;

He chose her for His dwelling:

[14] “This is My place of rest unto ages of ages;

Here I shall dwell, for I have chosen her.

[15] Blessing, I shall bless her provision;

I shall satisfy her poor with bread;

[16] And I shall clothe her priests with salvation,

And her saints shall rejoice exceedingly with great joy;

[17] There I shall cause to spring up a horn for David;

There I prepared a lamp for my anointed;

[18] His enemies I shall clothe with shame;

Upon him shall My sanctification flourish.”

Psalm 132 (133)

[1]*An ode of ascents; by David.*

B ehold now, what is so good or so pleasant

As for brothers to dwell together in unity?

[2] It is like fragrant oil running down upon the beard,

The beard of Aaron,

Running down upon the border of his garment;

[3] It is like the dew of Hermon, running down upon the mountains of Zion;

For there the Lord commanded the blessing

And life forever.

Psalm 133 (134)

[1]*An ode of ascents.*

B ehold now, bless the Lord,

All you servants of the Lord,

Who stand in the house of the Lord,

In the courts of the house of our God.

[2] In the nights, lift up your hands to the holy of holies

And bless the Lord.

[3] May the Lord bless you from Zion,

He who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 134 (135)

[1]*Alleluia.*[†ω]

P raise the name of the Lord,

O you servants; praise the Lord,

[2] You who stand in the house of the Lord,

In the courts of the house of our God.

[3] Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good;

Sing to His name, for it is good;

[4] For the Lord chose Jacob for Himself,

Israel for His special treasure.

[5] For I know the Lord is great,

And our Lord is above all the gods.

[6] All things whatsoever the Lord willed, He did,

In heaven and on the earth,

In the seas and in all deep places,

[7] Bringing clouds from the furthest part of the earth;

He made lightning for the rain,

Bringing winds from His storehouses.

[8] He struck the firstborn of Egypt,

From man to cattle;

[9] He sent forth signs and wonders in your midst, O Egypt,

Among Pharaoh and all his servants.

[10] He struck many nations

And destroyed mighty kings,

[11] Sihon king of the Amorites,

And Og king of Bashan,

And all the kingdoms of Canaan;

[12] And He gave their land as an inheritance,

An inheritance for Israel His people.

[13] O Lord, Your name abides forever,

O Lord, Your memorial unto generation and generation.

[14] For the Lord will judge His people,

And He shall comfort His servants.

[15] The idols of the nations are silver and gold,

The works of men's hands;

[16] They have a mouth, but they shall not speak;

They have eyes, but they shall not see;

[17] They have ears, but they shall not hear;

They have noses, but they shall not smell;

They have hands, but they shall not feel;

They have feet, but they shall not walk;

They have no sound in their throat;

For neither is there breath in their mouth.

[18] May those who made them become like them,

And all who trust in them.

[19] O house of Israel, bless the Lord;

O house of Aaron, bless the Lord;

[20] O house of Levi, bless the Lord;

You who fear the Lord, bless the Lord.

[21] Blessed be the Lord out of Zion,

He who dwells in Jerusalem.

Psalm 135 (136)

[1]*Alleluia.*

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

For His mercy endures forever;

[2] Give thanks to the God of gods,

For His mercy endures forever;

[3] Give thanks to the Lord of lords,

For His mercy endures forever;

[4] To Him who alone does great wonders,

For His mercy endures forever;

[5] To Him who made the heavens with understanding,

For His mercy endures forever;

[6] To Him who made firm the earth on the waters,

For His mercy endures forever;

[7] To Him who alone made the great lights,

For His mercy endures forever,

[8] The sun for authority over the day,

For His mercy endures forever,

[9] The moon and stars for authority over the night,

For His mercy endures forever;

[10] To Him who struck down Egypt with their firstborn,

For His mercy endures forever;

[11] To Him who led Israel out of their midst,

For His mercy endures forever,

[12] With a strong hand and an upraised arm,

For His mercy endures forever;

[13] To Him who divided the Red Sea into parts,

For His mercy endures forever,

[14] And led Israel through the midst of it,

For His mercy endures forever,

[15] And who overthrew Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea,

For His mercy endures forever;

[16] To Him who led His people through the wilderness,

For His mercy endures forever;

To Him who drew water from the hard rock,

For His mercy endures forever;

17 To Him who struck down great kings,

For His mercy endures forever,

18 And killed mighty kings,

For His mercy endures forever,

19 Sihon king of the Amorites,

For His mercy endures forever,

20 And Og king of Bashan,

For His mercy endures forever,

21 And who gave their land as an inheritance,

For His mercy endures forever,

22 An inheritance for Israel His servant,

For His mercy endures forever.

23 For in our humiliation the Lord remembered us,

For His mercy endures forever;

24 And He redeemed us from our enemies,

For His mercy endures forever;

25 Who gave food to all flesh,

For His mercy endures forever.

26 Give thanks to the God of heaven,

For His mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to the Lord of lords,

For His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 136 (137)

1 *By David.*[†ω]

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat and wept
When we remembered Zion.
[2] Upon the willows in her midst,
We hung up our musical instruments;
[3] For there our captors asked us for words from our songs,
And those who carried us off said to us,
“Sing us the songs of Zion.”
[4] How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a foreign land?
[5] If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
May my right hand be forgotten;
[6] May my tongue be glued to my throat
If I do not remember you,
If I do not prefer Jerusalem
In the beginning of my merriment.
[7] O Lord, remember the sons of Edom
On that day in Jerusalem,
When they were saying, “Empty it out,
Empty it out,
Even to its foundation!”
[8] O wretched daughter of Babylon,
Blessed is he who shall deal with you
As you dealt with us;
[9] Blessed is he who shall get the upper hand
And dash your infants against the rock.

Psalm 137 (138)

1*By David.*[†ω]

I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with all my heart,

For You hear the words of my mouth;

And I shall sing to You in the presence of angels.

2 I shall bow down and worship toward Your holy temple,

And I will give thanks to Your name

For Your mercy and Your truth;

For You magnified Your teaching above every name.

3 On the day I shall call out to You, hear me speedily;

You shall treat my soul with great care in Your power.

4 O Lord, let all the kings of the earth give thanks to You,

For they heard all the words of Your mouth;

5 And let them sing in the ways of the Lord,

For the glory of the Lord is great;

6 For the Lord is high, and He watches over the lowly things;

But the high things He knows from afar.

7 If I walk in the midst of affliction, You shall make me live;

You stretched out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies,

And Your right hand saved me.

8 The Lord shall repay them on my behalf.

O Lord, Your mercy endures forever;

Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

Psalm 138 (139)

1*For the End; a psalm by David.*[††]

O Lord, You test me and know me;

[2]You know my sitting down and my rising up;

You understand my thoughts from afar;

[3] You search out my path and my portion,

And You foresee all my ways.

[4] For there is not a word on my tongue,

[5] But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether,

The last things and the first things;

You fashioned me, and placed Your hands on me.

[6] Your knowledge has become too wondrous for me;

It has become too overwhelming; I am unable to grasp it.

[7] Where could I go from Your Spirit,

Or flee from Your face?

[8] If I should ascend into heaven, You would be there;

If I should descend into Hades, You would be there;

[9] If I should take up my wings at dawn

And pitch camp at the furthest part of the sea,

[10] Even there Your hand would lead me,

And Your right hand would hold me.

[11] And I said, “Perhaps darkness shall cover me,”

But the night shall be light to my delight;

[12] For darkness shall not be dark because of You,

And the night shall be bright as day;

As its darkness, so also shall be its light.

[13] For You possess my heart, O Lord;

You took hold of me from my mother's womb.

[14] I will give thanks to You,

For I am fearfully and wondrously made;

Marvelous are Your works,

And my soul knows this very well.

15 My bone you made in secret was not hidden from You.

And my substance was in the lowest parts of the earth;

16 Your eyes saw me when I was unformed,

And all men shall be written in Your book;

They shall be formed day by day,

When as yet there were none among them.

17 Your friends, O God, became very honorable to me;

Their principalities became very strong;

18 I shall count them,

And they shall be multiplied more than the sand;

I awakened, and I am still with You.

19 If You should slay sinners, O God,

You would turn aside from me, O men of blood.

20 For You will say regarding their reasoning,

“They shall receive your cities in vain.”

21 Have I not hated those who hate You, O Lord?

And was I not wasting away because of Your enemies?

22 I hated them with perfect hatred;

They became my enemies.

23 Test me, O God, and know my heart;

Examine me, and know my paths,

24 And see if there is a lawless way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139 (140)

1 *For the End; a psalm by David.*[†ω]

D eliver me, O Lord, from the evil man,

Rescue me from the unjust man,

3 Who devised wrongdoing in their heart;

They arrayed themselves for war all day long;

4 They sharpened their tongue like a serpent;

The venom of asps was under their lips. (Pause)

5 Keep me, O Lord, from the hand of the sinner;

Deliver me from unjust men

Who plotted to trip up my steps;

6 The arrogant hid a trap for me,

And they stretched out ropes as snares for my feet;

They set a stumbling block for me near my path. (Pause)

7 I said to the Lord, “You are my God;

Give ear, O Lord, to the voice of my supplication.

8 O Lord, O Lord, the power of my salvation,

You overshadowed my head in the day of war.

9 Because of my desire, O Lord, do not hand me over to the sinner;

They plotted against me; do not forsake me, lest they be exalted. (Pause)

10 “As for the head of those who encircle me,

The toil of their lips shall cover them.

11 Coals shall fall upon them;

You shall overthrow them with fire;

Do not let them withstand hardships.”

12 A talkative man shall not prosper on earth;

Evils shall hunt the unjust man to destruction.

13 I know the Lord will maintain the cause of the poor man

And the justice of the needy.

[14] Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name,

And the upright shall dwell in Your presence.

Psalm 140 (141)

[1]*A psalm by David.*[†]

O Lord, I have cried to You; hear me; Give heed to the voice of my supplication when I cry to You.

[2] Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense,

The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

[3] Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth,

A door of enclosure about my lips.

[4] Incline not my heart to evil words,

To make excuses in sins

With men who work lawlessness;

And I will not join with their choice ones.

[5] The righteous man shall correct me

With mercy, and he shall reprove me;

But let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head,

For my prayer shall be intense in the presence of their pleasures.

[6] Their judges are swallowed up by the rock;

They shall hear my words, for they are pleasant.

[7] As a clod of ground is dashed to pieces on the earth,

So our bones were scattered beside the grave.

[8] For my eyes, O Lord, O Lord, are toward You;

In You I hope; take not my soul away.

[9] Keep me from the snares they set for me,

And from the stumbling blocks of those who work lawlessness.

[10] Sinners shall fall into their own net;

I am alone, until I escape.

Psalm 141 (142)

[1]*Understanding; by David, when he was in the cave; a prayer.*

I cried to the Lord with my voice, With my voice I prayed to the Lord.

[3] I shall pour out my supplication before Him;

I shall declare my affliction in His presence.

[4] When my spirit fainted within me,

Then You knew my paths;

For on the way I was going, they hid a trap for me.

[5] I looked on my right, and saw

There was no one who knew me;

Refuge failed me,

And there was no one who cared for my soul.

[6] I cried to You, O Lord;

I said, “You are my hope,

My portion in the land of the living.

[7] Attend to my supplication,

For I was humbled exceedingly;

Deliver me from my persecutors,

For they are stronger than I.

[8] Bring my soul out of prison

To give thanks to Your name, O Lord;

The righteous shall wait for me, until You reward me.”

Psalm 142 (143)

[1]*A psalm by David, when his son persecuted him.*[†ω]

O Lord, hear my prayer; Give ear to my supplication in Your truth;

Answer me in Your righteousness;

2 Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,

For no one living shall become righteous in Your sight.

3 For the enemy persecuted my soul;

He humbled my life to the ground;

He caused me to dwell in dark places as one long dead,

4 And my spirit was in anguish within me;

My heart was troubled within me.

5 I remembered the days of old,

And I meditated on all Your works;

I meditated on the works of Your hands.

6 I spread out my hands to You;

My soul thirsts for You like a waterless land. (Pause)

7 Hear me speedily, O Lord;

My spirit faints within me;

Turn not Your face from me,

Lest I become like those who go down into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear Your mercy in the morning,

For I hope in You;

Make me know, O Lord, the way wherein I should walk,

For I lift up my soul to You.

9 Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord,

For to You I flee for refuge.

10 Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God;

Your good Spirit shall guide me in the land of uprightness.

11 For Your name's sake, O Lord, give me life;

In Your righteousness You shall bring my soul out of affliction.

12 In Your mercy You shall destroy my enemies;

You shall utterly destroy all who afflict my soul,

For I am Your servant.

Psalm 143 (144)

1 *By David; against Goliath.*[†]

B lessed is the Lord my God,

Who trains my hands for battle,

My fingers for war;

2 He is my mercy and my refuge,

My helper and my deliverer,

My protector in whom I hope,

Who subjects my people under me.

3 O Lord, what is man, that You are made known to him,

Or the son of man, that You consider him?

4 Man is become like vanity,

His days like a passing shadow.

5 O Lord, bow down Your heavens and descend;

Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke;

6 Flash lightning, and You shall scatter them;

Shoot Your arrows, and You shall trouble them.

7 Send forth Your hand from on high;

Deliver me and save me from great waters,

From the hand of the sons of foreigners,

8 Whose mouth speaks empty things,

And their right hand is the right hand of wrongdoing.

[9] O God, I shall sing a new song to You;

I shall play to You on a harp of ten strings,

[10] To Him who gives salvation to kings,

Who redeems David His servant from the evil sword.

[11] Deliver me and save me from the hand of the sons of foreigners,

Whose mouth speaks empty things,

And their right hand is a right hand of wrongdoing,

[12] Whose sons are like new plants

Matured in their youth,

Their daughters beautified,

Adorned like a temple;

[13] Their storehouses are full,

Bursting forth with abundance on all sides;

Their sheep give many births,

Multiplying in their streets;

[14] Their oxen are fat;

There is no gap in their fence or passage,

Nor outcry in their streets.

[15] They call the people blessed, whose lot this is;

But rather, blessed is the people

Whose God is the Lord.

Psalm 144 (145)

[1] *A praise by David.*[†ω]

I shall exalt You, my God and my King, And I shall bless Your name forever and unto ages of ages.

[2] Every day I shall bless You

And praise Your name forever and unto ages of ages.

3 Great is the Lord and exceedingly praiseworthy,

And His greatness has no limit.

4 Generation and generation shall praise Your works,

And they shall declare Your power.

5 They shall speak of the magnificence of the glory of Your holiness,

And they shall describe Your wonders.

6 They shall also speak of the power of Your awesome deeds

And describe Your great majesty.

7 They shall overflow with the memory of Your rich goodness,

And shall greatly rejoice in Your righteousness.

8 The Lord is gracious and merciful,

Longsuffering and abundant in mercy.

9 The Lord is good to all,

And His mercies are upon all His works.

10 O Lord, let all Your works praise You

And Your holy ones bless You.

11 They shall tell of Your kingdom's glory,

And they shall speak of Your power,

12 That all the sons of men may know Your power

And the glory of Your kingdom's magnificence.

13 Your kingdom is a kingdom of all the ages,

And Your dominion is from generation to generation.

The Lord is faithful in His words

And holy in all His works.

14 The Lord supports all who stumble

And restores all who are broken down.

15 All eyes hope in You,

And You give them their food in due season.

16 You open Your hand

And fill every living thing with Your pleasure.

17 The Lord is righteous in all His ways

And holy in all His works.

18 The Lord is near to all who call on Him,

To all who call upon Him in truth.

19 He shall do the will of those who fear Him,

And He shall hear their supplications and save them.

20 The Lord keeps all who love Him,

But all the sinners He shall utterly destroy.

21 My mouth shall speak the Lord's praise,

And let all flesh bless His holy name

Forever and unto ages of ages.

Psalm 145 (146)

1 *Alleluia; of Aggeus and Zacharias.*[†ω]

P raise the Lord, O my soul.

2 I shall praise the Lord while I live;

I shall sing to my God as long as I exist.

3 Do not trust in rulers and in the sons of men,

In whom there is no salvation.

4 His breath shall go out of him, and he shall return to his earth;

On that day all his thoughts shall perish.

5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob;

His hope is in the Lord his God,

6 Who made heaven and earth,

The sea and everything in them,

Who keeps truth forever,

[7] Who executes justice for the wronged,

Who provides food for the hungry.

The Lord frees those bound.

[8] The Lord restores those broken down.

The Lord gives wisdom to the blind.

The Lord loves the righteous.

[9] The Lord keeps watch over resident aliens.

He shall adopt the orphan and the widow,

But He shall destroy the way of sinners.

[10] The Lord shall reign forever:

Your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Psalm 146 (147:1–11)

[1] *Alleluia; of Aggeus and Zacharias.*[†]

P raise the Lord, for a psalm is a good thing;

Let praise be sweet to our God.

[2] The Lord is building Jerusalem,

And He shall gather together the dispersion of Israel;

[3] He heals the brokenhearted

And He binds up all their wounds.

[4] He numbers the multitude of stars

And calls them all by name.

[5] Great is our Lord, and great is His strength;

His understanding exceeds every measure.

[6] The Lord raises up the gentle,

But humbles sinners to the ground.

[7] Begin with thanksgiving to the Lord;

Sing to our God with the harp,

[8] To Him who covers heaven with clouds,

Who prepares rain for the earth,

Who makes grass grow on the mountains

And the green growth for the service of men,

[9] To Him who gives the cattle their food

And who gives food to the nestlings of ravens

When they call upon Him.

[10] He shall not take pleasure in the strength of a horse,

Nor be pleased with the legs of a man;

[11] The Lord is pleased with those who fear Him,

And with those who hope in His mercy.

Psalm 147 (147:12–20)

[1]*Alleluia; of Aggeus and Zacharias.*[†]

P raise the Lord, O Jerusalem;

Praise your God, O Zion,

[2] For He strengthens the bars of your gates;

He blesses your children within you;

[3] He who grants your borders peace,

And fills you with the finest of wheat;

[4] He who sends His teaching to earth

Until His word shall run swiftly,

[5] Giving snow like wool,

Sprinkling mist like ashes,

[6] Casting His ice like morsels;

Who shall withstand His winter?

[7] He shall send His word and melt them;

His wind shall blow, and the waters shall flow,

[8] He who declares His word to Jacob,

His ordinances and judgments to Israel.

[9] He did not do so with other nations,

Nor did He show His judgments to them.

Psalm 148

[1]*Alleluia; of Aggeus and Zacharias.*[†ω]

P raise the Lord from the heavens;

Praise Him in the highest.

[2] Praise Him, all you His angels;

Praise Him, all you His hosts.

[3] Praise Him, sun and moon;

Praise Him, all you stars and light.

[4] Praise Him, you heavens of heavens,

And you waters above the heavens.

[5] Let them praise the Lord's name,

For He spoke, and they were made;

He commanded, and they were created.

[6] He established them forever and unto ages of ages;

He set forth His ordinance, and it shall not pass away.

[7] Praise the Lord from the earth,

You dragons and all the deeps,

[8] Fire and hail, snow and ice,

Stormy wind, which perform His word,

9 Mountains and all the hills,

Fruitful trees and all cedars,

10 Wild animals and all cattle,

Creeping things and flying birds,

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,

Princes and all judges of the earth,

12 Young men and maidens,

Elders with younger,

13 Let them praise the Lord's name,

For His name alone is exalted;

His thanksgiving is in earth and heaven.

14 And He shall exalt the horn of His people,

A hymn for all His saints,

For the children of Israel, a people who draw near to Him.

Psalm 149

1 *Alleluia.*

S ing to the Lord a new song,

His praise in the assembly of His holy ones.

2 Let Israel be glad in Him who made him,

And let the children of Zion greatly rejoice in their King.

3 Let them praise His name with dance;

With tambourine and harp let them sing to Him;

4 For the Lord is pleased with His people,

And He shall exalt the gentle with salvation.

5 The holy ones shall boast in glory,

And they shall greatly rejoice on their beds;

[6] The high praise of God shall be in their mouth

And a two-edged sword in their hand,

[7] To deal retribution to the nations,

Reproving among the peoples,

[8] To shackle their kings with chains

And their nobles with fetters of iron,

[9] To fulfill among them the written judgment:

This glory have all His holy ones.

Psalm 150

[1]*Alleluia.*

P raise God in His saints;

Praise Him in the firmament of His power;

[2] Praise Him for His mighty acts;

Praise Him according to the abundance of His greatness.

[3] Praise Him with the sound of a trumpet;

Praise Him with the harp and lyre;

[4] Praise Him with timbrel and dance;

Praise Him with strings and flute;

[5] Praise Him with resounding cymbals;

Praise Him with triumphant cymbals;

[6] Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.

Alleluia.

Psalm 151

[1]*This is a psalm written with David's own hand, although outside the number, when he fought in single combat with Goliath.*[†]

I was small among my brothers And the youngest in my father's house;
I tended my father's sheep.
[2] My hands built a musical instrument;
My fingers tuned a lyre.
[3] And who shall tell my Lord?
The Lord Himself, He Himself hears.
[4] He sent forth His Angel
And took me from my father's sheep;
And he anointed me with his anointing oil.
[5] My brothers were handsome and tall,
But the Lord took no pleasure in them.
[6] I went out to meet the foreigner,
And he cursed me with his idols;
[7] But I drew his own sword and beheaded him,
And removed disgrace from the children of Israel.

JOB

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The Book of Job

Author—An unknown and gifted ancient who had inspiration and knowledge that only God could reveal to him. The authorship is attributed to an Israelite because of the repeated use of God's covenant name: YHWH. As transliterated from the Hebrew, it is commonly rendered, “Yahweh.”

Date—There is some evidence that the life of Job was much earlier than the actual writing of the book. He is thought to have lived during the time of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—approximately 1600 BC.

Major Theme—*The justice of God in light of human suffering.* The major theme of the Book of Job is the profound theological problem of how the suffering of a just man relates to God in the midst of his testing. The theme of theodicy is explored throughout the book, with Job's friends attempting to provide the explanation for his suffering. The character of Job is a type of Christ who suffers unjustly and is rewarded for his godliness.

Background—Although this book is considered a Wisdom book, it is written as a poetic dialogue in a prose-narrative literary style. It is the longest ancient Hebrew poem that has ever been known to be composed. There was much difficulty throughout history with the various translations of this book because of the unusual language and style.

The Septuagint (Greek) translation is four hundred lines shorter than the accepted Hebrew text, perhaps because sections were omitted that were not understood. The ancient Syriac (Peshitta), Aramaic (Targum), and Latin (Vulgate) had similar translation difficulties.

In the Church, Job's words have been given a unique place at the end of the Divine Liturgy: “Blessed be the name of the Lord” (1:21).

Outline

- I. Prologue (1:1–2:18)
    - A. Job's blessings (1:1–5)
    - B. Job's testing (1:6–2:18)
- II. The Dialogues and Speeches (3:1–27:23)
    - A. Job's lament (3:1–26)
    - B. First cycle of speeches (4:1–14:22)
    - C. Second cycle of speeches (15:1–21:34)
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- III. Interlude on Wisdom (28:1–28)
- IV. Monologues (29:1–42:6)
    - A. Job's cry for vindication (29:1–31:40)
    - B. Elihu's speeches (32:1–37:24)
    - C. Discourses between God and Job (38:1–42:6)
- V. Epilogue (42:7–22)
    - A. God's verdict (42:7–9)
    - B. Job's restoration (42:10–22)

Faithful Job and His Children

1 There was a man in the land of Ausitis whose name was Job. That man was true, blameless, righteous, and God-fearing, and he abstained from every evil thing.[†ω] [2]Now he had seven sons and three daughters, [3]and his cattle consisted of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys in the pastures. Moreover he possessed a very large number of house servants. His works were also great on the earth, and that man was the most noble of all the men of the East.

[4]His sons would visit one another and prepare a banquet every day, and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. [5]When the days of their drinking were ended, Job sent and purified them; and he rose early in the morning and offered sacrifices for them according to their number, as well as one calf for the sins of their souls. For Job said, “Lest my sons consider evil things in their mind against God.” Therefore Job did this continually.

Satan Is Permitted to Test Job

[6]Then as it so happened one day that behold, the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the devil also came with them.[†] [7]The Lord said to the devil, “Where did you come from?” So the devil answered the Lord and said, “I came here after going about the earth and walking around under heaven.”[†] [8]Then the Lord said to him, “Have you yet considered my servant Job, since there is none like him on the earth: a blameless, true, and God-fearing man, and one who abstains from every evil thing?” [9]So the devil answered and said before the Lord, “Does Job worship the Lord for no reason? [10]Have You not made a hedge around him,

around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his cattle have increased in the land.[†]
[11]But stretch out Your hand and touch all he has, and see if he will bless You to Your face.” [12]Then the Lord said to the devil, “Behold, whatever he has I give into your hand; but do not touch him.” Thus the devil went out from the Lord.

Job Loses His Children and Property

[13]Now there was a day when Job's sons and daughters were drinking wine in the house of their elder brother,[†ω] [14]and behold, a messenger came to Job and said, “The yokes of oxen were plowing, and the female donkeys were feeding beside them. [15]Then raiders came and took them captive and killed the servants with the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!” [16]While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said to Job, “Fire fell from heaven and burned up the sheep, and likewise consumed the shepherds; and I alone have escaped to tell you!” [17]While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “Horsemen formed three bands against us, surrounded the camels, took them captive, and killed the servants with the sword. I alone have escaped to tell you!” [18]While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine with their elder brother, [19]and suddenly a great wind came from the desert and struck the four corners of the house; and it fell on your children, and they died; and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

[20]Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved off the hair of his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped, saying,[†] [21]“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. As it seemed good to the Lord, so also it came to pass. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

[22]In all these things that happened, Job did not sin against the Lord or charge God with folly.[†]

Job Loses His Health

2 Then again as it so happened another day, the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the devil also came among them to present himself before the Lord.[ω] [2]The Lord said to the devil, “Where did you come from?” Then the devil said before the Lord, “I came here from walking around under heaven and going about all the earth.”[†] [3]Then the Lord said to the devil, “Have you considered my servant Job, since there is none like him on the earth: an innocent, true, blameless, and God-fearing man, and one who abstains from every evil thing? Moreover he still holds fast to his integrity, though you told me to destroy his possessions without cause.”

[4]Then the devil answered the Lord and said, “Skin for skin. Whatever a man has he will pay in full for his life.[†] [5]Yet truly, stretch out Your hand and touch his bones and his flesh, and see if he will bless You to Your face.” [6]So the Lord said to the devil, “Behold, I give him over to you; only spare his life.” [7]Thus the devil went out from the Lord and struck Job with

malignant sores from head to foot.[†] [8]So he took a potsherd to scrape away the discharge and sat on a dunghill outside the city.[†]

[9]When a period of time passed, his wife said to him, “How long will you hold out, saying,[†] [10]‘Behold, I will wait a little longer, looking for the hope of my salvation’? [11]Listen, your memory is wiped out from the earth: your sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb, which I suffered in vain and with hardships. [12]You yourself are sitting down, spending the nights in the open air among the rottenness of worms; [13]and I go about as a wanderer and a handmaid from place to place and from house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, so as to rest from my labors and pains that now beset me. [14]But say a word against the Lord and die!” [15]Then Job looked at her and said, “You have spoken as one of the foolish women speaks. If we accepted good things from the Lord's hand, shall we not endure evil things?” In all these things that happened to him, Job did not sin with his lips against God.[†]

Job's Friends Visit Him

[16]Now when Job's three friends heard of all the evil things that had come upon him, each one came to him from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite king, Bildad the Shuhite ruler, and Zophar the Naamathite king. For they came to him with one accord: to visit and comfort him.[†] [17]Now when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him; and they cried with a loud voice and wept. Each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head. [18]So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights,

and no one spoke to him, for they saw that his affliction was terrible and very great.

Job Curses His Day of Birth

3 After this, Job opened his mouth[†] [2] and cursed his day, saying:

[3] “May the day perish on which I was born,

And the night in which they said, ‘Behold, a male child.’

[4] May that day be darkness,

And may the Lord not regard it from above;

Nor may the light come upon it.

[5] May darkness and the shadow of death seize it;

May a cloud settle on it.

[6] May that day and night be cursed;

May darkness carry it away;

May it not come into the days of the year;

May it not be numbered with the days of the month.

[7] But may that night be sorrow,

And may no gladness come upon it, nor joy.

[8] But may he who curses that day curse it,

Even he who is about to subdue the great sea-monster.[†]

[9] May the stars of that night be darkened,

And may it remain dark.

May it not come into the light,

And may it not see the morning star arise;

[10] Because it did not shut up the doors of my mother's womb,

For it would have removed sorrow from my eyes.

[11] Why did I not die in the womb?

Why did I not perish immediately when I came from the womb?

[12] Why did the knees receive me,

And why did I nurse the breasts?

[13] For now I would have been lying down and quiet;

I would have slept and been at rest

[14] With kings and counselors of the earth

Who were insolent with their swords,

[15] Or with rulers who had abundant gold

And filled their houses with silver;

[16] Or I would have been like an untimely birth

Proceeding from his mother's womb,

Or like infants who never saw the light.

[17] There the ungodly have burnt out the fury of wrath;

There the weary in body are at rest.

[18] There men of ancient times have ceased together

To hear the voice of those who collect taxes.

[19] The small and great are there,

And the servant who feared his master.

[20] Why is light given to those in bitterness,

And life to souls in pain,[†]

[21] Who long for death, but do not obtain it,

Digging for it like treasures,[†]

[22] And would be very joyful if they could obtain it?

[23] Death is a rest to such a man,

For God is against him.

[24] For groaning comes before my food;

And I weep and am oppressed with terror.

25 For the terror I was concerned about came to me,

And what I feared happened to me;

26 Neither was I at peace or quiet, nor at rest,

For wrath came upon me.”

Eliphaz Accuses Job

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 “Have you been often spoken to in distress?

But now who shall endure the force of your words?

3 For though you instructed many,

And strengthened the hands of the weak one,[†]

4 And raised up the sick with your words,

And imparted courage to feeble knees,

5 Yet now pain has come upon you and touched you;

And you are anxious.

6 Is not your fear, your hope,

And the integrity of your way of life changed into folly?

7 Can you remember anyone pure who has perished,

Or true people who were altogether uprooted?[†]

8 According to what I have seen,

those who plow harmful things and those who sow them

Will reap pain for themselves.

9 They will perish by the command of the Lord,

And they will be destroyed by the breath of His wrath.

10 The strength of the lion, the voice of the lioness,

And the exulting cry of dragons are extinguished.

11 The old lion has perished for lack of prey,

And the cubs of the lioness have left one another.

12 “But if there had been any truth in your words,

None of these evils would have befallen you.

Shall not my ear receive extraordinary things from him?

13 But just as when terror falls upon men

With dread at a noise in the night,[†]

14 Shivering and trembling befell me

And caused my bones to shake.

15 Then a spirit came before my face,

And my hair and flesh shook with fear.

16 I arose, but could not recognize it.

I looked, and there was no form before my eyes,

But rather a gentle breeze, and a voice, saying,

17 ‘What? Shall a mortal man be pure in the Lord's sight,

Or blameless before Him in his works?

18 If He puts no trust in His servants,

And if He observes a perverse way in His angels,

19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,

Of whom we also are formed of the same clay?

Does not He smite them like a moth?

20 They no longer exist from morning till evening;

They have perished, for they cannot help themselves.

21 For He blows upon them, and they are withered.

They have perished for lack of wisdom.’

Blessed Is He Whom God Has Reproved

5 “But call out, if there is anyone who will obey you,

Or if you shall see any of the holy angels.[†]

[2] For wrath destroys a foolish man,

And envy slays one who is deceived.

[3] I have seen foolish people taking root,

But suddenly their mode of life consumed them.

[4] May their children be far from salvation,

May they be derided at the gates of worse people,

And may there be no one to deliver them.

[5] For the righteous will eat what they have gathered,

But they themselves will not be delivered from calamities.

Their strength will be exhausted.

[6] For trouble does not come from the earth,

Nor does suffering spring from the mountains;

[7] Yet man is born for trouble

As the young bird is born to fly to high places.

[8] But surely as for me, I will beseech the Lord,

And call upon the Lord and Master of all,

[9] Who does great, incomprehensible,

And marvelous things without number.

[10] He causes rain on the earth

And sends water on all the places under the heaven.

[11] He sets the lowly on high

And raises up the lost.

[12] He frustrates the counsels of the crafty

So their hands cannot carry out their plans.

[13] He catches the wise in their craftiness

And subverts the counsel of the cunning.

14 Let them encounter darkness in the daytime,

And may they grope at noontime as though it were night.

15 May they perish in war,

But may the weak escape from the hand of the mighty.

16 May the weak have hope,

And may the mouth of the unrighteous be stopped.

17 “But blessed is the man whom God corrects;

Therefore, do not reject the chastening of the Almighty.

18 For He causes a man to be in pain,

But He restores him again.

He smites, but His hands heal.

19 Six times He shall deliver you out of troubles,

And in seven no harm shall touch you.

20 In famine He shall deliver you from death,

And in war He shall free you from the power of the sword.

21 He shall hide you from the scourge of the tongue,

And you shall not be afraid of evils when they come.

22 You shall laugh at the unrighteous and the lawless,

And you shall not be afraid of the wild animals of the earth.

23 For the wild animals of the field shall be at peace with you.

24 Then you shall know your house will be at peace with you;

And in your dwelling place there shall be nothing amiss.

25 You shall also know your seed shall be many,

And your children shall be like the grass of the earth.

26 You shall come to the grave as grain reaped in its season,

Or as a heap of threshed wheat harvested at the proper time.

27 Behold, we have searched this out;

This is what we have heard.

Know for yourself if you have done anything wrong.”

Mercy Has Rejected Me

6 But Job answered and said:

[2] “I wish there were someone who would weigh the wrath upon me,

And at the same time lift up my griefs on a scale.[†]

[3] For indeed they would be heavier than the sand of the seashore;

But as it seems, my words are worthless.

[4] For the arrows of the Lord are in my body,

Whose anger drinks my blood;

For when I begin to speak, they pierce me.

[5] What then? Will the wild donkey bray for no reason

If he is not seeking food?

Or will the ox moo at the manger when it has fodder?[†]

[6] Will bread be eaten without salt?

Or is there any taste in empty words?

[7] My soul cannot stop groaning,

For I see my food to be like the smell of a lion.

[8] “Would that my request would come about,

And the Lord would grant my hope.

[9] Let the Lord begin and wound me,

But let Him not utterly destroy me.

[10] May the grave be my city upon the walls which I have leaped.

I will not turn away from it,

For I have not lied about the holy words of my God.[†]

[11] What strength do I have, that I should continue?

For how long would my soul endure?[†]
12 Is my strength the strength of stones?
Or is my flesh made of bronze?
13 Or have I not trusted in Him?
But help is far from me.
14 “Mercy has rejected me;
And the visitation of the Lord has disregarded me.
15 My relatives pay no attention to me.
They pass me by like a wave,
Or as though I were a failing brook.
16 Those who once reverenced me
Now look upon me like snow or frozen ice.
17 For when it melts at the approach of the heat,
It is no longer recognized for what it was.
18 Thus I have been forsaken by all,
But I am also lost and homeless.[†]
19 Look at the ways of Temanites,
You who mark the paths of Sabeans.
20 Those who put their trust in cities and wealth
Will be debtors to shame.
21 But you have also come to me without mercy,
That seeing my wound you were afraid.
22 What? Have I ever made any demand of you?
Or do I need your strength
23 To deliver me from enemies,
Or to rescue me from the hand of the mighty?
24 “Teach me, and I will keep quiet.

Tell me wherein I have erred.

25 But as it seems, the words of a true man are worthless,

For I do not ask strength of you.

26 Neither will your rebuke cause me to cease my words,

Nor will I endure the sound of your word.

27 Nevertheless you attack the orphan,

And you jump on your friend.

28 Now therefore, after I looked on your faces, I will not lie.

29 Sit down now, and may there be no wrongdoing;

And come together again with a righteous man.

30 There is no wrongdoing on my tongue,

Or does not my throat cultivate understanding?

My Life Is Vain

7 “Is not the life of a man on earth an ordeal?

Is not his life also like the life of a hired man working by the day,

2 Or like a servant who fears his master,

Or like one who grasps for a shadow,

Or like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages?

3 So I have been enduring months of futility,

And agonizing nights have been appointed for me.

4 When I lie down, I say, ‘When will it be day?’

When I arise, I say, ‘When will it be evening?’

I am full of pains from evening to morning.

5 My body is covered with loathsome worms,

And I am wasting away

As I scrape off clods of dust from my eruption.

6 “My life is lighter than speech

And perishes with an empty hope.

[7] Remember then, my life is a breath,

And my eye will no longer return to see good.

[8] The eye of him who sees me will not see me again;

Your eyes are on me, I am no more.[†]

[9] I am like the cloud that cleared away from the sky,

For if a man goes down to Hades, he shall not come up again.

[10] He shall not return to his own house,

Nor shall his place know him anymore.

[11] “Now then, neither will I restrain my mouth.

I will speak by necessity,

Because I will disclose the bitterness of my soul

When I am oppressed.[†]

[12] Am I a sea, or a serpent,

That You set a guard over me?[†]

[13] I said, ‘My bed will comfort me,

And on my couch I will counsel privately with myself.’

[14] You scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions.

[15] You will separate life from my spirit,

Yet keep my bones from death.

[16] For I will not live forever, that I should patiently endure.

Let me alone, for my life is vain.

[17] “What is man, that You should exalt him,

Or that You should set Your heart on him,

[18] Or that You should visit him every morning

And judge him till the time of rest?

[19] How long will You neither let me alone,

Nor let me go until I swallow my saliva in grief?

20 If I have sinned, what can I do to You,

O You who understand the heart of men?

Why have You set me as Your accuser?

Why am I a burden to You?[†]

21 Why then have You not forgotten my lawlessness

And purged my sin?

But now I will depart into the earth,

And in the morning I will no longer be here.”

Bildad: The Ungodly Will Perish

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:[†]

2 “How long will you speak these things,

And the breath of your mouth be filled with words?

3 Will the Lord do wrong when He judges,

Or will He who made all things trouble righteousness?

4 If your sons sinned against Him,

He sent them away because of their lawlessness.

5 But come early in the morning

And make your supplication to the Lord Almighty.

6 If you are pure and true, He will hear your supplication

And restore to you the dwelling of the righteous.

7 Though your beginning shall be small,

Your latter end will be abundantly great.

8 For inquire about the former generation

And search among the race of our fathers;

9 For we are of yesterday and know nothing,

Because our life on earth is a shadow.

10 Will they not teach you and proclaim to you,

And bring forth words from their heart?

11 “Can the papyrus bloom without water,

Or can the reeds flourish without moisture?[†]

12 While it is still on the root and not yet harvested,

Does not any vegetation wither before it receives moisture?

13 So shall be the end of all who forget the Lord,

For the hope of the ungodly shall perish.

14 For his house shall be without inhabitants,

And his tent shall turn out to be a spider's web.

15 If he props up his house, it will not stand,

And when he takes hold of it, it will not endure.

16 For it is moist under the sun,

And his branch shall come forth out of his rottenness.

17 He shall lie down upon a pile of rocks

And shall live in the midst of flints.

18 If he is swallowed up, his place shall deny him.

You have not seen such things,

19 “That such is the destruction of the ungodly,

And out of the earth another will grow up again.

20 For the Lord will not cast off the innocent,

Nor will He accept any gift of an ungodly man.

21 He will fill the mouth of the true with laughter

And their lips with thanksgiving.

22 But their enemies will be clothed with shame,

And the dwelling of an ungodly man will be no more.”

Job Has No Mediator

9 Then Job answered and said:

2 "I know that is true,

But how can a mortal man be righteous before the Lord?[†]

3 If he should wish to enter into judgment with Him,

The Lord would not listen to him,

For he could not answer to one out of a thousand of His charges.

4 He is wise in mind and mighty and great.

Who has hardened himself against Him and endured?

5 He who makes the mountains old, and men do not know it;

He who overturns them in His wrath;[†]

6 He who shakes the earth under heaven from its foundations,

And its pillars tremble;

7 He who commands the sun, and it does not rise;

He who seals off the stars;

8 He who alone stretches out heaven;

He who walks on the sea as on firm ground;[†]

9 He who makes Pleiades, Hesperus, and Arcturus,

And the chambers of the south;[†]

10 He who does great and unsearchable things,

Glorious and marvelous things without number.

11 If He goes beyond me, I do not see Him;

If He passes by me, I do not perceive Him;

12 If He takes away, who can turn Him back?

Who can say to Him, 'What have You done?'

13 For if He turns away His wrath,

The great sea creatures under heaven lie prostrate beneath Him.

14 “Would then that He would hear me, or judge my words.

15 For though I be righteous, He will not listen to me.

I will entreat His judgment.[†]

16 If I should call, and He hears me,

I would not believe He is listening to me.

17 Let Him not destroy me with darkness,

But He has caused my great destruction to no purpose.

18 For He will not allow me to draw breath,

But has filled me with bitterness.

19 For if He is strong in power,

Who then can resist His judgment?

20 For though I were righteous, my mouth will be impious;

And though I were blameless, I will be perverse.

21 “If I am ungodly, I do not know it in my soul,

But my life is taken away.

22 Therefore I said, ‘Wrath destroys the great and the mighty.’

23 The wrongdoers die violently,

But the righteous are laughed to scorn.

24 For they are delivered into the hands of the ungodly man.

He covers the faces of the judges of the earth.

If it is not He, who else could it be?

25 “Now my life passes swifter than a runner;

My days have fled away, and they do not see it.

26 Do the ships leave a mark of their path?

Or does a flying eagle leave a trace of its soaring as it seeks its prey?

27 If I say, ‘I will forget to speak,’

I will bow down my face and groan.

[28] I shake with fear in all my limbs;

I know You will not leave me as innocent.

[29] But since I am ungodly, why have I not died?

[30] If I should wash myself with snow

And cleanse myself with pure hands,

[31] You have fully immersed me in filth,

And my garment detests me.

[32] “For You are not a man, as I am,

With whom I could contend,

That we should go to judgment together.

[33] Would that we had a mediator who would cross-examine

And hear the case between us.

[34] Let Him remove the rod from me,

And do not let the fear of Him distress me.

[35] Then I will not be afraid, but will speak,

For I am not conscious of any guilt.

Lord, Why Have You Judged Me?

10 “Since I am weary and groaning in my soul,

I will let loose my words to Him.

Because I am distressed,

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.[†]

[2] I will say to the Lord, ‘Do not teach me to be ungodly.

Why have You thus judged me?

[3] Is it good before You if I do wrong,

And that You renounce the work of Your hands,

And give heed to the counsel of the ungodly?

[4] Do You see as the mortal sees?

Do You see as man sees?

[5] Is Your life human life?

Are Your years like the years of a man,

[6] That You examined my lawlessness

And searched out my sins?

[7] You know I have not acted impiously,

But who is he who can deliver from Your hands?

[8] ‘Your hands fashioned and made me;

Then You changed Your mind and struck me.[†]

[9] Remember that You fashioned me as clay,

But You are turning me back to earth again.[†]

[10] Did You not squeeze me out like milk

And curdle me like cheese?

[11] You clothed me with skin and flesh,

And knit me together with bones and sinews.

[12] You granted me life and mercy,

And Your visitation has guarded my spirit.

[13] ‘Since You have these things in Yourself,

I know You are able to do all things;

For nothing is impossible for You.

[14] For if I sin, You watch me;

And because of my lawlessness

You will not consider me innocent.

[15] For if I am ungodly, woe to me,

And if I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head;

For I am full of dishonor.

16 I am trapped like a lion for slaughter;

For again You have changed, and You are destroying me.

17 You renewed my affliction upon me,

And dealt with me in great wrath;

For You brought severe ordeals upon me.

18 ‘Why then did You bring me out of the womb?

Why did I not die, and no eye see me?

19 Why have I become as though I had not been?

For why was I not carried from the womb to the grave?

20 Is not the time of my life short?

Allow me to rest a little[†]

21 Before I go to the place from which I shall not return,

To an obscure and dark land,

22 To a land of eternal darkness, where there is no light,

Neither can any one see the life of mortals.’ ”[†]

Job Rebuked by Zophar

11 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:[†]

2 “He who speaks much should also listen in turn,

Or does the fluent speaker think himself to be righteous?

Blessed is the short-lived offspring of a woman.

3 Do not be wordy in your speech,

For there is no one to reply to you.

4 Do not say, ‘I am pure in my works

And blameless before Him.’

5 But how does the Lord speak to you?

He will open His lips against you.

[6] Then He will declare to you the power of wisdom,

For it shall be double in your case.

At that time you will know a worthy recompense

Has come to you from the Lord because of your sins.

[7] Will you find the traces of the Lord?

Have you reached the outer extremities

Of what the Almighty has made?

[8] Heaven is high, and what will you do?

And what do you know,

For there are even deeper things in Hades?

[9] Do you know those dimensions

That are longer than the earth and broader than the sea?

[10] If He should overthrow everything,

Who then will say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

[11] For He knows the works of the lawless;

And when He sees wrongs, He shall not overlook them.

[12] But man vainly swims in words,

And a mortal born of a woman is equal to a donkey in the desert.

[13] If you have made your heart pure

And stretch out your hands toward Him,

[14] If something lawless is done by your hands,

Put it far away from you;

And do not let any wrongdoing lodge in your dwelling.

[15] For in this way, your face will shine forth like pure water,

For you will cleanse away the filth. You will not fear.

[16] Then you will forget this hardship

Like a wave that has passed away;

And you will not be terrified.

[17] Your prayer will be like the morning star.

At midday, life will rise to you.

[18] You will be confident because you have hope;

And peace shall bring light to you out of anxiety and care.

[19] You will also be at rest,

And there will be no one to fight against you.

Many will change their mind about you and supplicate you.

[20] But salvation will forsake them, for their hope will be lost,

And the eyes of the ungodly will melt away.”

Job Chides His Critics

12 Then Job answered and said:

[2] “Moreover you are men.

Surely wisdom will die with you?

[3] But I also have a heart as well as you.

[4] “A righteous and blameless man

Has become an object of mockery.

[5] For it had been ordained that he should fall

Under the power of others at the appointed time,

And his houses should be plundered by the lawless.[†]

[6] Let not, however, any one be persuaded

That, if he is evil, he will be held innocent.

Let not those who provoke the Lord

Be persuaded there will be no trial for them.

[7] “But now ask the four-footed animals if they may speak to you,

And the birds of the air if they may report it to you.

[8] Tell the earth if it may interpret it to you,

And the fish of the sea will explain to you.

[9] Who among all these does not know

The hand of the Lord created them,

[10] That in His hand is the life of every living thing,

And the breath of every man?

[11] For indeed, the ear discerns words,

And the palate tastes wheat.

[12] In length of time is wisdom,

And in long life, knowledge.

[13] “With Him are wisdom and power;

With Him are counsel and understanding.

[14] If He tears down a house, who will build it up again?

If He closes a door against men, who will open it?

[15] If He withholds the water, He will dry up the earth;

If He lets it loose, He will destroy and ruin it.[†]

[16] With Him are might and strength.

He has knowledge and understanding.

[17] He leads counselors away captive

And makes fools of judges.

[18] He sets kings upon thrones

And binds their waist with a belt.

[19] He sends priests away into captivity

And overthrows the mighty of the earth.

[20] He changes the lips of the faithful

And knows the understanding of elders.

[21] He pours dishonor on rulers

And heals the humble.

22 He uncovers deep things out of darkness

And has brought into light the shadow of death.[†]

23 He leads the nations astray and destroys them.

He overthrows the nations and leads them away.

24 He changes the hearts of rulers

And leads them astray in a way they have not known.

25 May they grope in darkness,

And may they go astray like a drunken man.

13 “Behold, my eye has seen all these things,

And my ear has heard them.[†]

2 What you know, I also know;

I am not of lesser understanding than you.

3 Nevertheless I will speak to the Lord

And will reason before Him if He wills.

4 For you are all dishonest physicians and healers of diseases.

5 But would that you were silent,

For it would lead you to wisdom.

6 Hear the conviction of my mouth

And heed the judgment of my lips.

7 Do you not speak before the Lord

And utter deceit before Him?

8 Will you draw back?

But you yourselves be judges.

9 Would it be well for you if He searched you out?

For if you make every effort to join yourselves to Him,

10 He will surely rebuke you if you also secretly show favoritism.

11 Will not His terror make you dizzy

And His fear fall upon you?

12 In the end, your insolence will go away like ashes

And your body like clay.

13 “Be silent, that I may speak

And put my anger to rest,

14 So I may take my flesh in my teeth

And put my life in my hand.

15 Though the Mighty One should lay His hand upon me,

And already He has begun,

I will speak and reason before Him.

16 This will turn for me into salvation,

For there shall be no deceit before Him.

17 Listen, listen to my words,

For I will report them in your hearing.[†]

18 Behold, I am near my judgment:

I know I shall appear righteous.

19 Who is he who will judge me,

That I should now be silent and be wanting?

Job's Prayer to God

20 “Grant me two things,

Then I will not hide my face from You:

21 Withdraw Your hand far from me,

And let not the fear of You terrify me.

22 Then You will call, and I will obey You;

Or You will speak, then I will give You an answer.

23 How many are my sins and transgressions?

Teach me what they are.

[24] Why do You hide Yourself from me

And regard me as Your enemy?

[25] Will You take heed of me as a leaf shaken by the wind?

Or will You set Yourself against me as grass blown by the wind?

[26] For You wrote evil things against me

And compassed me with the sins of my youth.

[27] You have put my foot in the stocks,

Have watched all my works,

And have penetrated into the roots of my feet,

[28] Which have become old like a wineskin

Or like a moth-eaten garment.

14 “For mortal man born of woman Is short-lived and full of wrath.

[2] He falls like a flower that blooms,

And like a shadow, he does not continue.

[3] Have You not taken account of him

And brought him to judgment before You?

[4] For who shall be pure from uncleanness? No one.

[5] Even if his life is but one day upon the earth,

His months are numbered by You.

You appointed a time for him, and he cannot exceed it.[†]

[6] Depart from him that he may rest,

And let him be pleased with his life as a hired laborer.

I Will Wait until I Arise!

[7] “For there is hope for a tree, even if it is cut down,

That it will sprout again, and its tender shoots will not fail.[†]

[8] For though its root may grow old in the earth

And its stump may die in the rocky ground,

[9] Yet at the scent of water it will bud

And bring forth a crop like one newly planted.

[10] But a man who dies is utterly gone,

And when a mortal has fallen, he is no more.

[11] For in time the sea is drawn down,

And a river stops flowing,

And the river bed dries up.

[12] So too, when man falls asleep in death, he will not rise,

For the dead will not awake until heaven is dissolved.

[13] “For would that You had kept me in the grave,

That You had hidden me until Your wrath ceases,

And that You would appoint me a set time

In which You would remember me.

[14] For will man live again

After he completes his course of life and dies?

I will wait until I arise.[†]

[15] Then You will call, and I will answer You,

But do not cast away the works of Your hands.

[16] For You have numbered my practices,

And not one of my sins will escape You.

[17] You sealed up my lawlessness in a bag

And marked if I transgressed unwillingly.[†]

[18] “Truly a mountain falls and crumbles in pieces;

And a rock wears out in its place.

[19] Waters wear away stones,

And overflowing torrents wash away the soil of the earth;

And You destroy the duration of man.

[20] You push him to his end, and he is gone.

You set your face against him and send him away.

[21] If his children multiply themselves, he does not know it,

And if they be few, he does not perceive it.

[22] But the muscles of his body feel pain,

And his soul grieves.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

For the ancient Hebrews, death meant a return to the same earth from which all are taken: “For earth you are, and to the earth you shall return” (Gn 3:19; Job 7:21). Nevertheless, a general idea developed that the souls of the dead do continue, though only in a shadowy, semi-comatose kind of existence in a netherworld called *sheol*, or Hades (Gn 37:34, 35; Pss 114:3, 138:8; Is 14:9–11), a land of “oblivion” (Ps 87:10–12; Job 14:18–22). In *sheol*—the depths or abyss of the earth, “the Pit”—even the righteous dead abide, without any power of deliverance (Job 7:6–10; Ps 88:48; Is 38:18; Ezk 26:19–21). Yet there was at least a general hope that one’s memory would be kept alive by one’s community and descendants (Ps 111:1–6; Pr 10:7; Dt 25:5, 6).

Only gradually did God reveal glimpses of a glorious life after death to His people, a hope that would become available to all through the power of Christ’s Resurrection. An early hint of this coming hope was revealed to Job. Amid his terrible suffering, Job asks, “If a man dies, shall he live again?” And through a flash of divine insight, he says: “I will wait until I arise” (Job 14:14). Psalms also begin to reflect upon personal resurrection to everlasting life (Ps 15:8–11; 48:15; 70:20–23; 90:1–16).

The first indications of a corporate resurrection of the people of Israel are given in the 8th century BC through Hosea (Hos 6:1–3; 13:14) and Isaiah (Is 26:19). In the early 6th century BC, Ezekiel receives the dramatic vision of a miraculous reconstitution of “the whole house of Israel” on the plain covered with dry bones (Ezk 37:1–14). The Church reads this passage triumphantly on Great and Holy Saturday. Why? Because it is prophetic of the freeing of all the souls from Hades by Christ on that day (1Pt 3:19; Eph 4:8–10) and the general resurrection of all the dead on the last day.

By the late first century BC, as seen in the Wisdom of Solomon, immortality is directly linked with living in wisdom and righteousness: “Kinship with Wisdom is immortality” (WSol 8:17); “The righteous shall live forever” (WSol 5:15; see also 1:13–15; 2:22, 23; 6:17–21). Various passages from this book (WSol 3:1–9; 4:7–15; 5:15—6:3) are read at Vespers in commemoration of some of the more prominent saints.

At the time of Christ, the Sadducees rejected belief in an afterlife (see Mt 22:23), while the Pharisees did believe in resurrection and immortality (Acts 23:6–8). It was the Pharisees’ view which came to dominate in later Judaism. Lazarus’ sister Martha knew about a general “resurrection at the last day” (Jn 11:24), but Jesus declares to her that resurrection and eternal life come only through Him (Jn 11:25; see 3:14–16; 4:14; 6:40, 47–58; 14:1–6).

Christ promises that believers will be with Him after their death (Lk 23:42, 43; see 2Co 5:8; Php 1:21–23). The souls of believers are further enlightened in Christ, as they experience a foretaste of the eternal heavenly kingdom. Yet all the departed still await the general resurrection, the day when their souls will be reunited with their bodies, which are transformed into a glorified state (1Co 15:50–54) like Christ’s own body (Php 3:20, 21; 1Jn 3:2).

Eliphaz Renders Job Guilty

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:[†]

[2] “Will a wise man give as an answer a breath of understanding,
And does he satisfy the pain in his belly,
[3] Arguing with sayings which are not necessary
And with words wherein is no profit?
[4] Have you not moreover cast off fear
And accomplished such words before the Lord?
[5] You are guilty because of the words of your mouth,
Nor have you discerned the words of the mighty.
[6] May your mouth convict you, and not I;
For your lips will testify against you.
[7] “What? Are you the first man who was born?
Or were you made before the beaches?
[8] Have you heard the doctrine of the Lord,
And has wisdom come only to you?
[9] What do you know that we do not?
What do you understand that we do not also?
[10] Both the aged and the very old are among us,
Much older than your father.
[11] You have been punished for only a few of your sins;
You have spoken haughtily and exceedingly.

12 Why has your heart dared,

Or what are your eyes set on,

13 That you have vented your anger before the Lord

And brought forth such words from your mouth?

14 “For who is the mortal that shall be blameless,

Or who is born of a woman that shall be righteous,

15 Since He does not trust His saints

And heaven is not pure in His sight?

16 Alas then, detestable and unclean is a man

Who drinks wrongdoings like water!

17 “But I will tell you, listen to me;

I will tell you what I have now seen,

18 What wise men say.

They did not hide anything received from their fathers.

19 To them alone the earth was given,

And no stranger came among them.

20 All the life of an ungodly man is spent in anxiety,

And the years granted an oppressor are numbered.[†]

21 Fear is in his ears,

And when he at last seems to be at peace,

His destruction comes.

22 Let him not believe he will return from darkness,

For he has already been given over to the power of the sword.

23 He has been appointed to be food for vultures,

And he knows in himself that he lives in a dead body;

And a dark day will carry him away like a whirlwind.

24 Trouble and anguish will come upon him,

And like a general he will fall in the first rank.

[25] For he lifted his hands against the Lord

And acted defiantly against the Almighty Lord.

[26] He ran in His sight with insolence,

With the thickness of his wide shield.

[27] “For he covered his face with his fat

And put a collar upon his thighs.

[28] May he lodge in deserted cities

And enter uninhabited houses;

And what they prepared, others will carry away.

[29] Let him not grow rich, nor let his possessions remain;

Let him not cast a shadow upon the earth,

[30] Neither let him escape the darkness.

Let the wind wither his blossom, and let his flower fall off.

[31] Let him not believe he will endure,

For futility will be his reward.

[32] His harvest will perish before its gathering,

And his branch will not flourish.

[33] May he be gathered prematurely like unripe grapes,

And may he fall off like the blossom of an olive tree.

[34] For death is the witness of the ungodly man,

And fire will burn the houses of those who take bribes.

[35] So he will conceive sorrows, his end will be vain,

And his belly shall bear deceit.”

Job's Friends Are Bad Comforters

16 Then Job answered and said:

[2] “I have heard many such things;

You are all bad comforters.

[3] What order is there in words of wind?

Or what troubles you, that you answer thus?

[4] I also could speak as you do,

If indeed your soul were in my soul's place.

Then I would attack you with words

And shake my head at you.

[5] But would there were strength in my mouth:

Then I would not spare the movement of my lips.

The Lord Has Rejected Me

[6] “If I should speak, I would feel the pain of my wound,

But if I also should be silent, how would I be less wounded?

[7] But now He has made me weary and a worn-out fool,

And you have laid hold of me.

[8] My falsehood has become a testimony.

It rises up and argues against me to my face.[†]

[9] He vented His wrath and struck me down;

He gnashed at me with His teeth;

The arrows of the raiders fell on me.

[10] He attacked me with the sharp darts of His eyes;

He struck me on the cheek;

With one accord they ran me down.

[11] For the Lord delivered me into the hands of an unjust man

And cast me upon the ungodly.

[12] When I was at peace, He rejected me.

He took me by the hair of my head and pulled it out.

He set me up as a mark.

[13] They surrounded me with spears aimed at my mind.

Without sparing me, they poured out my gall on the ground.

[14] Running at me with all their strength,

They knocked me down, head over heels.

[15] I sewed sackcloth on my skin,

And my strength is spent on the ground.

[16] My belly is on fire because of weeping,

And shade is on my eyelids.

[17] Yet there was no wrongdoing in my hands,

And my prayer is pure.[†]

[18] O earth, do not cover the blood of my flesh,

Nor may my cry have a place.[†]

[19] Now behold, my witness is in the heavens,

And the One who knows me thoroughly is on high.

[20] May my supplication come before the Lord,

And may my eyes pour out tears in His presence.

[21] May there be rebuttal for a man before the Lord,

As a son of man with his neighbor.

[22] For my years are numbered,

And I shall go the way of no return.

17 “I am perishing, carried away by the wind;

And I ask for a burial-place, but cannot obtain it.

[2] I am tired of entreating, yet what have I done?

[3] Strangers have stolen my possessions.

Who is he? Let him join hands with me.

[4] For You hid their heart from discernment;

Therefore, You will not exalt them.[†]

[5] He will declare evils as their portion,

But my eyes melt away because of my children.

Where Is My Hope?

[6] “But You made me a byword among the people,

And I have become an object of laughter to them.

[7] For my eyes are petrified because of Your wrath,

And I am greatly besieged by everyone.

[8] Amazement seizes true men because of this,

And the righteous man rises against the lawless man.

[9] May the faithful man hold to his way,

And may those who have clean hands take courage.

[10] “Nevertheless, all of you stick together,

And indeed come, for I did not find you to be true.

[11] My days have passed in groaning

And my heartstrings are broken.

[12] Light turned night into day.

It is near at the appearance of darkness.

[13] If I tarry, Hades is my home,

And my bed is spread in darkness.

[14] I called upon death to be my father

And decay to be my mother and my sister.

[15] Where then is my hope,

Or where shall I see my good things?

[16] Will they go down with me to Hades,

Or shall we go down together in the tomb?”

Bildad Speaks of the Ungodly

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:[†]

[2] “How long will you keep talking?

Pay close attention so we may also speak.

[3] Why have we been silent before you

Like four-footed animals?

[4] Wrath possesses you. Suppose you die;

Would the earth under heaven be uninhabited,

Or the mountains be overturned from their foundations?

[5] “The light of the ungodly will go out,

And their flame will not go up.

[6] His light shall be dark in his dwelling,

And his lamp beside him shall be put out.

[7] May the least of men pounce on his goods,

And let his counsel stumble him.

[8] For his foot has been caught in a snare,

And he is entangled in a net.

[9] May snares come upon him.

He shall strengthen those who thirst for his destruction.

[10] A snare is hidden in the ground for him,

And a capture awaits him on the beaten paths.

[11] May sorrows destroy him on every side;

And may many enemies come about him

And plague him with severe hunger,

[12] For a destruction out of the ordinary is prepared for him.

[13] May the toes of his feet be devoured,

For death will consume his beauty.

[14] May health be banished from his dwelling,

And may distress seize him because of a royal decree.

[15] It shall dwell in his tent at night,

And his goodly appearance shall be sown with brimstone.

[16] His roots shall be dried out from below,

And his crop shall be trampled from above.

[17] His memory shall perish from the earth,

And his name shall be remembered no more.

[18] May he be driven from light into darkness.

[19] He shall not be known among his people,

Nor his house preserved on the earth;

But others shall live among his possessions.

[20] The last groaned for him, and wonder seized the first.

[21] These are the dwellings of wrongdoers,

And this is the place of those who do not know the Lord.”

How Long Will You Weary Me?

19 Then Job answered and said:

[2] “How long will you weary my soul

And take me down with words?

[3] Only know how the Lord has dealt with me thus.

You speak against me, and while shaming me,

You press hard on me.

[4] Yes indeed, I have truly erred; my error lodges with me.

When I speak words which I should not have spoken,

My words go astray and are unseasonable.

[5] Alas! You exalt yourselves against me

And attack me with disgrace.[†]

[6] Know therefore that the Lord has troubled me

And raised His stronghold against me.

[7] Behold, I laugh at disgrace and I will not speak.

Nor I will cry out, for judgment is nowhere to be found.[†]

[8] I am walled in round about and cannot cross over,

For He has set darkness before my face.

[9] He stripped me of my glory

And took the crown from my head.

[10] He has torn me apart on every side, and I am gone.

He has uprooted my hope like a tree.

[11] He handled me vehemently in wrath

And has counted me like an enemy.

[12] His raiders came against me with one accord.

They encircled my paths and lay in wait.

[13] “My brothers stood far from me

And recognized strangers rather than me.

So my friends became unmerciful.

[14] My relatives acted as though they did not know me,

And my close friends have forgotten me.

[15] As for my neighbors and the maidservants of my house,

I was a stranger before them.

[16] I called my servant, but he gave no answer,

Though I begged him with my mouth.

[17] I also entreated my wife,

And summoned the children of my concubines and flattered them.

[18] But they rejected me forever.

When I arise, they speak against me.

19 Those who know me detest me,

And those whom I truly love turned against me.

20 The muscles of my body have decayed under my skin,

And my bones are held in my teeth.

The Lord Is Everlasting

21 “Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, O friends,

For the hand of the Lord has touched me.

22 Why do you persecute me as the Lord does,

And are not satisfied because of my flesh?

23 “For who may commit my words to writing,

To put them in a book forever,[†]

24 With an iron pen and lead,

Or to engrave them in rocks?

25 For I know He is everlasting,

He who is about to set me free on the earth

26 And to raise up my skin that endures these things;

For these have been accomplished for me by the Lord;

27 Which I myself am conscious of,

And my eyes have beheld, and not those of another.

All has been accomplished for me in my bosom.

28 If you shall say, ‘What shall we say before him?

Then we will find in him the root of the matter.’

29 Indeed, be afraid to cover up your evil,

For wrath will come upon lawless men;

Then they will know where their substance is.”

Zophar: The Ungodly Will Perish

20 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:[†]

[2] “I did not suppose you would answer in that way;

Nor do you understand more than I.

[3] I will heed the discipline of my humiliation,

And the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer.

[4] “Have you not heard these things of old—

From the time man was put on the earth?

[5] For the gladness of the ungodly is a disastrous fall,

And the joy of transgressors is destruction.

[6] Though his gifts ascend to heaven

And his sacrifice touches the clouds,

[7] Just when he already seems to be established,

Then he shall utterly perish;

And those who knew him will say, ‘Where is he?’

[8] Like a dream he flew away and cannot be found;

And he fled like a vision of the night.

[9] The eye observed him, but will see him no more;

Nor will his place any longer behold him.

[10] May his children perish,

And may his vile hands kindle the fire of sorrows.

[11] His bones were full of his youthful vigor,

Which will lie down with him in the dust.

[12] Though evil is sweet in his mouth,

And he will hide it under his tongue,[†]

[13] Though he will not spare it and will not forsake it,

But will hold it fast in the midst of his throat, 14 Yet he shall be unable to help himself,

For the gall of an asp is in his belly.

15 His wealth gathered unjustly shall be vomited up,

And a messenger will drag him out of his house.

16 May he nurse on the anger of serpents;

And may a snake's tongue kill him.

17 May he not see the milk of the pastures,

Nor his supplies of honey and butter.

18 In vain he has labored unprofitably for wealth,

Of which he will not taste;

For it is like tough meat that he cannot chew.

19 For he crushed the houses of many weak people.

He plundered their dwelling and caused it to cease.

20 “There is no salvation in his possessions,

For he will not be saved by what he desired.

21 Nothing is left for him to eat;

Therefore, his good things will not flourish.

22 But when he at last seems to be satisfied, he will be distressed,

For every trouble will come upon him.

23 If he were to satisfy his stomach in some way,

Let God send the fury of wrath upon him,

And may He bathe him in sorrows.

24 He will not be saved from the power of the sword;

May a bronze bow wound him.

25 May an arrow pass through his body,

And may lightning strike his dwelling.

May terrors come upon him.

26 May total darkness await him.

A fire that will not go out will consume him.

May a stranger ruin his house.

27 May heaven uncover his lawlessness,

And may the earth rise up against him.

28 May destruction bring his house to an end,

And may a day of wrath come upon him.

29 This is the portion of an ungodly man from the Lord,

And the heritage appointed to him from the One who watches him.”

Job Pronounces Judgment on the Ungodly

21

Then Job answered and said:

2 “Listen carefully to my words,

That I may not have this consolation from you.

3 Bear with me and I will speak;

Then you will stop laughing at me.

4 “What? Is there any one who does not blame me?

Or why should I not be furious?

5 Look at me and be astonished,

And put your hand over your mouth.

6 For even when I remember, I am alarmed,

And pains take hold of my flesh.

7 Why do the ungodly live and become old, even in wealth?[†]

8 Their offspring is according to their desire,

And their children are before their eyes.

9 Their houses flourish, and they have no cause for fear;

Neither is there any affliction from the Lord upon them.

10 Their ox does not miscarry,

For it is preserved safe during pregnancy

And does not suffer a mishap.

11 They remain as an unfailing herd,

And their children dance,

12 Taking up the psaltery and harp;

And they celebrate at the sound of song.

13 They spend their life in their good things

And fall asleep in the rest of the grave.

14 Yet such a man says to the Lord,

‘Depart from me. I do not wish to know Your ways.

15 What is a sufficient reason for us to serve Him?

What benefit is it for us to meet Him?’

16 For their good things are in their power,

For He does not take notice of the works of the ungodly.[†]

17 “Nevertheless, the lamp of the ungodly will be put out.

Destruction shall come upon them,

And the sorrows of wrath will seize them.

18 They are like chaff before the wind,

And they are like dust a storm carries away.

19 May his possessions fail to supply his children.

God will recompense him, and he will not know it.

20 May his eyes see his own slaughter,

And may he not be saved by the Lord.

21 For is his will not in his house with himself?

But the number of his months has been apportioned.

22 “Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?

Does not He judge murders?

[23] One shall die in the strength of his simplicity,

And wholly at ease and prosperous.[†]

[24] His innards are full of stiff fat,

And the marrow of his bones is dissipated.

[25] Another dies under bitterness of soul,

Not eating any good thing.

[26] They lie down together in the earth,

And decay covers them.

[27] Thus I know you press me recklessly.

[28] You will say, ‘Where is the house of the ruler?

Where is the shelter of the dwelling place of the ungodly?’

[29] Ask those who travel the road,

And do not overlook their signs.[†]

[30] For the evil man makes light of the day of destruction,

But they shall be led away in the day of His wrath.

[31] Who will tell him his way to his face?

Who will recompense him for what he has done?

[32] Yet he is brought to the grave,

And a vigil is kept over the coffin.

[33] The pebbles of the valley have been sweet to him.

Every man shall depart after him,

As countless have departed before him.

[34] How then can you comfort me with empty words,

Since I have no rest from you?”

Eliphaz Accuses Job of Vice

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:[†]

22 [2] “Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?[†]

[3] For what concern is it to the Lord

If you were blameless in your works?

Or what profit is it to Him to make plain your ways?

[4] Will He argue with you while you plead your case?

Will He enter into judgment with you?

[5] Is not your vice plentiful,

And are not your sins innumerable?

[6] For you have taken pledges from your brethren for no reason

And taken away the clothing of the naked.

[7] Neither have you given the thirsty water to drink,

But have even withheld a morsel from the hungry.

[8] You have also admired the personality of some

And have transplanted those already settled on earth.

[9] You have sent widows away empty

And have mistreated orphans.

[10] Therefore snares are all around you,

And a serious war has troubled you.

[11] The light has turned to darkness for you,

And water has covered you as you fell asleep.

[12] “Does not He who dwells on high take notice of all?

Does He not humble those who move about with insolence?

[13] But you say, ‘What does the Mighty One know?

Will He judge down into the darkness?

[14] A cloud is His hiding place, so He cannot see

As He travels through the circle of heaven.’

[15] Will you keep to the old path

Which wrongdoers have trod,

16 Who were seized before their time

And whose foundations were swept away by a flood;

17 Who said, ‘What will the Lord do to us?’

Or, ‘What will the Almighty bring upon us?’

18 Yet He filled their houses with good things;

But the counsel of the ungodly is far from Him.

19 “The righteous have seen it and laughed,

And the innocent mocked them.

20 Surely their substance has perished,

And fire will consume what is left.

Eliphaz Exhorts Job to Be Strong

21 “Be strong, therefore. If you endure,

Then your fruit shall be in good things.

22 Receive utterance from His mouth

And lay up His words in your heart.

23 If you return and humble yourself before the Lord,

You have caused wrongdoing to be far from your dwelling.[†]

24 Then you will lay up treasure for yourself

Like a mound on a rock,

And you shall be like the gold of Ophir

On a rock in the brooks.

25 So the Almighty will be your helper from enemies,

And He will restore you as pure as silver purged by fire.

26 For then you will speak freely before the Lord,

Looking up cheerfully to heaven.

27 When you pray to Him, He will hear you,

And He will allow you to pay your vows.

[28] He will restore righteousness to your dwelling,

And there shall be light on your paths.

[29] You will say, ‘He behaved arrogantly, but he humbled himself,

And He will save him who bows down with his eyes.’

[30] He will deliver the innocent,

And you will save yourself in the purity of your hands.”

Job Will Pursue the Lord

23 Then Job answered and said:[†]

[2] “Indeed, I know pleading is out of my reach,

For His hand is heavy upon my groaning.

[3] Who then would know, that I might find Him,

And might bring this matter to an end?

[4] I would state my case before Him

And fill my mouth with arguments.

[5] Would that I knew the words He would answer me

And could understand what He would tell me.

[6] Though He would come on me in His great strength,

He would not use the occasion to threaten me.

[7] For truth and rebuke are from Him,

And He would bring my judgment to an end.

[8] “Though I should proceed to this important end

Until I no longer exist,

Still what would I know about the last things?

[9] When He worked on the left hand,

I could not understand it.

His right hand will encompass me,

But I will not see it.

10 For He knows my way already,

And He has weighed me as gold.

11 I will go forth in His commandments;

For I have kept His ways and will not turn aside.

12 I will not disregard His commandments;

But I have hidden His words in my bosom.[†]

13 “If He too has thus judged,

Who is he that has opposed Him?

Whatever He has willed, that He has done.

14 Therefore I pursue Him zealously,

And when I was instructed, I thought of Him.

15 Therefore let me be serious before His face.

I will consider and be afraid of Him.

16 For the Lord softened my heart,

And the Almighty has alarmed me.

17 For I did not know darkness would come upon me,

But thick darkness covered my face.

The Way of the Wicked

24 “Why have the times escaped the Lord's notice?[†]

2 “Why have the ungodly stepped over the boundary,

Snatching away the flock with the shepherd?[†]

3 They have led away the donkey of the orphans

And have taken the widow's ox as a pledge.

4 They have turned aside the weak from the right way;

The gentle of the land have hidden themselves together.

[5] They departed like donkeys in the field.

Contrary to me, they went forth to their own pursuits.

Their bread was sweet to their little ones.

[6] For they harvested a field that was not their own before the time,

And the weak worked the vineyard of the ungodly

Without pay or food.

[7] They caused many naked to sleep without clothing,

And they took away the covering of their life.

[8] They are wet with the showers of the mountains

And have huddled around the rock for want of shelter.[†]

[9] They have snatched the orphan from the breast

And have humiliated the banished.

[10] They have unjustly caused them to sleep without clothing,

And they have taken away the morsel from the hungry.

[11] They have wrongfully laid snares in narrow places

And have not known the way of righteousness.

[12] They have cast the weak out of the city and their own houses,

And the soul of the infants sighed greatly.

Why then has He not visited them?

[13] “They are ones on the earth who do not know the Lord,

And they do not understand the way of righteousness,

Nor do they walk in His paths.

[14] But He knows their works and delivered them into darkness;

And one shall be like a thief in the night.[†]

[15] For the eye of the adulterer watches for the darkness,

Saying, ‘No eye will perceive me’;

And he puts a covering on his face.

[16] In the dark he breaks into houses;

In the daytime they seal themselves up;

They do not know the light.

[17] For in due time, the shadow of death will be the same to them,

Because they shall know the troubles of the shadow of death.

[18] “He is swift on the face of the waters;

May his portion be cursed on earth.

[19] May their plants wither on earth,

For they have taken away from the orphans

Even the smallest portions.

[20] Then his sin is recalled to memory,

And he vanishes like a mist of dew;

But what he has done, may it be recompensed to him,

And may every wrongdoer be crushed like rotten wood.

[21] For he has not treated the barren woman well,

And showed no mercy to the feeble woman.

[22] “In his anger, he overturns the weak;

Therefore when he rises up,

No one believes his own life is safe.

[23] When he falls sick, let him not hope to recover,

But let him perish by disease.

[24] For his exaltation mistreated many,

But he has withered as mallows in the heat,

Or as an ear of corn falling on its own from the stalk.

[25] “If it is not so, who says I speak falsely

And will make my speech worth nothing?”

Bildad Asks How Man Can Be Righteous

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 “What beginning or fear is His—

He who makes all things in the highest heaven?

3 For may no one imagine there is a respite for pirates.

Upon whom will there not be an ambush from Him?

4 How shall a mortal be righteous before the Lord?

Or how may he who is born of a woman purify himself?[†]

5 If He orders the moon, then it does not shine,

And the stars are not pure in His sight.

6 But alas! Man is putrid, and the son of man a worm.”

God Is All Powerful

26 But Job answered and said:[†]

2 “To whom are you attached,

Or whom are you going to help?

Is it not He who has great strength

And whose arm is powerful?

3 To whom have you given counsel?

Is it not to Him who has all wisdom?

Or whom will you follow?

Is it not One who has the greatest power?

4 To whom have you spoken words?

Whose breath came forth from you?

5 “Will giants be born under the water

And those inhabiting them?

6 Hades is naked before Him,

And destruction has no covering.

[7] He stretches out the north wind upon nothing;

He hangs the earth on nothing.

[8] He binds up the water in His clouds,

Yet the cloud is not broken under it.

[9] He grasps the face of His throne

And spreads His cloud over it.

[10] He encompassed the face of the water by an ordinance

Until the end of light and darkness.

[11] The pillars of heaven were spread all over

And stood amazed at His rebuke.

[12] He checked the sea with His power,

And by His understanding He wounded the sea-monster.

[13] For the bars of heaven fear Him,

Because He put to death the rebellious dragon by a command.

[14] Behold, these are parts of His way,

And we will hearken to the least of His words.

But who knows when He will bring about the strength of His thunder?”[†]

Job Will Hold Fast to Righteousness

27 Moreover Job continued his speech and said:

[2] “As the Lord lives who thus judges me,

And the Almighty who embittered my soul,

[3] Surely as long as my breath is in me

And the divine breath is in my nostrils,[†]

[4] My lips will not speak lawless things,

Nor shall my soul practice wrongdoings.

5 May it not be I who set forth the opinion that you are righteous.

Until the day I die, I will not put away my integrity from me.

6 I hold fast to my righteousness and am not letting it go;

For I am not conscious in myself of having done anything wrong.[†]

7 “Surely not, but rather may my enemies

Be as the destruction of the ungodly,

And those who rise up against me

As the destruction of the lawless.

8 For what hope is there for an ungodly man that he holds to it?

Will he trust in the Lord and be saved?

9 Will the Lord hear his prayer

When distress comes upon him?

10 Has he any confidence before Him,

Or will the Lord hear him when he calls on Him?

11 “But indeed, I will tell you what is the hand of the Lord.

I will not lie concerning what is with the Almighty.

12 Behold therefore, all of you know

You are adding vanity to vanity.[†]

13 “This is the portion from the Lord for the ungodly man,

And the possession of oppressors

Shall come upon them from the Almighty.

14 If their children be many, they will be for slaughter;

And if they reach manhood, they will beg.

15 Those who survive him shall be buried in death,

And no one will have pity on their widows.

16 Though he gathers silver like dust

And shall prepare gold like clay,

17 The righteous will acquire these things,

And the true ones will possess his wealth.

18 His house goes away like a moth

And like a spider's web.

19 The rich man will lie down and not continue;

He opens his eyes, but is no more.

20 Pains happen to him like a flood,

And thick darkness takes him away in the night.

21 A burning wind will take him up, and he will be gone;

And it will scatter him from his place.

22 It will blow against him and not spare;

He will try in vain to flee from its force.

23 It will strike him with its power,

And whistle him from his place.

The Richness of the Earth

28 “Indeed, there is a place for silver, from whence it comes,

And a place for gold, from whence it is refined.[†]

2 Certainly, iron is taken from the earth,

And copper is hewn out like a stone.

3 He set an order to darkness

And examines accurately every limit.

A stone is darkness and the shadow of death.

4 There is a narrow channel of the brook because of dust;

So those who forget the right way

Are weakened because of mortal men.

5 As for the earth, from it will come bread,

But underneath, it is turned up as by fire;

[6] Its stones are the source of sapphires,
And its dust contains gold.
[7] There is a path no bird knows,
Nor has the eye of a vulture seen it.
[8] The sons of the arrogant have not trodden it,
Nor has the lion passed over it.
[9] He has stretched forth his hand to quarry stones
And has overturned the mountains by the roots.
[10] He has broken asunder the whirlpools of rivers,
And my eye has seen every valued thing.
[11] He has uncovered the depths of the rivers
And has brought his power to light.

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Where Is Wisdom Found?

[12] “But where can wisdom be found?
What is the place of understanding?
[13] Mortal man has not known its way,
Nor is it found among men.
[14] The deep said, ‘It is not in me’;
And the sea said, ‘It is not with me.’
[15] One shall not give massive piles of gold instead of it,
Nor can silver be weighed in exchange for it.
[16] It cannot be compared with the gold of Ophir,
With the precious onyx or sapphire.
[17] Neither gold nor crystal will equal it,
Nor can it be exchanged for vessels of gold.
[18] No mention shall be made of coral and quartz,

But you must hold up wisdom above the most valued things.

[19] The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,

Nor can it be compared with pure gold.

[20] “From where then is wisdom found,

And what is the place of understanding?

[21] It has been hidden from every man

And concealed from the birds of the sky.

[22] Destruction and Death said,

‘We have heard about its fame.’

[23] God has well established its way,

And He knows its place.

[24] For He watches over the whole earth under heaven,

Knowing the things in the earth, all He has made—

[25] The weight of the winds and the measures of the water.

[26] When He made them, He numbered them

And made a way for the claps of thunder.

[27] Then He saw wisdom and declared it;

He prepared it and traced it out.

[28] He said to man, ‘behold, the fear of God is wisdom,

And to abstain from evils is understanding.’”

The Glories of the Past

29 Job continued further and said in his speech:[†]

[2] “Who may put me in months past,

As in the days when God protected me—

[3] As when His lamp shone upon my head,

And by His light I walked in the darkness;

[4] As when I steadfastly pursued my ways,

When God's visitation was over my house;

[5] As when I lived in abundance,

And my children were around me;

[6] As when my roads spread out with butter,

And the mountains flowed with milk for me;

[7] “As when I went early in the city,

And took my seat in the open square;

[8] The young men saw me and hid,

And all the old men stood up.

[9] The great men refrained from talking

And put their finger to their mouth.

[10] Those who heard me blessed me,

And their tongue stuck to their throat.

[11] The ear heard and blessed me,

And the eye saw me and turned aside.

[12] For I saved the poor from the hand of the oppressor

And helped the orphan who had no helper.

[13] The blessing of the perishing man came upon me,

And the widow's mouth blessed me.

[14] I put on righteousness

And clothed myself with judgment like a robe.[†]

[15] I was the eye of the blind and the foot of the lame.

[16] I was the father of the weak,

And I searched out the cause I did not know.[†]

[17] I broke the molars of the wrongdoers

And plucked the spoil from the midst of their teeth.[†]

18 “Then I said, ‘My age shall continue as the stem of a palm tree,
And I shall live a long while.’
19 My root was spread out to the waters,
And the dew would settle on my harvest.[†]
20 My glory was fresh within me,
And my bow prospered in its hand.[†]
21 “Men heard and listened to me
And kept silence for my counsel.
22 At my word they did not speak again,
And they were very glad when I spoke to them.
23 They waited for my speech
As the thirsty earth for the rain.
24 If I laughed at them, they did not believe it,
And the light of my countenance did not fail.
25 I chose the way for them and sat as a ruler;
And I dwelt as a king in the army,
As one who comforts mourners.

The Present Seems Futile

30 “But now they laugh me to scorn, Men younger than I, whose fathers I disdained;
Whom I did not deem worthy to be put
With the dogs of my pastures.[†]
2 Indeed, what profit is the strength of their hands to me?
For them the full term of life was lost.
3 In want and famine, they are childless.
Yesterday they fled to a waterless desert in anguish and misery.
4 They are those who surround the noisy salt places,
Who have salty herbs for their food,

And who are also considered worthless

And deficient of every good thing,

And chew on the roots of trees because of their great hunger.

5 Thieves have risen up against me,

6 Whose houses were holes in the rocks,

7 Who cry out among the rustling bushes

And live under the wild shrubs.

8 They are the sons of fools and dishonored men,

Whose name and fame were extinguished from the earth.

9 “But now I am their lyre,

And they have me as their byword.

10 They detest me and keep their distance.

They do not hesitate to spit in my face.

11 For He has opened His quiver and afflicted me.

They have cast off restraint in my presence.

12 They rose up against me by the right hands of their offspring;

And they stretched out their foot

And directed against me their paths of destruction.

13 My paths are ruined, for they stripped off my garment.[†]

14 He shot me down with His arrows

And used me as He wished.

I am overwhelmed with pains.

15 My pains are turned upon me.

My hope is gone like the wind

And my salvation like a cloud.

16 “Even now my soul will be poured forth upon me,

And the days of pains seize me.

17 By night my bones are set on fire,

And my sinews are broken up.

18 With great force He took hold of my garment,

And like the collar of my tunic He surrounded me.

19 You regarded me as clay in the earth,

And my portion is with ashes.

20 “I cry out to You, but You do not answer me.

They stood and observed me.

21 You attacked me without mercy

And scourged me with a strong hand.

22 You appointed pains for me

And cast me away from salvation.

23 For I know death will destroy me,

For the earth is the house for every mortal.

24 “Would that I might lay hands on myself,

Or at least ask another, and he would do it for me.

25 Yet I wept over every man without strength

And groaned when I saw a man in distress.[†]

26 But while I held firmly to good things,

Days of evils happened to me instead.

27 My stomach churns and will not be quiet,

And days of poverty have come upon me.

28 I go groaning without restraint;

I stand up and cry out in the church.

29 I have become a brother of sirens

And a companion of sparrows.

30 My skin has been greatly darkened,

And my bones are burned by the heat.

[31] My lyre turned into mourning

And my song into my weeping.

Job Sets Forth His Integrity

31 “I have made a covenant with my eyes,

And I will not think upon a virgin.[†]

[2] What has God apportioned from above,

And what is the inheritance of the Mighty One from on high?

[3] Is not destruction for the wrongdoer,

And alienation for those who do lawlessness?[†]

[4] Will He not see my way and count all my steps?

[5] “If I have walked with scorners,

Or if my foot has hastened to deceit,

[6] May He weigh me therefore with a just scale,

For He knows my integrity.[†]

[7] If my foot has turned from the way,

Or if my heart has followed after my eyes,

Or if gifts have touched my hands,

[8] Then may I sow and others eat.

Yes, may I be uprooted on the earth.

[9] “If my heart has followed after another man's wife,

Or if I have laid wait at her door,

[10] Then also may my wife please another,

And may my children be humiliated.

[11] For the rage of anger is uncontrollable

In defiling another man's wife.

[12] For it is a fire burning on every side,

And whomever it comes upon, it destroys at the roots.

13 If I have despised the judgment of my servant or handmaid

When they judged me,

14 What then will I do when the Lord brings me to trial and visits me?

How shall I answer Him?

15 Did not He who made me in the womb make them?

So we were fashioned in the same womb.

16 “But the weak did not miss whatever they happened to need,

And I did not cause the eyes of the widow to fail.[†]

17 If I ate my morsel by myself

And did not share it with the orphan

18 (But from my youth I nourished them as a father,

And from my mother's womb I guided the widow);

19 If I have neglected the naked as he was perishing

And did not clothe him;

20 If the weak did not bless me,

And if their shoulders were not warmed with the fleece of my lambs;

21 If I raised my hand against the orphan,

Trusting that my strength was far superior to his,

22 Then let my shoulder fall from my collarbone;

Let my arm be torn from its socket.

23 For the fear of the Lord seized me,

And I cannot endure His burden.

24 If I have made gold my strength

Or trusted the precious stone,

25 If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great,

And if I, too, laid my hand on countless treasures[†]

26 (Or do I not see the shining sun eclipsed and the moon waning?

For this does not depend upon them);

27 If my heart has been secretly deceived,

And if I have laid my hand upon my mouth and kissed it,

28 Then may this also be reckoned to me

As the greatest lawlessness;

For I have lied against the Lord most high.

29 “If I, too, was glad at the fall of my enemies,

And my heart said, ‘Good! Well done!’

30 Then may my ear hear my curse,

And may I be a byword among my people in my affliction.

31 If my handmaids have often said,

‘Who may give us his meat to be satisfied?’

(But I was very kind.

32 For the stranger did not spend the night outside;

And my door was opened to everyone who came);

33 If I sinned involuntarily, then covered my sin,

34 (For I did not stand in awe of great multitude,

So as not to confess before them);

And if I permitted a poor man to go out of my door

With an empty bosom

35 (Who may listen to me?);

And if I had not feared the hand of the Lord,

And as to the document I had against someone,

36 I would place it as a crown on my shoulders and read it,

37 And if I did not tear it up and return it,

Having taken nothing from the debtor;

[38] “If at any time the land groaned against me

And its furrows wept together,

[39] If I have eaten its strength alone without paying,

Or if I also grieved the soul of the owner of the land

By casting him out,

[40] Then may the nettle come to me instead of wheat,

And bramble instead of barley.”

Thus Job ceased speaking.

Elihu Is Angered at Job and His Friends

32 Job's three friends also ceased answering him, for he was righteous before them.[†] [2]Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, of the country of Ausitis, became furious; and he was very angry with Job, because he declared himself to be righteous before the Lord. [3]He was also very angry with Job's three friends, because they found no answer to Job, and yet affirmed he was an ungodly man. [4]Now because they were years older than he, Elihu waited to speak to Job. [5]So when Elihu saw there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused. [6]So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said:

“I am young in years, and you are the elder;

Therefore I was silent

And dared not declare my knowledge to you.

[7] I said, ‘It is not time that speaks,

Though in many years, men know wisdom.’

[8] But there is a spirit in mortals,

And the breath of the Almighty is that which teaches them.

9 The long-lived are not always wise,

Nor do the old men always know judgment.

10 “Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me,

I also will declare what I know.’

11 Pay close attention to my words,

For I will speak in your hearing, while you examine my words,

12 And until I shall understand you.

So behold, not one of you answered Job in argument;

13 Lest you say, ‘We have found wisdom added to the Lord.’

14 But you permitted a man to speak such words.

15 “They were dismayed and answered no more;

They made their words obsolete.

16 I waited, for they did not speak.

Because they stood still, they did not answer.”

17 Then Elihu continued and said:

18 ‘Again I will speak, for I am full of words;

The spirit within my stomach is killing me.

19 Indeed, my stomach is like a wineskin of sweet new wine,

Bound up and ready to burst,

Or like the blowpipe of a coppersmith, ready to bellow.

20 I will speak, that I may find relief in opening my lips.

21 I will not feel shame before any man,

Neither indeed will I feel shame before any mortal.

22 For I do not know how to flatter persons,

Or else the moths would eat me.

Elihu Claims He Speaks for God

33 “Nevertheless, hear my words, Job, And pay close attention to what I say.[†]

2 For behold, I have opened my mouth

And my tongue has spoken.

3 By my words, my heart shall be found pure;

And the understanding of my lips will think pure thoughts.

4 The divine Spirit has made me,

And the breath of the Almighty is that which teaches me.[†]

5 Give me an answer to these things if you can.

Endure and stand firm against me, and I against you.

6 You and I were formed out of the clay;

Thus, we have been formed out of the same substance.

7 My fear will not distract you,

Neither shall my hand be heavy on you.

8 “However you said in my hearing

(I heard the voice of your words),

9 For you say, ‘I am pure, for I have not sinned.

I am blameless, for I have not acted lawlessly.

10 Yet He has found a charge against me;

He has counted me as His enemy.

11 He has put my feet in the stocks,

And He watches all my paths.’

12 “For how can you say,

‘I am righteous, yet He has not listened to me’?

For He that is above mortals is eternal.

13 But you say, ‘Why has He not heard every word of my cause?’

14 For when the Lord speaks once,

Or in another time in a dream,

15 Or in a meditation of the night

(As when dreadful fear falls upon men

While slumbering on their bed),

16 Then He unveils the hearts of men

And frightens them with such fearful visions

17 So as to turn man from his wrongdoing;

Thus He delivers his body from a fall.

18 He keeps back his soul from death

And does not allow him to fall in war.

19 “Again He also chastens him with sickness on his bed,

And the multitude of his bones grow numb.

20 He is not able to receive any food,

Though his soul may long for it,

21 Until his flesh wastes away

And he shows his bones bare.

22 His soul also draws near to death

And his life to Hades.

23 “If there are a thousand death-bringing messengers,

None of them shall wound him.

If he purposes in his heart to turn to the Lord,

And declares to man his fault, and shows his folly,

24 He will support him, that he might not fall into death;

And He will renew his body like fresh plaster upon a wall,

And fill his bones with marrow.

25 He will make his flesh young like a child's

And restore him among men in full manhood.

26 He shall pray to the Lord, and his prayer shall be accepted.

He shall come to prayer with an innocent face

And with an utterance of thanksgiving,

For He will restore righteousness to men.

27 Even then, a man shall blame himself, saying,

‘I am to blame because of what I did,

Yet He has not examined my guilt

To the extent of my unworthiness.’

28 Save my soul from going down to corruption,

So my life shall see the light.

29 “Behold all these things:

The Mighty One works three ways with a man.

30 But He has delivered my soul from death

That my life may praise Him in the light.

31 “Give ear, Job; listen to me;

Hold your peace, and I will speak.[†]

32 If you have anything to say, answer me;

Speak, for I desire you to be declared as righteous.

33 If not, listen to me;

Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom.”

Elihu Proclaims God's Justice

34 Elihu continued and said:[†]

2 “Hear me, O wise men who are present,

And pay close attention to what is good.

3 For the ear tests words as the palate tastes food.

4 Let us choose judgment for ourselves;

Let us know among ourselves what is good.

[5] For Job has said, ‘I am righteous,

And the Lord has taken away my judgment.’[†]

[6] But he spoke untruth in my judgment when he said,

‘My wound is severe, though I am without wrongdoing.’

[7] What man is like Job,

Who drinks scorn like water?

[8] For he says, ‘I have not sinned, nor committed ungodliness,

Nor had anything in common with the workers of lawlessness,

So as to walk with ungodly men.’

[9] For you should not say, ‘There shall be no visitation of a man,’

Whereas there is a visitation on him from the Lord.

[10] “Therefore listen to me, you wise in heart:

May it be far from me to act in an ungodly way before the Lord

And to pervert righteousness before the Almighty.

[11] Yes, He renders to a man as each one of them does,

And in a man's path He will find him.

[12] Do you think the Lord will do wrong,

Or will the Almighty who made the earth pervert judgment?

[13] Who is He who created everything under heaven

And all things therein?

[14] If He should wish to hold and restrain His breath within Himself,

[15] All flesh would die together,

And every mortal would return to the ground

From which he was formed.

[16] Take heed to this, lest He warn you;

Pay close attention to the voice of His words.

[17] Behold then the one who hates lawless things

And destroys the evil ones.

He is forever righteous.

18 He is ungodly who says to a king,

‘You act contrary to the law,’

And to rulers, ‘O, most ungodly one.’

19 Such a man is not ashamed

Before the face of an honorable man,

Nor does he know how to give honor to the great,

So as to show proper respect.

20 But it will prove to be in vain for them to cry out

And beg the favor of a man;

For they dealt unlawfully when they turned aside the weak.

21 “For He is the observer of the works of man,

And nothing of what they do escapes Him.

22 There is no place for the workers of lawlessness to hide themselves.

23 He need not further consider a man,

For the Lord gazes upon all men.

24 He comprehends unsearchable things,

Glorious also and extraordinary things without number.

25 He discloses their works;

And He will overthrow them in the night,

And they will be brought low.

26 He extinguishes the ungodly,

For they are visible before Him,

27 Because they turned aside from the law of God

And would not regard His ordinances,

28 So as to bring before Him the cry of the needy;

For He will hear the cry of the poor.

29 He will provide quietness, and who shall condemn Him?

And He will hide His face, and who shall see Him?

Whether it be done against a nation or a man jointly,

30 To cause a hypocrite to be king,

Because of the discontent of the people.

31 “For there is one that says to the Mighty One,

‘I have received blessings; I will not take in pledge;

32 I will see apart from myself;

Show me if I have done unrighteousness,

And I will do so no more.’

33 Will He not take vengeance for it from you,

Because you failed to listen to your conscience?

For you will choose, and not I;

Therefore, speak what you know.

Elihu Rebukes Job Sternly

34 “For this reason wise men in heart shall say this,

And a wise man listens to my word.

35 But Job has spoken without understanding,

And his words are without knowledge.

36 But learn, Job, and no longer answer like that of foolish men,

37 That we add not to our sins;

For lawlessness will be counted against us

If we speak many words against the Lord.”[†]

35 Elihu continued, saying:

2 “What is this you consider as judgment?

Who are you to say, ‘I am righteous before the Lord’?

3 Or will you say, ‘What did I do, if I have sinned?’

4 “I will answer you and your three friends.

5 Look up to heaven and see,

And observe the cloud as higher than you.

6 If you have sinned, what will you do?

If you have acted very lawlessly, what can you do?

7 Since therefore you are righteous, what will you give Him?

Or what did He receive from your hand?

8 Your ungodliness may affect a man such as you,

Or your righteousness a son of man.

9 “Those who are slandered by a multitude will cry out;

They will cry out for help because of the strength of the many.

10 But no one says, ‘Where is the God who made me,

Who appoints the night watches,

11 Who distinguishes me from the four-footed animals of the earth

And from the birds of heaven?’

12 There they will cry out, but no one answers,

Because of the insolence of evil men.

13 For the Lord does not desire to look on wrongdoing,[†]

14 For He, the Almighty, is the observer

Of those who perform lawless deeds,

But He will save me.

Decide before Him if you can praise Him as it is now possible.

15 But now, He is not visiting His wrath,

Nor even taking notice of very much transgression;

16 Yet Job opens his mouth in vain;

In ignorance he burdens us with words.”

Elihu Upholds God's Goodness

36 Elihu also proceeded and said:

[2] ‘Wait for me yet a little while, that I may teach you,

For there is yet more for me to say.

[3] I will gather my knowledge from afar

And truly speak of righteousness in my works.

[4] You were not hearing unjust words without good reason.

[5] “But know that the Lord who is mighty in strength of heart

Does not cast off an innocent man.

[6] He will not give life to the ungodly,

But He will give judgment to the poor.

[7] He will not turn away from the righteous,

But will seat them on the throne with kings;

For He will lift them in triumph, and they will be exalted.

[8] But if they are bound in fetters,

They shall be held in the cords of poverty.

[9] He will tell them their works and their transgressions,

For such will act with violence.

[10] He also will hear the righteous,

And He said they will turn from wrongdoing.

[11] If they give ear and serve Him,

They shall spend their days in good things

And their years in dignity.

[12] But He does not save the ungodly,

Because they are not willing to know the Lord, And because they refused to listen when they were admonished.

13 “For the hypocrites in heart will marshal anger against themselves,

And they will not cry for help, because He has bound them.

14 Therefore, may their soul die in youth,

And their life be wounded by messengers of death,

15 Because they afflicted the weak and helpless;

And He will make manifest the judgment of the gentle.

16 “Besides, He deceived you by the mouth of the enemy.

There is an abyss and a pouring over beneath it,

And your table descended full of fatness.

17 Judgment shall not fail from the righteous,

18 But there shall be anger against the ungodly

Because of the ungodliness of the gifts they received for wrongdoings.

19 Let not your heart willingly turn you aside

From the petition of the weak who are in distress.

20 Do not lure away all the mighty men at night

So the people should go up instead of them.

21 “But guard yourself, lest you do what is wrong,

For you chose this because of poverty.

22 Behold, the Mighty One shall prevail by His strength.

Who is so powerful as He?[†]

23 Who is he who examines His works?

Or who can say, ‘He has done unjustly’?

God's Works Are Great

24 “Remember, His works are great,

Because of which men began to exist.

25 Everyone has seen for himself

How many mortals are wounded.

26 “Behold, the Mighty One is great,

And we do not know Him.

The number of His years is also endless.

27 For He numbers the drops of rain,

And they shall be poured out in rain to form a cloud.

28 The ancient clouds shall drop down

And overshadow innumerable mortals.

He has fixed a time for cattle,

And they know the appointed time for their rest.

Yet your mind is not astonished by these things,

Nor does your heart leap out from your body.

29 For one should perceive the outspreadings of a cloud

And the measure of His tabernacle.

30 Behold, He stretches His bow against him

And covers the bottom of the sea.

31 For by these He will judge the peoples.

He will give food to him who has strength.

32 He has hidden light in His hands

And given orders to the cloud by which it is diverted.

33 The Lord will proclaim it to His friend,

But there is also a portion for unrighteousness.

37 “At this also my heart was troubled and flows from its place.

2 Listen attentively to the thunder of the Lord's wrath

And the discourse coming from His mouth.

3 His dominion is under the whole heaven

And His light to the ends of the earth.

[4] Behind Him a voice will cry aloud.

He will thunder with His voice of outrage,

Yet He will not change them when His voice is heard.

[5] The Mighty One will thunder marvelously with His voice,

For He does great things we cannot comprehend.[†]

[6] For He commands the snow, ‘Fall upon the earth,’

And likewise there is the winter,

The rain and the winter storms of His might.[†]

[7] He seals up the hand of every man

That everyone may know his weakness.

[8] The wild animals go into their shelters

And are at rest in their lairs.

[9] From the secret chambers comes the whirlwind,

And cold from the mountaintop.[†]

[10] By the breath of the Mighty One, He will send frost,

And He freezes the waters as He wishes.

[11] And when the cloud obscures what He chooses,

His light will disperse the cloud.

[12] He will swirl the encircling clouds by His governance

To perform all their works,

Moving them to do whatever He commands.

This has been appointed by Him on the earth,

[13] Whether for correction or for His earth,

Or if He shall find him an object for mercy.

[14] “Pay close attention to this, O Job.

Stand still and consider the power of the Lord.

[15] We know that God has appointed His works,

Having made light out of darkness.
[16] He knows the division of the clouds
And the violent falls of evil men.
[17] But your robe is warm,
And there is quiet upon the land.
[18] Will you establish with Him the foundations
For the ancient heavens?
They are strong like a molten mirror.
[19] “What is this to you? Teach me what we will say to Him,
And let us cease speaking many words.
[20] Have I a book or scribe by me
That I may stand and put man to silence?
[21] But the light is not visible to all.
It shines far off in the ancient heavens,
As that which is from Him in the clouds.
[22] From the north come the clouds, shining like gold;
In these great things are the glory and honor of the Almighty.
[23] We do not find another like Him in His strength.
Do you not think He who judges righteously listens?
[24] Therefore men shall fear Him,
And the wise in heart shall fear Him.”

The Lord Speaks to Job

38 After Elihu had ceased from speaking, then the Lord spoke to Job out of the whirlwind and clouds, saying:[†ω]

[2] “Who is this who hides counsel from Me,
And holds words in his heart

And thinks to conceal them from Me?

[3] Gird your waist like a man;

I will question you, and you shall answer Me.[†]

The Majestic Creator

[4] “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding.

[5] Who determined its measurements? Surely you know.

Or who stretched the line upon it?

[6] To what were its foundations fastened,

Or who laid its cornerstone,

[7] When the stars were made

And all My angels praised Me in a loud voice?[†]

[8] “I shut up the sea with doors

When it burst forth and issued from the womb.[†]

[9] I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in mist.

[10] I fixed My limit for it and set bars and doors.

[11] I said, ‘This far you may come, but no further,

And here your waves must stop.’

[12] “Did I order the morning light in your time,

And did the morning star see its appointed place,

[13] To lay hold of the ends of the earth

And to shake the ungodly out of it?

[14] Or did you take clay of the ground and form a living creature,

And set it with the power of speech upon the earth?[†]

[15] Have you removed light from the ungodly

And crushed the arm of the arrogant?[†]

[16] “Have you come upon the fountain of the sea

And walked in the tracks of the deep?

17 Do the gates of death open to you for fear,

And did the doorkeepers of Hades quake when they saw you?

18 Have you been instructed in the breadth of the earth under heaven?

Tell Me now, what is the extent of it?

19 “In what kind of land does the light dwell,

And what kind is the place of darkness?

20 If you would bring Me to their boundaries,

And also if you understand their paths,

21 Then I know you were born at that time,

And the number of your years is great.

22 “Have you come upon the storehouses of snow?

Have you seen the storehouses of hail?

23 Are they stored for you against the time of your enemies,

For the day of wars and battles?

24 From where does the frost proceed?

From where does the south wind scatter over the earth?

25 “Who prepared a course for the violent rain

Or a path for the thunders?

26 Who causes it to rain on a land where there is no man,

Or an uninhabited wilderness, where there is not a man in it,

27 To satisfy the untrodden and uninhabited land

And cause it to spring forth a crop of tender grass?

28 Who is the rain's father,

And who has begotten the drops of dew?

29 From whose womb comes the ice,

And who has given birth to the frost in heaven, 30 Which descends like flowing water?

Who made firm the face of the abyss?

31 “Do you understand the band of the Pleiades,

And have you opened the fence of Orion?

32 Will you open up Mazzaroth in its season,

And the evening star with his rays?

Will you guide them?[†]

33 Do you know the movements of heaven

Or the events which take place together under heaven?

34 “Will you call a cloud with your voice,

And will it obey you with a violent shower of much rain?

35 Can you send out lightnings, and they shall go?

They shall say to you, ‘What do you want?’

36 Who has given to women wisdom in weaving

Or knowledge of embroidery?[†]

37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom,

And who bowed heaven down to earth?

38 For it is spread like a cloud of dust,

And I have joined it together as one hewn stone to another.[†]

39 “Will you hunt prey for the lions

Or satisfy the lives of the serpents?

40 They fear in their dens,

And live in the forests, and lie in wait.

41 Who provides food for the raven?

For its young ones wander

And cry to the Lord in search of food.

39 “Do you know the time when the wild rock goats bear young, And do you mark when the deer gives birth?[†]

[2] Do you number the full months of childbearing,

And have you relieved their pangs?

[3] Have you reared their young without fear,

And have you sent away their pangs?

[4] Their young ones will break forth;

They will be multiplied with offspring;

They depart and do not return.

[5] Who set the wild donkey free?

Who loosed his bonds?[†]

[6] I made the wilderness his dwelling

And the salt lands his house.

[7] He scorns the great multitude of the city;

He does not heed the blame of the tax collector.

[8] He will survey the mountains as his pasture,

And he seeks out every green thing.

[9] Will the wild ox be willing to serve you?

Will he bed by your manger?

[10] Can you bind his yoke with ropes,

Or will he plow furrows for you in the field?

[11] Do you trust him because his strength is great?

Or will you commit your works to him?

[12] Will you trust him to bring home your seed

And gather it to your threshing floor?

[13] The wings of the falcon wave proudly,

But are her wings and pinions like the kindly stork's?

[14] For the falcon leaves her eggs on the ground

And warms them in the dust.

15 She has forgotten that a foot will scatter them,

Or that wild animals will trample them.

16 She hardens herself against her young ones

As though they were not hers.

She labors in vain without concern,

17 Because God deprived her of wisdom

And did not endow her with understanding.

18 When she lifts herself on high,

She scorns the horse and its rider.[†]

19 Have you given the horse strength?

Have you clothed his neck with a mane?

20 Have you put on him a suit of armor

And made his breast glorious with courage?

21 He paws exultingly in the valley

And goes forth with strength into the plain.

22 He mocks at battle when he sees it,

Nor does he turn back from the sword.

23 The bow and the sword resound against him,

And his rage would destroy the earth.

24 He will not believe until the trumpet sounds,

25 For at the blast of the trumpet he says, ‘Good! Well done!’

He smells the battle from afar with its leaping and shouting.

26 Does the hawk remain steady by your understanding,

And spread its rigid wings looking toward the south?

27 Does the eagle mount up at your command,

And the vulture remain sitting over its nest

28 On the crag of a hidden rock?

29 From there it spies out the prey;

Its eyes observe from afar.

30 Its young ones roll themselves in blood;

And where the slain are, immediately they are found.”

40 Moreover the Lord God answered Job and said:[†]

2 “Will anyone pervert judgment with the Mighty One?

He who rebukes God will answer for it.”

Job Responds

3 Then Job answered the Lord and said:

4 “Why am I still judged and admonished,

Even if I rebuke the Lord, hear such things, and am nothing?

But what answer will I give to these things?

I will put my hand over my mouth.

5 I have spoken once.

I will not do so a second time.”

The Lord Calls Job to Account

6 The Lord yet answered Job out of the cloud and said:[†]

7 “No rather, gird up your waist like a man,

For I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

8 “Do you not reject My judgment?

Do you think I have dealt with you in any other way

Than might appear to you to be righteous?[†]

9 Have you an arm like the Lord's?

Or can you thunder with a voice like His?

10 Assume now majesty and power,

And clothe yourself with glory and honor.

11 Send forth messengers with wrath

And humble every insolent man.

12 Extinguish the arrogant man

And consume at once the ungodly.

13 Hide them together in the earth

And fill their faces with disgrace.

14 Then I will also admit

That your own right hand can save you.

15 “But look now at the wild animals with you.

They eat grass like oxen.[†]

16 Behold now, his strength is in his loins,

And his power is in the center of his stomach.

17 He sets up his tail like a cypress;

His nerves are tightly knit.

18 His ribs are like ribs of bronze,

And his backbone like bars of iron.

19 This is the ruler of the Lord's creation,

Made to be mocked at by His angels.[†]

20 When he goes up to a rough mountain,

He causes joy to the four-footed animals in Tartarus.

21 He lies under trees of every kind,

Alongside the papyrus, and reed, and bulrush.

22 The great trees shade him with their branches;

So do the branches of the willow.

23 If there should be a flood, he will not notice it;

He is confident, though the Jordan beats against his mouth,[†]

24 Though he takes it in his eyes,

Or one pierces his nose with a snare.[†]

25 Will you catch the serpent with a hook

And put a halter about his nose?

26 Or will you fasten a ring in his nose

Or pierce his lip with a hook?

27 Will he speak to you in prayer,

Softly with the voice of a suppliant?[†]

28 Will he make a covenant with you?

Will you take him as a servant forever?

29 Will you play with him as with a bird,

Or will you cage him as a sparrow for a child?[†]

30 Do the nations feed upon him?

Will they apportion him among the nations of the Phoenicians?

31 All the ships come together would not be able

To bear the mere skin of his tail,

Or carry his head with fishing vessels.

32 Once you lay your hand on him,

Remembering the battle waged by his mouth,

Let it not be done again.

41 “Have you not seen him? Have you not wondered at what has been said of him?[†]

2 Do you not fear because I am prepared?

Who then is able to stand against Me?

3 Who will stand against Me and endure,

Since everything under heaven is Mine?

4 “I will not be silent because of him,

Though because of his power, one shall pity his antagonist.[†]

5 Who will remove his outer coat?

Who may enter within the fold of his breastplate?

6 Who will open the doors of his face,

With his terrible teeth all around?

7 His entrails are as brazen plates,

And the texture of his skin as a symrite stone.

8 One part clings to another

So no air comes between them.

9 A man will be joined to his brother.

They stick together and cannot be parted.

10 His sneezings flash forth light,

And his eyes are like the appearance of the morning star.

11 Out of his mouth go burning lights;

Sparks of fire shoot out.

12 Smoke goes out of his nostrils

As from a boiling pot with fire of coals.

13 His breath kindles coals,

And a flame goes out of his mouth.

14 Strength dwells in his neck,

And destruction runs before him.

15 The muscles of his body are joined together.

They are firm on him and cannot be moved.

16 His heart is as hard as stone,

And it stands like an unyielding anvil.

17 When he turns, he is a terror

To the four-footed wild animals which leap upon the earth.

18 Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail;

Nor does spear or javelin.

19 He regards iron as straw,

And bronze as rotten wood.

20 The arrow cannot wound him;

The sling-stone becomes like grass to him.

21 Hammers are regarded as straw,

And he laughs at the threat of javelins.

22 His bed is like sharp skewers,

And all the gold of the sea under him

Is like a great amount of clay.

23 He makes the deep boil like a brazen pot,

And he regards the sea like a pot of ointment.

24 The lowest part of the deep is as a captive.

He reckons the deep as his walking range.[†]

25 On earth there is nothing like him,

Who was made to be mocked at by My angels.

26 He beholds every high thing;

He is king over all that are in the waters.”

Job's Confession and Repentance

42 Then Job answered the Lord and said:[ω]

2 “I know You can do all things,

And nothing is impossible for You.

3 For who is he who hides counsel from You?

Who keeps back his words

And thinks to hide them from You?
Who will tell me what I knew not,
Things too great and wonderful, which I did not know?
[4] But hear me, O Lord, that I also may speak.
I will ask You, and please teach Me.[†]
[5] “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.[†]
[6] Therefore I depreciate myself, and I waste away.
I regard myself as dust and ashes.”[†]

The Lord Rebukes and Redeems Job's Friends

[7]So it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “You have sinned, you and your two friends, for you have not spoken before Me what is true, as My servant Job has.[†] [8]Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you. For I will only accept him, but for his sake, I would have destroyed you; because you have not spoken what is true regarding my servant Job.” [9]So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord commanded them; and He redeemed their sin for Job's sake.[†]

Job's Wealth Is Restored

[10]Then the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends, and He forgave their sin. But the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. [11]Then all his brothers and all his sisters heard about everything that happened to him, and they came to him. So did all who knew him from the

first. They ate food and drank with him and comforted him; and they wondered at all the Lord brought upon him. Each one gave him a lamb and four drachms' weight of uncoined gold.[†]

[12]Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand donkeys.[ω] [13]He also had seven sons and three daughters.[†] [14]And he named the first, Day, the second, Cassia, and the third, Amalthia's Horn. [15]In all the land, there were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job, and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. [16]After this affliction, Job lived one hundred and seventy years, and all the years he lived were two hundred forty-eight; and Job saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. [17]So Job died, old and full of days. [18]It is written that he will rise with those whom the Lord resurrects.[†]

[19]This man is described in the Syriac book as living in the land of Ausitis, on the borders of Edom and Arabia. Previously his name was Jobab. [20]He took an Arabian wife and begot a son named Ennon. But he himself was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and of his mother, Bosorra. Thus, he was the fifth son from Abraham.

[21]Now these were the kings who reigned in Edom, over which country he also ruled. First, there was Balak the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dennaba. But after Balak, there was Jobab, who is called Job. After him, there was Asom, who was ruler out of the country of Teman. After him, there was Adad the son of Barad, who destroyed Midian in the

plain of Moab; and the name of his city was Gethaim. [22]Now his friends who came to him were: Eliphaz, of the children of Esau, king of the Temanites; Bildad, ruler of the Shuhites; and Zophar, king of the Minians.

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The Proverbs of Solomon of Solomon

Author—Solomon was the principal contributor to this collection.

Date—970–931 BC

Major Theme—*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”* (9:10). Proverbs is thought to be the foundation for the Beatitudes (Mt 5). In the first nine chapters, the wisdom of God is personified as a companion of God from the beginning and is revealed in the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. The personification of wisdom in 8:22–35 is applied to the Theotokos, the Mother of God, in the Church's Divine Liturgy.

Background—Hebrew proverbs are often written as individual couplets with two lines of equal length. Two common types are (1) the synonymous proverb, which expresses the same basic thought in both lines; and (2) the antithetical proverb, which offers a contrast, such as between wise and foolish or virtuous and evil. The main writings of Solomon reflect the antithetical proverb.

In the “words of the wise” (22:20–24:39), there is a prevalence of two- or three-verse units. The style changes in the end, with the acrostic poem where wisdom is personified as a woman, honoring the wife of noble character.

Outline

I. Wisdom Poems (1:1–9:25)

II. First Solomonic Collection of Sayings (10:1–22:19)
III. Words of the Wise (22:20–24:39)
IV. Second Solomonic Collection of Sayings Transcribed under King Hezekiah (25:1–29:28)
V. A Father's Words (30:1–15)
VI. Numbered Proverbs (30:16–35)
VII. The Words of a King (31:1–9)
VIII. The Ideal Wife (31:10–30)

To Know Wisdom

1 The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David,
Who reigned in Israel,[†ω]
2 To know wisdom and instruction,
And to understand words of discernment;
3 To receive both subtlety of words,
And to understand true righteousness and upright judgment;
4 So as to give astuteness to the simple,
And both perception and understanding to a young man;
5 For a wise man who hears these things will be wiser,
And the man of understanding will gain direction.

Wisdom Begets the Fear of God

6 He will understand both a parable and a hidden saying,
Both wise words and riddles.[†]
7 The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,
And there is good understanding in all who practice it;[†]
8 And godliness toward God is the beginning of perception,
But the ungodly despise wisdom and instruction.

[9] Hear, my son, the instruction of your father,
And do not reject the laws of your mother.[†]
[10] For you will receive a crown of grace on your head
And a gold chain around your neck.
[11] My son, do not let the ungodly lead you astray,
And do not consent if they invite you, saying,[†]
[12] “Come with us; take part in bloodshed,
And let us hide a righteous man in the earth unjustly;
[13] And let us swallow him, just as Hades does the living,
And let us take away his remembrance from the earth;
[14] Let us seize his valuable property,
And let us fill our houses with spoils;
[15] Cast your lot with us
And let us acquire a common bag;
Let there be one purse for us.”
[16] Do not walk in the way with them,
But turn away your foot from their paths.
[17] For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
[18] For nets are not spread before birds for no reason,
For those who participate in murder store up evils for themselves;
And evil is the destruction of lawless men.
[19] These are the ways of all who accomplish lawless things,
For they take away their own soul in ungodliness.

Wisdom Speaks Out

[20] Wisdom sings in the streets;
She moves boldly in the squares.[†ω]

21 She preaches on high city walls

And sits at the gates of lords.

At the gates of a city she boldly says,

22 “So long a time as the simple hold fast to righteousness,

They shall not be ashamed;[†]

23 But those without discernment, since they are desirous of arrogance,

And are become ungodly, they hate perception,

And are become subject to reproofs.[†]

24 Behold, I shall bring forth upon you the utterance of my breath,

And I shall teach you my word.[†]

25 Since I called, but you did not obey,

And spoke at length, but you paid no attention,

26 But made my counsels invalid,

And were not persuaded by my reproofs;

27 Consequently, I will laugh at your annihilation,

And will exult when ruin comes to you,

28 And when confusion reaches you unawares,

And overthrow comes like a whirlwind,

29 And when tribulation and anguish come to you,

And when destruction comes to you.

30 For it shall be, when you shall call upon me,

I will not listen to you;

31 Evil men will seek me, but not find me,

For they hate wisdom, and choose not the fear of the Lord.

32 Neither do they wish to follow my counsels,

But despise my reproofs.

33 Therefore, they shall eat the fruits of their own way

And be filled with their own ungodliness.

[34] For since they wrong the simple, they shall be killed,

And a close examination shall destroy the ungodly.

[35] But he who obeys me shall dwell in hope,

And shall be at rest without fear from every evil.”

It Is Wise to Obey

2 My son, if you receive the words of my commandment

And hide them within yourself,[†ω]

[2] Your ear will be obedient to wisdom,

And you will incline your heart to understanding;

You will entrust it to your son as an admonition.

[3] For if he calls upon wisdom,

And you utter your voice for understanding;

If you seek perception with a strong voice,[†]

[4] If you seek her as silver

And search for her as treasure,

[5] Then you will understand the fear of the Lord

And find the knowledge of God.

[6] For the Lord gives wisdom,

And from His face come knowledge and understanding;

[7] And He stores up salvation for the upright;

He will protect their journey,[†]

[8] That He might guard the ways of His ordinances;

And He will carefully guard the way of those who reverence Him.

[9] Then you will understand righteousness and judgment,

And accomplish successfully every good path for yourself.

Holy Thinking

10 For if wisdom comes into your mind,

And the perception in your soul seems to be good,

11 Then good counsel will guard you,

And holy thinking will keep you;

12 That it might rescue you from an evil way

And from a man who speaks nothing trustworthy.

13 Woe to those who forsake the paths of uprightness

So they may walk in the ways of darkness,

14 Who delight in evils

And rejoice in evil perversion,

15 Whose ways are crooked

And their paths devious,

16 So they may cause you to be far from the straight way

And a stranger to righteous judgment.

17 My son, do not lay hold of evil counsel,

Nor forsake the teaching of your youth

And forget the divine covenant;

18 For it establishes its house with death,

And its paths beside Hades with the dead;

19 All who journey there do not return,

Nor do they lay hold of straight paths;

For they do not comprehend the years of life.

20 For if they walked in good paths,

They would find the smooth paths of righteousness.

21 The inhabitants of the land will be good,

And the simple will be left in it;

22 For the upright will dwell in the land,

And the holy will be left in it.

23 The ways of the ungodly shall perish from the land,

And the lawless shall be banished from it.

The Laws of Wisdom

3 My son, do not forget my laws,

But let your heart keep my words;[†ω]

2 For length of days, and years of life and peace

They will add to you.[†]

3 Do not let almsgiving and faithfulness forsake you,

But hang them upon your neck;

4 And you will find grace

And provide good things before the Lord and men.[†]

5 Trust in God with all your heart,

And do not exalt your own wisdom.

6 In all your ways know wisdom,

That she may cut a straight path for you;

And your foot will not stumble.

7 Do not rely on your own discernment,

But fear God, and turn away from every evil.

8 Then there shall be healing for your body

And care for your bones.

9 Honor the Lord from your righteous labors,

And offer Him the firstfruits from the fruits of your righteousness,

10 That your storehouses may be filled with abundance of grain,

And your winepresses may gush with wine.

The Instruction of Wisdom

[11] My son, do not despise the instruction of the Lord,

Neither grow weary under His reproof.[†ω]

[12] For whom the Lord loves He instructs,

And chastises every son He receives.

[13] Blessed is a man who finds wisdom,

And a mortal who sees discernment;

[14] For the profits gained from wisdom are better

Than the treasures of gold and silver.

[15] And wisdom is more valuable than precious stones,

And nothing evil will withstand her;

[16] She is well known to all who come near her,

And no honor is worthy of her.

[17] For length of days and years of life are in her right hand,

And in her left hand are riches and glory;

[18] Righteousness proceeds from her mouth,

And she carries law and mercy upon her tongue.

[19] Her ways are good ways,

And all her paths are in peace.

[20] She is a tree of life for all who cleave to her,

And she is security for those who lean upon her as upon the Lord.

[21] God by wisdom founded the earth

And prepared the heavens with discernment.[ω]

[22] With perception the depths were broken up,

And the clouds flowed with dew.

The Cure for Carelessness

[23] My son, do not be careless,

But keep my counsel and thinking,[†]

24 That your soul may live,

And grace may be around your neck.

25 And there will be healing for your flesh

And care for your bones,

26 That you may walk confidently in peace in all your ways,

And your foot may not stumble.

27 For if you sit down, you will be without fear,

And if you lie down, your sleep will be pleasant.

28 And do not be afraid of intimidation when it comes upon you,

Nor of the attack of the ungodly when it comes at you;

29 For the Lord will be over all your ways,

And He will plant your feet firmly, that you may not be shaken.

30 Do not withhold doing good to the needy,

When you may give a helping hand;

31 Do not say, when you are able to do good,

“Come back tomorrow, and I will give you something”;

For you do not know what the next day will bring forth.

32 Do not devise evil things against your friend

Who dwells beside you and trusts in you.

33 Do not be ready to quarrel with a man in vain,

Lest he do you some harm.

34 Do not incur the reproach of evil men,

Neither seek their ways;

35 For every lawless man is unclean before the Lord,

And he does not sit among the righteous.

36 The curse of God is in the houses of the ungodly,

But He blesses the dwellings of the righteous.

37 The Lord opposes the arrogant,

But He gives grace to the humble.[ω]

38 The wise shall inherit glory,

But the ungodly exalt dishonor.

Obedient Thinking

4 Hear, my children, the instruction of your father,

And pay attention, that you might know his thinking;[†]

2 For I offer a good gift to you;

Do not forsake my law.

3 For I was a son, and I was obedient to my father,

And beloved in the presence of my mother,

4 Who taught me, saying,

“Let our word become firmly planted in your heart;

5 Guard our commandments; do not forget them;

Neither disregard the word of my mouth,

6 Nor forsake it, and it shall cleave to you;

Love it, and it will keep you.

7 Secure it, and it shall exalt you;

Honor it, that it may embrace you,

8 And give your head a crown of graces,

And cover you with a crown of delight.”[†]

The Paths of Wisdom

9 Hear me, my son, and receive my words,

And the years of your life shall be increased,

That many ways of life may be yours;[†]

10 For I teach you the ways of wisdom

And set you on upright paths.

11 For if you walk, your steps shall not be confined;

And if you run, you will not grow weary.

12 Lay hold of my instruction; do not let go,

But guard it for yourself as your life.

13 Do not go in the ways of the ungodly,

Neither be zealous for the ways of the lawless;

14 In whatever place they encamp, do not go there,

But turn aside from them and pass by.

15 For they cannot sleep unless they do evil;

Their sleep is taken away, and they do not rest;

16 For they feed on the bread of ungodliness,

And they are drunk with the wine of lawlessness.

17 But the ways of the righteous shine like a light;

They go before and give light until full daylight.

18 But the ways of the ungodly are dark;

They do not know how they stumble.

The Wise Heart

19 My son, give heed to my word

And incline your ear to my words,[†]

20 That your fountains may not fail you;

Guard them in your heart;

21 For they are life to those who find them

And healing for all their flesh.

22 Keep your heart with all watchfulness,

For from these words are the issues of life.

23 Put away from yourself a crooked mouth

And remove unrighteous lips far from you.

24 Let your eyes look straight forward,

And let your eyelids assent to righteous things.

25 Make straight paths for your feet

And direct your ways aright.

26 Do not turn aside to the right or to the left,

But turn your foot from an evil way;

27 For God knows the ways on the right hand,

But those on the left are perverse;

28 And He shall make your paths straight

And guide your steps in peace.

Fornication or Marriage

5 My son, hold fast to wisdom

And incline your ear to my words,[†ω]

2 That you may guard good thinking;

And I command you with the perception of my lips.

3 Do not join yourself to a base woman,

For honey drips from the lips of a prostitute,

Or for a season she is pleasing to your taste;

4 Afterward, however, you will find her more bitter than gall

And sharper than a two-edged sword.

5 For feet lacking discernment lead those using her down into Hades with death;

Her footsteps are not planted,

6 For she does not travel the ways of life;

And her paths are slippery and not easy to discern.

The Perils of Sex outside of Marriage

[7] Now therefore, my son, hear me,

And do not make my words invalid;[†]

[8] Make your way distant from her

And do not come near the doors of her house,

[9] That you may not give away your life to others

And your existence to the merciless;

[10] That strangers may not be filled with your strength,

And your labors go into the houses of strangers,

[11] And you should feel regret at the last,

When the flesh of your body is consumed;

[12] And you will say, “How I hated instruction

And turned my heart away from reproofs;

[13] I did not hear the voice of my instructor and teacher,

Nor did I incline my ear;

[14] Little by little I was in every evil

In the midst of the church and congregation.”

The Sanctity of Marriage

[15] Drink waters from your vessels

And from the fountains of your spring.[†ω]

[16] Do not let the waters from your fountain be spilled by you,

But let your waters pass through your wide places;

[17] Let them be only for you,

And let no stranger partake with you;

[18] Let the fountain of your water be for you alone,

And rejoice together with the wife of your youth.

[19] Let your loving deer and graceful colt keep company with you,

And let her alone go before you and be with you at all times;

For in living with her love, you will be great.

Another Warning

20 Do not be intimate with a strange woman,

Neither cling to the embrace of a woman not your own;[†]

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of God,

And He keeps close watch on all his paths.

22 Lawless women ensnare a man,

But each man is bound by the chains of his own sins.

23 Such a man dies with the uninstructed

And is cast forth from the abundance of his own substance;

And he is destroyed by lack of discernment.

A Careless Tongue

6 My son, if you assume the debt of your friend,

You will deliver your hand to an enemy;[†]

2 For a man's own lips become a strong snare to him,

And he is conquered by the utterances of his own mouth.

3 My son, do what I command you, and you will save yourself;

For you came into the hands of evil things through your friend;[ω]

4 Do not be faint,

But provoke even your friend, for whom you assumed a debt;

5 Do not give sleep to your eyes

Nor slumber to your eyelids

6 That you may be saved, as a gazelle from the snares,

And as a bird from a trap. [†]

Laziness: A Dead-End Road

7 Compare yourself with the ant, O sluggard,

And be zealous when you see his ways,

And become wiser than he.[†]

8 For although he has no tilled land,

Neither anyone to compel him,

Nor any master to rule him,

9 Yet he prepares all his food in the summer

And makes his provisions abundant in the winter.

10 Or go to the honeybee,

And learn how she is a worker

And how solemnly she does her work,

11 Whose labors kings and common people use for health;

And she is desirable to all and glorious;

12 And although she is weak in bodily strength,

She leads the way in honoring wisdom.

13 How long, O sluggard, will you be idle,

And when will you arise from sleep?

14 You sleep a little; you sit down a little; you doze a short while;

And you fold your hands on your chest a little;

15 Then poverty comes to you as an evil traveler

And neediness as a swift runner.

16 But if you are diligent, your harvest shall come to you as a fountain,

And neediness as an evil runner shall desert you.

A Lawless Spirit

17 A man who is without discernment and is lawless does not walk in good ways.

But he winks with an eye; he makes a sign with his foot,

And teaches with the wave of his hand.[†]

18 And with a perverse heart, he constantly schemes evil things;

Such a man causes trouble in a city.

19 Therefore his destruction comes suddenly,

A deep and incurable wound.

20 For he rejoices in everything the Lord hates,

And he shall be broken because of his soul's uncleanness:

21 A haughty eye, an unrighteous tongue,

Hands that shed righteous blood,

22 A heart that devises evil thoughts,

And feet that hasten to do evil;

23 As a false witness he kindles injustice

And causes quarrels between brethren.

24 My son, guard the laws of your father,

And do not depart from the rules of your mother.[ω]

25 But fasten them to your soul continually

And wear them as a collar upon your neck.

Playing with Fire

26 When you walk about, bring along this commandment

And let it be with you;[†]

27 And as you sleep, let it guard you,

That when you arise, it may speak to you.

28 For a commandment of law is a lamp and a light,

And the way of life is reproof and instruction,

29 That you may keep yourself from a married woman

And from the slanderous tongue of a strange woman.

30 Do not let the desire of beauty conquer you;

Neither be caught by her eyes,

Nor captivated by her eyelids;

31 For the value of a prostitute is only one loaf,

And such a woman hunts for the precious souls of men.

32 Shall anyone bind fire to his bosom

And his garments not burn?[†]

33 Or will anyone walk about on coals of fire

And not burn his feet?

34 Likewise is the one who goes in to a married woman;

He shall not be guiltless, nor any who touch her.

35 It is not surprising if anyone who steals is caught,

For he steals that he may fill his hungry soul;

36 But if he is caught, he will repay sevenfold,

And by giving all his goods, he shall deliver himself.

37 But the adulterer through his lack of discernment

Obtains the destruction of his soul;

38 He bears both pain and dishonor,

And his disgrace will not be wiped away forever.

39 For the anger of her husband is full of jealousy;

He will not spare in the day of judgment;

40 He will not take any ransom in exchange for his hatred,

Nor will he be reconciled by many gifts.

A Son with Discernment

7 My son, guard my words,

And hide my commandments within yourself;[†]

2 My son, honor the Lord, and you shall be strong,

And fear none other but Him.

3 Guard my commandments

And you will live, and my words as the pupils of your eyes;

[4] And put them around your fingers,

And write them upon the breadth of your heart.

[5] Say that wisdom is your sister,

And gain discernment as a friend for yourself,

[6] So they may keep you from a strange and evil woman,

If she comes at you with flattering words. [†]

A Son without Discernment

[7] For she looks from a window of her house into the streets

Upon whom she might see among the undiscerning children,[†]

[8] A young man lacking discernment

Passing by near the corner on the pathways of her house;

[9] And she speaks in the darkness at evening,

When there is silence on a dark night;

[10] And the woman meets him, having the appearance of a prostitute;

She makes the heart of young men throb.

[11] She is excited and debauched,

And her feet do not rest at home.

[12] For at times she is outside roaming about,

And another time she is in the streets near every corner laying a trap.

[13] Then laying hold of him, she kisses him,

And with a shameless face she says to him,

[14] “I have a peace offering;

Today I pay my vows;

[15] For this reason I came out to meet you;

Longing for your face, I found you;

[16] I spread my bed with sheets

And covered it with tapestry from Egypt.

17 I sprinkled my bed with saffron

And my house with cinnamon;

18 Come, and let us enjoy love until morning;

Come, and let us embrace in love;

19 For my husband is not at home,

But is gone on a long journey

20 Taking a bag of money in his hand;

He will return to his house after many days.”

21 So she leads him astray with much conversation,

And with snares from her lips she compels him.

22 And being cajoled, he follows her

As an ox is led for slaughter

23 And as a dog to bonds,

Or as a deer struck with an arrow in the liver;

24 And he hastens even as a bird into a snare,

Not knowing he runs for his life.

25 Now therefore, my son, hear me,

And hold fast to the words of my mouth;[†]

26 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,

For she wounded and cast down many,

And those whom she slew are innumerable;

27 Her house is the road to Hades,

Leading down to the chambers of death.

Divine Wisdom for Mankind

8 You shall proclaim wisdom

That discernment may obey you;[††ω]

2 For she is on the lofty summit

And stands in the midst of the paths.†

3 For she sits beside the gates of princes

And sings at the entrances,

4 “You, O men, I exhort,

And I utter my voice to the sons of men;†

5 Understand astuteness, O simple ones,

And put it in your heart, O uninstructed ones.

6 Obey me, for I speak sacred things,

And from my lips I will bring forth things that are true.

7 For my mouth shall speak the truth,

But false lips are an abomination before me.†

8 All the words of my mouth are with righteousness;

There is nothing in them crooked or twisted.

9 All things are evident to those who understand

And true to those who find knowledge.†

10 Lay hold of instruction and not silver,

And knowledge rather than tested gold,

And choose perception rather than pure gold.†

11 For wisdom is better than precious stones,

And every costly thing is not worthy of her.

12 I, wisdom, dwell with counsel,

And I call upon knowledge and understanding.

13 The fear of the Lord hates unrighteousness,

And both rudeness and arrogance, and the ways of wicked men;

And I hate the perverted ways of evil men.

14 Counsel and safety are mine;

Discernment is mine, and strength is mine;

15 By me, kings reign,

And princes write of righteousness;

16 By me, noblemen become great,

And by me, monarchs have power in the land.

17 I love those who love me,

And those who seek me shall find me.

18 Riches and glory belong to me,

And abundant possessions, and righteousness;

19 It is better to enjoy my fruits than gold and precious stones,

And my fruits are better than choice silver.

20 I walk in the ways of righteousness,

And I am conversant with the paths of judgment;

21 That I may distribute substance to those who love me,

And may fill their treasuries with good things.

Divine Wisdom and the Father

22 “If I declare to you the things that happen daily,

I will also remember to recount the things of old.[†] [ω]

23 The Lord created me in the beginning of His ways for His works;

He established me in the beginning before time,[†]

24 Before He made the earth, and before He made the abysses,

Before the going forth of the fountains of waters,[†]

25 Before the mountains were created;

And He begot me before all hills.

26 The Lord made the fields and the uninhabited places

And the inhabited heights under heaven.[†]

27 When He prepared heaven, I was present with Him,

And when He set apart His throne upon the winds.

[28] When He made strong the things above the clouds,

And made sure the fountains under heaven,

[29] And made strong the foundations of the earth,

I was working beside Him;[†]

[30] I was He in whom He rejoiced;

Daily and continually I was gladdened by His face.

[31] When He completed the world, He rejoiced,

And He rejoiced in the sons of men.[†]

[32] Now therefore, my son, hear me:

Blessed is the man who shall hearken to me

And the man who shall guard my ways;[†] [ω]

[33] Who watches daily at my doors,

Who keeps watch at the doors of my entryways;

[34] For my issues are the issues of life,

And grace is prepared from the Lord.[†]

[35] But those who sin against me act ungodly toward their own souls,

And those who hate me love death.”[†]

Wisdom's Invitation

9 Wisdom built her house,

And she supported it with seven pillars.[†] [ω]

[2] She offered her sacrifices;

She mixed her wine in a bowl

And prepared her table.[†]

[3] She sent her servants,

Inviting people to the bowl with a lofty proclamation, saying,[†]

[4] “He who is without discernment,

Let him turn aside to me”;
And to those in need of discernment, she says,[†]
5 “Come, eat my bread
And drink the wine I mixed for you;[†]
6 Forsake lack of discernment, and you shall live;
Seek discernment so you may live,
And keep straight your understanding with knowledge.”

Wisdom: Let Us Attend!

7 He who chastises evil men shall receive dishonor to himself,
And he who reproves the ungodly man shall be blamed himself.[†]
8 Do not reprove evil men, so they may not hate you;
Reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
9 Give the opportunity to a wise man, and he will be wiser;
Instruct a righteous man, and he shall continue to receive it.
10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the counsel of saints is understanding;
For to know the law is characteristic of a good mind.
11 For in this manner you will live a long time,
And the years of your life shall be increased.
12 My son, if you become wise in yourself,
you shall also be wise toward your neighbor;
But if you prove to be evil, you alone will go through troubles.[ω]
13 He who supports himself with lies will shepherd winds
And chase flying birds;
14 For he abandoned the ways of his own vineyard
And strayed from paths of his own farming;
15 And he will pass through a waterless desert,

A land assigned to drought,

And he gathers barrenness with his hands.

16 A woman in need of a morsel is without discernment and overbold;

She has no sense of shame.

17 She sits upon the doors of her own house,

Upon a seat openly in the streets,

18 Calling to those who pass by

And who go straight along their paths,

19 “He who is very lacking in discernment, let him turn aside to me;

And he who is in need of discernment, I exhort, saying,

20 ‘Grasp with pleasure the secret bread

And the sweet water of theft.’ ”

21 But he does not know that the inhabitants of the earth perish beside her,

And he happens upon a snare of Hades.

22 But hurry off, do not continue in that place,

Neither set your eye toward her;

23 For so you shall pass through strange water

And cross beyond a strange river;

24 And keep away from strange water,

And do not drink from a strange fountain;

25 That you may live a long time

And add years of life to yourself.[††]

The Wisdom of Solomon

10 A wise son makes his father glad,

But a son without discernment is a grief to his mother.[†] [ω]

2 Treasures do not benefit lawless men,

But righteousness delivers from death.[†]

3 The Lord will not let the soul of the righteous man starve,

But He overthrows the life of the ungodly.†

4 Poverty humbles a man,

But the hands of courageous men enrich others.†

5 A son who is instructed will be wise,

And he will use a man without discernment as a servant.

6 A son with understanding is kept safe from the heat,

But a lawless son is blasted by the wind at harvest time.†

7 The blessing of the Lord is upon the head of a righteous man,

But untimely grief will cover the mouth of the ungodly.

8 The remembrance of the righteous is with eulogies,

But the name of an ungodly man is extinguished.

9 The wise man in heart will receive the commandments,

But the man unguarded in speech will be overthrown in his perverseness.†

10 He who walks in sincerity walks confidently,

But he who perverts his ways will be known.

11 He who winks his eyes deceitfully gathers grief for men,

But he who reproves boldly is a peacemaker.

12 A fountain of life is in the hand of a righteous man,

But the mouth of an ungodly man will hide destruction.

13 Hatred stirs up strife,

But love covers all who are not lovers of strife.†

14 He who brings forth wisdom from his lips

Beats a heartless man with a rod.

15 The wise will hide perception,

But the mouth of a rash man approaches destruction.†

16 The acquisition of riches is a fortified city,

But poverty is the destruction of the ungodly.

17 The works of the righteous produce life,

But the fruits of the ungodly produce sins.

18 Instruction guards righteous ways of life,

But instruction incapable of criticism goes astray.

19 Righteous lips cover hatred,

But those who bring forth abuse are very lacking in discernment.

20 You will not escape sin by a multitude of words,

But you of discreet lips will be forbearing.[†]

21 The tongue of a righteous man is silver tried in the fire,

But the heart of an ungodly man shall fail.

22 The lips of righteous men understand lofty things,

But men without discernment die in want.

23 The blessing of the Lord is upon the head of a righteous man;

It enriches him, and grief of heart will not be added to it.

24 A man without discernment does evil things with laughter,

But wisdom gives birth to discernment in a man.[†]

25 The ungodly man is carried about in destruction,

But the desire of the righteous man is acceptable.

26 The ungodly man is destroyed by the passing storm,

But the righteous man turns aside and shall be saved forever.

27 As an unripe grape is harmful to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,

So is a lawless woman to the men who use her.

28 The fear of the Lord increases days,

But the years of the ungodly will be shortened.

29 Gladness continues for the righteous,

But the hope of the ungodly perishes.[†]

[30] The fear of the Lord is the stronghold of a holy man,

But destruction is for those who work evil.[†]

[31] A righteous man will never fail,

But the ungodly shall not inhabit the earth.

[32] The mouth of a righteous man distills wisdom,

But the tongue of an unrighteous man utterly destroys.[ω]

[33] The lips of righteous men distill grace,

But the mouth of the ungodly is perverse.

The Fruits of Righteousness

11 Deceitful scales are an abomination before the Lord,

But a righteous weight is acceptable to Him.

[2] Wherever arrogance enters, there also is dishonor,

But the mouth of the humble meditates on wisdom.[†]

[3] When a righteous man dies, he leaves regret,

But the destruction of the ungodly is immediate and brings joy.

[4] Righteousness cuts straight and blameless paths,

But ungodliness embraces wrongdoing.[†]

[5] The righteousness of upright men delivers them,

But lawless men are taken to their destruction.

[6] When a righteous man dies, his hope does not perish,

But the boast of the ungodly perishes.[†]

[7] A righteous man escapes from a snare,

But the ungodly man is handed over in his place.

[8] There is a snare for citizens in the mouth of the ungodly,

But the perception of the righteous is prosperous.[†]

[9] A city stays upright in the good things of the righteous,

But it is razed to the ground by the mouths of the ungodly.

10 A man in need of discernment treats citizens with contempt,

But a man of discernment keeps quiet.†

11 A double-tongued man reveals deliberations heard in council,

But a man faithful in spirit conceals matters.

12 Those for whom there is no leadership fall like leaves,

But there is salvation in much counsel.

13 A wicked man does evil whenever he meets a righteous man,

And he hates the sound of stability.

14 A thankful woman raises up glory to her husband,

But a throne of dishonor is a woman who hates righteousness.

15 Lazy men are in need of wealth,

But courageous men support themselves with wealth.†

16 A merciful man does good to his soul,

But an unmerciful man utterly destroys his body.

17 An ungodly man does unrighteous works,

But the seed of the righteous is a reward of truth.†

18 A righteous son is begotten unto life,

But the persecution of an ungodly man is unto death.

19 Perverse ways are an abomination to the Lord,

But all who are blameless in their ways are acceptable to Him.

20 He who joins hands with the unrighteous will not go unpunished,

But he who sows righteousness will receive a faithful reward.

21 Like a ring in the nose of a wild swine,

So is beauty to an evil-minded woman.

22 Every desire of the righteous is good,

But the hope of the ungodly is destruction.†

23 There are those who sow their own things and produce more things,

And there are those who gather but have less.

24 Every sincere soul is blessed,

But an angry man is not graceful.[†]

25 May the one who hoards grain leave it to the nations,

But may blessing be upon the head of the one who shares it.

26 He who plans good things seeks good grace,

But he who seeks evil, it will capture him.

27 He who trusts in riches, this man will fall,

But he who helps the righteous, this man will rise.

28 He who does not deal graciously with his own house will inherit the wind,

And a man without discernment will be servant to one with discernment.

29 A tree of life springs up from the fruit of righteousness,

But the souls of the lawless will be taken away before their time.[†]

30 If the righteous man is scarcely saved,

Then where shall an ungodly man and a sinner appear?[†]

The Riches of Righteousness

12 He who loves instruction loves perception,

But he who hates correction is without discernment.[†]

2 He who finds grace from the Lord becomes better,

But a lawless man will be passed over in silence.[†]

3 A man will not prosper by lawlessness,

But the roots of righteous men will not be pulled out.

4 A courageous wife is a crown to her husband,

But as a worm in a tree, so an evildoing wife destroys her husband.[†]

5 The thoughts of the righteous are judgments,

But the ungodly devise deceits.[†]

6 The words of the ungodly are deceitful,

But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.

[7] If he does not turn, an ungodly man is destroyed,

But the houses of the righteous remain.

[8] The mouth of a man of understanding is praised by a man,

But the slothful of heart are treated with contempt.[†] [ω]

[9] It is better for a man in dishonor to serve himself

Than for him to surround himself with honor while in need of bread.

[10] A righteous man has compassion on the lives of his cattle,

But the affections of the ungodly are without mercy.[†]

[11] He who works his own land will be satisfied with bread,

But those who pursue vain things are in need of discernment.

[12] He who is gladdened by wines in passing his time

Shall leave dishonor in his own strongholds.

[13] The desires of the ungodly are evil,

But the roots of the godly are in strongholds.[†]

[14] By the sin of his lips a sinner falls into snares,

But a righteous man escapes from them.

[15] He whose looks are gentle will show mercy,

But he who contends in the gates will afflict souls.[†]

[16] By the fruits of his mouth, the soul of a man will be filled with good things,

And the recompense of his lips will be given to him.

[17] The ways of undiscerning men are right in their own eyes,

But a wise man hearkens to counsels.

[18] A man without discernment immediately proclaims his wrath,

But an astute man hides his own dishonor.[†]

[19] A righteous man declares his honesty openly,

But the witness of the unrighteous is deceitful.[†]

20 There are those who wound with a sword as they speak,
But the tongues of the wise heal.[†]

21 Truthful lips establish a testimony,
But a hasty witness has an unrighteous tongue.

22 There is deceit in the heart of a man who devises evil things,
But those who counsel peace shall be glad.[†]

23 Nothing unrighteous will ever be pleasing to the righteous,
But the ungodly will be filled with evil things.

24 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord,
But he who shows faithfulness is acceptable to Him.[ω]

25 A man of understanding is a throne of perception,
But the heart of the undiscerning will meet with curses.[†]

26 The hand of the chosen shall prevail easily,
But the deceitful shall be for captivity.

27 A fearful word troubles the heart of a righteous man,
But a good message makes him glad.

28 A righteous arbiter shall be his own friend,
But the decisions of the ungodly are unreasonable.

29 Evil things shall pursue sinners,
And the way of the ungodly will lead them astray.

30 A deceitful man will not gain his prey,
But a pure man is a precious possession.

31 In the ways of righteousness there is life,
But the ways of remembering wrongs are unto death.[†]

The Godly and the Ungodly

13 An astute son is obedient to his father,
But a disobedient son is for destruction.[†]

[2] A good man eats from the fruits of righteousness,

But the souls of the lawless will destroy themselves before their time.[†]

[3] He who guards his mouth keeps his own soul,

But he who is hasty with his lips will dismay himself.[†]

[4] Every idle man has desire,

But the hands of the courageous are diligent.[†]

[5] A righteous man hates an unrighteous word,

But an ungodly man is ashamed and will not have confidence.

[6] Righteousness guards the simple,

But sin makes the ungodly worthless.

[7] There are those with nothing who make themselves rich,

And there are those, though very rich, who humble themselves.

[8] The ransom of a man's soul is his own wealth,

But the poor man does not withstand a threat.[†]

[9] Light is with the righteous continually,

But the light of the ungodly is extinguished.

[10] Deceitful souls are led astray in sins,

But the righteous have compassion and are merciful.[†]

[11] An evil man does evil things with arrogance,

But those who know themselves are wise.[†]

[12] Property hastily gained with lawlessness becomes diminished,

But he who gathers for himself with godliness will be increased;

A righteous man has compassion and lends.

[13] A man who begins to give aid heartily is better

Than he who only promises and leads another to hope;

A good desire is a tree of life.

[14] He who despises a matter will be despised by it,

But he who fears the commandment, this man is in good health.

15 To a deceitful son there shall be nothing good,

But for a wise servant, his deeds shall be prosperous,

And his way shall be led aright.[†]

16 The law of the wise is a fountain of life,

But the man without understanding will die by a snare.[†]

17 A good understanding gives grace,

And to know the law is to be of a good mind,

But the ways of scorners are destructive.[†]

18 Every astute man acts with knowledge,

But the man without discernment spreads out his own evil.[†]

19 A rash king falls into evil things,

But a faithful messenger rescues him.

20 Instruction removes poverty and dishonor,

And he who gives heed to rebukes will be glorified.[†]

21 The desires of the godly gladden the soul,

But the works of the ungodly are far from knowledge.

22 He who walks with the wise shall be wise,

But he who walks with those without discernment will be known.[ω]

23 Evil things shall pursue sinners,

But good things will overtake the righteous.[†]

24 A good man will inherit sons of sons,

But the wealth of the ungodly will be stored up for the righteous.

25 The righteous shall live in wealth many years,

But the unrighteous will be destroyed suddenly.

26 He who spares the rod hates his son,

But he who loves him instructs him with care.[†]

27 A righteous man eats and satisfies his soul,

But the souls of the ungodly are in want.

Righteousness at Home

14 Wise women build houses,

But those without discernment destroy them with their hands.[†]

2 He who walks uprightly fears the Lord,

But he who is crooked in his ways will be dishonored.

3 From the mouth of a man without discernment comes a rod of arrogance,

But the lips of wise men guard themselves.[†]

4 Where there are no oxen, the stalls are clean,

But where there are abundant crops, the strength of an ox is evident.

5 A faithful witness does not lie,

But an unrighteous witness kindles lies.

6 You will seek wisdom in the company of evil men, and you will not find it;

But perception is easily found with the discerning.[†]

7 All things are contrary to a man without discernment,

But the weapons of perception are wise lips.[†]

8 The wisdom of astute men will know their ways,

But the folly of men without discernment is in their deceit.[†]

9 The houses of the lawless are due for purification,

But the houses of the righteous are acceptable.

10 If the heart of a man is controlled by feelings, his soul is sorrowful,

But when he rejoices, it is not mingled with arrogance.

11 The houses of the ungodly will be destroyed,

But the tents of the upright shall stand.

12 There is a road that seems to be right with men,

But the ends of it reach into the depths of Hades.[†]

13 Sorrow does not mingle with gladness,

But in the end, this joy turns to sorrow.

14 A bold-hearted man will be filled with his own ways,

But a good man with all his thoughts.[†]

15 A simple man believes in every word,

But an astute man comes to repentance.[†] [ω]

16 A wise man fears and turns away from evil,

But a man without discernment persuades himself to mingle with a lawless man.

17 A quick-tempered man acts with recklessness,

But a man with discernment bears many things.[†]

18 Men without discernment will share in evil,

But the astute will take hold of perception.[†]

19 Evil men will slip and fall in the presence of good men,

And the ungodly shall serve at the gate of the righteous.

20 Friends will hate poor friends,

But the friends of the rich are many.

21 He who dishonors the poor sins,

But he who has mercy on the poor is very blessed.

22 Deceivers devise evil things,

But good men devise mercy and truth.[†]

23 Devisers of evil things do not understand mercy and faithfulness,

But mercies and faithfulness are with devisers of good things.

24 To everyone who is careful there is an abundance,

But he who is pleasure-taking and slothful shall be in want.

25 The crown of the wise is astuteness,

But the pastime of the undiscerning is evil.[†]

26 A faithful witness will rescue a soul from evil men,

But a deceitful man kindles lies.
27 In the fear of the Lord there is hope of strength,
And to His children there remains support.
28 The command of the Lord is a fountain of life,
For it causes one to turn from the snare of death.[†] [ω]
29 The glory of a king is in a large nation,
But the destruction of a ruler is in a lack of people.
30 A longsuffering man is strong in discernment,
But the fainthearted man is strongly without discernment.[†]
31 A man with a gentle spirit is a healer of the heart,
But a sensual heart is the moth of the bones.[†]
32 He who oppresses the poor provokes his Maker,
But he who honors Him has mercy upon a poor man.
33 In his evil an ungodly man will be rejected,
But a righteous man has confidence in his own holiness.
34 There is wisdom in the good heart of a man,
But wisdom is unknown in the heart of those without discernment.[†]
35 Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sins diminish tribes.
36 A wise servant is acceptable to a king,
And by his own versatility he removes dishonor.

Righteous Responses

15 Wrath destroys even men of discernment;
But a humble answer turns away anger,
And a grievous word stirs up wrath.[†]
2 The tongue of the wise understands good things,
But the mouth of those without discernment proclaims evil things.

3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place;

They keep watch over both the evil and the good.[†]

4 The healing of the tongue is a tree of life,

And the one who guards it will be filled with the Spirit.[†]

5 A son without discernment treats the instruction of his father with contempt,

But the one who guards his commandments is more astute.

6 In abundant righteousness there is much strength,

But the ungodly shall utterly perish from the earth.

7 In the houses of the righteous there is much strength,

But the fruits of the ungodly shall perish.

8 The lips of the wise are bound by perception,

But the hearts of those without discernment are not safe.[†] [ω]

9 The sacrifices of the ungodly are an abomination to the Lord,

But the prayers of the upright are acceptable with Him.

10 The ways of the ungodly are an abomination to the Lord,

But He loves those who pursue righteousness.

11 The instruction of the simple is known by those who pass by,

But those who hate reproofs will die shamefully.

12 Hades and destruction are manifest before the Lord;

How can the hearts of men not be also?

13 An uninstructed man will not love those who reprove him,

And he will not keep company with the wise.[†]

14 When one's heart is glad, his face is cheerful,

But when it is in grief, his face is sad.

15 The upright heart seeks perception,

But the mouth of the uninstructed will know evil things.[†]

16 The eyes of evil men are waiting for evil things all the time,

But good men are at rest continually.

17 Better is a small portion with the fear of the Lord

Than great treasures with lack of fear.

18 Better is a dinner of herbs with friendship and grace

Than a fatted calf with hostility.

19 An angry man stirs up contention,

But a longsuffering man even calms the rising quarrel.†

20 A longsuffering man will extinguish condemnations,

But the ungodly man stirs up more.

21 The ways of idle men are strewn with thorny plants,

But the thorny plants of the courageous are worn smooth.†

22 A wise son gladdens a father,

But a son without discernment treats his mother with contempt.†

23 The paths of one without understanding are in need of discernment,

But a man with discernment walks uprightly.

24 Those not honoring councils defer their deliberations,

But counsel remains in the hearts of those who resolve to do it.

25 The evil man will not obey counsel,

Nor will he speak anything appropriate, even something for the common good.†

26 The thoughts of a wise man are his ways of life,

That he might turn aside and be saved from Hades.

27 The Lord will destroy the houses of the arrogant,

But He will strengthen the boundary of a widow.

28 The thinking of the unrighteous man is an abomination to the Lord,

But the words of the holy are sacred.

29 He who receives bribes utterly destroys himself,

But he who hates the receiving of bribes saves himself.

30 Sins are cleansed by almsgiving and faithfulness,

And by the fear of the Lord everyone turns aside from evil.†

31 The hearts of the righteous care about faithfulness,

But the mouth of the ungodly answers evil things.

32 The ways of righteous men are acceptable before the Lord,

And through them even enemies become friends.

33 God is far from the ungodly,

But He hears the prayers of the righteous.†

34 Better is a small yield with the righteous

Than abundant fruits with the unrighteous.

35 Let the heart of a man think righteous things

That he may make his steps straight under God.

36 The eye that beholds good things gladdens the heart,

But a good report enriches the bones.

37 He who rejects instruction hates himself,

But he who gives heed to reproofs loves his soul.†

38 The fear of God is instruction and wisdom,

And the beginning of glory will respond to it.†

Humility, Discernment, and Righteousness

16 All the works of the humble are evident before the Lord,

But the ungodly will be destroyed in the evil day.† †

2 Every high-hearted man is unclean before the Lord,

And he who joins hands with the unrighteous will not go unpunished.

3 The beginning of a good way is to do righteous things,

And this is more acceptable to God than to offer sacrifices.†

4 He who seeks the Lord will find knowledge with righteousness,

And those who seek Him rightly will find peace.†

5 All the works of the Lord are with righteousness,

But the ungodly man is kept for an evil day.

6 There is an oracle on the lips of a king,

And his mouth does not err in judgment.

7 The weight of a scale is righteousness before the Lord,

For His works are righteous standards.[†]

8 He who does evil things is an abomination to a king,

For the throne of a ruler is prepared with righteousness.

9 Righteous lips are acceptable to a king,

And he loves upright words.[†]

10 The wrath of a king is a messenger of death,

But a wise man will appease him.

11 The son of a king is in the light of life,

And those acceptable to him are as a cloud of the latter rain.

12 The abodes of wisdom are more to be chosen than gold,

And the abodes of discernment are more to be chosen than silver.[†]

13 The paths of life turn away from evil,

And the ways of righteousness are length of life;[ω]

14 He who receives instruction shall be in good things,

And he who heeds rebukes shall become wise;[†]

15 He who guards his own ways shall keep his own soul,

And he who loves his life shall use his mouth sparingly.

16 Arrogance goes before destruction

And folly before a fall.

17 A gentle mind with humility is better

Than he who divides spoils with the arrogant.[†]

18 A man wise in his deeds is a discoverer of good things,

But he who trusts in God is the most blessed.

19 Men call the wise and understanding worthless,

But those pleasing in speech will increase in understanding.

20 Understanding is a fountain of life to those who possess it,

But the instruction of those without discernment is evil.[†]

21 The heart of a wise man shall understand the things from his own mouth,

And he shall carry knowledge upon his lips.[†]

22 Good words are a honeycomb,

And their sweetness is a healing of the soul.

23 There are ways that seem right to a man;

However, their ends look to the depths of Hades.

24 A man labors diligently for himself

And expels destruction from himself;

However, a perverse man carries destruction on his lips.

25 A man without discernment digs up evil things for himself

And stores up fire on his own lips.

26 A perverse man spreads evil things,

And a torch of deceit kindles evils and separates friends.

27 A lawless man makes a trial of friends

And leads them in ways not good.

28 A man sets his eyes to calculate perverse things

And determines every evil thing with his lips;

This man is a furnace of wickedness.

29 Old age is a crown of dignity,

But it is found in the ways of righteousness.[†]

30 A patient man is better than a strong man,

And he who controls his temper is better than he who captures a city.[†]

31 All evil things come into the bosoms of the unrighteous,

But all righteous things come from the Lord.[†]

Family and Friends

17 Better is a morsel with enjoyment in peace

Than a house full of many good things and unrighteous sacrifices with quarreling.[†]

2 A servant with discernment shall rule over masters without discernment,

And will divide portions among brethren.

3 As silver and gold are tested in a furnace,

So are chosen hearts before the Lord.[†]

4 An evil man heeds the tongue of the lawless,

But a righteous man pays no attention to false lips.[†]

5 He who laughs at the poor provokes the One who made him,

And he who rejoices in destruction will not be unpunished;

But he who has compassion will be shown mercy.

6 The crown of old men is children of children,

And the boasting of children is their fathers.

7 The entire world of goods belongs to the faithful,

But to the faithless, not even a penny.

8 Faithful lips will not adapt to a man without discernment,

Nor lying lips to a righteous man.

9 Instruction awards benefits to those using it,

And wherever it turns, it prospers them.[†]

10 He who hides wrongdoings seeks love,

But he who hates to cover them will separate friends and close relatives.

11 A threat breaks the heart of a man with discernment,

But a man without discernment, though flogged, has no perception.

12 Every evil man stirs up controversy,

But the Lord will send him a merciless messenger.

[13] Care will befall a thoughtful man,

But men without discernment devise evil things.

[14] He who repays evil for good,

Evil will not be removed from his house.[†]

[15] The foundation of righteousness gives authority to words,

But discord and quarreling precede poverty.

[16] He who judges the unrighteous as righteous, and the righteous as unrighteous,

He is unclean and abominable before God.[†]

[17] Why do goods belong to a man without discernment?

For a heartless man is unable to gain wisdom.

[18] He who makes his own house lofty seeks destruction,

And the one who turns away from learning will fall into evils.

[19] Let a friend be with you on every occasion,

And let brethren be useful in necessities,

For they are begotten for this reason.[†] [ω]

[20] A man without discernment applauds and rejoices over himself,

As also the one who gives himself as surety for his friend.

[21] He who loves sin rejoices in quarrels,

And the hard-hearted man does not assemble with good men.

[22] A changeable man will fall into evils with his tongue,

And a heart without discernment is grief to the one possessing it.[†]

[23] A father does not delight in an uninstructed son;

But a son with discernment gladdens his mother.

[24] A cheerful heart makes a man healthy,

But the bones of a sorrowful man dry him up.

[25] The ways of a man who receives gifts unrighteously do not prosper,

And the ungodly man shuns the ways of righteousness.

26 The face of a wise man shows understanding,

But the eyes of the man without discernment are upon the ends of the earth.

27 A son without discernment is wrath to a father

And grief to her who bore him.

28 It is not good to punish a righteous man,

Nor is it holy to plot against righteous princes.

29 He who refrains from uttering a harsh word is intelligent,

And a longsuffering man has discernment.[†]

30 Wisdom shall be imputed to a man without understanding who asks for wisdom,

And anyone who holds his peace will seem to have discernment.[†]

Words and Works

18 A man seeks a pretext when he wishes to separate from his friends,

But he shall be reproached at every opportunity.[†]

2 A man lacking understanding has no need of wisdom,

For he is rather led by lack of discernment.

3 When an ungodly man comes into the depth of evil things, he acts contemptuously,

But dishonor and reproach come upon him.

4 A word in the heart of a man is deep water,

And a river and a fountain of life spring up from it.[†]

5 It is not good to admire the person of the ungodly,

Nor is it holy to pervert righteousness in judgment.

6 The lips of a man without discernment lead him into evil things,

And his rash mouth calls upon death.

7 The mouth of a man without discernment is destruction to him,

And his lips are the snare of his soul.[†]

8 Fear destroys slothful men,

And the souls of cowardly men shall hunger.[†]

[9] He who does not heal himself by his works,

He is the brother of him who maltreats himself.

[10] The name of the Lord is of great strength,

And when the righteous run to it, they are exalted.[†]

[11] The substance of a rich man is a strong city,

And its glory casts a great shadow.

[12] Before its destruction, the heart of a man exalts itself,

And before its glory, it humbles itself.

[13] He who replies to a word before he hears it

Lacks discernment, and this is a reproach to him.

[14] A servant with discernment calms the anger of a man,

But who can support a discouraged man?[†]

[15] A heart of discernment gains perception,

And the ears of the wise seek understanding.[†]

[16] The gift of a man enlarges him

And seats him beside princes.

[17] When a prosecutor speaks first, he seems righteous,

But when the defendant examines his case, he is reproved.

[18] An allotment of land ends controversies,

And it determines the boundary between princes.

[19] A brother aided by his brother is like a strong and fortified city,

And he is strong like a well-founded palace.[†]

[20] From the fruits of his mouth a man fills his stomach,

And from the fruits of his lips he will fill himself to the full.

[21] Life and death are in the hand of a tongue,

And those who rule over it will eat the fruits thereof.[†]

22 He who finds a good wife finds benefits

And receives cheerfulness from God.

23 He who casts out a good wife casts out good things,

And he who keeps adulteresses is without discernment and is ungodly.

Mercy and Malice

19 A man's lack of discernment maltreats his ways,

And in his heart he blames God.[†]

2 Wealth adds many friends,

But the poor man is even forsaken by an existing friend.

3 A false witness shall not be unpunished,

And he who accuses unrighteously shall not escape.

4 Many men serve in the presence of kings,

But every evil man becomes a reproach to another man.

5 Every man who hates his poor brother,

He shall be far from friendship.

6 Good understanding will draw near those who know it,

And a man with discernment will find it.[†]

7 He who does many evil things perfects wickedness,

And he who provokes with words,

He shall not be saved.

8 He who gains discernment loves himself,

And he who guards discernment will find good things.[†]

9 A false witness shall not be unpunished,

And he who kindles evil will perish by it.

10 Luxury is not profitable for a man without discernment,

And it is not good if a servant begins to rule with arrogance.

11 A merciful man is longsuffering,

And his boast goes against the lawless.

12 The anger of a king is like the roar of a lion,

But as dew upon the grass, thus is his grace.

13 A son without discernment is a disgrace to his father,

And vows paid from the wage of a prostitute are not pure.

14 Fathers divide the house and property to their children,

But a wife is suited to her husband by God.

15 Cowardice possesses a weak man,

And the soul of the idle man will be hungry.[†]

16 He who guards the commandment keeps his soul,

But he who despises his ways shall perish.[ω]

17 The one who has mercy on the poor lends to God,

And He will repay him according to his gift.[†]

18 Instruct your son, for thus he shall be hopeful,

But do not lift up your soul in arrogance.

19 A malicious man shall be punished severely,

And if he commits injury, he will also add this to his soul.

20 Hear, my son, the instruction of your father,

That you may become wise in your last days.

21 There are many thoughts in the heart of a man,

But the counsel of the Lord abides forever.[†]

22 Mercy is fruit to a man,

And a poor righteous man is better than a rich liar.

23 The fear of the Lord is unto life for a man,

And he shall lodge without fear in places where knowledge is not examined.[†]

24 A man who hides his hands in his bosom unrighteously,

He will not even bring them up to his mouth.

25 When a pestilent man is punished, a man without discernment becomes more astute,

But if you reprove a discerning man, he will understand perception.†

26 He who dishonors his father and pushes away his mother,

He will be shamed and reproached.

27 A son who forsakes guarding his father's instruction,

He will think about evil sayings.

28 He who becomes surety for an undiscerning child despises the ordinance,

And the mouth of the ungodly swallows judgments.

29 Lashes are prepared for the intemperate

And punishments for the shoulders of those without discernment.†

Double Standards or Single-Mindedness

20 Wine is an intemperate thing, and strong drink is full of violence;

And all who commingle with it will not be wise.†

2 The threat of a king does not differ from the anger of a lion,

And he who provokes him sins against his own soul.

3 It is glory for a man to turn away from reproaches,

But every man without discernment is entangled with such things.

4 A lazy man who is reproached feels no shame;

Likewise also is he who borrows bread in harvest.

5 Counsel is deep water in the heart of a man,

And a man with discernment will draw it out.†

6 Man is important, and a man who shows mercy is noble,

But it is difficult to find a faithful man.

7 He who lives blamelessly in righteousness,

He will leave blessed children behind him.

8 When a righteous king sits upon the throne,

No evil thing can oppose his presence.

9 Who will boast about having a pure heart?

Or who will declare boldly being clean from sins?†

10 The lamp of him who reviles his father or mother shall be put out,

And the pupils of his eyes shall see darkness.

11 A portion gained hastily in the beginning

Will not be blessed at the end.

12 Do not say, “I will avenge myself on the enemy,”

But wait on the Lord, that you may be helped.

13 A weight, great and small, and a double standard,

Both are also unclean before the Lord.

14 And the one who uses these things in his pursuits will be entangled;

But a young man with holiness, his road is straight.

15 The ear hears and the eye sees;

Both are also works of the Lord.†

16 Do not love to speak ill,

That you may not be taken away;

17 Open your eyes,

And you will be filled with bread.†

18 A double standard is an abomination to the Lord,

And a deceitful scale is not good before Him.

19 Steps are made straight for a man by the Lord,

But how can a mortal man understand His ways?

20 It is a snare for a man to quickly sanctify something of his own things as holy,

Then after making this vow, to come to a change of heart.†

21 A wise king is a winnower of the ungodly,

And he casts them upon the wheel of torture.

22 The breath of man is the light of the Lord,

Who searches the inner man.[†]

23 Mercy and truth are a guard for the king,

And they will encircle his throne with righteousness.

24 Wisdom is an ornament to young men,

And the glory of old men is their gray hair.

25 Bruises and fractures happen to evil men,

And plagues shall come into their inner man.[†]

Godliness: Willing to Do God's Will

21 As a flow of water, so is the heart of the king in the hand of God;

Wherever He wills to incline it, there he turns it.[†]

2 Every man appears righteous to himself,

But the Lord makes hearts right.

3 To do righteous things and to speak the truth

Are more pleasing before God than the blood of sacrifices.[†] [ω]

4 A high-minded man is bold-hearted in his arrogance,

And the lamp of the ungodly is sin.

5 He who produces treasures with a lying tongue

Pursues worthless things upon the snares of death.

6 Destruction shall entertain the ungodly,

For they are not willing to do righteous things.[†]

7 To the crooked, God sends crooked ways,

For His works are pure and upright.

8 It is better to dwell in a corner in the open air

Than with wrongdoing in plastered rooms and in a shared house.

9 The soul of the ungodly will not be shown mercy by anyone among men.

10 When the intemperate man is punished, the simple man becomes more astute,

And a wise man of understanding shall receive knowledge.[†]

11 A righteous man understands the hearts of the ungodly,

And he despises the ungodly in their evils.

12 He who closes his ears that he might not listen to the weak,

He will also call upon someone, and there will be no one listening.

13 A secret gift calms anger,

But he who refrains from giving gifts stirs up strong anger.

14 It is the joy of the righteous to do judgment,

But a holy man is unclean before evildoers.[†]

15 A man who wanders from the way of righteousness

Shall rest in an assembly of giants.

16 A man in need loves merriment,

Loving wine and oil as wealth.

17 A lawless man is the outcast of a righteous man.

18 It is better to live in a desert

Than with a contentious, talkative, and quick-tempered woman.

19 A treasury of desire will rest upon the mouth of a wise man,

But men without discernment shall swallow it.

20 The way of righteousness and mercy shall find life and glory.

21 A wise man assaults fortified cities

And pulls down the stronghold the ungodly trust.[†]

22 He who guards his mouth and tongue

Keeps his soul from tribulation.[ω]

23 A troublemaker is called rash, arrogant, and boastful,

And he who bears malice is called lawless.

24 Desires kill a slothful man,

For his hands choose not to do anything.[†]

25 The ungodly man desires evil all day long,

But the righteous man shows mercy and compassion unsparingly.

26 The sacrifices of the ungodly are an abomination to the Lord,

For they offer them lawlessly.†

27 A false witness shall perish,

But an obedient man will speak guardedly.

28 An ungodly man resists shamelessly to the face,

But the upright man himself understands his ways.

29 There is no wisdom, there is no courage,

There is no counsel for the ungodly.†

30 The horse is prepared for the day of war,

But help is from the Lord.

Rich Man, Poor Man

22 A good name is to be chosen more than much wealth,

And good grace more than silver and gold.†

2 The rich man and the poor man meet with one another,

But the Lord made both.

3 An astute man, seeing an evil man severely punished, is himself instructed,

But those passing by without discernment suffer loss.

4 The fear of the Lord and riches and glory and life

Are the offspring of wisdom.†

5 Thorns and snares are in the ways of the crooked,

But he who guards his own soul will keep away from them.†

6 The rich will rule over the poor,

And servants will lend to their own masters.

7 He who sows worthless things will reap evil things,

And bring to an end the plague of his works.

8 God blesses a cheerful man and a giver,

And he will bring to an end the vanity of his works.[†]

9 He who shows mercy to a poor man shall himself be supported,

For he gave his own bread to the poor man.

10 He who gives gifts to a poor man gains victory and honor for himself;

However, he who buys him takes away his soul.

11 Cast out a pestilent man from the assembly,

And contention will go out with him;

For whenever he sits in the assembly, he dishonors everyone.

12 The Lord loves holy hearts,

And all the blameless are acceptable to Him;[†]

13 A king governs lips.

14 And the eyes of the Lord maintain perception,

But the lawless man despises His words.

15 A slothful man makes excuses and says,

“There is a lion in the way, and murderers in the streets.”

16 The mouth of a lawless man is a deep pit,

And the man hated by the Lord shall fall into it.[†]

17 Evil ways are before a man,

And he does not love to turn away from them,

But it is necessary to turn away from a crooked and evil way.

18 Folly fastens itself to the heart of a child,

For the rod and instruction are far from him.

19 He who oppresses a poor man increases his possessions,

Yet he gives them to a rich man to lessen them.

20 Incline your ear to the words of the wise and hear my word,

And establish your heart, that you may know they are good.[†]

21 And if you apply them to your heart,

They will gladden you and at the same time be upon your lips;

22 That your hope might be in the Lord,

And His way might be known to you.

23 And register them upon the breadth of your heart for yourself threefold,

For counsel and knowledge.

24 Therefore, I teach you a true word and good knowledge to be obeyed,

That you might answer words of truth to those who question you.

25 Do not rob the poor, for he is needy,

And do not dishonor the helpless at the gates;

26 For the Lord will judge his cause,

And you will deliver your soul from violence.

27 Do not be a companion to an angry man

And do not associate with a quick-tempered friend,[†]

28 Lest you learn his ways

And receive a snare for your soul.

29 Do not give yourself as surety because you respect a person,

For if you do not have the wherewithal to make compensation,

They will take your bed out from under you.

30 Do not remove the eternal landmarks your fathers established.[†]

31 An observant man and one astute in his business

Should be present with kings,

And he should not be present with slothful men.

Understanding and Priorities

23 If you sit down to dine at a table of princes,

Understand carefully the things put before you;[†]

2 And apply your hand,

Knowing you should prepare certain things;

[3] And if you are insatiable, do not desire its delicacies,

For these things belong to a false life.

[4] If you are poor, do not measure yourself with a rich man,

But keep away from this in your thinking;

[5] If you fix your eye on him, he will disappear,

For wings like an eagle's are prepared for him,

And he returns to the house of his master.

[6] Do not dine with an envious man,

Neither desire his foods;

[7] For as someone who may swallow a hair,

So he eats and drinks.

[8] Neither invite him in, nor eat your morsel with him;

For he will vomit it forth and maltreat your good words.

[9] Speak nothing into the ears of a man without discernment,

Lest he treat your wise words with contempt.

[10] Do not remove the eternal landmarks,

And do not enter the possession of orphans.

[11] For the Lord who redeems them is mighty,

And He will judge their cause with you.

[12] Give your heart to instruction,

And prepare your ears for words of perception.[†]

[13] Do not withhold instruction from a child,

For if you should strike him with a rod, he would not die;

[14] For you shall strike him with a rod

And deliver his soul from death.

[15] My son, if your heart becomes wise,

You will also gladden my heart;[ω]

16 And your lips shall spend time with the words on my lips,

If they be upright.[†]

17 Do not let your heart envy sinners,

But be in fear of the Lord the whole day long.

18 For if you keep these words, you shall have offspring,

And your hope will not depart from you.

A Father's Counsel on Wine and Women

19 Hear, my son, and become wise,

And direct aright the thoughts of your heart.

20 Do not be a wine-bibber,

Neither provide contributions of meats or goods at drinking parties.

21 For every drunkard and fornicator shall become impoverished,

And every sluggard shall clothe himself with tattered and ragged garments.[†]

22 Hear, my son, your father who begot you,

And do not despise your mother because she has grown old.

23 A righteous father rears his child well,

And his soul rejoices in a wise son.

24 Let your father and mother be glad in you,

And let her who bore you rejoice.

25 My son, give me your heart,

And let your eyes observe my ways;

26 For a house of prostitution is a pierced vessel

And a strange and empty well;

27 For he shall perish suddenly,

And every lawless man shall be destroyed.

28 Who has woe? Who has tumult? Who has condemnation?

Who has unpleasantness and gossip?

Who has afflictions with no purpose?

Whose eyes are pale?

29 Is it not those who linger long with wines?

Is it not those who hunt for the whereabouts of drinking parties?

30 Do not be drunk with wine, but keep company with righteous men,

And keep company in public walks;

31 For if you set your eyes to the bowls and cups,

Afterward you will walk about more naked than ground meat.

32 And at last, he stretches himself out as one bitten by a serpent,

And the venom spreads through him as one bitten by a horned serpent.

33 When your eyes behold a strange woman,

Then your mouth will speak twisted things;

34 And you will lie down as in the heart of the sea

And as a pilot in a great storm;

35 And you will say, “They beat me, but I did not suffer,

And they mocked me, but I knew it not;

36 When will it be morning,

That I may go seek those with whom I may company?”

Issues of Life and Death

24 My son, do not envy evil men,

Neither desire to be with them;

2 For their heart ponders a lie,

And their lips speak of sufferings.

3 A house is built with wisdom,

And it is built up with understanding.[†]

4 Storehouses are filled with perception

From all honorable and good riches.

[5] It is better to be a wise man of strength

And a man having discernment, than to be a man who has a large estate.

[6] War comes with the skill of a commander,

But help comes with the heart of a counselor.

[7] Wisdom and good thinking are in the gates of the wise;

The wise do not turn away from the mouth of the Lord,

But they deliberate with councils;[†]

[8] Death happens to the uninstructed,

And a man without discernment shall die in his sins;

[9] And uncleanness will pollute a pestilent man

In an evil day and a day of tribulation, until he dies.

[10] Rescue those being led into death,

And saw off the bonds of those being cast out; do not spare them help;[†]

[11] If you say, “I do not know this man,”

Know that the Lord knows the hearts of all;

[12] And He who formed every breath knows all things,

Who will render to each man according to his works.

[13] My son, eat honey, for the honeycomb is good,

That your throat may be sweetened.[†]

[14] Thus you shall discern wisdom for your soul,

For if you find it, there will be a good end to your life;

And hope will not abandon you.

[15] Do not bring an ungodly man to the dwelling of the righteous,

Neither be deceived by the full satisfaction of the stomach.

[16] For a righteous man will fall seven times and rise again,

But the ungodly shall weaken in evils.[†]

[17] If your enemy falls, do not rejoice over him,

And do not exalt yourself at his stumbling;[†]

18 Because the Lord will see this, and it will not please Him,

And He will turn His anger from him.

19 Do not rejoice in evildoers,

Nor envy sinners;

20 For there is no future for evil men,

And the lamp of the ungodly shall be put out.

21 Fear God, my son, and the king,

And disobey neither of them;

22 For suddenly they will take retribution on the ungodly,

And who will know the punishments of both?

23 A son who guards the word will be free from destruction,

For he receives it fully.

24 Let no lie be spoken from your tongue to the king,

And let no lie come from his tongue.

25 The tongue of the king is a sword and not of flesh,

And whoever it delivers, it will annihilate;

26 For if his anger is sharpened,

It destroys men with its sinews.

27 And it devours the bones of men,

And it burns like a flame,

So as to be inedible for the nestlings of eagles.

28 Now I say the following to you, the wise, to observe,

“It is not good to be partial in judgment.”

29 He who says about an ungodly man, “He is righteous,”

Shall be accursed to people and despicable to nations;

30 But those who reprove him shall appear more excellent,

And a good blessing shall come upon them;

And they will kiss the lips that answer good words.

31 Prepare your works for your going forth,

And prepare yourself for the field;[†]

32 And walk behind me,

And you shall build up your house.

33 Do not be a false witness against your countryman,

Neither open wide your lips;

34 Do not say, “I will treat him as he treated me,

And I shall avenge myself on him wherein he wronged me.”

35 A man without discernment is like a field,

And a man in need of discernment is like a vineyard;

36 If you leave it alone, it will remain dry and barren,

Altogether covered with grass and forsaken,

And its stone walls will be razed to the ground.

37 Afterward, I repented;

I observed that I might choose instruction.

38 I doze a little, and I sleep a little,

And I fold my arms across my chest a little.

39 If you do this, your poverty shall go before you,

And want, like a strong runner.

25

These are the miscellaneous instructions of Solomon which the friends of Hezekiah, the King of Judah, wrote out.

2 The Glory of God hides a word,

And the glory of the king honors deeds.

3 Heaven is high, and earth is deep,

But the heart of the king is incapable of disproof.

4 Beat drossy silver,

And it will be made entirely clean.[†]

5 Slay the ungodly from before the king,

And his throne shall be established in righteousness.[†]

6 Do not brag on yourself in the presence of the king,

Neither stand in the places of princes;[†]

7 For it is better that it be said to you, “Come up to me,”

Than for you to be humbled in the presence of a prince.

8 Speak the things your eyes see.[†]

9 Do not enter into a quarrel quickly,

That you may not be sorry in the end.

10 When your friend reproaches you,

Retreat and do not despise him,

11 Lest your friend continue to reproach you,

And your quarrel and enmity shall not depart,

But be equal to death for you.

12 Grace and friendship free a man;

Keep these for yourself, that you may not be reproached,

But guard your ways peaceably.

13 As a golden apple in a small necklace of sardius stone,

Thus it is to speak a wise word.

14 As a very expensive sardius stone set in a golden earring,

So is a wise word to an obedient ear.

15 As the falling of snow in harvest is beneficial against the heat,

So is a faithful messenger to those who send him;

For he benefits the souls of those who use him.

16 As winds, clouds, and rains are evident,

So are those who boast in a false gift.

17 There is prosperity for kings in patience,

And a mild tongue breaks bones.

18 When you find honey, eat what is sufficient,

Lest being filled, you should vomit it up.[†]

19 Seldom visit your own friend's house,

Lest he become fed up with your company and hate you.

20 As a club, a sword, and a pointed arrow,

So also is the man who testifies as a false witness against his friend.

21 The tooth of an evil man and the foot of a lawless man

Shall perish in an evil day.

22 As vinegar is bad for a festering wound,

So calamity befalling the body grieves the heart.

23 As a moth in a garment and a worm in wood,

So the grief of a man damages the heart.

24 If your enemy is hungry, feed him,

And if he is thirsty, give him drink.[†]

25 For by doing this, you shall heap coals of fire on his head,

And the Lord will reward you with good things.

26 The north wind stirs up clouds,

And a shameless face provokes the tongue.

27 It is better to dwell in a corner on a housetop

Than in a house shared with an abusive woman.

28 As cold water is agreeable to a thirsty soul,

So is good news from a far-off land.

29 As if someone would stop a spring and corrupt an outlet of water,

So it is unseemly for a righteous man to fall before the ungodly.

30 It is not good to eat too much honey,

But it is necessary to honor words held in honor.

31 As an unfortified city whose walls are broken down,

So is a man who does something without counsel.[†]

The Undiscerning Man

26 As dew in harvest and as rain in summer,

So honor is not for a man without discernment.[†]

2 As birds and sparrows fly,

So a curse will not come upon anyone without a cause.

3 As a whip for a horse and a prod for a donkey,

So is a rod for a lawless nation.

4 Do not answer an undiscerning man in relation to his lack of discernment,

Lest you become like him.

5 But answer an undiscerning man contrary to his lack of discernment,

So he may not appear wise to himself.

6 He shall drink reproach at his own feet

Who sends a word through an undiscerning messenger.

7 Remove the motion of the legs

And a proverb from the mouth of men without discernment.

8 He who binds a stone in a sling

Is like one who gives glory to a man without discernment.

9 Thorny plants grow in the hand of a drunkard

And slavery in the hand of men without discernment.

10 All flesh of men without discernment grievously suffers many things,

For their illusion is brought to nothing.

11 As when a dog returns to his own vomit and becomes despicable,

So is a man without discernment who returns to his own evil by his own sin.

12 There is shame that brings on sin,

And there is shame that is glory and grace.

13 I saw a man who seemed to himself to be wise,

But a man without discernment has more hope than he.

The Slothful Man

14 A slothful man who is sent on his way says,

“There is a lion in the way.”[†]

15 As a door turns upon its hinge,

So does a slothful man upon his bed.

16 When a slothful man hides his hand in his bosom,

He shall be unable to bring it to his mouth.

17 A slothful man appears wiser to himself

Than he who satisfactorily brings back a message.

The Scheming Man

18 As he who lays hold of a dog's tail,

So is he who is the mouthpiece of another's cause.[†]

19 As those who need correction speak to others,

He who first replies to the word shall be tripped up,

20 So are all who set a trap for their own friends;

But when they are discovered, they say, “I did it in jest.”

21 A fire rages among many trees,

But where there is no disagreement, contention is at rest.

22 As a fireplace is for coals and wood for a fire,

So a contentious man kindles violence.

23 The words of a talebearer are mild

And they strike into the innermost affections.

[24] Money given with deceit is like a sharp piece of broken pottery;

So smooth lips hide a heart that causes pain.

[25] A weeping enemy promises everything with his lips,

But in his heart he devises deceits.

[26] If your enemy entreats you with a loud voice,

Do not consent, for there are seven vices in his soul.

[27] He who hides enmity contrives deceit,

But being well known in the assemblies, he exposes his own sins.

[28] He who digs a pit for his neighbor shall fall into it,

And he who rolls a stone rolls it upon himself.

[29] A lying tongue hates the truth,

And an unguarded mouth causes confusion.

Wisdom for Today

27 Do not boast about tomorrow,

For you do not know what the next day will bring forth.[†]

[2] Let your neighbor praise you, and not your own mouth;

A stranger, and not your own lips.[†]

[3] A stone is heavy, and sand is cumbersome;

But the wrath of a man without discernment is heavier than both.[†]

[4] Wrath is merciless and anger passionate,

But jealousy supports nothing.

[5] Open reproofs are better than hidden love.

[6] The wounds of a friend are more trustworthy

Than the voluntary kisses of an enemy.[†]

[7] A satiated soul mocks honeycombs,

But to a hungry soul, even bitter things appear sweet.

[8] As when a bird flies down from its own nest,

So is a man enslaved whenever he becomes a fugitive from his own place.

9 The heart delights in perfumes, wines, and incenses,

But the soul is broken by mishaps.

10 Do not abandon your friend or the friend of your father,

And when you have misfortune, do not go to your brother's house;

A friend nearby is better than a brother far away.

11 My son, become wise, that my heart may be glad,

And turn away from your reproachful words.

12 An astute man hides when evils are at hand,

But when men without discernment are at hand, they will pay the penalty.

13 If a haughty man passes by, take away his garment,

For he lays waste the goods of another.

14 Whoever blesses a friend early in the morning with a loud voice,

He will not seem different from one who curses him.

15 Continual dripping on a rainy day drives a man from his house;

In like manner, a contentious woman also drives a man from his own house.

16 The north wind is a harsh wind,

And a prosperous man is called harsh.

17 Iron sharpens iron,

And a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.[†]

18 Whoever plants a fig tree will eat its fruit,

And whoever guards his own master will be honored.

19 As faces are not like other faces,

So neither are the hearts of men.

20 Hades and destruction are not satiated;

In like manner the eyes of men are also insatiable.[†]

21 He whose eye is fixed is an abomination to the Lord,

And the uninstructed are intemperate with the tongue.

22 Proving by fire is a way of testing for silver and gold,

But a man is tested by the mouth of those who praise him.†

23 A lawless heart seeks evil things,

But an upright heart seeks knowledge.†

24 If you should whip a man without discernment in the midst of the council and dishonor him,

You would not remove his lack of discernment.

25 Know thoroughly the souls of your sheep,

And you will set your heart on your flocks,†

26 Since strength and might are not in man forever,

Neither are they transmitted from generation to generation.

27 Take care of the green plants in the field, and cut the herbs short,

And gather the grass of the mountains.

28 That you may have the wool of sheep for clothing,

Honor the field, so there may be lambs for you.

29 My son, you have strong sayings from me for your life

And for the life of your servants.

The Lawful and the Lawless

28 An ungodly man flees when no one is pursuing,

But a righteous man is confident as a lion.†

2 Condemnations arise because of the sins of the ungodly,

But an astute man quenches them.†

3 A bold man harasses the poor with ungodliness.

As a driving and unprofitable rain,

4 So those who forsake the law praise ungodliness,

But those who love the law surround themselves with a wall.

5 Evil men do not understand judgment,

But those who seek the Lord shall understand it in everything.[†]

6 A poor man walking in the truth is better than a rich liar.

7 A wise son keeps the law,

But he who cherishes luxury dishonors his father.

8 He who increases his wealth with usury and unjust gains

Gathers it for him who shows mercy to the poor.

9 He who turns away his ear so as not to hear the law,

He also makes his prayer repulsive.[†]

10 He who leads upright men astray in an evil way,

He shall fall into destruction;

11 And lawless men shall pass by good things,

But they shall not enter into them.

12 A rich man is wise in his own eyes,

But a poor man shall disapprove of his thoughts.

13 Great glory arises because of the help of the righteous,

But in places of the ungodly, men are conquered.[†]

14 He who hides his own ungodliness shall not prosper,

But he who leads his own rebuttal shall be loved.[†]

15 Blessed is the man who shall be discreet in all things because of godly fear,

But the man who hardens his heart shall fall into evils.

16 A hungry lion and a thirsty wolf

Is he who, being poor, tyrannizes over poor people.

17 A king in need of revenues is a great oppressor,

But he who hates unrighteousness shall live a long time.

18 He who becomes surety for a man charged with murder

Shall be a fugitive and unsafe.

19 Instruct your son, and he shall love you;

And he shall give honor to your soul,

Lest he follow a lawless people.

20 He who walks righteously shall be helped,

But he who walks in crooked ways shall be entangled therein.[†]

21 He who works his own land shall be satisfied with bread,

But he who pursues leisure shall be filled with poverty.

22 A trustworthy man shall be blessed in many things,

But an evil man shall not go unpunished.

23 He who does not respect righteous people is not good;

Such a man will sell another for a morsel of bread.

24 An envious man hastens to be rich,

But does not know that a merciful man shall have the mastery over him.

25 He who reproves a man's ways

Shall have more grace than he who flatters him.

26 He who casts off his father or mother and thinks he does not sin,

He is the accomplice of an ungodly man.

27 A greedy man judges rashly,

But he who trusts in the Lord shall be careful.

28 He who trusts in an arrogant heart, such a man is without discernment,

But he who walks in wisdom, such a man shall be saved.[†]

29 He who gives to the poor shall not be in want,

But he who turns away his eye from them shall be in much distress.

30 The righteous lament in the places of the ungodly,

But in their destruction the righteous shall be increased.[†]

The Wise and the Unwise

29 A reproving man is better than an obstinate man,

For when the latter is suddenly consumed, there shall be no remedy.[†]

[2] When the righteous are praised, the people shall rejoice,

But when the ungodly rule, men lament.

[3] When a man loves wisdom, his father rejoices,

But he who keeps prostitutes shall destroy his wealth.

[4] A righteous king will establish a country,

But a lawless man razes it to the ground.

[5] He who prepares a net for the presence of his own friend

Casts it around his own feet.

[6] It is a great snare to a man when he sins,

But a righteous man shall be in joy and gladness.[†]

[7] A righteous man understands how to judge on behalf of the poor,

But the ungodly man will not consider such knowledge;

For he has no understanding heart for a poor man.

[8] Pestilent men burn down a city,

But wise men turn away wrath.

[9] A wise man judges people fairly,

But when a worthless man is angry, he laughs at them, and does not fear.

[10] Bloodthirsty men will hate a holy man,

But the upright will seek his soul.[†]

[11] A man without discernment brings forth his whole mind,

But a wise man distributes his in part.

[12] When a king obeys an unrighteous word,

All those under him are lawless.

[13] When a creditor and a debtor meet with one another,

The Lord watches both of them.

[14] When a king judges the poor truly,

His throne shall be established as a testimony.

15 Blows and reproofs give wisdom,

But a child who goes astray shames his parents.

16 When the ungodly are many, there are many sins,

But when they fall, the righteous are fearful.

17 Instruct your son, and he shall give you rest,

And he will delight your soul.

18 There shall be no interpreter of the law for a lawless nation,

But he who guards the law is very blessed.

19 A stubborn servant will not be instructed by words,

For even if he understands them, he will not obey.[†]

20 If you see a man hasty in words,

Know a man without discernment has more hope than he.

21 He who lives luxuriously from childhood shall be a servant,

And in the end, he shall cause himself pain.

22 An angry man digs up strife,

But a furious man digs up sins.

23 Arrogance humbles a man,

But the Lord supports the humble-minded with glory.[†]

24 He who takes part with a thief hates his own soul,

And if, when an oath is set forth, those who hear it do not report it,

25 They are tripped up, because they fear and stand in awe of men;

But he who trusts in the Lord will rejoice.[†]

26 Ungodliness causes a man to stumble,

But he who trusts in the Master shall be saved.

27 Many serve in the presence of leaders,

But righteousness comes to a man from the Lord.[†]

28 An abomination to the righteous is an unrighteous man,

And the upright way is an abomination to the lawless.

A Father's Wisdom

30 My son, fear my words,

And when you receive them, repent;

The man says these things to those who believe in God, then I cease speaking;†

2 For I am the most lacking of all men in discernment,

And the discernment of men is not in me;†

3 God gives me wisdom,

And I know holy things.

4 Who ascends into heaven and descends?

Who gathers the winds in His bosom?

Who wraps up the water in a garment?

Who rules over all the ends of the earth?

What is His name, and what is the name of His children,

That you might acknowledge it?†

5 All the words of God are tried in fire,

And He defends those who fear Him.†

6 Do not add to His words,

That He might not reprove you, and you become a liar.

7 Two things I ask from You:

Do not take away grace from me before I die;†

8 Make a vain word and a lie be far from me;

But give me neither riches nor poverty,

And appoint what is necessary and sufficient for me;

9 Lest being full, I become a liar and say, “Who sees me?”

Or being poor, I steal, and swear by the name of God.

10 Do not deliver a servant into the hands of his master,

Lest he curse you, and you be destroyed.

11 An evil offspring curses his father

And does not bless his mother.[†]

12 An evil offspring judges himself righteous,

But is not washed from his uncleanness.

13 An evil offspring has haughty eyes

And exalts himself with his eyelids;

14 An evil offspring has teeth like swords

And molars like knives, so as to destroy

15 And to devour the poor from the earth,

And their needy from among men.

Lessons from the Animals

16 The leech had three dearly loved daughters,

And these three did not satisfy her,

And the fourth did not satisfy her, for her to say, “It is enough.”[†]

17 Hades and the love of a woman

And Tartarus and the earth not satisfied with water,

And water and fire will not say, “It is enough.”

18 The eye that mocks his father and dishonors the old age of his mother,

Let the ravens of the valleys pick it out,

And the young eagles devour it.

19 Now there are three things I cannot understand,

And a fourth I do not know:

20 The track of a flying eagle,

And the ways of a serpent upon a rock,

21 And the paths of a ship passing through the sea,

And the ways of a man in his youth.

22 Such is the way of an adulterous woman,

Who, when she commits adultery, washes herself and says she did nothing wrong.

23 The earth is shaken by three things,

And is unable to bear a fourth:

24 If a servant reigns,

Or a man without discernment is satiated with food,

25 Or if a maidservant casts out her own mistress,

Or a hateful woman marries a good man.

26 Now there are four very small things upon earth,

But these are wiser than the wise:

27 The ants, which are not strong,

Yet they prepare provisions in the summer;

28 The rabbits, which are not a strong tribe,

Yet they make their own homes in the rocks;

29 The locust, which is without a king,

Yet he marches out as one commanded in an orderly manner.

30 And the spotted lizard, which supports himself with his hands and is easily caught,

Yet he dwells in the fortresses of kings.

31 There are three things which walk easily,

And a fourth that strides well:

32 The cub of a lion, stronger than other animals

And does not turn away, neither fears any animal;

33 A cock, walking about boldly among the hens;

A he-goat, leading a flock;

And a king, speaking publicly to the people.

34 If you abandon yourself to merriment

And stretch forth your hand with contention, you will be dishonored.

35 Churn milk, and it will become butter;

And if you squeeze someone's nose, blood will come out;

And if you draw out words, condemnations and contentions will emerge.

31 My words were spoken by God,

The oracular response of a king, whom his mother instructed.[†]

A Mother's Wisdom

2 “What, my child, will you keep? What? The words of God.”

My firstborn son, I say to you, “What, the child of my womb?

What, the child of my vows?”

3 Do not give your wealth to women,

Nor your heart or life to remorse.

4 Do all things with counsel;

Drink wine with counsel;

Princes are prone to anger, but let them not drink wine,

5 Lest while they drink, they forget wisdom,

And be unable to judge the weak uprightly.

6 Give strong drink to those in sorrow,

And wine to drink for those in pain,

7 So they may forget their poverty

And no longer remember their grief.

8 Open your mouth for the word of God,

And judge all men fairly;

9 Open your mouth and judge righteously,

And plead the cause of the poor and helpless.

A Virtuous Wife

10 Who will find a courageous wife?

For such a one is more valuable than precious stones.[†ω]

11 The heart of her husband trusts in her;

She will not be at a loss for fine spoils,

For she provides good things for her husband all her life.

12 She weaves wool and linen cloth

And is productive with her hands.

13 She is like a ship trading afar off,

So she procures her livelihood.

14 She also rises before dawn

And gives food to her household,

And appoints tasks for her maidservants.

15 Seeing a farm, she buys it,

And from the fruits of her hands she plants her plot of land.

16 Strongly girding her loins,

She strengthens her arms for work.

17 She experiences work as a good thing,

And her lamp is not quenched all night.

18 She extends her arms to do profitable things,

And she applies her hands to the spindle.

19 She opens her hands to the poor

And reaches out with her fruit to the needy.

20 Her husband is not anxious about those at home

When he spends a long time elsewhere,

For all her household are clothed.

21 She makes a double upper garment for her husband

And garments of fine linen and purple for herself.

22 Her husband is respected at the gates

And when he sits in council with the elders who inhabit the land.

23 She makes and sells fine linens

And girdles to the Canaanites.

24 She opens her mouth carefully and lawfully

And controls her tongue.

25 She clothes herself with strength and dignity

And rejoices in the last days.

26 She runs her household carefully,

And she does not eat the bread of idleness.

27 She opens her mouth wisely and lawfully,

And her charity raises her children, and they become rich,

And her husband praises her,

28 “Many daughters acquire riches; many do mighty things,

But you excel and surpass all.”

29 Desires to please are deceitful, and the beauty of a wife is vain;

For a wise wife is blessed,

And let her in fear praise the Lord.

30 Give to her from the fruits of her hands,

And let her husband praise her at the gates.

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The Book of Ecclesiastes

Author—The “Teacher” or “Preacher” has traditionally been identified as Solomon, because only he was the son of David, king of Israel in Jerusalem (1:1, 12), who achieved great fame for his wisdom, wealth, and achievements (12:9–12; 3Kg 10:23, 24).

Date—According to Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote the Song of Songs in his youth, Proverbs in his middle years, and Ecclesiastes in his old age. Following this line of reasoning, he would have written this book about 935 BC.

Major Theme—*Without God, all of life is vanity.*

Background—Early Judaism accepted the book as holy and read it on the third day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The early Church identified Solomon as the author, and some included the book in the list of books to be read in the churches (see St. Athanasius, *Festal Letter* 39; St. Augustine, *Christian Doctrine* Bk. 2:8).

Outline

I. Everything Human Is Vain, for It Is without Profit (1:1–18)

II. There Is No Profit under the Sun (2:1–12:8)

III. Conclusion: Fear God and Keep His Commandments (12:9–14)

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Israel in Jerusalem.[†]

The Vanity of Life

[2] “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher;
“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”[†]
[3] What advantage does a man have in all his labor
In which he toils under the sun?[†]
[4] A generation comes and a generation goes,
But the earth stands forever.
[5] The sun rises and the sun sets
And returns to its place.
[6] The wind rises and goes toward the south
And swirls towards the north.
The wind whirls in a circular motion
And returns full circle.
[7] All the rivers flow to the sea,
Yet the sea shall not be filled.
To the place where the rivers flow,
There they return again.
[8] All words are wearisome,
And a man will not be able to say them.
Neither will the eye be satisfied with seeing,
Nor will the ear be filled with hearing.[†]
[9] What has been is what will be,
And what has been done is what will be done.
There is nothing new under the sun.
[10] Who will speak and say,
“See, this is new”?
For it has already been in the ages

That have passed before us.

[11] There is no remembrance of former things,

And indeed, there shall be no remembrance of later things

By the things that will come after that.

Futility of Man's Wisdom

[12]I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.† [13]I gave my heart to seek out and to prepare myself in wisdom concerning all the things done under heaven; for God has given painful distraction to the sons of men to be occupied therewith. [14]I beheld all the works done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and is the choice of one's spirit.†

[15] That which has become crooked cannot be made straight,

And what is lacking cannot be counted.†

[16]I spoke in my heart, saying, “Behold, I have become great, and have acquired wisdom beyond all before me in Jerusalem; and my heart has experienced much wisdom and knowledge.” [17]I gave my heart to know wisdom and knowledge, to learn proverbs and understanding. And this, too, was waywardness of spirit.†

[18] For in the abundance of wisdom

There is abundance of knowledge,

And he who increases knowledge will increase suffering.

The Vanity of Merriment

2 I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with merriment and see if this is good; and behold, this, too, is vanity.”† [2]I said concerning laughter, “This is madness,” and concerning merriment, “What does this accomplish?” [3]I searched in my heart that I might excite my flesh as with wine. And my heart guided me with wisdom to grasp what is foolishness, until I might see what is good for the sons of men, that which they should do under the sun all the days of their life. [4]I made my works great; I built myself houses and planted vineyards for myself. [5]I made myself gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. [6]I made pools of water for myself from which to water growing trees. [7]I acquired male and female servants, and servants were born in my house; and I had abundant possessions of herds and flocks, more than all before me in Jerusalem.

[8]I also gathered silver and gold for myself and the abundant treasures of kings and countries. I provided male and female singers for myself, the delights of the sons of men, and male and female cupbearers. [9]So I became great and advanced beyond all before me in Jerusalem; my wisdom established me.

[10] Whatever my eyes desired,

I did not keep from them.

I did not withhold my heart from any merriment.

For my heart was made glad in all my labor,

And this was my portion from all my labor.

[11] Then I looked on all the works my hands had done

And on the labor in which I had toiled,

And indeed all is vanity

And is the choice of one's spirit.

There was no profit under the sun.

Wisdom Excels Foolishness

[12] Then I turned myself to consider

Wisdom, madness, and foolishness,

For who is the man who will follow after counsel,

Whatever it is, to do it?

[13] Then I saw that wisdom excels foolishness

As light excels darkness.[†]

[14] The wise man's eyes are in his head,

But the senseless man walks in darkness;

And I indeed know

That one event happens to all of them.

[15] So I said in my heart,

“As it happens to the senseless man,

So it also happens to me.

Why then have I gained abundant wisdom?”

Then I said in my heart,

“This indeed is also vanity,

Because the senseless man speaks of his abundance.”

[16] For there is no remembrance forever

Of the wise man or of the senseless man,

Since now as in the days to come,

All things are forgotten.

And how will the wise man

As well as the senseless man face death?[†]

[17] Thus I have hated life, because the work done under the sun was evil before me; for all is vanity and is the choice of one's spirit.

[18]Then I hated all my labor in which I toiled under the sun, for I must leave it to the man who comes after me. [19]For who knows whether he shall be a wise man or a senseless man? Yet he will have authority over all my labor in which I toiled and wherein I grew wise under the sun. Indeed, this also is vanity. [20]So I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor wherein I toiled under the sun. [21]For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and courage, yet this man shall give his portion to one who has not labored therein. This also is vanity and a great evil. [22]For what does a man have for all his labor and his purpose of heart wherein he labors under the sun? [23]For all his days are sorrowful, and the distraction of life is his, for even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

[24]There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw was from the hand of God.[†] [25]For who will eat or who will drink without Him? [26]And He gives wisdom, knowledge, and gladness to a man who is good in His sight. But to him who commits sin He gives the job of gathering and collecting, that he may give to the man who is good in God's sight. This is also vanity and is the choice of one's spirit.

A Time for Everything

3 To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:[†]

[2] A time to give birth

And a time to die;

A time to plant

And a time to pluck what is planted.

3 A time to kill

And a time to heal;

A time to pull down

And a time to build up.

4 A time to weep

And a time to laugh;

A time to mourn

And a time to dance.

5 A time to throw stones

And a time to gather stones;

A time to embrace

And a time to refrain from embracing.

6 A time to seek

And a time to lose;

A time to keep

And a time to throw away.

7 A time to tear

And a time to sew;

A time to keep silent

And a time to speak.

8 A time to love

And a time to hate;

A time of war

And a time of peace.

The Gifts of God

[9]What profit has the worker from all his labors? [10]I have seen altogether the tasks which God has given to the sons of men to be engaged in. [11]He made everything beautiful in its time, and He indeed put eternity in their hearts in such a way that man may not find out the work God made from the beginning to the end. [12]I know there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and do good in their lives. [13]Indeed, every man should eat and drink and experience the good in all his labor—this is God's gift to him.

[14] I know that whatever things God does,

They shall be forever.

Nothing can be added to or taken away from these things,

For God did them that men would fear before Him.[†]

[15] What is has already been,

And what is to be has already been;

And God will require an account of what is past.

God Judges All

[16] Moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment.

The ungodly man was there.

I also saw the place of the righteous man.

The ungodly man was not there.

[17] I said in my heart,

“God will judge both the righteous man and the ungodly man,

For there is a time for every action and every work.”

[18]I said in my heart, “Concerning the speech of the sons of men, God will judge them so as to show them that indeed, they are themselves like animals.” [19]For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals: one thing befalls them; as is the death of the one, so also is the death of the

other, and there is one breath to all. So what advantage does a man have over an animal? For all things are vanity. [20]All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to the dust. [21]Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, whether it goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, whether it goes downward to the earth? [22]So I saw that there was no good except that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion. For who shall bring him to see what happens after him?[†]

Those Oppressed

4 Then I returned and saw all the oppressions done under the sun.

Behold, the weeping of the oppressed!

But they have no comforter.

On the side of the oppressors was power,

But they have no comforter.[†]

[2] So I praised those who were already dead

More than the living,

As many as are alive until now.

[3] Better than both these is he who has not yet been born,

Who has not seen all the evil work done under the sun.

[4]Again I saw all the labor and all the courage of the worker, that this is the zeal of a man because of his companion. This is also vanity and is the choice of one's spirit.

[5] The senseless man folds his hands

And consumes his own flesh.

[6] Better is a handful of rest

Than two handfuls of labor,

And it is the choice of one's spirit.

[7] Then I returned and saw vanity under the sun:

[8] There is one, and there is not a second one,

And he has neither son nor brother.

And there is no end to all his labor,

Neither is his eye satisfied with wealth.

But he never asks,

“For whom do I labor and deprive myself of goodness?”

This also is vanity and a painful distraction.[†]

The Treasure of Friendship

[9] Two are better than one

Because they have a good reward for their labor.

[10] For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.

But woe to him who is alone when he falls,

For there is not a second one to help him up![†]

[11] If two lie down together, both stay warm,

But how can one stay warm alone?

[12] If one is added strength, two will stand before him,

And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.[†]

An Unlikely King

[13] Better is a poor and wise youth

Than an old and senseless king

Who will no longer take advice.[†]

[14] For this youth shall come from the house of prisoners to reign,

Even though in his kingdom he was born poor.

[15] I saw all the living who walk under the sun,
And they were with the youth
Who will be established in the king's place.
[16] There was no end of all the people
Over whom he was made king;
Yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him.
Surely this also is vanity and is the choice of one's spirit.

Draw Near to God

[17]Walk carefully when you go to the house of God. And draw near to hear, rather than to offer the sacrifice of senseless men; for they do not know that they do evil.

[5] Do not be hasty with your mouth,
And do not let not your heart be quick
To utter a word before God;
For God is in heaven, and you are on earth;
Therefore, let your words be few.
[2] For a dream comes in a multitude of distractions,
And the voice of a senseless man is with a multitude of words.
[3] When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it,
For His will is not in senseless men.
So pay whatever you vowed.
[4] Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

[5]Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, and do not say in the presence of God, “It was a mistake.” Why should God be angry at your voice, and destroy the work of your hands? [6]For in a multitude of dreams there are vanities and many words, but you should fear God.

The Vanity of Riches

[7]If you see the oppression of the poor and the violation of judgment and righteousness in the land, do not marvel at the matter; for there is a high official to watch over a high official, and higher ones over them! [8]Moreover, the abundance of the earth is for all: even a king depends on work in the field.

[9] He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver;

Nor he who loves the harvest, with its abundance.

This also is vanity.

[10] In the abundance of good things

They who eat them also increase,

But what virtue does the owner have from them,

Except to see them with his eyes?

[11] The sleep of a servant is sweet,

Whether he eats little or much;

But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.

[12] There was a sickness I saw under the sun:

Wealth kept for its owner to his hurt.

[13] That wealth shall perish in painful distraction,

And he begets a son;

But there is nothing in his hand.

[14] As he came from his mother's womb,

Naked shall he return, to go as he came;

And he shall take nothing from his labor

That it may go with him in his hand.[†]

[15] This also is a painful sickness,

For as he came, so shall he go;

And what is his gain, for which he labored for the wind?

[16] All his days are in darkness and sorrow

And in much anger, sickness, and gall.

[17]Behold, I have seen good: It is a fine thing for a man to experience goodness in all his labor in which he toils all the days of his life that God has given him; for it is his portion. [18]As for every man to whom God has given wealth, possessions, and authority—to eat from it, to receive his portion, and to rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God. [19]For he will not remember the many days of his life, because God distracted him in the merriment of his heart.

6 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, and it is abundant among men:[†] [2]A man to whom God shall give wealth, possessions, and glory, so he lacks nothing for his life from all the things he shall desire; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a stranger consumes it. This is vanity and a grievous sickness.

[3]If a man begets a hundred children, and he shall live many years—however many the days of his years shall be—yet his soul is not to be filled with goodness, and he also has no burial. I say that a miscarried child is better than he, [4]for it came in futility and departs in darkness; and its name shall be covered with darkness. [5]Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, it has more rest than that man. [6]Even if he lived a thousand years twice, but has not seen goodness, do not all go to one place?

[7] All the labor of man is for his mouth,

And yet his soul is not satisfied.

[8] For what advantage does the skilled man

Have over the unskilled man,

Since even this poor man knows how to keep himself alive?

[9] Better is the sight of the eyes

Than the wandering of the soul.

This also is vanity and is the choice of one's spirit.

[10] If anything has come to be,

Its name has already been used;

And it is known what man is,

That he is unable to dispute with him

Who is stronger than he.

[11] Since there are many words that multiply vanity,

What advantage does man have?

[12] For who knows what is good for man in his life? For all his days in life, which pass like a shadow, are spent in vanity. Who can tell a man what will happen under the sun after he is gone?

The Value of Wisdom

7 A good name is better than good olive oil,

And the day of one's death

Than the day of one's birth.[†]

[2] It is better to go to the house of mourning

Than to go to the house of drinking,

For this is the end of every man;

And the living will take it to heart.

[3] Sorrow is better than laughter,

For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.

4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,

But the heart of senseless men is in the house of merriment.

5 It is better to hear the rebuke of a wise man

Than for a man to hear the song of senseless men.[†]

6 For like the crackling of thorns under a pot,

So is the laughter of senseless men.

This also is vanity.

7 Oppression makes a learned man dizzy

And destroys his vigorous heart.

8 The end of matters is better than their beginning,

And a patient man is better than one haughty in spirit.

9 Do not be hasty in your spirit to be angry,

For anger rests in the bosom of senseless men.

10 Do not say, “Why were the former days better than these?”

For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

11 Wisdom is good with an inheritance,

And profitable to those who see the sun.

12 For wisdom in its shadow is as the shadow of silver,

But the abundance of the knowledge of wisdom

Will give life to him who has it.

13 Behold the works of God,

For who can put in order him

Whom God made crooked?

14 In the day of what is good, live in that goodness,

But in the day of trouble, consider also

That God made one harmonious with the other, That a man may not find out anything

That will come after him.

15 I saw everything in my days of vanity:

There is a righteous man

Who perishes in his righteousness,

And there is an ungodly man

Who remains alive in his vice.

16 Do not be overly righteous,

Nor be overly wise,

Lest you be confounded.[†]

17 Do not be very ungodly,

Nor be hardened,

Lest you die before your time.

18 It is good that you lay hold of this

And do not let your hand let go of it:

For the one who fears God, all things will turn out well.[†]

19 Wisdom will help the wise

More than ten rulers in the city.

20 For there is not a righteous man on earth

Who does good and does not sin.[†]

21 Also do not take to heart all the words people say,

Lest you hear your servant cursing you.

22 For very often he will act in an evil manner against you,

And many times he will afflict your heart,

Just as you have cursed others.

23 I proved all this by wisdom.

I said, “I will be wise,”

24 But it was far from me.

As for what is far off and exceedingly deep,

Who will find it out?

25 I and my heart went about to know,

And to search and seek out wisdom

And the account of things,

And to know the foolishness, hardness, and madness

Of the ungodly man.

26 I find more bitter than death

The woman who is a snare and her heart a net;

And her hands are her chains.

A man who is good in the sight of God will escape from her,

But the sinner will be caught by her.[†]

27 “Behold, I found this,” says the Preacher,

“Adding one thing to the other to find out the reason,

28 Which my soul still seeks, but cannot find:

I found one man among a thousand,

But a woman among all these, I have not found.

29 Except behold, I found this,

That God makes man upright,

But they have sought out many schemes.”

8 Who knows the wise?

And who knows the interpretation of a thing?

A man's wisdom makes his face shine,

And a man shameless in face will be hated.[†]

Obey Those Who Rule

[2]Keep the king's commandment and spare no effort for the sake of your oath to God. [3]You will go out from his presence, but do not stand with an evil thing, for the king will do whatever he pleases.

[4] Insofar as a king has authority, he speaks,

And who will say to him,

“Why will you do this?”

[5] He who keeps his commandment will not know an evil thing,

And a wise man's heart knows the time of judgment.

[6] For to every matter there is a time and a judgment,

Because the knowledge of a man lies heavily upon him.

[7] For there is no one who knows what is going to be;

For who will tell him how it shall be?

[8] No one has the authority over his spirit to withhold his spirit,

And no one has authority in the day of his death.

There is no discharge in that war,

And ungodliness will not save those given to it.[†]

[9]I saw all this and gave my heart to every work done under the sun wherein one man has authority over another man to injure him.

Death Visits All

[10]Then I saw the ungodly buried in their tombs and brought from their holy place and praised in the city for what they had done. But this also is vanity. [11]For no controversy comes quickly against those who do evil; therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully determined within them to do evil.[†] [12]Whoever sins does evil from that time on and for a long time afterwards; nevertheless, I know that it shall be well for those who fear God

so long as they have fear before Him. [13]But it shall not be well with the ungodly man; he will not prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not have fear before God.

[14]There is a vanity that is done on earth: there are the righteous as when the work of the ungodly overtakes them, and there are the ungodly as when the work of the righteous overtakes them. I said that this also is vanity. [15]So I praised merriment, because a man has nothing better to do under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will be present with him in his labor all the days of his life that God gives him under the sun.[†]

[16]For this reason I committed my heart to know wisdom and to see the distractions done on earth; nevertheless, he receives no sleep, day or night. [17]Then I saw all the works of God, that a man cannot discover how He does His work under the sun. No matter how much a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it out. And no matter how much a wise man may speak of knowing it, he will not be able to find it out.

9 For I gave my heart to all this, and my heart saw all this, that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God. Whether it be love or hatred, man does not know it, although all things are before him.[†]

[2] Vanity is in all things:

One event happens to the righteous man and the ungodly man,

To the good man and the evil man,

To the pure man and the impure man,

To the man who sacrifices and the man who does not sacrifice.

As is the good man, so is the man who sins;

As is he who takes an oath, so is he who fears an oath.

[3]There is this evil in everything done under the sun, that one event happens to all. And truly the heart of the sons of men is full of evil; madness is in their heart while they live, and afterwards they go to the dead. [4]For who has fellowship with all the living? There is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.[†]

[5] For the living know they will die,

But the dead know nothing;

And they have no more reward,

For the memory of them is forgotten.

[6] Also their love, hatred, and envy have now perished;

And they have no portion forever

In all that is done under the sun.

[7] Go, eat your bread with merriment

And drink your wine with a happy heart;

For now God is well pleased with your works.[†]

[8] Let your garments be always white,

And let your head lack no oil.

[9]Experience life with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He gave you under the sun all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life and in the labor you performed under the sun. [10]Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work or reasoning or knowledge or wisdom in Hades where you are going. [11]I returned and saw under the sun that:

The race is not to the swift,

Nor the battle to the strong,

Nor bread to the wise,

Nor wealth to men of understanding,

Nor favor to men of knowledge;

For time and chance will happen to them all.[†]

12 For man also does not know his time:

Like fish taken in a cruel net,

Like birds caught in a snare,

So the sons of men are snared in an evil time

When it falls suddenly upon them.

Wisdom Is Better Than Strength

13 I saw this wisdom under the sun, and it is great to me. 14 There was a little city with a few men in it; and a great king came against it and surrounded it and built great barricades around it.[†] 15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and by his wisdom he rescued the city; yet no one remembered that poor man. 16 Then I said:

“Wisdom is better than strength,

But the poor man's wisdom is despised,

And his words are not heard.

17 The words of the wise are heard in quietness

More than the shouting of those who rule in foolishness.

18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war,

But one sinner destroys much goodness.”

10 Dead flies will corrupt the preparation of seasoned olive oil,

And a little wisdom is more valuable

Than the glory of great foolishness.[†]

[2] A wise man's heart is at his right hand,

But the heart of a senseless man is at his left.

[3] When a senseless man also walks along the way,

His heart will fail him,

And everything he considers is foolishness.

[4] If the spirit of the ruler rises against you,

Do not leave your place;

For soothing puts an end to great sins.[†]

[5] There is an evil I saw under the sun

When an offense proceeds from a ruler.

[6] The senseless man devotes himself to great heights,

And rich men shall sit in a lowly place.

[7] I saw servants on horses

And princes walking on the ground like servants.

[8] He who digs a pit will fall into it,

And he who pulls down a wall will be bitten by a serpent.

[9] He who removes stones will be worn out by them,

And he who cuts down trees will be endangered by them.

[10] If the ax head falls off, then his countenance is troubled,

And he will put forth more strength;

And in that case skill is of no advantage to the man.

[11] If the serpent bites when it is not charmed,

Then there is no advantage to the charmer.

[12] The words of a wise mouth are gracious,

But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up.

[13] The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,

And the end of his talk is evil madness.

14 A senseless man multiplies words.

No man knows what is to be;

And who will tell him what will be after him?

15 The labor of fools wears them out,

For they do not even know how to go to the city![†]

16 Woe to you, O city whose king is young

And whose princes feast in the morning!

17 Blessed are you, O land,

When your king is the son of nobles

And your princes feast at the proper time in strength.

They will not be dishonored.

18 Because of laziness the roofing will be brought low,

And through idleness of hands the house will leak.

19 They make bread for laughter,

And wine delights the living;

But all will listen to money.

20 Do not curse the king, even in your conscience;

Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom;

For a bird of the air will carry your voice,

And a bird in flight will tell the matter.

Cast Your Bread upon the Water

11 Cast your bread upon the face of the water,

For you will find it after many days.[†]

2 Give a portion to seven and also to eight,

For you do not know what evil there will be on the earth.

3 If the clouds are full of rain, they pour it out upon the earth,

And if a tree falls to the south or to the north,

In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.

[4] He who observes the wind will not sow,

And he who sees the clouds will not reap.

[5] As you do not know the way of the wind,

Or how the bones grow in the womb of her

Who is with child,

So you do not know the works of God,

Even all things whatever He will do.

[6] In the morning sow your seed,

And in the evening do not withhold your hand;

For you do not know which will prosper,

Either this or that,

Or whether both alike will be good.

[7] The light is sweet,

And it is good for the eyes

To behold the sun.

[8] For if a man lives many years

And rejoices in them all,

Yet let him remember the days of darkness,

For they shall be many.

All that comes is vanity.

Follow God in Your Youth

[9] Be glad, O young man, in your youth,

And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.

Walk in the ways of your heart

And in the sight of your eyes;

But know for all this

That God will bring you into judgment.

10 Therefore remove anger from your heart

And pass by evil with your flesh,

For youth and lack of understanding are vanity.

12 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,

Before the difficult days come

And the years arrive when you say,[†]

2 While the sun and the light,

The moon and the stars

Are not darkened,

And the clouds do not return after the rain;

3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,

And the men of strength are led astray;

When the women who grind the grain become idle

Because they are few;

When the women who look out the windows

Will remain in darkness;

4 When the doors are shut in the marketplace,

And the sound of grinding is low;

When one rises up at the sound of a sparrow,

And all the daughters of song are brought low.

5 Also they will look from the height,

And there are terrors in the way;

When the almond tree blossoms,

The grasshopper grows fat,

And the caper plant is scattered.

For man goes to his eternal home,

And the mourners go about the marketplace.[†]

[6] Remember your Creator until the silver cord is removed,

And the golden flower is pressed together,

And the pitcher is shattered at the fountain,

And the wheel runs together at the well;

[7] Then the dust returns to the earth as it was,

And the spirit returns to God who gave it.

[8] “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher,

“All is vanity.”[†]

[9]Because the Preacher was wise more than others, he taught the people knowledge; and the ear will search out his well-ordered proverbs. [10]The Preacher sought diligently to find desirable words, and what was written is upright; they are words of truth.

[11]The words of the wise are like pointed sticks, like nails firmly fastened; they are given from the collections and abound from them by one Shepherd. [12]Moreover, my son, guard yourself, for there is no end to the making of many books, and much study is weariness of the flesh.

[13]Hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God

And keep His commandments,

For this is the whole man.

[14] For God will bring every work into judgment,

Including everything that has been overlooked,

Whether it be good or evil.

SONG OF SONGS

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The Song of Songs

Author—Traditionally, Solomon, who is referred to seven times (1:1, 5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11, 12).

Date—About 965–960 BC, according to early Jewish tradition.

Major Theme—*The love between husband and wife.* The Song of Songs is a hymn used by the Jewish people for centuries to celebrate human love at wedding feasts. The theme is symbolic of God's love for His faithful people and their reciprocal love. Christians have tended to emphasize the allegorical interpretation of Christ's love for His Bride, the Church.

Background—Typical of ancient Middle Eastern love poetry, the Song of Songs shares the extensive use of sensuous imagery drawn from nature. The closest parallels appear to be found in Proverbs (5:15–20; 6:24–29; 7:6–23). The description of love in 8:6, 7 seems to confirm that the Song belongs to biblical wisdom literature and that it is wisdom's description of an amorous relationship.

Outline

I. Title: Solomon's Song of Songs (1:1)

II. The First Meeting: Love's Desire (1:2–2:7)

III. The Second Meeting: Aspiring Courtship (2:8–3:5)

IV. The Third Meeting: Solomon's Wedding Procession (3:6–5:1)

V. The Fourth Meeting: The Bride's Search for Her Lover (5:2–6:3)

VI. The Fifth Meeting: Union of Spouses (6:4–8:4)

VII. Strength of Devoted Love (8:5–7)

VIII. The Conclusion (8:8–14)

The Bride

1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.†

[2] Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,

For your love is better than wine,†

[3] And the smell of your ointments is better than all spices.

Your name is ointment poured forth;

Therefore, the young maidens love you.†

[4] They draw you.

Companions

We will run after you

For the smell of your ointments.

The Bride

The king brought me into his chamber.

Companions

Let us be extremely joyful and glad in you.

We will love your breasts more than wine;

Uprightness loves you.†

The Bride

[5] I am black and beautiful,

O daughters of Jerusalem,

As the tents of Kedar,

As the curtains of Solomon.[†]
[6] Do not look at me because I am black,
For the sun gave me a tan.
The sons of my mother fought with me
And made me keeper in the vineyards.
But I have not kept my own vineyard.[†]
[7] Tell me, you whom my soul loves,
Where you shepherd your flock,
Where you rest them at noonday;
Lest I become as one
Who encompasses herself
With the herds of your companions.[†]

The Groom

[8] If you do not know yourself,
Fairest among women,
Go forth on the heels of the flocks,
And tend your young goats by the shepherds’ tents.[†]
[9] I have likened you, my beloved,
To my horses in the chariots of Pharaoh.
[10] Your cheeks are as beautiful as turtledoves,
Your neck as a small necklace.[†]

Companions

[11] We will make for you figures of gold
With studs of silver.

The Bride

[12] While the king was at the table,
My spikenard gave forth its smell.[†]
[13] My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh;
He shall take rest in between my breasts.[†]
[14] To me, my beloved is a cluster of grapes from Cyprus
In the vineyards of En Gedi.[†]

The Groom

[15] Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved;
Behold, you are beautiful;
Your eyes are doves.[†]

The Bride

[16] Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved,
And indeed lovely;
Our bed is shaded.[†]
[17] The beams of our houses are cedars;
Our ceilings are cypress wood.[†]

2 I am a flower of the plain,
A lily of the valleys.[†]

The Groom

[2] As a lily among thorns,
So is my beloved among the daughters.[†]

The Bride

[3] As the apple among the trees of the woods,

So is my beloved among the sons.

I desired to be in his shadow and to sit down;

And his fruit was sweet in my mouth.[†]

4 Bring me into the house of wine;

Set love before me.[†]

5 Strengthen me with cakes of raisins;

Refresh me with apples,

For I am wounded with love.[†]

6 His left hand shall be under my head,

And his right hand shall embrace me.[†]

7 I implore you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

By the hosts and powers of the field,

That you rouse not nor wake my love

Until he wishes.[†]

8 The voice of my beloved!

Behold, he comes leaping on the mountains

And skipping over the hills.[†]

9 My beloved is as a gazelle or a young stag

On the mountains of Bethel.

Behold, he stands behind our wall,

Looking through the windows

And peering through the lattices.[†]

10 My beloved answers and says to me,

“Rise up and come, my companion, my fair one, my dove.

11 For behold, the winter is past,

And the rain is gone;

It has departed.[†]

12 The flowers are seen in the land;

The time of pruning has arrived;

The voice of the dove is heard in our land.[†]

13 The fig tree has put forth its young figs,

And the vines are in bloom and give forth their fragrance.

Arise and come, my companion, my fair one, my dove,[†]

14 And come, my dove, to the shelter of the rock,

And take hold of the wall.

Show me your face,

And cause me to hear your voice;

For your voice is sweet,

And your face is beautiful.”[†]

Companions

15 Catch us the foxes,

The little ones that spoil the vineyard,

For our vines are in bloom.

The Bride

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his,

He who shepherds his flock among the lilies.[†]

17 Until the day dawns and the shadows depart,

My beloved, turn back, and be as likened to

A gazelle or a young stag

On the mountains of the ravines.[†]

3 In the night on my bed

I sought him whom my soul loves;

I sought him, but did not find him.

I called him, but he did not hear me.

2 I will rise now and go about the city,

In the marketplaces and the streets.

I will seek him whom my soul loves.

I sought him, but did not find him.[†]

3 The watchmen who do their rounds in the city

Found me, and I said to them,

“Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”[†]

4 Scarcely had I departed from them

When I found him whom my soul loves.

I held him and would not let him go

Until I brought him into my mother's house,

Into the chamber of her who conceived me.[†]

5 I implore you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

By the hosts and powers of the field,

That you rouse not nor wake my love

Until he wishes.

Companions

6 Who is this who comes up from the desert

Like pillars of smoke,

Offering incense, myrrh, and frankincense,

With all the fragrant powders of the perfumer?[†]

7 Behold the bed of Solomon;

Sixty mighty men round about it

From the mighty ones of Israel,

8 All holding a sword

And trained in war.

Every man has his sword upon his thigh

Because of fear in the night.[†]

[9] King Solomon made a palanquin for himself

From the trees of Lebanon.[†]

[10] He made its pillars of silver

And its back of gold,

Its covering crimson,

Its interior a mosaic of love,

Because of the daughters of Jerusalem.

[11] Go forth and look at King Solomon,

At the crown with which his mother crowned him

In the day of his wedding,

And in the day of the gladness of his heart.[†]

The Groom

4 Behold, you are beautiful, my companion,

Behold, you are beautiful.

Your eyes are like doves behind your veil;

Your hair is as flocks of goats

Coming down from Gilead.[†]

[2] Your teeth are as flocks of shorn sheep

That went up from the washing,

All of them bearing twins,

And none among them is barren.[†]

[3] Your lips are like a thread of scarlet,

And your manner of speech is pleasant.

As the rind of a pomegranate

Are your cheeks behind your veil.[†]

4 Your neck is like the tower of David,

The one built on courses of stone.

A thousand shields hang upon it,

All the arrows of the mighty men.[†]

5 Your two breasts are like two fawns,

Twins of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies.[†]

6 Until the day dawns and the shadows depart,

I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh

And to the hill of frankincense.[†]

7 You are altogether beautiful,

And there is no blemish in you.[†]

8 Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon.

Beginning with faithfulness, you shall come and pass through

From the top of Senir and Hermon,

From the dens of lions

And the mountains of leopards.[†]

9 My sister, my bride, you ravished my heart;

You have ravished my heart with one look from your eyes,

With one jewel of your necklace.[†]

10 My sister, my bride,

How beautiful are your breasts.

How much more beautiful are your breasts than wine,

And the fragrance of your garments than all the spices.[†]

11 Your lips, my bride, drip as the honeycomb;

Honey and milk are under your tongue;

And the fragrance of your garments
Is as the scent of Lebanon.†
12 My sister, my bride, is an enclosed garden;
An enclosed garden, a sealed fountain.†
13 Your plants are a garden of pomegranates
With the fragrance of a fruit harvest
And aromatic plants:
14 Spikenard and saffron,
Calamus and cinnamon;
With every tree of Lebanon,
Myrrh, aloes, with all the finest spices;
15 A fountain of gardens,
A well of living and rushing water from Lebanon.

The Bride

16 Awake, O north wind,
And come, O south wind;
Blow through my garden
And let my spices flow out.
Let my beloved come to his garden
And eat of its fruits.†

The Groom

5 I came into my garden, O my sister, my bride;
I harvested my myrrh with my spices;
I ate my bread with my honey
And drank my wine with my milk.

O friends, eat and drink,
And O brothers, drink abundantly.[†]

The Bride

[2] I sleep, but my heart keeps watch;
The voice of my beloved—he knocks at the door!
“Open to me, my sister, my companion,
My dove, my perfect one;
For my head is wet with dew,
And my locks of hair with the drops of the night.”[†]
[3] I have taken off my tunic; how can I put it back on?
I have washed my feet; how can I dirty them?[†]
[4] My beloved put his hand by the opening of the door,
And my heart was stirred by him.
[5] I arose to open to my beloved;
My hands dripped with myrrh,
My fingers with choice myrrh,
Upon the handles of the door.[†]
[6] I opened it for my beloved,
But my beloved had passed by.
My soul went after him because of his word,
And I sought him, but did not find him;
I called him, but he did not answer me.[†]
[7] The watchmen who encircled the city found me.
They struck and wounded me;
The guards of the walls removed my veil.[†]
[8] I implore you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the hosts and powers of the field,

If you find my beloved, what should you tell him?

That I am wounded with love.

Companions

9 What is your beloved more than another beloved,

My beautiful one among women?

What is your beloved more than another beloved,

That you implore us?

The Bride

10 My beloved is a shining and fiery light,

Chosen from countless thousands.[†]

11 His head is like refined gold;

His locks of hair are shiny and black,

Like a raven's feathers.

12 His eyes are like those of doves

Sitting by pools of water,

Having eyes bathed in milk and fitly set.

13 His cheeks are like bowls of spices

Pouring forth perfumes.

His lips are lilies dripping choice myrrh.

14 His hands are like elaborate gold

Set with precious stones.

His stomach is like an ivory tablet

Inlaid with sapphire stones.

15 His legs are like pillars of marble

Established on golden feet.

His appearance is like Lebanon,

Choice as the cedar trees.

16 His mouth is most sweet and altogether desirable.

This is my beloved, my companion,

O daughters of Jerusalem!

Companions

6 Where has your beloved gone,

You beautiful one among women?

Where has your beloved turned his attention?

For we will seek him with you.[†]

The Bride

2 My beloved has gone down to his garden,

To the beds of spice,

To shepherd his sheep in the gardens

And to gather lilies.[†]

3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,

He who shepherds his sheep among the lilies.

The Groom

4 You are beautiful, my companion,

You are my good pleasure;

You are as beautiful as Jerusalem;

You are as awesome as an army set in array.

5 Turn away your eyes from before me,

For they have ravished me.

Your hair is like flocks of goats

Coming down from Gilead.[†]

[6] Your teeth are as flocks of sheep

That are sheared,

Which came up from the washing.

All of them bear twins,

And none among them is barren.

[7] Your lips are like scarlet thread,

And your manner of speech is lovely.

Your cheeks outside your veil

Are like the rind of a pomegranate.

[8] There are sixty queens

And eighty concubines,

And maidens without number.[†]

[9] My dove, my perfect one is the only one;

And she is the only one of her mother,

The choice of the one who bore her.

The daughters saw her

And considered her blessed.

The queens and the concubines will also praise her.

[10] Who is she who looks forth as the early morning,

Beautiful as the moon,

Choice as the sun,

Awesome as armies set in array?[†]

Bride

[11] I went down to the orchard of nut trees

To see the fruits of the valley,

To see if the vineyard had blossomed

And if the pomegranates had put forth blossoms.

There I will give my breasts to you:[†]

12 My soul did not know it.

It made me as the chariots of Amminadab.

Companions

7 Return, return, O Shulamite;

Return, return, and we will look at you.

The Groom

What will you see in the Shulamite,

She who comes as the troops of armies?[†]

2 Why are your feet beautiful in your sandals,

O daughter of Nadab?

The curves of your thighs are like small necklaces,

The work of a skilled craftsman.[†]

3 Your navel is like an elaborate bowl,

Not lacking mixed wine.

Your stomach is like a heap of wheat

Set about with lilies.

4 Your two breasts are like two fawns,

The twins of a gazelle.

5 Your neck is like a tower of ivory,

And your eyes are like pools in Heshbon

By the gates of a daughter of many.

Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon

Pointing towards Damascus.

6 Your head crowns you like Carmel,

And the locks of your hair are like a purple garment.

The king is held captive by your curls.

7 How beautiful and how sweet you are, O love,

With your delights!

8 This greatness of yours is like the palm tree,

And your breasts like a cluster of grapes.

9 I said, “I will climb up the palm tree,

And grasp hold of its high branches.”

Indeed your breasts shall be like clusters of the vine,

And the fragrance of your nose like apples,

10 And your mouth like a good wine

That goes down smoothly for my beloved,

Fit for my lips and teeth.

The Bride

11 I am my beloved's

And his desire is towards me.[†]

12 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;

Let us lodge in the villages;[†]

13 Let us rise early in the morning in the vineyards;

Let us see if the vine has flowered,

If the blossoms have appeared,

If the pomegranates have blossomed.

There I will give you my breasts.

14 The mandrakes have put forth an aroma,

And fruits of all kinds, new and old,

Are at our doors.

O my beloved, I have kept them for you.

8 Who would have granted you, my brother,

To nurse at my mother's breasts?

I would have found you outside;

I would have kissed you,

And no one would despise me.[†]

2 Then I would take you along

And lead you to my mother's house,

Into the chamber of her who conceived me;

I would give you spiced wine to drink,

The juice of my pomegranates.[†]

3 His left hand would be under my head,

And his right hand would embrace me.[†]

4 I implore you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

By the hosts and powers of the field,

Do not rouse nor wake my love

Until he wishes.[†]

Companions

5 Who is she who comes up, is made white,

And leans on her beloved?

The Groom

Under an apple tree I raised you up.

There your mother travailed in labor for you;

There she who travailed in labor for you

Gave you birth.[†]

[6] Set me as a seal upon your heart,

As a seal upon your arm;

For love is as strong as death,

Jealousy as cruel as Hades.

Her sparks are sparks of fire,

Even the flames thereof.[†]

[7] Much water will not be able to quench love,

Nor will rivers drown it.

If a man should give all his possessions for love,

Men would utterly despise them.[†]

Companions

[8] Our sister is small and has no breasts;

What will we do for our sister

In the day when she is spoken for?[†]

[9] If she is a wall, let us build silver battlements upon her;

And if she is a door, let us carve cedar panels for her.[†]

The Bride

[10] I am a wall, and my breasts are as towers;

I was in his eyes as one who found peace.

[11] Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon;

He entrusted his vineyard to keepers.

A man was to bring a thousand silver coins for its fruit.[†]

[12] My vineyard before me is mine;

O Solomon, you shall have a thousand,

And those who keep its fruit, two hundred.

The Groom

[13] You who dwell in the gardens,

The companions give heed to your voice;

Cause me to hear.[†]

The Bride

[14] Escape, my beloved, and be like the gazelle

Or the fawn of a deer

On the mountains of spices.

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The Wisdom of Solomon

Author—An unknown Jewish believer of the larger Greek community of Alexandria, Egypt.

Date—30–10 BC.

Major Theme—*The greatness of Wisdom.* The Wisdom of Solomon was written to offer edification to a Jewish community during times of political, military, and religious upheaval. Its aim was to encourage the Jews to be faithful to their covenant with God. The work was also intended to attract pagans and apostate Jews back to Judaism.

Background—The content of this rich theological work has prepared for and deeply influenced the Church's teachings on the Incarnation of Christ, as well as its understanding of God, salvation, and the nature of the Church itself. The Wisdom of Solomon is frequently found in the Old Testament readings of the Church lectionary, especially during Holy Week. This inspired writing was used in the early Church to further instruct those most recently baptized. Chronologically, it was the last book written in the Old Testament Canon, and it serves as a bridge to the New Testament in terms of theology and preparation for the Advent of Christ.

Outline

I. Wisdom Bestows Eternal Life (1:1–6:21)

II. The Nature and Power of Wisdom and King Solomon's Pursuit of Her (6:22–10:21)

III. Wisdom Guides God's Chosen People during the Exodus (11:1–19:22)

Seek the Lord

1 Love righteousness, you who judge on the earth.

Think about the Lord in goodness

And seek Him with sincerity of heart;†

2 Because He is found by those who do not tempt Him,

And He is manifest to those who do not disbelieve Him.

3 For dishonest reasoning separates people from God,

And when His power examines someone,

It convicts the undiscerning;

4 For wisdom will not enter the soul that plots evil,

Nor will it dwell in a body involved in sin.†

5 For a holy spirit of discipline flees from deceit

And sends away undiscerning reasoning;

It will put wrongdoing to shame when it comes near.†

God Examines Our Actions

6 For wisdom is a spirit that loves mankind,

But she will punish a blasphemer because of his words;

For God is the witness of his thoughts,

The true examiner of his heart, and the hearer of his tongue;

7 Because the Spirit of the Lord fills the world,

And He who holds all things together knows what is said.†

8 Therefore no one who speaks unrighteous things

Will escape notice,

Nor will justice, when it cross-examines, pass him by.

9 For there shall be a close examination

Into the deliberations of an ungodly man,

And a report of his words will come to the Lord

As proof of his lawlessness;

10 For the zealous ear hears all things,

And the noise of murmuring is not hidden.

11 Therefore keep yourself from useless murmuring

And refrain your tongue from evil speech;

For no secret word will go unpunished,

And a lying mouth will destroy one's soul.

God Made Life, Not Death

12 Do not be zealous for death by the deceit of your life,

Nor bring destruction upon yourself by the works of your hands.

13 For God did not make death,

Neither does He have pleasure over the destruction of the living.[†]

14 For He created all things that they might exist,

And the generations of the world so they might be preserved;

For there was no poison of death in them,

Nor was the reign of Hades on the earth.

15 For righteousness does not die.

16 But the ungodly summoned death by their words and works;

Although they thought death would be a friend, they were dissolved.

For they made a covenant with death,

Since they were deserving to share it in common.

An Ungodly View of Life

2 For they said among themselves, as they reasoned incorrectly:

“Our life is short and painful,

And there is no cure for the death of a man;

For no one has been known to return from Hades;[†]

[2] Because we were born by chance,

And after this we shall be as though we never existed;

For the breath in our nostrils is smoke,

And our speech is the spark kindled by the beating of our heart.

[3] When the spark is extinguished, our body will turn to ashes,

And our breath will disperse like empty air.

[4] Then our name will be forgotten in due time,

And no one will remember our works;

So our life will pass away like the trace of a cloud

And be scattered like fog,

Driven away by the rays of the sun

And oppressed by its heat.

[5] For our appointed time is the passing of a shadow,

And there is no return from our death;

Because it is sealed up, no one can turn back.

[6] Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that exist,

And make the most of creation as quickly as possible,

As we did in our youth.

[7] Let us be filled with expensive wine and perfumes,

And let no flower of springtime pass us by.

[8] Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds

Before they wither away.

[9] Let none of us fail to share in our arrogance.

Let us leave signs of our gladness everywhere, Because this is our portion, and this is our lot.

10 Let us oppress the righteous poor man;

Let us not spare a widow,

Nor respect the aged gray hair of an old man.

11 Let our might be our law of righteousness,

For what is weak is shown to be useless.

Hatred of the Righteous.

12 “Let us lie in ambush for the righteous man,

Because he is useless to us and opposes our deeds;

He denounces us for our sins against the law

And accuses us of sins against our upbringing.[†]

13 He claims to have knowledge of God,

And he calls himself a child of the Lord.

14 He has become for us as a refutation of our purposes;

Even seeing him is a burden to us,

15 Because his life is unlike that of others;

For his paths go in a different direction.

16 We are considered by him as a hybrid,

And he avoids our ways as something immoral.

He considers the last things of the righteous as blessed

And pretends that God is his Father.

17 Let us see if his words are true,

And let us put these last things to the test at the end of his life.

18 For if the righteous man is a son of God, He will help him,

And deliver him from the hand of those who oppose him.[†]

19 Let us test him with insult and torture

That we may know his gentleness

And test his patient endurance.

[20] Let us condemn him to a shameful death,

For there shall be a visitation because of his words.”

[21] So they reasoned these things

And were led astray,

For their malice blinded them.

[22] But they did not know the mysteries of God,

Nor hope for the wages of holiness,

Nor judge the reward of blameless souls.

[23] For God created man for immortality

And made him an image of His own eternity.

[24] But death entered the world by the envy of the devil,

And those of his portion tempt it.

The Hope of the Righteous

3 But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,

And no torture will ever touch them.[†]

[2] In the eyes of the undiscerning they seemed to have died,

And their departure was considered to be misfortune,

[3] And their passage from us to be their destruction;

But they are at peace.

[4] For though in man's view they were punished,

Their hope is full of immortality.

[5] Though chastened in a few things,

Great kindness will be shown them,

For God tested them and found them worthy of Himself.

[6] He tested them like gold in a furnace

And accepted them as a whole burnt offering.

7 In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,

And they will run about like sparks through straw.

8 They will judge nations and rule over peoples,

And the Lord shall reign over them unto the ages.

9 Those who trust in Him will understand truth,

And the faithful shall continue with Him in love,

Because grace and mercy are upon His elect.[†] [†]

The Plight of the Ungodly

10 But the ungodly shall experience

The punishment they themselves plotted,

They who rejected the righteous man

And rebelled against the Lord.[†]

11 For whoever despises wisdom and instruction is miserable,

And their hope is vain, their labors are useless,

And their works are worthless.

12 Their wives are foolish,

And their children are evil, their existence accursed.

The Blessing of Virtue

13 Blessed is the undefiled barren woman

Who has not known sexual promiscuity;

She shall have fruit in the visitation of souls.[†]

14 Blessed also is the eunuch who has done no lawless deed,

Nor thought evil things against the Lord;

For a chosen grace of faith will be given to him,

And a delightful portion in the temple of the Lord.

[15] For the fruit of good labors is of good report,

And the root of discernment is infallible.

Children of the Ungodly

[16] But the children of adulterers shall not reach maturity,

And the seed of a lawless bed shall perish.

[17] For even if they live a long time

They shall be considered as nothing,

And in the end their old age will be accounted a dishonor.

[18] But if they should die young, they would have no hope

Nor consolation in the day of decision.

[19] For the end of an unrighteous generation is grievous.

When Virtue Is Present

4 Childlessness with virtue is better than this,

For immortality is in its memory;

Because it is known both by God and by man.[†]

[2] When virtue is present, people imitate it,

And when it goes away, they long for it.

Throughout one's lifetime,

Virtue leads the struggle for undefiled prizes,

Wearing a crown and conquering.[†]

[3] But the prolific multitude of the ungodly are useful to no one,

And none of their illegitimate seedlings will grow a deep root

Or establish a sure footing.

[4] For although they may flourish in their branches for a time,

Yet without a sure footing they will be shaken by the wind

And uprooted by the force of the winds.

[5] Their twigs shall be broken off before they reach maturity,

And their fruit will be useless,

Not ripe for eating or good for anything.

[6] For children born from lawless unions

Are witnesses of evil against their parents

In their close examination.[†]

[7] But though a righteous man may die before his time,

He shall be at rest.

[8] For old age is not honored for its length of existence,

Nor measured by its number of years;

[9] But discernment is gray hair for mankind,

And a spotless life is the maturity of old age.

The Righteous Enoch

[10] There was once a man pleasing to God and loved by Him,

And while living among sinners he was taken up.[†]

[11] He was caught up lest evil change his understanding

Or deceit deceive his soul.

[12] For envy arising from lack of judgment obscures what is good,

And a whirling of desire undermines an innocent heart.

[13] He was made perfect,

For in a short time he fulfilled long years,

[14] For his soul was pleasing to the Lord;

Therefore, He took him early from the midst of evil.

Yet peoples saw this but did not understand,

Nor take such a thing to heart,

[15] That the Lord's grace and mercy are with His elect

And that He watches over His holy ones.

A Study in Contrasts

16 But a righteous man who is dead

Shall condemn the ungodly who are living,

And a youth who is quickly perfected

Shall condemn the ripe old age of a wrongdoer.

17 For they will see the end of the wise man,

But will not understand what the Lord purposed for him

Or why He kept him safe.†

18 They will see and despise him,

But the Lord will laugh them to scorn.

19 After this they shall be dead without honor

And an insult among the dead continually;

Because He will dash them headlong and speechless to the ground

And shake them from the foundations.

They shall be left dry and barren to the very end;

They shall be in pain,

And their memory shall perish.

20 They will come with dread

In the day of reckoning for their sins,

And their lawless deeds will convict them to their face.†

5 Then the righteous man will stand with confidence

In the presence of those who afflict him;

And those who reject his labors,

2 When they see him, will be shaken with dreadful fear;

And they shall be amazed at his unexpected salvation.

3 They will speak among themselves with regret,

And in anguish of spirit they will groan and say,

4 “This is the man whom we fools once held in derision

And made a byword of disgrace.

We considered his life to be madness

And his death as without honor.

5 How has he been numbered among the sons of God?

And how is his portion among the saints?[†]

6 Therefore we went astray from the way of truth,

For the light of righteousness did not shine on us,

And the sun did not rise upon us.

7 We were satisfied with the paths of lawlessness,

And we traveled through impassable deserts;

But the way of the Lord we have not known.

8 What has arrogance profited us?

And how has our wealth with its false pretension helped us?

9 “All those things have passed by like a shadow

And like news that escapes notice;

10 Like a ship that passes through the waves of water,

Which after passing through, no trace can be found,

Nor the pathway of its keel in the waves;

11 Or like a bird, when it flies through the air,

No proof of its journey is found;

And the light air, whipped by the beating of its pinions

And divided by the force of its rushing motion,

Is traveled through by the movement of its wings,

But after this no sign of its approach is found therein;

12 Or like an arrow, when it is shot at an object,

The divided air immediately comes together,

So that no one knows its pathway.

13 Thus we also, after we are born, come to an end,

Yet have no sign of virtue to show,

But have been entirely consumed in our vice.”

14 Because the hope of the ungodly man

Is like dust carried by the wind

And like a light frost driven away by a storm,

It is dispersed like smoke before the wind,

And it passes like the remembrance of a guest

Who stays only one day.

15 But the righteous live forever,

And their reward is with the Lord;

And their care is by the Most High.

16 Therefore they shall receive a kingly dwelling of dignity

And a crown of beauty from the hand of the Lord,

Because He will shelter them with His right hand

And protect them with His arm.

17 He will take His zeal as His full armor

And will turn His creation into weapons against His enemies.[†]

18 He will wear righteousness as a breastplate

And put on impartial judgment as a helmet.

19 He will take holiness as an unconquerable shield

20 And sharpen His relentless wrath for a sword;

And creation will fight with Him against the senseless.

21 Well-aimed flashes of lightning will strike

And leap to their object as from a well-drawn bow of clouds;

22 And hailstones full of anger will be hurled

As from an engine of war.

The water of the sea will be vexed with them,

And the rivers will wash over them severely.

23 A powerful wind will oppose them,

And like a storm it will winnow them away.

Lawlessness will lay waste all the earth,

And wrongdoing will overturn the thrones of rulers.

To Kings and Rulers

6 Listen therefore, O kings, and understand;

Learn, O judges of the ends of the earth.[†]

2 Give ear, you that rule over multitudes,

And take pride in yourself over a multitude of nations.

3 For power was given to you from the Lord,

And your lordship from the Most High,

Who will make a careful search of your works

And examine closely your plans.

4 Because as servants of His kingdom,

You did not judge rightly;

Neither did you keep His law,

Nor did you walk according to the plan of God;

5 He shall come upon you terribly and quickly,

Because severe judgment falls on those who govern.

6 For the least is pardoned in mercy,

But the powerful shall be strongly examined.

[7] For the Master of all will not shrink back

From anyone's presence,

Nor respect greatness;

Because He Himself made both small and great,

And cares for all alike.

[8] But a strict inquiry is imminent for the mighty.

[9] Therefore to you, O tyrants, my words are directed,

That you may learn wisdom and not fall away.

[10] For they will be made holy who keep holy things piously,

And those who are taught holy things will find a defense.[†]

[11] Therefore long for my words;

Yearn for them, and you will be instructed.

Wisdom's Radiance

[12] Wisdom is radiant and unfading

And is easily perceived by those who love her;

For she is found by those who seek her.[†]

[13] She comes upon those who long to know her beforehand.

[14] He who rises early in the morning to seek her

Will not grow weary,

For he will find her sitting at his gates.

[15] For to think deeply about her

Is the perfection of discernment,

And he who keeps watch for her

Will soon be free from worry;[†]

[16] Because she goes about seeking those worthy of her,

And she appears to them favorably in their paths

And meets them in every thought.[†]

17 For the beginning of wisdom

Is a very genuine desire for instruction,

And careful attention to instruction is the love of her.†

18 Now this love is the keeping of her laws,

And giving heed to her laws is the assurance of incorruption;

19 And incorruption brings one near to God.

20 So desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.

21 Therefore if you take pleasure in thrones and scepters, O tyrants,

Honor wisdom, that you may reign forever.

22 I will tell you what wisdom is and how she came to be,

And I will hide no mysteries from you;

But I will search her out from the beginning of creation

And make her knowledge clear.

I will not pass by the truth,

23 Nor indeed travel with envy, which causes one to waste away,

Because envy will have no share in wisdom.

24 But a multitude of wise men is the salvation of the world,

And a prudent king is the stability of his people.†

25 Therefore be instructed by my words, and you will profit.

The King Is a Mere Man

7 Now I also am a mortal, the same as all men,

And earthborn, a descendant of the first-formed man;

For in the womb of a mother I was engraved as flesh.†

2 In a period of ten months, I was constructed with blood

From the seed of a man and the pleasure of marriage.†

3 When I was born, I breathed the common air,

Then fell upon the earth the same as all;

And as my first sound, I cried like everyone else.

4 I was nursed with care in swaddling cloths.[†]

5 Thus no king had a different beginning of existence,

6 For there is one entrance into life for all,

And a common departure.[†]

Solomon's Love of Wisdom

7 Therefore I prayed, and discernment was given to me;

I appealed to God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.[†]

8 I preferred her to scepter and thrones,

And regarded wealth as nothing in comparison to her.

9 Nor did I liken her to any priceless stone,

Because all gold is only a little sand in her sight.

And silver will be counted as clay before her.

10 I loved her more than health and beauty,

And I chose her instead of light,

Because her light is sleepless.

11 All good things came to me together with her,

And in her hands countless wealth.

12 I was gladdened by all of them

Because wisdom rules them;

But I did not know she was their mother.

13 So I learned both honestly and ungrudgingly,

And I do not hide her wealth,

14 For it is an unfailing treasure for men

Who, when they get it, obtain friendship with God,

For they demonstrate her gifts that come from instruction.

15 May God grant me to speak according to His purpose

And to think worthily of what I was given,

For He is also the guide of wisdom and the corrector of the wise.

16 For both we and our words are in His hand,

And so are all insights and knowledge of handicrafts.

17 For He gives me knowledge of the things that exist:

To know the truthful structure of the world,

The operative power of its elementary principles,

18 The beginning, end, and middle of the times,

The changes of the solstices and the transitions of the seasons,

19 The cycles of the year and the arranging of the stars,

20 The natures of animals and the tempers of beasts,

The force of winds and the reasoning of mankind,

The distinction of plants and the strength of roots,

21 And to know whatever is hidden and whatever is visible.

For wisdom, the artisan of all things, taught me.

22 So in herself, wisdom is a spirit that is rational,

Holy, only-begotten, manifold, subtle, easily moved, clear,

Undefiled, manifest, invulnerable, loving what is good, keen,[†]

23 Unhindered, beneficent, man-loving, steadfast, unfailing,

Free from worry, all-powerful, all-surveying,

And penetrating all spirits that are rational, pure, and most subtle.

24 For wisdom moves from one place to another

More easily than motion itself,

And because of her purity, she penetrates all things.

25 So she is the exhalation of the power of God

And the emanation of the pure glory of the Almighty;

Therefore nothing defiled enters her.

26 For she is the radiance of eternal light,

A spotless mirror of the operative power of God

And the image of His goodness.

27 Though she is one, she can do all things;

So while remaining in herself, she renews all things;

And in every generation, she passes into holy souls

And makes them friends of God and prophets.[†]

28 Thus God loves nothing as much

As the one who lives with wisdom.

29 For wisdom is more beautiful than the sun

And more than every constellation of stars.

Compared with light she is found to be superior,

30 For night succeeds the light,

But evil cannot overcome wisdom.

At Home with Wisdom

8 Wisdom stretches out from one end of the earth to the other,

And she governs all things well.[†]

2 I loved her and sought her from my youth,

And desired to take her as a bride for myself;

And I became a lover of her beauty.

3 She glorifies her noble birth by living with God,

And the Master of all loves her.

4 For she is the initiate of the knowledge of God

And one who chooses His works.[†]

5 Now if riches are a possession to be desired in life,

What is richer than wisdom, who works all things?

6 And if discernment shows itself in action,

Who more than wisdom is its craftsman?

7 If anyone loves righteousness,

The products of righteousness are the virtues.

For wisdom teaches self-control, discernment, righteousness and courage,

Concerning which things there is nothing more valuable in the life of man.[†]

8 But also, if anyone longs for great experience,

She knows the things of old and portrays the things to come;

She understands subtlety of words and the solution of riddles;

She has foreknowledge of signs and wonders

And the outcomes of times and seasons.[†]

9 Therefore I decided to take her to live with me,

Knowing she would give me good counsel

And encouragement in cares and sorrows.

10 Because of her I will have glory among the multitudes

And honor in the presence of the elders, though I am young.[†]

11 I will be found keen in judgment

And be admired in the sight of rulers.

12 When I am silent, they will wait for me,

And when I speak, they will give heed to me;

And when I speak longer,

They will put their hand over their mouth.

13 I will have immortality because of her

And will leave an eternal remembrance

For those who exist after me.

14 I shall govern peoples,

And nations will be subject to me.[†]
15 Dread tyrants shall be afraid of me when they hear of me;
Among the people I will show myself
To be good and courageous in war.
16 When I enter my house, I shall find rest with her,
For association with her has no bitterness,
Neither does living with her have any sorrow,
But only gladness and joy.
17 When I considered these things within myself
And thought about them in my heart,
That in kinship with wisdom there is immortality,
18 And in friendship with her there is good pleasure,
And in the labors of her hands there is unfailing wealth,
And in the shared training of her company there is discernment,
And in the fellowship of her words there is good repute—
Thus I searched about that I might take her for myself.
19 As a child I was good by nature and received a good soul;[†]
20 And much more, since I was good,
I entered an undefiled body.
21 Yet I knew otherwise that I would not be self-controlled
Unless God gave me wisdom,
And that it was a mark of discernment
To know whose gift she was—[†]
So I entreated the Lord and besought Him,
And with all my heart, I said:

Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom

“O God of our fathers and the Lord of mercy,

9

Who made all things by Your word[†]
[2] And in Your wisdom built a man,
That by You He might be the master of what is created,
[3] And manage the world in holiness and righteousness,
And pass judgment with uprightness of soul:
[4] Give me the wisdom that sits by Your throne,
And do not reject me from among Your servants;
[5] Because I am Your servant and the son of Your maidservant,
A weak man and lasting but a short time,
And inferior in the understanding of judgment and laws.[†]
[6] For though one is perfect among the sons of men,
Yet if Your wisdom is absent from him,
He will be regarded as nothing.[†]
[7] You chose me to be the king of Your people
And to be the judge over Your sons and daughters.
[8] You gave command to build a temple on Your holy mountain
And an altar in the city of Your habitation,
A copy of Your holy tabernacle
Which You prepared from the beginning.[†]
[9] With You is wisdom, who knows Your works
And was present when You made the world,
And who understands what is pleasing in Your sight
And what is upright within Your commandments.
[10] Send her forth from Your holy heavens,
And send her from Your glorious throne,
That she might be present with me and labor
And that I might know what is well-pleasing to You.

11 For she knows and understands all things,

And she will guide me wisely in my actions

And guard me with her glory.

12 Then my works shall be acceptable,

And I will judge Your people righteously

And shall be worthy of my father's throne.

13 For what man will know the counsel of God?

Or who will think about what the Lord wills?

14 For the reasoning of mortals is cowardly,

And our intents are unsafe;

15 For a corruptible body weighs down the soul,

And this earthly tent burdens a heart full of thoughts.[†]

16 We can barely form a conjecture of the things upon the earth,

And the things at hand we find with toil;

But who has searched out the things in the heavens?

17 Who has known Your counsel,

Unless You have given him wisdom

And sent him Your Holy Spirit from on high?[†]

18 And thus the paths of those on earth were made straight,

And mankind was taught what pleases You;

So they were saved by wisdom.”

Wisdom in History: Adam

10 Wisdom took care of the first-formed father of the world

When he alone was created;

And she delivered him from his transgression[†]

2 And gave him strength to rule all things.

Cain

[3] But when an unrighteous man departed from her in his wrath,

He perished in anger for murdering his brother.

Noah

[4] When the earth was flooded because of him,

Again wisdom saved it

And piloted the righteous man by a cheap piece of wood.

Abraham

[5] Also when the nations in evil concord were confused,

Wisdom knew the righteous man

And preserved him blameless before God,

And kept him strong in the time of his affection for his child.

Lot

[6] Wisdom rescued a righteous man

When the ungodly were perishing,

For he escaped the fire that descended on the five cities,

[7] Concerning which a testimony still remains:

A barren land continually blackened with smoke,

Trees bearing fruit which does not ripen in season,

And a pillar of salt standing as a monument

To an unbelieving soul.[†]

[8] For since they passed by wisdom,

They not only were injured by not knowing good things,

But also left behind for the living a memorial of their folly,

So they could not forget their fall.

[9] Wisdom rescued from troubles those who served her.

Jacob

[10] She guided a righteous man on straight paths

When he fled from his brother's wrath.

She showed him the kingdom of God

And gave him knowledge of holy things.

She prospered him in hardships

And increased the fruit of his labors.[†]

[11] When they dishonored him in their covetousness,

She stood by him and made him rich.

[12] She protected him from his enemies,

Kept him safe from those who plotted against him,

And arbitrated a strong contest for him,

So he might know that godliness is more powerful than anything.

Joseph

[13] When a righteous man was sold,

Wisdom did not abandon him,

But delivered him from sin.[†]

[14] She went down with him into a pit,

And she did not leave him in chains

Until she brought him the scepter of a kingdom

And authority over those who tyrannized him.

She showed those who blamed him to be lying

And gave him everlasting glory.

Moses

15 She delivered a holy people and a blameless seed

From a nation of oppressors.

16 She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord

And opposed fearful kings with signs and wonders.

17 She gave to holy men the reward of their labors.

She guided them in a marvelous way

And became for them a shelter by day

And a flame of stars by night.[†]

18 She carried them across the Red Sea

And led them through deep water;

19 But she drowned their enemies

And cast them up from the depth of the abyss.

20 Therefore the righteous stripped the ungodly,

And they sang, O Lord, to Your holy name

And praised with one accord Your defending hand;

21 Because wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb

And made the tongues of infants speak clearly.[†]

Wisdom in the Wilderness

11

Wisdom prospered their works by the hand of a holy prophet.

2 They traveled through an uninhabited desert

And pitched their tents in impassable places.

3 They held their ground in wars

And defended themselves against their enemies.

4 They thirsted and called upon You,

And water was given them from a flinty rock,

And a quenching of thirst from a hard stone;[†]

5 For through the things by which their enemies were punished,

They themselves when in need

Had kindness shown to them.

6 In place of a spring of an ever-flowing river,

Troubled and defiled with blood,

7 In rebuke of the decree to slay the infants—

You gave them abundant water unexpectedly,

8 Showing through their thirst at that time

How You punished their enemies.

9 For when they were tested,

Though they were disciplined in mercy,

They learned how the ungodly were tormented

When judged in wrath.[†]

10 For You tested them, admonishing them like a father,

But You examined the ungodly

Like a severe king passing sentence.

11 Whether present or absent,

They were likewise consumed,

12 For twofold grief possessed them

And a groaning over the memory of all that happened.

13 For when they heard that through their own punishments

The holy people had kindness shown to them,

They understood it was the Lord's doing.

14 For they marveled at the outcome of the man

They had cast out mockingly and exposed long before,

For they did not thirst for godliness as do the righteous.

15 In return for the wrongdoing of their senseless reasoning,

In which they were led astray

And worshiped irrational serpents and worthless animals,

You sent upon them a multitude of animals in vengeance,

16 So they might learn that one is punished

By the things by which he sins.

17 For Your all-powerful hand,

Which created the world out of unformed matter,

Did not lack the resource to send upon them

A multitude of bears or bold lions,

18 Or newly created unknown beasts full of anger,

Either snorting a breath of fire

Or scattering like chaff a thick cloud of smoke,

Or flashing terrible sparks from their eyes.

19 Not only could their damage utterly destroy men,

But their mere outward appearance could terrify and kill them.

20 Even without these, men could fall in a single breath

When they are pursued by justice

And scattered like chaff by the breath of Your power;

But You have ordered all things by measure, number, and weight.

The God Who Loves Mankind

21 For great power is always present with You,

And who can oppose the might of Your arm?

22 Because the entire world before You

Is like a small additional weight on scales,

And like a drop of dew early in the morning

That falls on the ground.[†]

23 But You are merciful to all, for You can do all things;

And You overlook the sins of men to bring them to repentance.

24 For You love all the things that exist,

And You detest nothing of the things You made;

For You would not even make anything You hated.[†]

25 How could anything continue to exist unless You willed it?

Or how could anything be preserved

Unless it was called into existence by You?[†]

26 You spare all things, because they are Yours,

O Master who love human beings.

12 For Your immortal Spirit is in all things.

2 For this reason You correct little by little those who fall away,

And You remind and warn them of the sins they commit

So they may be freed from evil and believe in You, O Lord.[†]

The Canaanites’ Vice

3 For You hated the inhabitants of Your holy land long ago,[†]

4 Because they practiced very hateful works of sorcery and unholy rites.

5 These unmerciful murderers of children

Who ate sacrificial meals of human flesh and blood,

These initiates in the midst of an orgy,

6 These parents and murderers of helpless children—

You willed to destroy by the hands of our fathers,

7 That the land most precious of all to You

Might be a worthy colony of the servants of God.

8 But even these You spared, since they were men,

And sent wasps as forerunners of Your army

That You might destroy them little by little.

9 You were not powerless to give the ungodly

To the righteous in regular battle,

Or to destroy them by terrible wild beasts

Or by one severe word;

10 But judging them little by little

You gave them a chance for repentance,

For You were not unaware that their generation was evil,

Their vice implanted,

And their reasoning would not change forever.

11 For they were an accursed seed from the beginning,

Nor did You give them amnesty for their sins

Because You feared anyone.

God Our King

12 For who will say, “What have You done?”

Or who will oppose Your judgment?

Who will bring a charge against You

For destroying the nations You made?

Or who will stand before You

To plead as an advocate for unrighteous men?[†]

13 For neither is there any god except You,

Whose care is for all things,

So You may show that You do not judge unjustly;

14 Nor can any king or tyrant meet You face to face

Concerning those You punish.

15 You are righteous and order all things uprightly,

And You consider it alien to Your power

To pass sentence on him who should not be punished.

16 For Your strength is the origin of righteousness,

And it causes You who are the Lord of all to spare all.

17 For to him who disbelieves the perfection of Your power,

You show forth Your strength

And rebuke the insolence among those who know it.

18 But You who gain the mastery by Your strength

Judge with gentleness,

For You govern us with great forbearance;

And power is present with You to use when You will it.

God Chastens His Children

19 Through such works You taught Your people

That the righteous man should love mankind;

And You made Your children hopeful

By offering them repentance over their sins.[†]

20 For if You punished the enemies of Your children

And those liable to death with so much attention and deliberation,

And granted them time and opportunity to depart from their evil,

21 With how much strictness did You judge Your children,

To whose fathers You gave oaths and covenants of good promises?

22 So then You chastened us,

But our enemies with ten thousand whips,

That we may care about Your goodness when we judge

But expect Your mercy when we are judged.[†]

The Egyptians Were Judged

23 Therefore those who lived unjustly in their foolishness of life

You tormented by means of their own abominations.[†]

24 For they went far astray on the paths of error,

Taking up gods which were despised even among their enemies,

Being deceived after the manner of foolish children.

25 Therefore to those thoughtless children

You sent Your judgment to mock them;

26 But those who were not warned by this light gesture of censure

Will be put to the test by the deserved judgment of God.

27 For when they suffered, they were indignant

At those they imagined to be gods,

Realizing they were being punished because of them.

They also came to recognize the true God

Whom they refused to know long ago;

Therefore, the utmost of condemnation came upon them.

The Futility of False Gods

13 For all men while ignorant of God were useless in their condition.

So from the good things that are seen

They were unable to know Him who exists,

Nor did they know the Craftsman by paying attention to His works.[†]

2 But they supposed that the gods who rule the world

Were either fire or wind or swift air,

Or the circle of the stars or violent water or the luminaries of heaven.

3 If while delighting in their beauty men assumed them to be gods,

Let them know how much better than these things is their Lord,

For the Creator of beauty created them;[†]

4 And if they were amazed at their power and working,

Let them understand from them

How much more powerful than these is He who made them.

5 For from the greatness and beauty of created things

The Creator is seen by analogy.†

6 Nevertheless there is little reason for complaint against them,

For perhaps they go astray while seeking God and wish to find Him.†

7 For as they live among His works, they examine them closely

And are persuaded by what they see,

Because the things they see are beautiful.

8 However, they are not to be excused;†

9 For if they were able to know so much

With their ability to investigate the world,

How is it possible they did not quickly find

The Lord of all these things?

10 But they are miserable, and so are their hopes in dead things,

Those who call “gods” the works of men's hands,

Gold, silver, and the practice of craftsmanship,

And the likeness of animals,

Or a worthless stone of an ancient hand.

11 But also, if some carpenter saws down an easily moved tree

And skillfully scrapes away all its bark,

He then builds a useful vessel beautifully made by his skill

For the service of the living,†

12 And uses up the cast-off pieces of his trade

To prepare his food and be filled.

13 But a cast-off piece from among them, useful for nothing,

That grew up with the tree, crooked and full of knots,

He takes and carves with care in his leisure

And forms it with intelligent skill,

And models it in the likeness of a man.

14 Or he likens it to some worthless animal

And smears it with bright red paint,

Making its surface red,

Covering every blemish in it with paint.

15 Then he makes a room fitting for it

And puts it on a wall and fastens it with iron nails

That it may not fall.

16 He takes care of it, knowing that it cannot help itself;

For it is an image that has need of help.

17 When he prays about his possessions,

His marriage and his children,

He is not ashamed to speak to a lifeless thing,

And he appeals to a weak thing concerning his health.

18 Concerning life he prays to something dead;

Concerning aid he supplicates something ignorant;

And concerning a journey, something that cannot take a step;

19 Concerning means of livelihood,

Profit and success with his hands;

He requests bodily strength

From something powerless with its hands.

The Use of Wood

14 Again, someone getting ready for a voyage

And about to sail through wild waves

Cries out loud to a piece of wood

More fragile than the ship that carries him.[†]

[2] For it was desire for gain that contrived that boat,

And wisdom was the craftsman who built it;

[3] But Your providence, O Father, governs its course,

Because You have given it a path in the sea

And a safe track in the waves,

[4] Showing that You can save from every danger,

And that even without skill one may embark upon the sea.

[5] For You do not will that the works of Your wisdom be useless;

Therefore, men trust their lives even to the smallest piece of wood,

And passing through the waves on a ship

They are brought safely through.

[6] For even in the beginning, when arrogant giants perished,

The hope of the world took refuge in a boat,

And piloted by Your hand it left to the world the seed of a family.[†]

[7] For the wood was blessed through which righteousness comes.

[8] But what was made by human hands itself is accursed,

And so is he who made it—

He because he made it,

And the perishable thing because it was called a god.[†]

[9] For equally hateful to God are the ungodly man and his ungodliness.

[10] For what was done will be punished along with him who did it.

[11] Therefore there shall also be a visitation upon the idols of the nations,

Because, though the wood was part of God's creation,

It was made into an abomination

And became a stumbling-block for the souls of men

And a trap for the feet of fools.

[12] For the invention of idols was the beginning of fornication,

And the conception of them the corruption of life,

13 For neither were they from the beginning

Nor shall they be forever.

14 For by the vainglory of mankind they entered the world,

And therefore their speedy end has been planned.

15 For a father consumed with untimely grief

When his child was soon taken from him

Made an image of the once-dead human being

And honored him now as a god,

And handed down to those under him secret mysteries and initiations.

16 Then the ungodly custom, strengthened by time, was kept as a law,

And at the command of tyrants carved images were worshiped.

17 When men could not honor a tyrant before his face

Because he lived far away,

They imagined his face from a distance

And made a visible image of the honored king,

That by their zeal they might flatter the one absent as though present.

18 Then the ambition of the craftsman encouraged

Even those who did not know the king to increase their worship.

19 For wishing perhaps to please the one who ruled over him,

He skillfully forced the likeness into a more beautiful form,

20 And the multitude, attracted by the popularity of his work,

Now considered him as an object of worship

Whom a short time before they honored as a man.

21 But this became a trap for their life,

Because men, in bondage either to calamity or to kingly power,

Conferred on stones and wood a name not shared with another.

Idolatry Brings Evil

22 Furthermore, it was not enough for them

To be deceived about the knowledge of God,

But they live in a great conflict of ignorance,

And they call such evils peace.[†]

23 For they either hold child-murdering rites of initiation,

Or celebrate secret mysteries,

Or engage in the frantic revelry of special customs.

24 Moreover, they keep neither life nor marriages pure,

But one either kills another in ambush,

Or one causes another grief when he corrupts his marriage.

25 Everything is mixed together:

Blood and murder, theft and treachery,

Depravity, unfaithfulness, tumult, perjury,

26 Confusion over what is good, ingratitude, corruption of family,

Breakup of marriages, disorder, adultery, and debauchery.[†]

27 For the worship of idols not to be named

Is the beginning, cause, and end of every evil.

28 For either they are driven to a frenzy in their celebrations,

Or prophesy lies,

Or live unrighteously, or readily swear falsely;

29 For since they trust in lifeless idols,

They swear with wrong motives and expect to suffer no harm.

30 But justice will catch up with them on two counts:

Because they thought wrongly about God in their devotion to idols,

And by treating holiness with contempt

They swore unjustly in deceit.

31 For it is not the power of making oaths,

But the punishment of those who sin

That always prosecutes the transgression of the unrighteous.

Our Merciful God

15 But You, our God, are kind, true, patient,

And govern all things in mercy.

2 For even if we sin, we belong to You and know Your might;

But we will not sin,

Because we know that we are counted as belonging to You.

3 For to know You is complete righteousness,

And to know Your might is the root of immortality.[†]

4 For neither have the evil practices of human art deceived us,

Nor a form stained with diverse colors,

The barren labor of painting,[†]

5 Whose appearance creates a desire in fools

That longs for the lifeless form of a dead image.

6 Lovers of evil things and fit for such objects of hope

Are those who either make or desire or worship them.

Idols of Clay

7 For even when a potter compresses soft earth,

He laboriously forms each vessel for our service;

But he models from the same clay

Both vessels that serve clean uses and likewise those to the contrary.

But what will be the function of one or the other

Is the decision of the craftsman.[†]

8 So, working evil, he forms a worthless god from the same clay,

He who a little while before was made from the earth

And in a short while returns to the earth from which he was taken,

When the soul that was loaned to him

Is demanded in return at death.

9 But he is not concerned that he is about to be sick

Or that his life will be ending shortly;

So he competes with goldsmiths and melters of silver

And imitates bronze-workers;

And he considers it a glory that he forms false gods.

10 His heart is ashes, and his hope as cheap as dirt;

And his life is more dishonored than his clay,[†]

11 Because he disregards the One who formed him,

And who inspired him with an operative soul,

And breathed into him a life-giving spirit.[†]

12 But he considered our life to be a plaything

And life a festival held for profit;

For he says, “One must make a living however one can,

Even by evil means.”

13 For this man, more than all others, knows that he sins

When he fabricates from earthly matter

Easily broken vessels and carved images.[†]

The Egyptian Enemies

14 Yet more foolish and infantile are the enemies

Who oppressed Your people,

15 Because they thought that all the idols of the nations were gods,

Though these have neither the use of their eyes for vision, Nor noses for inhaling air,

Nor ears to hear with,

Nor fingers on their hands for touching;

And their feet are useless for walking.[†]

16 For a man made them,

And he whose spirit is borrowed formed them;

For no man can form a god like himself.

17 A man who works a dead thing with lawless hands is mortal,

For he is better than his objects of worship,

Because he is alive, but they never are.

18 The enemies of Your people worship the most hateful animals,

For they are worse than all others in stupidity.

19 Not even as animals are they so beautiful in appearance

That one would desire them,

But they escaped both the praise of God and His blessing.

16 Therefore they were worthily punished through creatures like these,

And were tormented through a multitude of wild animals.[†]

2 Instead of such punishment You showed kindness to Your people

And prepared quails as food with a delicious taste to satisfy their hunger,[†]

3 That those men, when they desired food,

Might turn away their necessary hunger

Because of the ugly look of the creatures sent upon them,

While Your people, being in need for a brief period,

Might partake of food with a delicious taste.

4 For it was necessary for those enemies

That unavoidable need come upon them and tyrannize them,

While to Your people it was only shown

How their enemies were being tormented.

[5] For even when the terrible rage of wild animals

Came upon Your people,

And they were being destroyed by the bites of twisting serpents,

Your wrath did not continue to the end.[†]

[6] They were troubled for a short while as a warning,

And received a pledge of salvation

In remembrance of Your law's command.[†]

[7] For the one who turned to it was saved, not by what he saw,

But by You, the Savior of all.

[8] So in this You persuaded our enemies

That You are the One who saves from every evil.

[9] For the bites of locusts and flies killed them,

And no healing was found for their life,

Because they deserved to be punished by such things.

[10] But the teeth of poisonous serpents

Did not overcome Your children,

For Your mercy came to their aid and healed them.[†]

[11] For they were goaded to remind them of Your oracles

And were quickly saved,

Lest they should fall into deep forgetfulness

And be continually unmindful of Your kindness.

[12] For neither herb nor medicinal plaster healed them,

But it was Your word, O Lord, which heals all men.

[13] For You have authority over life and death,

And bring men down to the gates of Hades

And lead them back again.[†]

14 A man in his malice kills another,

But he cannot bring back a departed spirit

Nor return a soul that is taken.

God Judges Egypt

15 To escape from Your hand is impossible,[†]

16 For the ungodly who refuse to know You

Were flogged by the strength of Your arm.

They were pursued by rains, hail, and thunderstorms

And consumed by fire.

17 For the fire, very contrary to expectation,

Was more effective in the water, which extinguishes everything;

For the world is a defender of the righteous.

18 For at one time the flame was subdued

That it might not burn up the creatures sent against the ungodly,

But seeing this they might know

That they were struck by the judgment of God;

19 And at another time even under water

The flame burned more intensely than fire

To destroy the harvest of the unrighteous land.

Bread from Heaven for Israel

20 Instead of these things You fed Your people the food of angels,

And without their labor You provided them

With ready-made bread from heaven,

Fitting for every pleasure and suitable to every taste.[†]

21 For Your provision manifested sweetness toward Your people,

And the bread served the need of those who took it

And changed to what one wished.

22 Snow and ice endured fire without melting

So they might know that fire destroyed the harvest of their enemies,

The fire that burned in the hail

And flashed like lightning in the rain—

23 Again that fire which forgot its own natural power

That the righteous might be fed.

24 For the creation serves You who made it

And increases its intensity to punish the unrighteous,

But in kindness relaxes itself on behalf of those who trust in You.[†]

25 Therefore also at that time,

It explored as though in a mine Your all-nourishing bounty

And served the will of those who supplicated You,

26 That Your children whom You loved, O Lord, might learn

That it is not the production of crops that feeds man,

But Your word that maintains those who believe in You.

27 For what was not destroyed by fire

Was melted when simply warmed by a small ray of the sun,

28 To make it known that one must get up before sunrise

To give You thanks,

And to intercede before You at the dawning of the light.

29 For the hope of an unthankful man will melt like the wintry frost

And flow away like useless water.

The Sins of Egypt

17 Great are Your judgments and hard to explain;

Therefore, ignorant souls have gone astray.[†]

[2] For when lawless men thought they exercised power

Over Your holy nation,

They themselves were prisoners of darkness and long night,

Shut in under their roofs, exiles from eternal providence.

[3] For when they thought they escaped notice

With their secret sins behind a curtain of forgetfulness,

They were scattered and in a terrible state of shock

And thrown into confusion by apparitions.[†]

[4] For not even the inmost part of the house that held them

Protected them from fear,

But troubling noises sounded all around them,

And gloomy apparitions with downcast faces appeared to them.

[5] No force of fire had the strength to give them light,

Nor did the very bright lights of the stars

Tarry to illuminate that hateful night.

[6] Now a self-acting fire full of fear alone shone through to them,

But they were greatly terrified when that apparition was not perceived;

So they considered the things they were seeing to be worse.

[7] The delusions of their magic were ineffective,

And so was the arrogant certainty of their pretense to have insight.[†]

[8] For those who promised to drive away

The fears and troubles of a sick soul

Were themselves sick with an absurd timidity.

[9] For even if nothing dreadful frightened them,

Yet, scared by the passing of beasts and hissing of serpents,

They perished full of fear,

Even refusing to look at the air, which could not be avoided.[†]

[10] For evil is a cowardly thing,

And condemned by its own witness;

And tormented by conscience,

It always welcomes things full of trouble.

[11] For fear is nothing but the betrayal

Of the assistance that comes from reasoning;[†]

[12] And the expectation from within considers itself to be weaker

Than ignorance of the cause which supplies the torment.

[13] But they slept the same sleep throughout the night,

Which was actually powerless,

And which assaulted them from the inmost parts of a powerless Hades.

[14] They were driven by the monsters of apparitions

And were paralyzed by the betrayal of their soul;

For sudden and unexpected fear was poured out on them.

[15] So then whoever was there fell down

And thus was kept shut up in a prison not made of iron.

[16] For whether someone was a farmer or a shepherd

Or a worker who labored in the wilderness,

He was overtaken by force and endured inescapable punishment;

For all were bound with one chain of darkness.

[17] Whether there came a whistling wind,

Or the musical sound of birds in wide-spreading branches,

Or the motion of violently rushing water,

Or the hard crash of rocks thrown down,

[18] Or the unseen running of leaping animals,

Or the roar of fierce wild animals,

Or an echo reflected from the hollow of mountains, It paralyzed them with terror.

19 For the whole world was illumined with bright light

And embraced unhindered works,

20 While over those men alone heavy night was spread,

An image of darkness that was about to receive them;

But they were heavier than darkness to themselves.

Light Shines on Israel

18 But for Your holy ones there was a very great light.

Their enemies heard their voice but did not see their form;

And they considered them blessed because they had also not suffered,[†]

2 For Your holy ones did not harm those

Who previously wronged them.

So they were thankful and begged for grace

For being at variance with them.

3 Therefore You provided a flaming pillar of fire

As a guide for their unknown journey,

And a harmless sun for their glorious exile.[†]

4 For their enemies deserved to be deprived of light

And imprisoned in darkness,

Those who imprisoned Your children,

Through whom the incorruptible light of the law

Was to be given to the world.

Death Visits Egypt

5 When they resolved to kill the babes of Your holy ones

And one child was exposed and rescued,

You took away as a rebuke a multitude of their children;

And You destroyed them together in the violent water.†

6 That night was made known beforehand to our fathers

So they might rejoice with sure knowledge in the oaths they trusted.†

7 The salvation of the righteous and the destruction of enemies

Were expected by Your people,

8 For You punished our enemies with the same means

By which You called and glorified us.†

9 For in secret the holy children of good people offered sacrifices,

And in harmony with the divine law made a covenant,

That the saints would share alike in good things and in dangers;

And already they were singing the praises of their fathers.

10 But the discordant cry of their enemies resounded,

And their pitiful outcry and mourning for their children spread abroad.

11 The servant was punished with the same penalty as the master,

And the common man suffered the same thing as the king.

12 They all together by the one name of death

Had innumerable dead persons,

For there were not enough living even to bury them;

Because in one critical moment their valued children were destroyed.†

13 For they disbelieved everything because of their sorceries,

But at the destruction of their firstborn,

They acknowledged the people to be God's son.

14 For while gentle silence embraced everything

And night at its own speed was half over,

15 Your all-powerful Word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne,

Into the midst of a doomed land,

A relentless warrior carrying the sharp sword

Of Your irrevocable command,[†]

16 And He stood and filled all things with death

And touched heaven while standing on earth.

17 Then immediately apparitions in terrifying dreams troubled them,

And unexpected fears set upon them,

18 And they threw themselves to the ground half-dead,

One apparition here and another there,

To make known to them the reason they were dying.

19 For the dreams which disturbed them revealed this beforehand,

So they might not die without understanding

Why it was they suffered.

Aaron Prays for Israel

20 The experience of death also touched the righteous,

And a plague came upon the multitude in the desert;

But the wrath did not last long.[†]

21 For a blameless man hastened and acted as their champion.

He carried the instrument of his ministry:

Prayer and the atonement of incense,

And withstood the anger and put an end to the calamity,

Showing that he was Your servant.

22 He conquered the wrath not by strength of body,

And not by the power of weapons,

But by a word he subdued the punisher,

Because he remembered the oaths and covenants of the fathers.

23 For when the dead had already fallen on one another in heaps,

He stood in the midst and drove back the wrath

And cut off its path to the living.

24 For the whole world was on his long robe,

And the glories of the fathers were a carved work

Arranged in four rows of stones;

And Your majesty was on the diadem on his head.

25 To these the destroyer yielded

And these he feared;

For the trial of his wrath alone was enough.

The Foolishness of Egypt

19 But unmerciful anger came upon the ungodly to the end,

For God knew of them and their future beforehand,[†]

2 That they would allow Your people to depart

And eagerly send them forth,

But then change their minds and pursue them.

3 For while they were yet mourning

And lamenting at the graves of their dead,

They made another foolish decision

And pursued as fugitives

Those whom they had begged and had sent away.

4 For a deserved destiny drew them to this end

And made them forget what had happened,

So they might fill up the punishment

Which was lacking in their torments,

5 And that Your people might attempt an incredible journey,

But that they themselves might come upon a strange death.

Creation Serves Its God

[6] For the whole creation in its kind was fashioned again from above

To serve Your commands,

That Your servants might be kept unharmed.

[7] The cloud was seen overshadowing the camp

And the emerging of dry land out of the water previously present,

An unhindered way out of the Red Sea

And a grassy plain out of the violence of rough water,

[8] Through which those sheltered by Your hand

Passed with the whole nation

After observing marvelous wonders.

[9] For they grazed like horses

And leaped about like lambs,

Praising You, O Lord, who saved them.

[10] For they still remembered their sojourn in a foreign land,

How instead of the birth of animals the land brought forth small flies,

And instead of things living in water

The river vomited forth a multitude of frogs.

[11] Afterwards they also saw a new kind of birds,

When led by their passion they requested meats for self-indulgence;

[12] For their relief, quails came up from the sea.

The Punishment of Egypt

[13] The punishments did not come upon the sinners

Without previous signs in the violence of thunder,

And they suffered justly because of their own evils;

For they practiced a very bitter hatred of strangers.

[14] Others did not welcome those unknown to them when they arrived,

But these enslaved foreign benefactors.

15 And not only this, but there shall be a certain visitation

Because they received foreigners hatefully;

16 For after receiving them with festivals,

They mistreated with terrible sufferings

Those who had already shared the same rights.

17 They were also stricken with blindness

Like those at the doors of the righteous man,

When, clothed in darkness, each sought the way through his own doors.

God Dwells with His People

18 For the elements combined among themselves in different ways,

Which can be accurately conjectured from the sight of what took place,

As on a harp the sounds of the rhythm differ in expression

While always remaining the same in sound.

19 For land animals were changed into water creatures,

And creatures that swim crossed over to the land.

20 In water, fire prevailed with its own power,

And water forgot its quenching properties.

21 Flames, on the contrary, did not consume

The flesh of perishable animals that walked among them,

Nor was the species of immortal food capable of being melted

Like easily melted ice.

22 For in everything, O Lord, You have exalted and glorified Your people,

And have not neglected to be present with them in every time and place.[†]

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The Wisdom of Sirach

Author—Jesus ben Sirach. He was a Jewish scribe who was apparently an instructor at a Jewish academy, probably in Jerusalem, where he taught religion and ethics.

Date—About 180 BC

Major Theme—*All true wisdom comes from the Lord*. The book is in the tradition of Proverbs: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Wisdom is God's gift to men. Though profound, the teaching is not complicated, and it touches the heart.

Background—Jesus ben Sirach wrote his lectures down in a manuscript. That manuscript, written in Hebrew, got very little circulation until his grandson translated it into Greek. Then, about three centuries later, a translation was made into Syriac from the Hebrew text. Ben Sirach is well-acquainted with the Law and the Prophets. According to 1:11–20, wisdom comes from a blessed, joyful reverence for and knowledge of God.

Outline

I. Prologue

II. Fearing God and Keeping His Commandments (1:1–42:14)

III. God's Wisdom Revealed in Creation (42:15–43:33)

IV. Walking in Wisdom (44:1–50:29)

V. A Prayer of Thanksgiving (51:1–30)

The Prologue[†]

Of the many great things given to us through the law and the prophets and through others who followed them, we should praise Israel for instruction and wisdom. Not only should those who read gain understanding, but also those who love learning should be able to help outsiders understand both through speaking and writing.

Thus my grandfather Jesus especially devoted himself to reading the law and the prophets and other books of the fathers. So he acquired sufficient skill in these, and himself was led to write something fitting for instruction and wisdom, that lovers of learning might become involved in these things as well, and especially, in addition to this, might live a life according to the law.

Therefore you are encouraged to read with good will and attention and to do your reading with allowances made in cases where, although we worked hard in translating, we may seem to render a phrase inadequately. For what was said in Hebrew in itself does not have equal force when it is translated into another language. Not only this, but also the law itself and the prophets and the rest of the books differ not a little as originally spoken.

For when I arrived in Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of King Euergetes, and spent some time there, I found a book filled with instruction. Thus I made it a necessity for myself to apply some diligence and loving labor to the translation of this book. So I employed my skill day and night to complete and publish it for lovers of learning who live in a foreign land, and have prepared themselves beforehand to live according to the law.

Wisdom Is from the Lord

1 All wisdom comes from the Lord
And is with Him forever.[†]

2 Who can count the sand of the seas,
The drops of rain, and the days of eternity?
3 Who can search out the height of heaven,
The breadth of the earth, the abyss, and wisdom?
4 Wisdom was created before all things,
And the insight of prudence was from eternity.[†]
5 To whom has the root of wisdom been revealed?
And who has come to know her great deeds?
6 There is one who is wise and is feared exceedingly,
He who sits upon His throne.[†]
7 The Lord Himself created wisdom.
He saw and numbered her
And poured her out on all His works,[†]
8 In the midst of all flesh according to His gift;
And He provided her for those who love Him.

The Fear of the Lord

9 The fear of the Lord is glory and boasting,
And gladness and a crown of rejoicing.
10 The fear of the Lord will cheer the heart
And will give gladness, joy, and long life.[†]
11 For those who fear the Lord, it shall be well to the utmost,
And on the day of his death, he will be blessed.

12 The beginning of wisdom is to fear the Lord,
And she was joined with the faithful in the womb.[†]

13 She constructed a foundation of life among men
And will be trusted among their seed.

14 The gratification of wisdom is to fear the Lord,
And she intoxicates them with her fruits.

15 She will fill every house of theirs with objects of desire
And their storehouses with her harvest.

16 The fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom,
Making peace and soundness of health to flourish.

17 The Lord saw and numbered her,
And poured out the power of comprehension;
And He exalted the glory of those who hold fast to her.

18 The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord,
And her branches are length of days.

Warnings to the Wise

19 Unjust anger cannot be justified,
For anger's decisive influence causes his fall.

20 A patient man will hold fast until the proper time,
Then afterwards gladness shall burst forth for him.

21 He shall conceal his words until the proper time,
And the lips of many will tell of his understanding.

22 In the treasures of wisdom are the parables of knowledge,
But godliness is an abomination to a sinner.

23 If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments,
And the Lord will supply it to you.[†]

24 For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction,

And His good pleasure is faith and gentleness.
[25] Do not disobey the fear of the Lord,
And do not come to Him with a divided heart.
[26] Do not be a hypocrite in the sight of men,
And be careful with your lips.
[27] Do not exalt yourself, lest you fall
And bring dishonor to your soul.
The Lord shall reveal your secrets,
And in the midst of the assembly He will strike you down,
Because you did not come in the fear of the Lord
And your heart was full of deceit.

God's Faithfulness and Mercy

2 My son, if you draw near to serve the Lord,
Prepare your soul for temptation.[†]
[2] Set your heart right and be steadfast,
And do not strive anxiously in distress.
[3] Cleave to Him and do not fall away,
That you may be honored at the end of your life.
[4] Accept whatever is brought upon you,
And in exchange for your humiliation, be patient;
[5] Because gold is tested in fire
And acceptable men in the furnace of abasement.
[6] Believe in Him, and He will help you;
Make your ways straight and hope in Him.
[7] You who fear the Lord, wait for His mercy,
And do not turn aside, lest you fall.

[8] You who fear the Lord, believe in Him,

And your reward will not fail.

[9] You who fear the Lord, hope for good things

And for everlasting gladness and mercy.

[10] Consider the ancient generations and see:

Who believed in the Lord and was put to shame?

Or who stood fast in His fear and was forsaken?

Or who called upon Him and was overlooked?

[11] Because the Lord is compassionate and merciful,

He forgives sins and saves in time of affliction.

[12] Woe to cowardly hearts and weakened hands,

And to a sinner who walks on two paths![†]

[13] Woe to a fainting heart, because it does not believe!

Therefore it will not be sheltered.

[14] Woe to you who have lost your patient endurance!

What will you do when the Lord visits you?

[15] Those who fear the Lord will not disobey His words,

And those who love Him will keep His ways.

[16] Those who fear the Lord will seek His approval,

And those who love Him will be filled with the law.

[17] Those who fear the Lord will prepare their hearts

And will humble their souls before Him.

[18] We will fall into the hands of the Lord

And not into the hands of men;

For as His majesty is, so is His mercy.

Honoring Parents

Give heed to me, O children, for I am your father, 3 And do what I tell you, that you may be saved.[†]

2 For the Lord honored the father over the children

And strengthened the judgment of the mother over her sons.

3 He who honors his father atones for his sins;

4 And he who honors his mother

Is like one who stores up treasure.

5 He who honors his father

Will be gladdened by his own children,

And when he prays, he will be heard.

6 He who honors his father will have a long life,

And he who obeys the Lord will give rest to his mother;

7 And he will serve his parents as his masters.

8 Honor your father and mother in word and deed,

That a blessing may come upon you from him.

9 For the blessing of a father establishes the houses of the children,

But the curse of a mother uproots their foundations.

10 Do not glory in the dishonor of your father,

For your father's dishonor is no glory to you.

11 For the glory of a man is from the honor of his father,

And it is a disgrace for children to dishonor their mother.

12 My son, help your father in his old age,

And do not grieve him in his life;

13 And if his understanding fails, be considerate,

And do not dishonor him in your prime.

14 For kindness to a father will not be forgotten,

And it will be credited to you instead of your sins.

15 It will be remembered in the day of your affliction;

Thus your sins will melt away like frost in warm weather.

16 He who forsakes his father is like a blasphemer,

And he who provokes his mother to wrath is cursed by God.

Wisdom at Work

17 My son, accomplish your works with gentleness,

And you will be loved by people the Lord accepts.

18 The greater you are, the more humble you must be,

And you will find grace before the Lord;[†]

19 Because great is the power of the Lord,

And He is honored by the humble.

20 Do not seek things too difficult for you,

Nor examine what is beyond your strength.[†]

21 Think about what is commanded you,

For you do not need what the Lord keeps hidden.

22 Do not meddle in what is none of your business,

For things beyond human insight have been shown to you.

23 Speculation has led many astray,

And evil suppositions have caused their minds to slip and fall.

Keep a Soft Heart

24 A hard heart will suffer ruin in the end,

And he who loves danger will perish in it.[†]

25 A hard heart will be weighed down with pains,

And the sinner will add sin to sin.

26 There is no healing to aid an arrogant man,

For a plant of evil has taken root in him.

27 The heart of an intelligent man will ponder a parable,

And the ear of a pupil is a wise man's desire.

28 Water will quench a blazing fire,

And almsgiving will atone for sins.

29 He who repays kindnesses is mindful of the hereafter,

And at the time of his fall he will find support.

Care of the Poor and Needy

4 My son, do not deprive the poor of his living,

And do not keep eyes in need waiting.

2 Do not grieve a soul who is hungry,

Nor provoke to anger a man in despair.

3 Do not trouble a heart that was made resentful,

And do not put off the gift of a man in need.

4 Do not reject a suppliant who is afflicted,

Nor turn your face away from a poor man.

5 Do not turn your eye away from a needy man,

And do not give a man occasion to curse you;

6 For if he curses you in the bitterness of his soul,

His Maker will hear his prayer.

7 Make yourself beloved in the assembly

And bow your head to a great man.

8 Incline your ear to a poor man

And answer him peaceably and with gentleness.

9 Deliver a person who has been wronged

From the hand of the wrongdoer,

And do not be fainthearted when you judge his case.

10 Be like a father to orphans

And like a husband to their mother;

And you will be like a son of the Most High,

And He will love you more than your mother.[†]

Pursuit of Wisdom

11 Wisdom exalts her children

And lays hold of those who seek her.[†]

12 Whoever loves her loves life,

And those who come to her early in the morning

Will be filled with gladness.

13 He who holds fast to her will inherit glory,

And the Lord blesses every place she enters.

14 Those who serve her will minister to the Holy One,

And the Lord loves those who love her.

15 He who obeys her will judge the nations;

And he that gives heed to her will live with confidence.

16 If he trusts in her, he will inherit her,

And his posterity will be in possession of her.

17 At first she will walk with him on disturbing paths

And bring fear and dread upon him;

And she will torment him with her discipline

Until she can trust his soul

And test him with her ordinances.

18 Then she will come straight back to him,

And will gladden him, and reveal her secrets to him.

19 If he wanders away, she will forsake him

And hand him over to his ruin.

Shame and Sin

[20] Watch for a proper opportunity and keep yourself from evil;

And do not bring shame upon your soul.

[21] For there is a shame that brings sin,

And there is a shame which is glory and grace.

[22] Do not show partiality to someone to your own harm,

And do not let your respect for another cause you to fall.

[23] Do not withhold a word in time of need;

[24] For wisdom is made known by a word,

And instruction by a word of the tongue.

[25] Do not speak against the truth,

And do not be put to shame by your ignorance.

[26] Do not be ashamed to confess your sins,

And do not exercise force against the current of a river.

[27] Do not subject yourself to a foolish man,

And do not show partiality to a ruler.

[28] Fight to the death for the truth,

And the Lord God will fight for you.

[29] Do not be rash with your tongue

And sluggish and neglectful in your works.

[30] Do not be like a lion in your home

And act in pretense with your servants.

[31] Do not let your hand be extended to receive

And shut when you should repay.

God Is the Lord

5 Do not set your heart on your possessions,

And do not say, “I am independent.”[†]

[2] Do not follow yourself and your strength

So as to walk in the desires of your heart;

[3] And do not say, “Who will be lord over me?”

For the Lord will surely punish you.

[4] Do not say, “I sinned, so what happened to me?”

For the Lord is patient.

[5] Do not be so confident of atonement

That you add sin to sin;

[6] And do not say, “His compassion is great;

He will atone for the multitude of my sins,”

For both mercy and wrath come from Him;

And His anger rests on sinners.

[7] Do not delay to turn to the Lord,

And do not put it off from day to day;

For suddenly the wrath of the Lord will come forth,

And in the day of vengeance, you will perish.

[8] Do not set your heart on dishonest wealth,

For it will profit you nothing in the day of distress.

Control of the Tongue

[9] Do not winnow with every wind

And do not follow every road;

For a double-tongued sinner is of such a kind.[†]

[10] Be established in your understanding

And let your word be consistent.

[11] Be quick to listen

And give your answer with patience.

[12] If you have understanding, answer your neighbor,

But if not, let your hand be over your mouth.

13 There is glory and dishonor in speech,

And a man's tongue may cause him to fall.

14 Do not be called a slanderer,

And do not lie in ambush with your tongue;

For shame awaits a thief,

And a grievous condemnation will come upon

A double-tongued man.

15 In a great or in a small matter, do not go wrong.

6 Do not be an enemy instead of a friend;

For a bad name brings shame and disgrace,

And a double-tongued sinner is of such a kind.

2 Do not exalt yourself with your own counsel,

Lest your soul be torn in pieces as by a bull.[†]

3 You will devour your leaves and lose your fruit,

And be left like a withered tree.

4 An evil soul will destroy him who possesses it

And make him an object of malignant joy to his enemies.

Friendships

5 Pleasant speech will multiply his friends,

And a gracious tongue will multiply many kind greetings.[†]

6 Let those who live at peace with you be many,

But let your counselors be one in a thousand.

7 If you gain a friend, gain him in testing,

And do not be in a hurry to trust him.

8 For there is a friend who is such to his own advantage,

But he will not remain beside you in the day of your affliction.

9 There is also a friend who changes into an enemy

And will reveal a quarrel to your disgrace.

10 Again, there is a friend who is a companion at table,

But will not stand by you in your day of trouble.

11 Further, when you prosper, he will be like you

And speak boldly to your servants;

12 But if you are brought low, he will be against you,

And will hide himself from your presence.

13 Stay away from your enemies

And hold onto your friends.

14 A faithful friend is a strong shelter,

And he who finds one finds a treasure.

15 There is nothing that can take the place of a faithful friend,

And there is no way to measure his worth.

16 A faithful friend is a medicine of life,

And those who fear the Lord will find him.

17 He who fears the Lord guides his friendship rightly,

Because as he is, so also is his neighbor.

Instruction Brings Wisdom

18 My son, from your youth up, choose instruction,

And you will find wisdom also into old age.[†]

19 Come to her as one who plows and sows,

And wait expectantly for her good fruits;

For in her work you will labor a little while,

Then you will quickly eat of her fruit.

20 She is very harsh on the undisciplined

And on the one who lacks the heart to continue with her.[†]

21 She will be like a heavy stone of trial upon him,

And he will not delay to throw her off.

22 For wisdom is like her name and is not manifest to many.

23 Listen, my son, and accept my judgment,

And do not reject my advice.

24 Put your feet into her fetters and your neck into her collar.

25 Put your shoulder under her and carry her,

And do not be angry with her bonds.

26 Come to her with all your soul,

And keep her ways with all your strength.

27 Search for her and seek her out,

And she will become known to you;

And when you become self-controlled, do not let her go.

28 For in the end you will find her rest,

And she will turn to you in gladness.

29 Then her fetters will be as a strong protection for you,

And her collar a glorious robe.

30 For there is a golden adornment upon her,

And her bonds are a blue thread.

31 You will wear her as a glorious robe

And put her on yourself as a crown of exceeding joy.

32 If you are willing, my son, you will be taught,

And if you apply yourself, you will be prudent.[†]

33 If you love to listen, you will wait with anticipation,

And if you incline your ear, you will be wise.

34 Stand in an assembly of elders,

And who is wise? Attach yourself to him.

[35] Desire to listen to every divine narrative,

And do not let proverbs of understanding escape you.

[36] If you see a man who has understanding,

Rise early in the morning

And let your foot wear out the threshold of his door.

[37] Set your mind on the ordinances of the Lord

And practice His commandments.

He will strengthen your heart continually,

And the desire for wisdom will be given to you.

Put away Evil Acts

7 Do no evil things,

And evil will never overtake you.[†]

[2] Stay away from wrongdoing,

And it will turn away from you.

[3] My son, do not sow on the furrows of wrongdoing,

And you will not reap the same things sevenfold.

[4] Do not seek authority from a lord

Nor the seat of honor from a king.

[5] Do not declare yourself righteous before a lord,

Nor play the wise man before a king.

[6] Do not try to be a judge

If you will not be strong enough to remove wrongdoing,

Lest you respect the presence of the powerful

And compromise your integrity.

[7] Do not sin against the population of a city,

Nor disgrace yourself before the people.

[8] Do not repeat your sin,

For you will not be unpunished even for one.

[9] Do not say, “He will look upon the multitude of my gifts,

And when I bring an offering to God Most High, He will accept it.”

[10] Do not be fainthearted in your prayer

And do not neglect to do alms.[†]

[11] Do not laugh at a man who is in bitterness of soul,

For there is One who humbles and exalts.

[12] Do not devise a lie against your brother,

Nor do the same against a friend.

[13] Do not desire to tell any lie,

For the habit of lying never does any good.

[14] Do not talk idly in the assembly of the elders,

And do not repeat yourself in prayer.

Farm and Family

[15] Do not hate hard work, especially farming,

Which was created by the Most High.

[16] Do not number yourself among an assembly of sinners;

Remember that wrath will not tarry long.

[17] Humble yourself greatly,

For the punishment of the ungodly is fire and worms.

[18] Do not exchange a friend for money,

Nor a genuine brother for the gold of Ophir.[†]

[19] Do not ignore a wise and good wife,

For her grace is worth more than gold.

20 Do not mistreat a servant who does his work in truth

Nor a hired worker who devotes himself to you.†

21 Let your soul love an intelligent servant;

Do not deprive him of his freedom.

22 Do you have cattle? Take care of them;

And if they are profitable to you, keep them.†

23 Do you have children? Correct them,

And make them obey from their youth.

24 Do you have daughters? Watch carefully over their chastity,

And do not be too easy on them.†

25 Give a daughter in marriage

And you will have completed a great work;

But give her to a man of understanding.

26 Do you have a wife after your own heart? Do not reject her,

But do not trust yourself to a wife whom you disregard.

27 Honor your father with all your heart,

And do not forget the birth pangs of your mother.

28 Remember that you were begotten through them,

And what can you give back to them

To the degree they gave to you?

The Priests and the Poor

29 Fear the Lord with all your soul

And honor His priests.†

30 Love Him who made you

And do not forsake His ministers.

31 Fear the Lord and honor His priests,

And give them their portion as commanded:

The firstfruits, the trespass offering,

The gift of the shoulder offering,

The sacrifice of sanctification,

And the firstfruits of the holy things.

[32] Stretch forth your hand to the poor,

That your blessing may be complete.[†]

[33] Let the kindness of giving be shown

In the presence of all the living,

And do not withhold kindness from the dead.

[34] Do not withdraw yourself from those who weep,

And mourn with those who mourn.

[35] Do not hesitate to visit a sick man,

For by such visits you will be loved.

[36] With all your words, remember the time you will die,

And you will never sin.

Kings and Commoners

8 Do not contend sharply with a powerful man,

Lest you fall into his hands.[†]

[2] Do not quarrel with a rich man,

Lest he resist your force,

For gold has destroyed many

And perverted the hearts of kings.

[3] Do not contend sharply with a talkative man,

And do not heap wood on his fire.

[4] Do not jest with an uncultivated man,

Lest your forefathers be insulted.

[5] Do not insult a man who turns away from sin;

Remember that we are all valuable.

[6] Do not dishonor a man in his old age,

For some of us are growing old as well.[†]

[7] Do not rejoice over any dead person;

Remember that we all must die.

[8] Do not disregard a saying of the wise,

But be conversant with their proverbs;

Because from them you will gain instruction

And how to serve noble people.

[9] Do not miss a saying of the old,

For they themselves learned from their fathers;

Because from them you will gain understanding

And be able to give an answer in time of need.

[10] Do not kindle the coals of a sinner,

For you may be burned by his flame.[†]

[11] Do not let the presence of an insolent man

Arouse you from your seat,

Lest he lie in wait as an ambush against your words.

[12] Do not lend to a man stronger than you;

But if you do, consider it lost.

[13] Do not give surety beyond your ability to pay;

But if you do give surety, be as careful as one who has to pay.

[14] Do not go to law against a judge,

For they will decide for him because of his reputation.

[15] Do not travel on a journey with a reckless man,

Lest he weigh you down;

For he will do his will,

And you will perish with him in his folly.

[16] Do not cause a fight with an angry man,

And do not go into a lonely place with him,

Because murder is as nothing in his eyes,

And where there is no help, he will strike you down.

[17] Do not consult with a fool,

For he will not keep a matter confidential.[†]

[18] Do nothing confidential in the presence of a stranger,

For you do not know what he will give birth to.

[19] Do not open your heart to everyone,

Lest unkindness be shown to you.

Behavior with Women

9 Do not be jealous of the wife of your bosom

And so teach her an evil lesson about yourself.[†]

[2] Do not give your soul to a woman

To let her trample on your strength.

[3] Do not meet with a woman who is a courtesan,

Lest you fall into her snares.[†]

[4] Do not associate with a dancing-girl,

Lest you be caught in her schemes.

[5] Do not gaze at a virgin,

Lest you stumble and pay damages for her.

[6] Do not give your soul to prostitutes,

Lest you destroy your inheritance.

[7] Do not look around in the streets of a city,

And do not wander about in its deserted sections.

[8] Turn your eye away from a woman with a shapely figure,

And do not gaze at beauty belonging to another.

Many have been led astray by the beauty of a woman,

And erotic love is like a burning fire.

[9] Never dine with another man's wife,

And do not share in parties with her over wine,

Lest your soul turn aside to her,

And you slip and with your spirit fall into destruction.

Friends and Neighbors

[10] Do not forsake an old friend,

For a new one is not equal with him.

A new friend is like new wine;

Drink it with pleasure only after it ages.[†]

[11] Do not envy the honor given a sinner,

For you do not know what his end will be.

[12] Do not delight in the pleasure of the ungodly;

Remember, they will not be declared righteous even in Hades.

[13] Keep far away from a man who has the power to kill,

And you will not be anxious about the fear of death.

But if you come near him, do not offend him,

Lest he take away your life.

Know that you are stepping in the midst of snares

And walking about the battlements of a city.

[14] Evaluate your neighbors as best you can

And consult with those who are wise.

[15] Let your reasoning be with those who are wise,

And let all your talk be about the law of the Most High.†

16 Let righteous men be your dinner companions,

And let your boasting be in the fear of the Lord.

Wise Leaders

17 A work will be praised for the skill of its craftsmen,

And a wise leader of people for the skill of his words.

18 A talkative man is regarded with fear in his city,

And a man who is reckless in his speech will be hated.

10 A wise leader will educate his people,

And the rule of an intelligent man will be well ordered.

2 As goes the leader of a people, so also are his officials,

And all the inhabitants of a city will reflect its ruler.

3 An undisciplined king will ruin his people,

But a city will be made habitable through the wisdom of its rulers.

4 The authority of the earth is in the hand of the Lord,

And He will raise up the right man for an appointed time.†

5 The success of a man is in the hand of the Lord,

And He confers His honor upon the person of the scribe.

6 Do not cherish anger against your neighbor for any injury,

And do nothing by acts of insolence.

Beware of Arrogance

7 Arrogance is hateful before God and man,

And wrongdoing is offensive to both.

8 Dominion is transferred from nation to nation

Because of wrongdoing, insolence, and wealth.

9 How can he who is earth and ashes be arrogant?

Because even while living, his insides are decaying.[†]

10 A physician scoffs at a long illness,

And a king today will also die tomorrow.

11 When a man dies, he will inherit

Reptiles, wild animals, and worms.

12 The beginning of a man's arrogance is to depart from the Lord,

For his heart withdraws from the One who created him.

13 For the beginning of arrogance is sin,

And he who takes hold of it will pour out an abomination.

Therefore the Lord will bring them extraordinary distress

And completely destroy them.

14 The Lord pulls down the thrones of rulers

And seats the gentle in their place.[†]

15 The Lord plucks out the roots of nations

And plants the humble in their place.

16 The Lord overthrows the lands of the nations

And destroys them to the foundations of the earth.

17 He removes some of them and destroys them,

And puts an end to their memory on the earth.[†]

18 Arrogance was not created by mankind,

Nor fierce anger by the offspring of women.

Honor and Dishonor

19 What kind of seed is honored?

The seed of man.

What kind of seed is honored?

Those who fear the Lord.

What kind of seed is dishonored?

The seed of man.

What kind of seed is dishonored?

Those who transgress the commandments.

20 Among brothers their leader is honored,

And those who fear the Lord are honored in His eyes.†

21 The fear of the Lord goes before the obtaining of authority,

But roughness and pride is the losing thereof.

22 The rich and the honored and the poor alike—

Their boasting is the fear of the Lord.

23 It is not right to dishonor an intelligent poor man,

Nor is it proper to honor a sinful man.

24 The nobleman, the judge, and the ruler will be honored,

But none of them is greater than the one who fears the Lord.

25 Free men will render service to a wise servant,

And an understanding man will not grumble.

26 Do not put your wisdom on display when you do your work,

Nor magnify yourself in the time of your trouble.

27 Better is he who works and has plenty

Than he who magnifies himself but has no bread.

28 My son, honor your soul with gentleness

And give it honor according to its worth.†

29 Who will declare righteous the man who sins against his soul,

And who will honor the man who dishonors his life?

30 A poor man is honored for his knowledge,

While a rich man is honored for his wealth.

31 If a man is honored in poverty,

How much more in wealth,

And if a man is dishonored in wealth,

How much more in poverty?

11 The wisdom of a humble man will exalt his head,

And he will take his seat among the great.

Outward Appearances

2 Do not praise a man for his good looks,

And do not detest one because of his appearance.[†]

3 The bee is small among winged creatures,

But her fruit is first among sweet things.

4 Do not boast about your fine clothes,

Nor magnify yourself in the day you are honored;

Because the works of the Lord are wondrous,

And His works are hidden from men.

5 Many tyrants have sat on the ground,

But one never thought of has worn a crown.

6 Many rulers have suffered exceeding disgrace,

And honored men have been betrayed into the hands of others.

Slow Down!

7 Do not find fault before you examine a situation.

First, understand it, and then make your judgment.

8 Do not answer before you have listened,

And do not interrupt someone while he is talking.

9 Do not argue about a matter that does not concern you,

And do not sit together with sinners when they judge a case.

10 My son, do not let your business involve too many things.

If you multiply them, you will not remain unpunished, And if you pursue them, you will not overtake them;

And you will not escape by running away.[†]

[11] There is a man who works and works

And keeps on working, but is in much more poverty.

[12] There is another who is sluggish and in need of help;

And he lacks strength and abounds in poverty.

But the eyes of the Lord look upon him for his good

And restores his well-being from his humble state.

[13] He raises up his head,

And many are amazed at this.

Handling Riches

[14] Good and bad, life and death, poverty and wealth—

These are from the Lord.

[15] The gift of the Lord remains with the godly,

And His approval brings prosperity forever.

[16] There is a man who grows rich

Because of his attention and restraint;

And this is the portion of his reward:[†]

[17] When he says, "I have found rest,

And now I will partake of my good things."

Yet he does not know how much time will pass until he will die

And leave them behind to others.

[18] Stand by your covenant and attend to it,

And grow old in your work.

[19] Do not be amazed at the works of a sinner,

But trust in the Lord and remain at your work;

Because it is easy in the sight of the Lord

To make a poor man rich quickly and unexpectedly.

20 The blessing of the Lord is in the reward of a godly man,

And in an instant He makes his blessings flourish.

21 Do not say, “What do I need,

And what good things will be mine in the future?”

22 Do not say, “I am independent.

From now on, what will harm me?”[†]

23 In the day of good things,

There is forgetfulness of bad things,

And in the day of bad things,

There is no remembrance of good things.

24 For it is easy in the judgment of the Lord

To reward a man on the day of his death according to his ways.[†]

25 The ill-treatment of an hour makes one forget luxury,

And at the end of a man's life,

There shall be a revelation of his works.

26 Consider no man happy before his death,

And a man will be known in his children.

Beware of Evildoers

27 Do not bring every man into your home,

For the plots of the deceitful are many.

28 The heart of an arrogant man is like a decoy partridge in a cage,

And like a spy he watches for your fall.

29 For he lies in wait and turns good into evil,

And he will attach blame to the good one chooses.

30 From a spark of fire a charcoal fire is kindled,

And a sinful man lies in wait for bloodshed.

31 Beware of an evildoer and his schemes,

Lest he bring lasting blame upon you.

32 Receive a stranger into your home

And he will upset you with troubles,

And alienate your family from you.

Showing Kindness

12 If you show kindness, know to whom you show it,

And you shall be thanked for your good deeds.[†]

2 Do good to a godly man, and you will be repaid—

If not by him, then certainly by the Most High.

3 There shall be no good things for him who continues in evil things,

Or for him who does not give alms cheerfully.

4 Give to a godly man, but do not help the sinner.[†]

5 Do good to a humble man, but do not give to an ungodly man.

Hold back his bread and do not give it to him,

Lest by it he lord it over you.

For you will receive twice as much evil coming back

For all the good you did for him.

6 For the Most High also hates sinners

And will render punishment on the ungodly.

Never Trust an Enemy

7 Give to the good man, but do not help the sinner.[†]

8 A friend will not be revealed when you are prosperous,

Nor will an enemy hide himself when you are in adversity.

9 When a man prospers, his enemies are grieved,

But when he is in adversity, even a friend will separate himself.
[10] Never trust your enemy,
For as copper becomes rusty, so is his evil.
[11] Even if he acts humble and goes about with a humble posture,
Watch yourself, and be on your guard.
Then you shall be to him like him who wipes off a mirror,
And you will know that it is not corroded continually.
[12] Do not let him stand by your side,
Lest he overthrow you and take your place.
Do not seat him on your right,
Lest he seek your seat of honor.
Then at last you will know the truth of my words,
And because of my words you will be pierced with sorrow.
[13] Who will pity a snake charmer when he is bitten,
Or those who go near wild animals?
[14] So no one will pity one who approaches a sinful man
And gets involved in his sins.
[15] He will stay with you for a while,
But if you turn aside from him, he will not put up with you.
[16] An enemy speaks sweetly with his lips,
But in his heart he will plan to throw you into a pit.
An enemy will shed tears, but if he finds an opportunity,
He will not be satisfied apart from shedding your blood.
[17] If evil comes upon you,
You will find your enemy there ahead of you,
And as he pretends to help you,
He will pull your feet from under you.

[18] He will shake his head and applaud with his hands;

And he will whisper many things and alter his expression.

Choosing Colleagues

13 Whoever touches pitch will be stained,

And whoever associates with an arrogant man will become like him.

[2] Do not lift a weight too heavy for you,

Nor associate with a man stronger and richer than you.

What does a clay pot have in common with a copper kettle?

For the clay pot will strike against the kettle and will itself be broken.

[3] A rich man does wrong and even proves himself to be the one wronged.

A poor man is wronged, and he must apologize.[†]

[4] If you can be useful to him, a rich man will make use of you;

But if you are in need, he will abandon you.

[5] If you own anything, he will live with you,

And he will exhaust you, but will not feel sorry for you.

[6] When he needs you, he will deceive you and smile at you;

And he will give you hope and say good things to you.

He will even say, “What do you need?”

[7] He will shame you with his foods

Until he exhausts you two or three times.

Then at last he will mock you.

If he should see you after this, he will forsake you

And shake his head over you.

[8] Take heed, lest you be led astray

And be humiliated in your folly.

[9] When a ruler invites you, be slow to accept,

And he will invite you more often.

10 Do not press upon him, lest you be rejected,

But do not withdraw at a distance, lest you be forgotten.

11 Do not intend to speak to him as an equal,

And do not trust his abundance of words;

For he will test you with a lot of talk,

And while he is smiling, he will scrutinize you.

12 He who does not guard your words is unmerciful,

And he will not hesitate to harm or imprison you.

13 Keep your words to yourself, and be very careful,

For you are walking near your own fall.

Like Attracts Like

14 Every living creature loves its like,

And every man his neighbor.[†]

15 All flesh gathers together by species,

And every man clings to one like himself.

16 What wolf will associate with a lamb?

No more will the sinner with a godly man.

17 What peace is there between a hyena and a dog?

And what peace does a rich man have with a poor man?

18 The prey of lions are wild asses in the wilderness.

Similarly, the pastures of the rich are the poor.

Rich and Poor

19 Lowness of stature is an abomination to the arrogant;

Thus a poor man is an abomination to a rich man.

20 When a rich man is shaken, he is strengthened by friends;

But when a humble man falls, he is pushed away by friends.

[21] When a rich man falls, there are many to help him;

And when he speaks abominable words, they justify him.

If a humble man falls, they criticize him further;

And when he speaks with intelligence, no place is given to him.

[22] When a rich man speaks, everyone is silent,

And they exalt his word to the clouds.

A poor man speaks, and they say, “Who is this man?”

And if he stumbles, they push him down even further.

[23] Wealth in which there is no sin is good,

But poverty is evil in the mouth of an ungodly man.

[24] The heart of a man changes the expression on his face,

Either for good or for evil.

[25] The mark of a heart filled with goodness is a cheerful face,

But the invention of proverbs requires laborious reasoning.

14 Blessed is a man who does not slip and fall because of his mouth,

And is not stung with pain caused by his sin.

[2] Blessed is he whose soul does not condemn him,

And who has not fallen away from his hope.[†]

[3] Wealth is not fitting for a small-minded man,

And to what end is wealth for an envious man?[†]

[4] For he who gathers for himself, gathers for others,

And others will live in luxury with his goods.

[5] If a man does evil to himself, for whom shall he do good?

And he will not rejoice in his wealth.

Warnings of Vices

[6] When a man envies himself, there is no one worse off,

And this is the reward for his vice.

[7] Even if he does good, he does it unintentionally,

And in the end he reveals his vice.

[8] He who envies with his eye is evil;

He turns away his face and despises souls.

[9] The eye of a greedy man is not satisfied with his share,

And useless wrongdoing dries up the soul.

[10] The evil eye of a man is envious over his bread;

Thus it is lacking at his table.

[11] My son, whatever you have, treat yourself well,

And offer sacrifices worthily to the Lord.

[12] Remember that death does not delay,

And the covenant of Hades has not been shown to you.[†]

[13] Before you die, do good to a friend,

And reach out and give to him based on your ability.

[14] Do not let a day go by without doing something good,

And do not let any of your desire for doing good escape you.

[15] Will you not leave all your hard work to another,

And all your hard work to be divided by lot?

[16] Give and receive and deprive yourself,

Because in Hades there is nowhere to seek luxury.

[17] All flesh becomes old like a garment,

For the covenant from of old is, “You shall die by death.”

[18] Like flourishing leaves on a thick tree,

Which sheds some leaves and puts forth others,

So also is the generation of flesh and blood:

One dies and another is born.

19 Every work of man decays and fails,

And he who made it will depart with it.

The Blessings of Wisdom

20 Blessed is the man who practices wisdom

And discourses with insight.[†]

21 Whoever ponders the ways of wisdom in his heart

Will also reflect on her secrets.

22 Pursue wisdom like a tracker

And lie in wait on her paths.

23 He who looks intently through her windows

Will also listen at her doors.

24 He who lodges near her house

Will also fasten his tent peg to her walls.

25 He will establish his home according to her will,

And so lodge in a good dwelling place.

26 He will put his children in her shelter

And lodge under her branches.

27 He will be sheltered by her from the burning heat

And will dwell in her glory.

15 He who fears the Lord will do this,

And he who holds fast to the law will obtain wisdom.

2 She will come to meet him like a mother

And accept him like the wife of one's youth.[†]

3 She will feed him the bread of understanding

And give him the water of wisdom to drink.

4 He will be supported by her and not fall;

And he will hold on to her and not be put to shame.

[5] She will exalt him alongside his neighbors,

And in the midst of the assembly she will open his mouth.

[6] He will find gladness and a crown of rejoicing

And will inherit an everlasting name.

[7] But foolish men will not find her,

And sinful men will not see her.

[8] She is far from the arrogant,

And lying men will not keep her in mind.

[9] Praise is not proper in the mouth of a sinner,

Because it was not sent from the Lord.

[10] For praise should be spoken in wisdom;

Then the Lord will prosper it.

Our Sin Is Our Fault

[11] Do not say, “I fell away because of the Lord,”

For He will not do what He hates.[†]

[12] Do not say, “It was He who led me astray,”

For He has no need of a sinful man.

[13] The Lord hates all abominations,

And they are not loved by those who fear Him.

[14] He Himself created man in the beginning

And left him in the counsel of his will.

[15] If you will, you will keep the commandments

And faithfully do His good pleasure.

[16] He has set before you fire and water;

If you will, stretch forth your hand.[†]

[17] Life and death are before mankind,

And whichever he chooses, it will be given to him.

18 For great is the wisdom of the Lord;

He is mighty in power and sees all things.

19 His eyes are upon those who fear Him,

And He Himself knows every deed of man.[†]

20 He has commanded no one to be ungodly,

And He has given no one license to sin.

Ungodly Children

16 Do not desire a multitude of useless children,

Nor rejoice in ungodly sons.[†]

2 If they multiply, do not rejoice over them

If the fear of the Lord is not in them.

3 Do not trust in their life

Nor pay attention to their multitude;

For one godly child is better than a thousand.

And it is better to die childless than to have ungodly children.

4 For from one child with wisdom a city will be filled with people,

But a tribe of lawless men will make it desolate.

5 My eyes have seen many such things,

And my ear has heard worse things than this.

Rebuke and Mercy

6 In the congregation of sinners, a fire will be kindled,

And in a disobedient nation, wrath is kindled.[†]

7 There was no atonement for the ancient giants

Who turned away from God because of their strength.[†]

8 He did not spare the cities where Lot sojourned,

Whom He detested because of their arrogance.[†]

9 He had no mercy on a nation destined for destruction

Who were taken away because of their sins.

10 The same thing happened to the six hundred thousand foot-soldiers

Who gathered together in their hardness of heart.[†]

11 Even if there was only one stiff-necked man,

It would be a marvel if he were to remain unpunished.

For mercy and wrath belong to the Lord,

And He is mighty to forgive;

And He pours out wrath.

12 As great as His mercy, so also great is His rebuke,

And He will judge a man according to his works.[†]

13 A sinner will not escape with his spoils,

And the patience of a godly man will not fare badly.

14 He will make a place for every act of mercy.

Each will find this out according to his works.

None Remain Anonymous

15 Do not say, “I will be hidden from the Lord,

And who will remember me from on high?

I will not be known among so many people,

For what is my soul in comparison to the immeasurable creation?[†]

16 Behold, heaven and the highest heaven,

The abyss and the earth will be shaken at His visitation.

17 At the same time, the mountains and the foundations of the earth

Will shake with trembling when He looks upon them.

18 No heart will able to think about these things,

And who will ponder His ways?

19 There will be a sudden blast of wind which no man will see,

For most of His works will be done in secret.

20 Who will proclaim His works of righteousness,

Or who will endure them?

For His covenant is far off.”

21 This is what a man thinks

Who is diminished in heart and without discernment,

Who is deceived and thinks foolishly.

22 Listen to me, my son, and gain knowledge,

And pay close attention to my words in your heart.[†]

23 I will reveal instruction with balance,

And I will proclaim knowledge with exactness.

The Majesty of Creation

24 By the judgment of the Lord, His works exist from the beginning,

And from their creation, He determined their boundaries.

25 He ordered His works forever,

And their principles according to their generations.

They neither hunger nor grow weary,

And they do not cease from their works.

26 Each does not afflict the one close to him,

And they will never disobey His word.

27 After this the Lord looked upon the earth

And filled it with His good things.

28 He covered its surface with the life of every living creature,

And to it they will return again.

Creation of Man

17 The Lord created man from the earth

And returned him to it again.[†]

2 He gave them a certain number of days and an appointed time,

And He gave them authority over it.

3 He clothed them in strength like His own

And made them in His image.

4 He put the fear of man upon all flesh

And gave him dominion over wild animals and birds.

5 He gave mankind the ability to deliberate,

And a tongue, eyes and ears, and a heart to think with.

6 He filled them with the skill of comprehension

And showed them good and evil.

7 He set His eye upon their hearts

To show them the majesty of His works.

8 They will praise His holy name

So as to fully describe the majesty of His works.

The Covenant with Israel

9 He added knowledge to them

And gave them the law of life as a heritage.[†]

10 He established an eternal covenant with them,

And He showed His judgments to them.

11 Their eyes saw His glorious majesty,

And their ears heard His glorious voice.

12 He said to them, “Beware of all unrighteousness,”

And He commanded each of them concerning his neighbor.

13 Their ways are before Him continually;

They will not be hidden from His eyes.

14 He appointed a ruler for every nation,

But Israel is the Lord's portion.

15 All His works are as the sun before Him,

And His eyes are continually on their ways.

16 Their wrongdoings are not hidden from Him,

And all their sins are before the Lord.

17 A man's almsgiving is like a seal with Him,

And He will treasure the kindness of a man like the pupil of His eye.

18 After this He will arise and repay them,

And He will reward them with retribution on their head.

19 But He provides a return to those who repent,

And He comforts those who lack endurance.

Return to the Lord

20 Turn to the Lord and forsake your sins,

And pray in His presence and reduce your offense.[†]

21 Return to the Most High and turn away from wrongdoing,

And hate an abomination exceedingly.

22 Who will praise the Most High in Hades,

As do the living and those who give thanks?

23 Thanksgiving ceases from a dead man since he is no longer alive;

Only the living and the healthy will praise the Lord.[†]

24 How great the mercy of the Lord is,

And His atonement for those who turn to Him.[†]

25 For all things are not possible for man,

Because a son of man is not immortal.

26 What shines brighter than the sun? Yet this light fails,

And so will flesh and blood when it lays evil to heart.[†]

27 He examines the host of the highest heaven,

But all men are earth and ashes.

A Song of God's Mercy

18 He who lives forever created everything;

2 The Lord alone will be declared righteous.

3 He permitted no one to proclaim His works,

For who can trace out His mighty works?[†]

4 Who will measure His majestic power with a number,

And who will add to this measure

While describing His mercies?

5 There is no one who can add or subtract,

And there is no who can search out the wonders of the Lord.

6 When a man completes his search, then he starts over;

And when he stops, he will still be perplexed.

7 What is man and what use is he;

What is his good and what is his evil?

8 The number of a man's days is considered great

If he is one hundred years old.[†]

9 But like a drop of water from the sea and a grain of sand,

So are a few years within a day of eternity.

10 Therefore the Lord is patient with them

And pours out His mercy upon them.

11 He sees and knows their end, that it is evil;

Therefore He makes full atonement for them.

12 The mercy of a man is upon his neighbor,

But the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh,

Rebuking, training, and teaching them

Like a shepherd who returns his flock to the fold.

13 He has mercy on those who receive His discipline

And who are eager for His judgments.

Take Care to Be Wise

14 My son, do not bring disgrace on the good you have done,

Nor cause grief by your words when you make a gift.

15 Does not dew give relief from the burning heat?

In the same way, a word is better than a gift.[†]

16 Indeed, is not a word better than a fitting gift?

And both are found in a gracious man.

17 A fool will insult and disgrace someone,

And the gift of an envious man makes his eyes waste away.

18 Before you speak, learn,

And before you get sick, take care of your health.[†]

19 Before you make a judgment, examine yourself closely,

And in the hour of visitation you will find atonement.

20 Before you become sick, humble yourself;

And at the time of sinning, prove your conversion.

21 Let nothing hinder you from paying a vow promptly,

And do not wait until death to become righteous.

22 Before you make a vow, prepare yourself;

And do not become like a man who tempts the Lord.[†]

23 Remember His anger on the day of your death,

At the time of vengeance, when He turns His face away.

24 Remember the time of hunger in the time of plenty,

And poverty and need in the days of wealth.[†]

25 From morning until evening, time changes;

And all things are soon in the presence of the Lord.

26 A wise man will have the fear of God in everything he does;

And in these days of sin, he will guard against wrongdoing.[†]

27 Every intelligent man knows wisdom

And praises the one who finds her.

28 The wise in words—they also make others wise,

And they pour forth accurate proverbs.[†]

Self-Control

29 Do not walk after your own desires,

But restrain your appetites.[†]

30 If you fill your soul with the desire for pleasure,

It will make you the laughingstock of your enemies.

31 Do not rejoice in great luxury,

Lest you become needy by its expense.

32 Do not become a beggar by feasting on borrowed money

When you have nothing in your purse.

The Reckless Soul

19 A working man who is a drunk will not become wealthy,

And he who despises small things will fail little by little.[†]

2 Wine and women will draw away intelligent men,

And he who joins himself to prostitutes shall become very reckless.

3 Decay and worms will inherit him,

And his reckless soul will be carried away.

Don’t Gossip

[4] He who trusts quickly is unwise in heart,

And he who sins will err against his own soul.

[5] He who rejoices in evil shall be condemned,

[6] And he who hates talkativeness will sin less.

[7] Never repeat a word and you will lose nothing at all;

[8] With friend or enemy, do not report it,

And unless it is a sin for you, do not reveal it.[†]

[9] For someone heard you and watched you,

And in time will hate you.

[10] Have you heard a word? Let it die with you.

Take courage; it will not burst you.

[11] But a fool will suffer birth-pangs because of such a word,

Like a woman in labor with a child.

[12] Like an arrow stuck in the flesh of a thigh,

So is a word inside a fool.

[13] Question a friend; perhaps he did not do it.

And if he did something, perhaps he will not repeat it.[†]

[14] Question a neighbor; perhaps he did not say it.

And if he did say it, may he not say it twice.

[15] Question a friend, for often it is slander.

So do not believe every word.

[16] A person slips, but it was not his intention;

For who has not sinned with his tongue?

[17] Question your neighbor before you threaten him,

And give place to the law of the Most High.

The Wise and the Clever

18 All wisdom is the fear of the Lord,

And in all wisdom there is the doing of the Law.†

19 Wisdom is not the knowledge of evil,

Nor is there discernment in the counsel of sinners.

20 There is a cleverness that is an abomination,

And there is a fool who is lacking in wisdom.

21 Better is a man who is afraid but lacks understanding,

Than a man who abounds in discernment but transgresses the law.

22 There is a precise cleverness which itself is unjust;

And there is one who is offensive that justice may be revealed.

23 There is an evildoer bowed down in mourning,

But inwardly he is full of deceit.

24 He covers his face and pretends to be deaf,

But when no one notices, he will take advantage of you.

25 If he is prevented from sinning because he lacks strength,

When he later finds an opportunity, he will do evil.

26 A man will be known by his appearance,

And a man of intelligence will be known

By his countenance when you meet him.†

27 The clothing of a man and the way he laughs and walks

Give indication of who he is.

When to Speak

20 There is a rebuke which is not timely,

And there is he who is silent but has discernment.

2 How much better it is to rebuke than to seethe with anger.

3 He who confesses his fault will be kept from loss.†

4 Like the desire of a eunuch to violate a maiden,

So is the man who executes justice by violence.[†]

5 There is a man who is silent but is found to be wise,

And there is a man who is hateful because he talks too much.[†]

6 There is a man who is silent because he has no answer,

And there is a man who is silent because he knows when to speak.

7 A wise man will keep silent until it is the right time to speak,

But an arrogant and undiscerning man will speak out of turn.

8 The man who talks too much will be detested,

And the man who stands on his rights will be hated.

Buying and Selling

9 There is prosperity in the midst of adversities,

But there is also a sum realized by a sale for a loss.[†]

10 There is a gift that will not profit you,

And there is a gift where the repayment is double.

11 There is a loss because of glory,

And there is a man who raises his head from a humble state.

12 There is a man who buys much with little,

But pays for it sevenfold.

13 A wise man will make himself beloved through his words,

But the kindnesses of fools will be forgotten.

14 The gift of a senseless man will not benefit you,

For his eyes are many instead of one.[†]

15 He will give little but insult much,

And he will open his mouth like a herald.

Today he will lend but tomorrow he will demand it back;

Such a man is hateful.

A Man without Grace

16 A fool will say, “I have no friend,

And I get no thanks for my good deeds.[†]

17 Those who eat my bread are worthless in their speech.”

How many will laugh scornfully at him, and how often?

18 A slip on the ground is better than a slip of the tongue;

Thus the downfall of evil will come speedily.

19 A man without grace is like a story told at the wrong time;

It will continue on the lips of the ignorant.[†]

20 A parable from the lips of a fool will be rejected,

For he does not tell it at its proper time.

Commentary on Sinners

21 There is one who is hindered from sinning because of his poverty,

So when he rests, he will not be pierced with sorrow.

22 There is one who may lose his life through shame,

Or lose it because of his foolish countenance.

23 There is one who makes a promise to a friend because of shame,

And needlessly gains him as an enemy.

24 A lie is an evil disgrace in a man;

It will continue on the lips of the ignorant.

25 A thief is preferable to a continual liar;

Both, however, will inherit destruction.

26 The character of a liar brings dishonor,

And his shame is continually with him.

Ways of the Wise

27 A wise man will advance himself with his words,

And a man with discernment will please great men.

28 A man who works the earth will raise up his harvest,

And he who pleases great men will atone for wrongdoing.

29 Presents and gifts blind the eyes of the wise,

And like a muzzle on the mouth they turn aside rebukes.

30 Wisdom hidden and unseen treasure:

What profit is there in either of them?

31 Better is the man who hides his foolishness

Than a man who hides his wisdom.

Flee from Sin

21 My son, have you sinned?

No longer add to them, but pray about your former sins.[†]

2 Flee from sin as you would from the presence of a snake,

For if you approach it, it will bite you;

Its teeth are like lion's teeth, destroying the souls of men.

3 All lawlessness is like a two-edged sword,

For there is no healing from its wound.[†]

4 Panic and violence will lay waste to wealth.

Likewise, the house of an arrogant man will be laid waste.

5 The prayer of a poor man goes from his mouth to God's ears,

And His judgment comes speedily.

6 Whoever hates rebuke walks in the steps of a sinner,

But he who fears the Lord will return to Him with his heart.

7 A man powerful in speech is known from afar,

But an intelligent man knows when he slips.

8 He who builds his house with other people's money

Is like a man who gathers his stones in a storm.

9 The assembly of the lawless is like a bundle of kindling

Whose end is a flame of fire.

10 The way of sinners is paved with stones,

But at its end is the pit of Hades.

Wise or Foolish?

11 He who keeps the law controls his thoughts;

The end result of the fear of the Lord is wisdom.[†]

12 He who is not astute cannot be taught,

But there is an astuteness that increases bitterness.

13 The knowledge of a wise man is like a flood,

And his counsel will flow abundantly as a fountain of life.[†]

14 The inner workings of a fool are like a broken vessel,

For he will not hold onto any knowledge.

15 If a man of understanding hears a wise word,

He will praise it and add to it;

But if a self-indulgent man hears it, it displeases him,

And he turns his back on it.

16 The explanation of a fool is like a burden on a journey,

But grace will be on the lips of an intelligent man.[†]

17 The utterance of a sensible person will be sought in the assembly,

And they will ponder his words in their heart.[†]

18 Like a house that has disappeared,

So is wisdom to a fool,

And the knowledge of a foolish man is words

That will not stand up to examination.

19 To a foolish man, instruction is like chains on the feet

And like handcuffs on the right hand.

20 A fool raises his voice when he laughs,

But an astute man will smile quietly with some hesitation.

21 To a wise man instruction is like a golden ornament

And like a bracelet on the right arm.

22 The foot of a fool quickly enters a house,

But a man with much experience will stand respectfully outside.

23 A man without discernment peers into a house from the door,

But a well-educated man will stand outside.

24 A man shows his lack of education when he listens at the door,

But a prudent man will be grieved by this disgrace.

25 The lips of the unwise will describe things in detail,

But the words of the prudent will balance the scale.

26 The heart of fools is in their mouth,

But the mouth of the wise is in their heart.

27 When an ungodly man curses Satan,

He curses his own soul.[†]

28 The whisperer defiles his own soul

And will be hated in his own neighborhood.

22 A lazy man may be compared to a filthy stone,

And everyone hisses at his dishonor.[†]

2 A lazy man may be compared to the filth of manure;

Everyone who picks it up will shake it off his hand.

A Father's Disgrace

3 The disgrace of a father is begetting an undisciplined son,

And a foolish daughter is born to his loss.[†]

[4] A sensible daughter will bring an inheritance to her husband,

But a shameful one is a grief to her father.

[5] An arrogant daughter shames both father and husband,

And she will be dishonored by both.

[6] An ill-timed statement is like mournful music,

But the chastising and instruction of wisdom are always timely.

The Fool

[7] He who teaches a fool is like one who glues pottery together,

Or like trying to arouse one from a sound sleep.

[8] He who tells something to a fool tells it to a drowsy man,

And at the end he will say, “What is it?”

[9] If children live honestly, and have wherewithal,

They shall cover the baseness of their parents.

[10] But children, being haughty, through disdain and want of nurture

Stain the nobility of their kindred.

[11] Weep for a dead man, for he left the light behind;

But weep over a fool, for he left intelligence behind.

Weep gladly for a dead man, because he is at rest;

But the life of the fool is worse than death.[†]

[12] Mourning for a dead man lasts seven days,

But mourning for a fool or an ungodly man lasts all his life.

[13] Do not hold a conversation with a fool,

And do not visit with a senseless man.

Beware of him, so as to avoid trouble,

And you will not be defiled when he shakes himself off.

Stay away from him, and you will find rest

And not be exhausted by his insanity.[†]

14 What will be heavier than lead?

And what will be his name but “Fool”?

15 Sand, salt, and a piece of iron are easier to bear

Than a senseless man.

16 A wooden beam bound together in a building

Will not be broken loose in an earthquake;

So a heart strengthened by reasonable counsel

Will not be afraid in a crisis.

17 A heart settled on intelligent thought

Is like a plaster decoration on a smooth wall.

18 As fences set on a high place will not stand firm against the wind,

So a cowardly heart in the thought of a fool

Cannot stand firm against any kind of fear.

Building Friendships

19 He who pokes his eye will cause tears to fall,

And he who pierces a heart reveals its feeling.

20 Throwing a rock at birds scares them away,

And disgracing a friend will break up a friendship.

21 If you draw a sword against a friend,

Do not despair, for a restoration of friendship is possible.

22 If you open your mouth against a friend,

Do not worry, for reconciliation is possible.

But as for reviling or arrogance or revealing secrets or a treacherous blow—

with behavior like this any friend will flee.[†]

23 Gain your neighbor's trust when he is poor,

So you may be fulfilled with him when he prospers.

Stand by him in his time of trouble,

That when he gets his inheritance, you may share it with him.

24 As the smoke and vapor of a furnace precede a fire,

So abuses precede bloodshed.

25 I will not be ashamed to shelter a friend,

And I will not hide from his face.

26 If anything bad happens to me because of him,

Everyone who hears about it will beware of him.

27 Who will set a guard over my mouth,

And a prudent seal over my lips,

That I may not fall because of them,

And that my tongue may not destroy me?[†]

A Prayer for Wisdom

23 O Lord, Father and Master of my life,

Do not leave me to their counsel,

Nor let me fall because of them.[†]

2 Who will set whips over my thoughts

And the discipline of wisdom over my heart,

So they may not spare me in my errors,

nor neglect me in my sins?

3 Lest my mistakes be multiplied

And my sins abound.

Then I would not fall before my adversaries,

And my enemy would not rejoice over me.

4 O Lord, Father and the God of my life, do not give me haughty eyes,

5 But turn me away from evil desire.

[6] Do not let gluttony or lust overcome me,

Nor give me up to a shameless soul.

Warning to Children

[7] My children, hear the teaching of my mouth,

For he who keeps it will not be conquered.

[8] A sinner will be overtaken by his lips,

And a slanderer and arrogant man will be made to stumble by them.

[9] Do not accustom your mouth to vows,

Nor make a habit of using the name of the Holy One.[†]

[10] For as a servant who is continually beaten will not lack bruises,

So also he who makes a vow and continually names the Holy One

Will never be cleansed from sin.

[11] A man who swears many oaths will be filled with lawlessness,

And that plague will not depart from his house.

If he offends, his sin will be on him,

And if he overlooks it, he has sinned doubly.

If he swears in vain, he will not be declared righteous,

For his house will be filled with trouble.

[12] There is a way of speaking comparable to death.

May it not be found in the inheritance of Jacob;

For all these things will be far from the godly,

And they will not be involved in sins.

[13] Do not accustom your mouth to lewd expressions,

For this is sinful speech.

[14] Remember your father and mother

When you sit in council with great men,

Lest you forget yourself in their presence

And by habit act foolishly.

Then you will wish you had never been born,

And you will curse the day of your birth.

15 A man accustomed to abusive words

Will never discipline himself as long as he lives.

Men of Sin

16 Two kinds of men multiply sins,

And a third kind will bring down wrath:

17 A soul heated like a burning fire

Will not be quenched until it is consumed;

A man whose whole body is given to fornication

Will not cease until the fire burns out.

To a man who is a fornicator, all bread is sweet.

He will not grow weary until he dies.

18 The man who transgresses against his marriage bed

Says to himself, “Who sees me?

Darkness encircles me.

The walls of my house hide me,

And no one sees me.

Why should I be afraid?

The Most High will not remember my sins.”

19 His fear is the eyes of men.

Yet he does not know that the eyes of the Lord

Are ten thousand times brighter than the sun

And look upon all the ways of men,

And observe even the secret places.

20 Before all things were created,

Everything was known to Him,

And the end of all things is also known to Him.[†]

21 This adulterer will be punished in the city streets,

And where he does not suspect it, he will be seized.

Women of Sin

22 So also the woman who forsook her husband

And brought in an heir by another man.

23 For she first disobeyed the law of the Most High;

And second, she transgressed against her husband;

And third, in her fornication she committed adultery

And bore children by a stranger.

24 She will be brought before the assembly,

And there shall be a visitation of her children.

25 Her children will not take root,

And her branches will not bear fruit.

26 She will leave behind her memory as a curse,

And her disgrace will not be blotted out.

27 Those left behind will know

There is nothing better than the fear of the Lord;

And there is nothing sweeter

Than to give heed to the Lord's commandments.

In Praise of Wisdom

24 Wisdom will praise herself,

And in the midst of her people she will boast.[†]

2 In the assembly of the Most High, she will open her mouth

And boast in the presence of His host.

3 “I came forth from the mouth of the Most High

And covered the earth like a mist.[†]

4 I pitched my tent in the high places

And my throne on the pillar of cloud.

5 I alone encircle the ring of heaven,

And I walk in the depth of the abyss.

6 In the waves of the sea, in all the earth,

And in every people and nation

I have gained a possession.

7 With all these, I have sought a place to rest;

In what inheritance will I lodge?

8 “Then the Creator of all things commanded me,

And He who created me gave me a place to live.

He said, ‘Pitch your tent in Jacob

And receive an inheritance in Israel.’[†]

9 Before the age, He created me from the beginning,

And in the age to come I will not cease.[†]

10 I serve before Him in His holy tabernacle;

Therefore, I am established in Zion.

11 In the beloved city likewise He gives me rest,

And my authority is in Jerusalem.

12 I am firmly rooted among an honored people,

Among the Lord's portion, His inheritance.

13 “Like a cedar tree I was raised on high in Lebanon,

Like a cypress tree in the mountains of Hermon.

14 I was exalted like a palm tree in En-Gedi

And like rose bushes in Jericho;

I was exalted like a beautiful olive tree in the plain

And grew tall like a plane-tree.

15 I gave forth the fragrance of aromatic spices

Like cinnamon and camel-thorn,

And I spread a fragrance like choice myrrh,

And like galbanum, onyx, and oil of myrrh,

And like the fragrance of frankincense in the tabernacle.

16 I spread forth my branches like a terebinth tree,

And my branches were glory and grace.[†]

17 I yield grace like a vine,

And my flowers produce the fruit of glory and riches.

18 I am the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope:

I therefore, being eternal, am given to all my children who are named by Him.

19 “Come to me, you who desire me,

And take your fill of my fruits.

20 For the remembrance of me is sweeter than honey,

And my inheritance is sweeter than the honeycomb.

21 Those who eat me will hunger for more,

And those who drink me will thirst for more.[†]

22 He who obeys me will not be put to shame,

And those who work with me will not sin.”

23 All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God—

The law Moses commanded us,

The inheritance of the congregations of Jacob.

24 Faint not to be strong in the Lord;

That He may confirm you, cleave unto Him:

For the Lord Almighty is God alone,

And beside Him there is no other Savior.

[25] This law fills men with wisdom,

Like the Pishon and the Tigris at the time of firstfruits;

[26] And it fills them with understanding,

Like the Euphrates and the Jordan at the time of harvest.

[27] This law shines forth instruction like light,

Like the Gihon in the days of vintage.

[28] As the first man did not know wisdom perfectly,

So the last man has not searched out her depths.

[29] For her thoughts are deeper than the sea

And her counsel than the great abyss.

[30] I went forth like a canal from a river

And like an aqueduct into a garden.

[31] I said, “I will water my garden

And drench the garden beds.”

And behold, my canal became a river,

And my river became a sea.

[32] I will yet make instruction shine like the morning,

And I will make it shine far away.

[33] I will yet pour forth teaching like prophecy,

And I will leave it behind for future generations.

[34] As you can see, I have not labored for myself alone,

But for all who seek wisdom.

Numbered Sayings

25 There are three things beautiful to see,

And they are beautiful before the Lord and men:

The harmony of brothers, friendship between neighbors, And a wife and husband well-adjusted together.[†]

[2] My soul hates three kinds of men,

And I am very offended with their lifestyle:

A beggar who is arrogant, a rich man who is a liar,

And an old man who is an adulterer and lacks understanding.

Wisdom of the Aged

[3] If you have gathered nothing in your youth,

How can you find anything in your old age?

[4] Judgment is like beauty in gray hair,

And in elders, it is to know counsel.

[5] Wisdom is like the beauty of old men,

And in those who are glorious, it is understanding and counsel.

[6] The crown of old men is great experience,

For their boast is the fear of the Lord.

Ten Blessings

[7] In my heart I have blessed nine suppositions,

And I will mention a tenth:

A father who delights in his children;

A man who lives to see the downfall of his enemies;[†]

[8] A husband who is blessed to live with an understanding wife;

A man who does not slip with his tongue;

A man who has not served a man less worthy than himself;

[9] A man who is blessed to find discernment;

A man who is blessed to speak to ears that listen;

[10] And a man who has found wisdom—how blessed he is!

But there is no one greater than a man who fears the Lord.

11 The fear of the Lord is more important than anything.

To what will it be compared?

An Evil Wife

12 Any wound, but not a wound of the heart!

Any evil, but not an evil wife!

13 Any misery, but not the misery of those who hate me!

Any vengeance, but not the vengeance of enemies!

14 There is no head worse than the head of a snake,

And there is no anger worse than the anger of an enemy.

15 I would rather live with a lion or a snake than with an evil wife.[†]

16 The evil of a wife changes her appearance

And darkens her face like that of a bear.

17 Her husband will go to his neighbors for meals,

And he sighs bitterly and involuntarily.

18 Any evil is small compared to the evil of a wife.

May the portion of a sinner fall upon her!

19 A sandy hill of ascent for the feet of an old man—

Such is an overly talkative wife to a quiet husband.

20 Do not fall for the beauty of a woman,

And do not long for her beauty.

21 There is wrath, insolence, and great shame

When a wife supports her husband.[†]

22 A downcast heart, a sad face, and a wounded heart

Are caused by an evil wife.

Drooping hands and weakened knees

Are caused by a wife who does not make her husband happy.

23 Sin had its beginning from a wife,

And because of her we all die.

24 Do not give water an outlet,

Nor boldness to an evil wife.[†]

25 If she does not follow your good leadership,

Cut her off from yourself.[†]

A Good Wife

26 Happy is the husband of a good wife;

The number of his days will be doubled.[†]

2 A courageous wife makes her husband glad,

And his years will be full of peace.

3 A good wife is a good portion,

And she will be given in the portion

Of those who fear the Lord.

4 The good heart of a rich or a poor man

Is a cheerful face at all times.

Fallen Womanhood

5 My heart fears because of three things,

And I pray to God concerning a fourth:

The slander of a city, the gathering of a mob,

And a false accusation—all these are worse than death.[†]

6 There is also pain of heart and sorrow

When a wife is jealous over another woman,

And a tongue-lashing makes it known to all.

7 An evil wife is like an ox-yoke that shakes to and fro,

And to take hold of her is like grabbing a scorpion.

[8] A drunken wife is very wrathful,

And she will not conceal her shame.

[9] The fornication of a wife will be known

By her haughty looks and her eyelids.[†]

[10] Keep strong watch over a headstrong daughter,

Lest she find some liberty and make the most of it.

[11] Be on guard against her shameless eye,

And do not be amazed if she trespasses against you.

[12] Her mouth will open like a thirsty traveler's

And drink from any water nearby.

She will sit down before every tent peg

And open her quiver to any arrow.

A Blessed Wife

[13] A wife's grace will delight her husband,

And her skill will put fat on his bones.[†]

[14] A silent wife is a gift from the Lord,

And there is nothing worth as much as a disciplined soul.

[15] A modest wife is blessing upon blessing,

And there is no scale adequate to weigh a self-controlled soul.

[16] Like the sun rising in the Lord's heaven

Is the beauty of a good wife in the ordering of her house.

[17] Like a lamp shining on the holy lampstand

Is the beauty of a countenance in the prime of life.

[18] Beautiful feet with a steady heart

are like golden pillars on a silver base.

Three Griefs

19 My heart is grieved by two things,

And because of a third, anger arises within me:

A man of war in want because of poverty;

Men of intelligence who suffer contempt;

And a man who turns back from righteousness to sin.

The Lord will prepare this one for the sword.

The Merchant

20 With difficulty a merchant will deliver himself from wrongdoing,

And a peddler will not be acquitted from sin.[†]

27 Many have sinned to make a profit,

And he who seeks riches will turn away his eyes.

2 As a stake will be driven tightly between fitted stones,

So sin will be wedged between selling and buying.

3 If a man does not hold steadfastly to the fear of the Lord,

His house will be soon overturned.

Tested by Reason

4 When a sieve is shaken, the refuse remains;

So a man's filth remains in the way he reasons.[†]

5 As a furnace tests a potter's vessels,

So the test of a man is in the way he reasons.[†]

6 As fruit reveals how a tree is cultivated,

So a man's reasoning process reveals his heart.

7 Do not praise a man before he reveals the way he reasons,

For this is the way a man is tested.

8 If you pursue righteousness, you will attain it

And put it on like a glorious robe.[†]

9 As birds flock with their own kind,

So also truth will return to those who practice it.

10 As a lion lies in wait for his prey,

So sin lies in wait for those who do wrong.

Speaking Wisely

11 The talk of a godly man is always wise,

But a fool changes like the moon.

12 Among senseless men, limit your time;

Instead, spend it with men of understanding.

13 The talk of fools is offensive,

And they laugh at the lewdness of sin.[†]

14 Speech filled with swearing will make one's hair stand on end,

And quarreling will make one stop his ears.

15 The quarreling of the arrogant leads to bloodshed,

And their abusive language is hard on the ears.

16 He who reveals secrets destroys his credibility,

And he will not find a friend for life.

17 Love your friend,

And be trustworthy with him;

But if you reveal his secrets, do not pursue him closely.

18 For as surely as a man has destroyed his enemy,

So you have destroyed the friendship of your neighbor.

19 As you might release a bird from your hand,

So you have let your neighbor go;

And you will not catch him.

20 Do not pursue him, for he has withdrawn far away

And has escaped like a deer from a snare.

21 For a wound can be bandaged and an insult forgiven,

But anyone who reveals secrets is without hope.

22 He who winks with his eye plots evil deeds,

And no one can draw him away from them.

23 His speech will be sweet in your presence,

And he will marvel at your words;

But later his speech will distort what you said,

And he will cause trouble with your words.

24 I hate many things, but none in comparison to him;

And the Lord will hate him.

Consequences of Sin

25 He who throws a stone into the air

Throws it on his head,

And a treacherous blow will distribute wounds.

26 He who digs a pit will fall into it,

And he who sets a snare will be caught in it.

27 He who does evil things will have it roll back on him,

And he will not know what hit him.[†]

28 Mockery and abuse come back on an arrogant man,

And vengeance lies in wait for him like a lion.

29 Those who rejoice at the fall of the godly

Will be caught in a trap,

And pain will consume them before their death.

30 Anger and wrath, these are also abominations,

And a sinful man shall possess both.

28 He who seeks revenge will find it from the Lord,

And He will surely punish his sins.[†]

Showing Mercy

[2] Forgive a wrong done you by your neighbor;

Then your sins will be pardoned when you pray.[†]

[3] Can a man preserve wrath against his neighbor

And still seek healing from the Lord?[†]

[4] Can he show no mercy toward a man like himself

And still beg God for mercy for himself?[†]

[5] If he being flesh keeps his anger continually,

Who will atone for his sins?

[6] Remember the end of your life

And cease from enmity;

Remember destruction and death

And stand fast in the commandments.[†]

[7] Remember the commandments

And do not vent your wrath against your neighbor;

Remember the covenant of the Most High

And overlook faults.

Cease Quarreling and Evil Talk

[8] Refrain from quarreling and you will decrease your sins,

For a man who is hot-tempered will kindle quarreling.

[9] A sinful man will trouble his friends,

And among those who live in peace he will inject unfriendliness.

[10] The heat of a fire will be kindled according to the amount of wood;

So also the heat of a fire will be kindled according to the obstinacy of quarreling.

According to the strength of a man, so his anger shall be;

And according to his wealth, he will increase his wrath.

11 A hasty quarrel kindles a fire,

And a vigorous quarrel sheds blood.

12 If you blow on a spark, it will kindle a fire,

But if you spit on it, it will be quenched;

Yet both come out of your mouth.

13 Curse a slanderous and deceitful man,

For he has destroyed many who were at peace.

14 Slander has unsettled many

And scattered them from nation to nation;

And it has destroyed strong cities

And overturned the houses of great men.

15 Slander has driven away courageous women

And robbed them of their labors.

16 He who devotes himself to slander will not find rest,

Nor shall he dwell in quietness.

17 The blow from a whip causes a wound,

But a blow from the tongue breaks bones.

18 Many have fallen by the edge of the sword,

But not so many as those who have fallen because of the tongue.

19 Blessed is the man who is sheltered from it,

Who has not passed through the anger of the tongue;

Who does not drag its yoke

And is not bound by its chains.

20 For its yoke is a yoke of iron,

And its chains are chains of bronze.

21 Its death is an evil death,

And Hades is preferable to it.

22 An evil tongue will not prevail over the godly,

And they will not be burned in its flame.

23 Those who forsake the Lord will fall into it,

And among them it will be kindled;

And it will not be quenched.

It will set upon them like a lion,

And like a leopard it will mangle them.

24 See that you fence in your possessions with thorns;

Lock up your silver and gold.[†]

25 Make balances and scales for your words

And bar and bolt the door of your mouth.[†]

26 Beware lest you make a slip with your tongue,

Lest you fall victim before him who lies in wait.

Loans and Gifts

29 He who shows mercy will lend to his neighbor,

And he who makes him strong with a helping hand

Keeps the commandments.[†]

2 Lend to your neighbor in the time of his need,

And when you borrow, repay your neighbor on time.

3 Keep your word and be trustworthy with him,

And on every occasion you will find what you need.

4 Many men, supposing a loan is like a windfall,

Cause trouble to those who help them.

5 He will kiss the lender's hand until he receives the loan,

And to get his neighbor's money he will lower his voice;

But at the time of repayment, he will put it off, And repay only with words of indifference,

And blame the times.

6 If the lender is firm with him, he will barely get back half the loan,

And will consider it as a windfall.

If the borrower does not repay anything,

He has robbed him of his money,

And needlessly made him an enemy.

The lender will then repay him with curses and insults,

And dishonor instead of glory.

7 Many men, not because they are evil,

Have refused to lend;

They have become afraid of being needlessly robbed.

8 However, be patient with a man of humble circumstances,

And do not keep him waiting for your alms.

9 Because of the commandment, help a poor man,

And in his need, do not turn him away empty.

10 Lose your money for the sake of a brother and friend;

Do not let it rust under a stone and be lost.[†]

11 Lay up your treasure according to the commandments of the Most High,

For this will profit you more than gold.[†]

12 Store alms in your storerooms,

And they will deliver you from all affliction.

13 More than a mighty shield and better than a strong spear

Almsgiving will fight for you against your enemy.

14 A good man will go surety for his neighbor,

But a man who has lost his sense of shame will forsake him.

15 Do not forget the kindness his surety has done for you,

For he has given his life for you.

16 A sinner will overthrow the good things of his surety,

And the ungrateful man will forsake his deliverer on purpose.

17 Suretyship has destroyed many prosperous men

And tossed them about like waves of the sea.

18 Suretyship has driven influential men from their homes,

And they have wandered among foreign nations.

19 The sinner who chances upon suretyship

And the man who pursues profit-taking will fall into judgment.

20 Help your neighbor according to your ability,

But watch out for yourself lest you fall.

21 The principle of life is water, bread, and clothing,

And a house that offers privacy.

22 The life of a poor man under a shelter of logs

Is better than great food in another man's house.

23 Be content with little or much,

And you will not hear your guest insulted.

24 Going from house to house is a bad way to live,

And where you are visiting, you dare not open your mouth.

25 You will entertain guests and give drink to the ungrateful,

And besides this you will hear bitter words:

26 “Come here, stranger; set the table,

And if you have any food at hand, feed me.”

27 “Get out, stranger, somebody more important is here;

My brother has come as my guest;

I need my house.”

28 These things are hard for a sensible man to take:

The rebuke of a household and the abuse of a creditor.

Raising Children

30 The man who loves his son will chastise him often,

So he may rejoice in him in his later years.[†]

2 He who disciplines his son will profit by him

And boast of him among acquaintances.

3 The man who teaches his son will make his enemy jealous

And will rejoice exceedingly over him among friends.

4 When his father dies, it is as though he is not dead,

For he left behind one like himself.

5 While he lived, he saw and rejoiced in him,

And when he died, he was not grieved.

6 Before his enemies, he left behind an avenger,

And to his friends one who repays favors.

7 He who spoils his son will bandage his wounds,

And at every cry his heart will ache.

8 A horse not broken turns out to be stubborn,

And a son allowed to run wild turns out to be headstrong.

9 Pamper a child, and he will frighten you;

Play with him, and he will grieve you.

10 Do not laugh with him, lest you suffer with him

And gnash your teeth over him at last.

11 Do not give him authority while he is young.

12 Bruise his ribs when he is young,

Lest he become stubborn and disobey you.

13 Discipline your son and work with him,

So he will not embarrass you with his behavior.

Good Health

14 A poor man with good health is better off
Than a rich man afflicted in his body.
15 Health and vigor are better than all gold,
And a strong body than immense wealth.
16 There are no riches greater than health of body,
And there is no gladness above joy of heart.[†]
17 Death is better than a wretched life,
And eternal rest is better than chronic sickness.
18 Good things set out before a closed mouth
Are like offerings of food put on a grave.
19 What use is an offering of fruit to an idol?
For it can neither eat nor smell.
So is a man afflicted by the Lord:[†]
20 He sees with his eyes and groans,
Like a eunuch embracing a virgin.

Gladness of Heart

21 Do not give yourself over to sorrow,
And do not distress yourself deliberately.[†]
22 Gladness of the heart is the life of man,
And rejoicing by a man lengthens his life.
23 Love your soul and comfort your heart,
And put sorrow far away from you;
For sorrow has destroyed many,
And there is no profit in it.

[24] Envy and anger will shorten your days,

And worry will bring premature old age.

[25] A man with a good and cheerful heart

Will pay attention to the food he eats.

Be Wise with Wealth

31 Losing sleep over wealth wastes away the body,

And anxiety about wealth removes sleep.[†]

[2] Sleepless anxiety will drive away slumber,

And severe illness makes an end to sleep.

[3] A rich man labors to gather money,

And when he rests he fills himself with his luxuries.

[4] A poor man labors to make a meager living,

And when he rests he becomes needy.

[5] He who loves gold will not be called righteous,

And he who pursues profit will be led astray by it.

[6] Many are driven to calamity for the sake of gold,

And their destruction has met them face to face.

[7] It is a stumbling block for those possessed by it,

And every senseless man will be trapped by it.

[8] Blessed is a rich man who is found blameless

And does not chase after gold.[†]

[9] Who is he? And we shall call him blessed,

For he has worked wonders among his people.

[10] Who has been tested by it and found perfect?

He has ground for boasting.

Who was able to transgress but did not transgress?

Who was able to commit evil but did not do it?

[11] His good things will be strengthened,

And the assembly will talk of his almsgiving.

Food and Drink

12 Are you seated at table with a great man?

Do not gluttonize, and do not say,

“How much food there is upon your table!”[†]

13 Remember that a greedy eye is a vice.

What has been created worse than the eye?

Therefore it sheds tears on every face.

14 Do not stretch out your hand for everything you see,

And do not crowd another at the dish.[†]

15 Understand the things of your neighbor by your own,

And in every matter be considerate.

16 Eat what is set before you like a human being,

And do not devour your food, lest you be despised.[†]

17 Be the first to stop eating for the sake of discipline,

And do not be greedy, so as not to cause offense.

18 And if you are seated in a large group of people,

Do not reach out your hand before they do.

19 How small an amount is sufficient for a man with discipline!

And he does not gasp for breath on his bed.[†]

20 Healthy sleep depends on moderate eating,

And he rises early and in good spirits;

But the distress of sleeplessness, nausea, and indigestion

Are with the glutton.

21 If you are stuffed with food,

Get up in the middle of the meal and stop eating.

22 Listen to me, my child, and do not disregard me,

And you will find my words to be important.

In all your works be prepared,

And no sickness will overtake you.

[23] Lips will bless a man generous with his food,

And their witness to his goodness is trustworthy.

[24] A city will grumble against the man stingy with his food,

And their witness to his stinginess is accurate.

[25] Do not get your courage from wine,

For wine has destroyed many men.[†]

[26] As a furnace tests steel in the tempering process,

So wine tests hearts in the quarrels of the arrogant.

[27] Wine is like life to men,

If you drink it in moderation.

What is life without wine?

For it was created to give gladness to men.

[28] Wine drunk at the proper time and with temperance

Is joyfulness of heart and gladness of soul.

[29] Drinking too much wine is bitterness of soul,

With irritation and occasion for stumbling and falling.

[30] Drunkenness increases the anger of a senseless man to his own hurt,

Reducing his strength and adding to his wounds.

[31] Do not rebuke your neighbor at a wine party,

And do not despise him when he is enjoying himself.

Do not speak a word of insult against him,

And do not afflict him by making demands of him.

Hosting a Banquet

32 Did they appoint you as leader of the banquet?

Do not exalt yourself.

Among them be as one of them.

Take care of them and only then be seated.†

2 Then having fulfilled all your duties, take your place,

That you may make merry for their sake,

And receive a crown because of your orderly behavior.

3 Speak, O elder, for this is fitting for you to do so with accurate knowledge;

But do not interrupt the music.†

4 Where there is entertainment, do not pour out talk,

And do not display your cleverness at the wrong time.

5 A concert of music at a banquet of wine

Is like a seal of ruby in a gold ornament.

6 A seal of emerald in a gold setting

Is the melody of music with delicious wine.

7 Speak, young man, if there is need of you,

But no more than twice, and only if you are asked repeatedly.†

8 Be brief; say much in a few words.

Act like a man who knows, yet holds his tongue.

9 Among the great do not act as their equal,

And when another is speaking, do little talking.

10 Lightning flashes before thunder,

And favor goes before a modest man.

11 Rise to leave in good time, and do not lag behind.

Run home and do not be remiss.

12 Amuse yourself there, and do what you intend,

But do not sin by speaking arrogantly;

13 And for these things, bless Him who created you

And satisfies you with His good things.

Wise and Sinful Men

14 The man who fears the Lord will receive instruction,

And those who rise early will find His approval.

15 He who seeks the Law will be filled with it,

But the hypocrite will be made to stumble by it.

16 Those who fear the Lord will discover judgment,

And like the light they will kindle righteous deeds.

17 A sinful man will turn aside correction

And find a rationalization according to his will.[†]

18 A man of counsel will not neglect thought,

But a strange and arrogant man does not tremble in fear.

19 Do nothing without counsel,

And when you have acted, do not regret it.

20 Do not walk a path filled with obstacles,

And do not trip over stony ground.

21 Do not put your trust in an unexplored way,

22 And keep watch because of your children.

23 In every work entrust your soul to the Lord,

For this is the keeping of the commandments.[†]

24 He who believes in the Law heeds the commandments,

And he who trusts in the Lord will not suffer loss.

33 Evil will not befall the man who fears the Lord,

But in trial He will deliver him again and again.

2 A wise man will not hate the law,

But he who pretends to keep it is like a ship in a storm.[†]

3 A man of understanding will trust in the law,

And to him the law is trustworthy because it is a divine revelation.

4 Prepare what to say and thus you will be heard.

Draw on your training and make your reply.

5 The heart of a fool resembles a wagon wheel,

And his reasoning is like a turning axle.[†]

6 A lusty stallion is like a mocking friend;

He impregnates everyone who sits under him.

Reflecting on Creation

7 Why is one day better than another,

When all the light of a day in the year is from the sun?[†]

8 They were separated by the knowledge of the Lord,

And He changed the seasons and feasts.

9 Some days He exalted and sanctified,

And some days He made ordinary.

10 All men are from the ground,

For Adam was created from the earth.

11 In the fullness of knowledge the Lord separated them

And changed their paths.

12 Some days He blessed and exalted,

And some days He sanctified and drew near to Himself.

Some days He has cursed and humbled

And removed from their place.

13 All His ways are according to His good pleasure.

Like clay in a potter's hand,

Thus men are in the hand of Him who made them,

To render to them according to His judgment.[†]

Opposites

14 Good is the opposite of evil, and life is the opposite of death.

In the same way, a sinner is the opposite of a godly man.†

15 Look, therefore, upon all the works of the Most High:

They also come in pairs, one the opposite of the other.

16 I kept the last watch like one gleaning after the harvest.†

17 By the blessing of the Lord I arrived in time,

And like a grape-picker I filled my winepress.

18 Observe well that I did not labor for myself alone,

But for all who seek instruction.

Careful Leadership

19 Hear me, you leaders of the people,

And you rulers of the assembly, listen to me.

20 Do not give authority over yourself while you are still living

To your son or your wife, nor to your brother or a friend;

And do not give your property to another,

Lest you change your mind and need to beg for it.

21 While you are still alive and there is breath in you,

Do not change places with anyone.

22 For it is better that your children should ask from you

Than that you should look to the hands of your sons.

23 Be outstanding in all your works;

Do not put a blemish on your reputation.

24 On the day when the days of your life are fulfilled,

At the time of your death, distribute the inheritance.

Relating to Servants

25 Fodder, the rod, and a burden are for a donkey,

And bread, instruction, and work are for a servant.

26 Make a servant work, and you will find rest;

Leave his hands idle and he will seek freedom.

27 Yoke and strap will bend the neck,

And racks and tortures are for an evil servant.

28 Put him to work that he may not be idle,

For idleness teaches much evil.

29 Set him to the work appropriate for him;

And if he is not obedient, put heavy chains on his feet.

30 And do not act superior toward any flesh,

And do nothing without judgment.[†]

31 If you own a servant, let him be as yourself,

For with your blood you bought him.

32 If you own a servant, treat him as a brother.

For you will need him as your own soul.

33 If you treat him badly and he runs away,

Which way will you go look for him?

Discerning Dreams

34 Vain hopes and lying belong to a man without understanding,

And dreams give wing to senseless men.[†]

2 Like him who grasps after shadows and chases the wind,

So is he who pays attention to dreams.

3 The vision of dreams is this against that,

The likeness of a face opposite a face.

4 What will be cleansed from an unclean thing?

And what will be true from a false thing?

5 Divinations, omens, and dreams are worthless;

And like a woman in the pains of childbirth,

The heart becomes visible.

6 Unless visions are sent from the Most High in a visitation,

Do not give your heart to them.[†]

7 For dreams have deceived many,

And those who hope in them have fallen away.

8 Without such lying, the law will be fulfilled,

And wisdom is perfection in the mouth of the faithful.

Benefits of Travel

9 A man who has traveled about knows many things,

And a man with much experience will speak with understanding.[†]

10 A man who has not been tested knows little,

But he who has traveled about increases his astuteness.

11 I have seen many things in my travels,

And my understanding is more than I can express in words.

12 I have frequently been in danger of death,

But I have been saved because of these experiences.

The Blessings of God

13 The spirit of those who fear the Lord will live,

For their hope is in Him who saves them.

14 He who fears the Lord will fear nothing,

And he will not be cowardly, for the Lord is his hope.

15 Blessed is the soul of a man who fears the Lord.

To whom does he look? And who is his support?[†]

16 The eyes of the Lord are upon those who love Him.

He is a powerful protection and a strong support:

A shelter from the burning heat,

A shelter from the noonday sun,

A guard from stumbling,

And help from a fall.

17 He raises up the soul

And gives light to the eyes.

He gives healing, life, and blessing.

Unacceptable Offerings

18 If a man sacrifices by means of wrongdoing,

The offering is a mockery,

And the gifts of the lawless are not accepted.[†]

19 The Most High is not pleased with the offerings of the ungodly,

And a man does not atone for his sins with a multitude of sacrifices.

20 He who offers a sacrifice from the property of the poor

Is like one who kills a son in the sight of his father.

21 The bread of the needy is the life of the poor.

He who deprives them of it is a man of bloodshed.

22 Whoever takes away his neighbor's livelihood murders him,

And whoever deprives a hired worker of his wages sheds his blood.

23 If one builds up while another tears down,

What do they profit other than toil?[†]

24 If one prays while another curses,

Whose voice will the Lord hear?

25 If a man washes himself after touching a corpse,

Then touches it again,

What does he profit by his washing?

26 So it is with a man who fasts over his sins

And goes and does the same sins all over again.

Who will hear his prayer?

What does his humbling profit him?

Acceptable Offerings

35 The man who keeps the law will abound in offerings;

He who heeds the commandments sacrifices a peace offering.[†]

2 He who returns a kindness offers fine wheat flour,

And he who does alms sacrifices a praise offering.[†]

3 To forsake evil is pleasing to the Lord,

And to forsake wrongdoing is atonement.

4 Do not appear before the Lord empty-handed,

For all these offerings are made because of the commandment.

5 A righteous offering anoints the altar,

And its fragrance rises before the Most High.

6 The sacrifice of a righteous man is acceptable,

And its remembrance shall not be forgotten.

7 Glorify the Lord with your generosity,

And do not reduce the firstfruits of your hands.

8 In every gift let your face be cheerful,

And sanctify your tithe with gladness.[†]

9 Give to the Most High as He has given to you,

And give to Him with generosity, according to your windfall.

10 For the Lord is He who repays,

And He will repay you sevenfold.[†]

God's Justice and Mercy

11 Do not bribe Him, for He will not accept it;

And do not offer an unrighteous sacrifice.

12 For the Lord is the judge,

And there is no partiality with Him.

13 He will not show partiality to a poor man,

But He will hear the petition of him who is wronged.[†]

14 He will not overlook the supplication of an orphan,

Nor a widow when she pours out her story.

15 Do not the tears of a widow run down her cheeks

As she cries out against him who caused them?

16 He whose service is pleasing to the Lord

Will be accepted by Him,

And his prayer will reach to the clouds.

17 The prayer of a humble man passes through the clouds,

And he will not be comforted until it reaches the Lord;[†]

18 And he will not withdraw it until the Most High visits him,

Provides justice for the righteous,

And executes judgment.

19 So the Lord will not delay,

Neither will He be slow to help them,[†]

20 Until He crushes the loins of the unmerciful

And repays vengeance upon the nations,

21 Until He destroys the multitude of the insolent

And crushes the scepter of the unrighteous,

22 Until He renders to a man according to his practices

And the works of men according to their devices,

23 Until He judges the cause of His people

And brings them joy with His mercy.

24 Mercy is beautiful in the time of His affliction,

Like rain in the time of drought.[†]

A Prayer for Israel

36 Have mercy on us, O Lord, the God of all, and look upon us,

And put Your fear on all the nations.[†]

2 Raise Your hand against foreign nations

And let them see Your power.

3 As in us You have been sanctified before them,

So in them may You be made great before us.

4 Let them know You as we also have known You,

For there is no God but You, O Lord.

5 Renew Your signs and work fresh wonders;

Glorify Your hand and Your right arm.

6 Stir up Your anger and pour out Your wrath;

Drive away the adversary and destroy the enemy.

7 Hasten the time and remember Your oath,

And let people declare Your mighty works.[†]

8 Let him who survives be devoured in Your fiery wrath,

And may those who harm Your people meet destruction.[†]

9 Crush the heads of the rulers of the enemies

Who say, “There is no one but us.”

10 Gather together all the tribes of Jacob,

And grant them their inheritance as from the beginning.[†]

11 Have mercy upon Your people called by Your Name, O Lord—

Upon Israel, whom You have likened to Your firstborn son.

12 Have pity on the city of Your sanctuary,

Jerusalem, the place of Your rest.

13 Fill Zion with the celebration of Your divine virtue

And Your people with Your glory.[†]

14 Give testimony to what You created in the beginning

And raise up the prophecies spoken in Your name.

15 Reward those who wait for You

And let Your prophets be found trustworthy.

16 Hear, O Lord, the prayer of Your suppliants,

According to the blessing of Aaron over Your people;

17 And all on earth will know

That You are the Lord, the God of the ages.[†]

Using Discernment

18 The stomach eats any kind of food,

But some food is better than others.

19 As the palate tastes the flavor of game,

So an understanding heart detects lying words.

20 A crooked heart will cause grief,

But a man with great experience will pay him back.

21 A woman will accept any son,

But one daughter is better than another.[†]

22 A beautiful woman gladdens a man's face

And surpasses his every desire.

23 If there is mercy and gentleness on her tongue,

Her husband is not like other men.

24 He who gains a wife gets his best possession,

A helper like himself and a pillar of support.[†]

[25] Where there is no wall, the property will be plundered,

And where a man has no wife, he will wander around and groan.[†]

[26] Who will trust a well-equipped thief

Who skips from city to city?

[27] Who will trust a man who has no home

And lodges wherever night overtakes him?

Choosing Companions

37 Every friend will say, “I too am your friend,”

But sometimes a friend is a friend in name only.[†]

[2] Is it not a grief to the death

When a companion and friend turns to hatred?

[3] O evil reasoning! Why were you involved

To cover the land with deceit?

[4] A companion delights in the gladness of a friend,

But in time of affliction, he will be against him.

[5] A companion labors to help a friend for his stomach's sake,

And in a time of battle he will take up the shield.

[6] Do not forget a friend in your soul,

And do not be unmindful of him with your wealth.

Choosing Counselors

[7] Every counselor extols his own counsel,

And some offer advice in their own interest.[†]

[8] Protect yourself from a counselor

And know beforehand what is his interest;

For he will take thought for himself

Lest he cast his vote against you

[9] And say to you, “Your path is good.”

Then he will stand aside to see what will happen to you.

[10] Do not consult with a man who looks at you suspiciously,

And hide your counsel from those who envy you.

[11] Also, do not consult with a woman about her rival,

Nor with a coward about battle,

Nor with a merchant about exchange,

Nor with a buyer about selling,

Nor with a slanderer about gratitude,

Nor with an unmerciful man about generosity,

Nor with an idler about any work,

Nor with a seasonal hired hand about completing his work,

Nor with a lazy servant about a big job.

Pay no attention to these in any counsel.

[12] Instead, persevere with a godly man

Who you know keeps the commandments,

Whose soul accords with your soul

And will share in your suffering if you fall.

[13] Stand firm on the counsel of your heart,

For no one is more faithful to you than it.

[14] For a man's soul sometimes tells him more

Than seven watchmen sitting high on a watchtower.

[15] And in all matters, pray to the Most High

That He may direct your way in truth.

Wisdom, False and True

[16] A word is the beginning of every work,

And counsel comes before every action.

17 Four types of things appear

As a clue to a change of heart:

18 Good and evil, life and death;

And it is the tongue that continually rules them.

19 There is an astute man who is a teacher of many,

But is useless to his own soul.

20 A man who devises words craftily will be hated.

This man will go hungry,

21 For grace was not given to him from the Lord,

Because he is destitute of all wisdom.[†]

22 There is a man wise in his own soul,

And the fruits of his understanding are trustworthy when he speaks.

23 A wise man will instruct his own people,

And the fruits of his understanding are trustworthy.

24 A wise man shall be filled with blessing,

And all who see him will consider him blessed.

25 The life of a man is numbered by days,

But the days of Israel are without number.

26 The wise man will inherit trust among his people,

And his name will live forever.

Gluttony

27 My son, while you are still living, test your soul,

And see what is bad for it, and do not give in to that.

28 For not everything is profitable for everyone,

And not every soul enjoys everything.

29 Do not be gluttonous for every dainty food,

And do not give yourself over to food.[†]

30 For overeating will bring sickness,

And gluttony will lead to nausea.

31 Many have died because of gluttony,

But the careful man will prolong his life.

Honoring the Physician

38 Honor the physician with the honor due him,

And also according to your need of him,

For the Lord created him.[†]

2 Healing comes from the Most High,

And he will receive a gift from the king.

3 The physician's skill will lift up his head,

And he shall be admired in the presence of the great.

4 The Lord created medicines from the earth,

And a sensible man will not loathe them.[†]

5 Is not water made sweet by wood

That its strength might be known?[†]

6 And He gave skill to men

That He might be glorified in His wonders.[†]

7 By them He heals and takes away pain,

A druggist making a compound of them.

8 God's works are never finished,

And from Him health is upon the face of the earth.

9 My son, do not be negligent when you are sick,

But pray to the Lord and He will heal you.[†]

10 Depart from transgression and direct your hands aright,

And cleanse your heart from every sin.

11 Offer a sweet-smelling sacrifice

And a memorial of the finest wheat flour;

And pour oil on your offering, as if you are soon to die.

12 And keep in touch with your physician,

For the Lord created him;

And do not let him leave you,

For you need him.

13 There is a time when success is also in their hands,

14 For they will pray to the Lord

To give them success in bringing relief and healing,

For the sake of preserving your life.[†]

15 He who sins before the One who made him,

May he fall into the hands of a physician.

Mourning the Departed

16 My son, let your tears fall for the dead,

And as one suffering grievously, begin the lament.

With the honor due him, wrap his body

And take care of his burial.[†]

17 Weep bitterly and lament fervently;

Do your mourning according to what he deserves

For a day or two to avoid slander;

Then be comforted for your grief.

18 For grief is a cause of death,

And a grief-stricken heart will sap your strength.

19 Grief also abides in misery,

And the life of a poor man weighs down his heart.

20 Do not give your heart to grief;

Drive it away, remembering the end of life.

21 Do not forget, for there is no coming back;

And you cannot help the dead man by grieving,

But will only injure yourself.

22 Remember my end, since yours is also like it:

“Mine yesterday, yours today.”

23 When the dead man is at rest, let his remembrance cease,

And be comforted for him in the exodus of his spirit.[†]

Gratitude for Laborers

24 The wisdom of a scribe depends on his opportunity for quiet,

For when he has little business, he will be made wise.[†]

25 How will he who handles the plow be made wise?

For he boasts in the shaft of the goad,

And he drives oxen and is occupied with their labors,

And his talk is about young bulls.[†]

26 His heart is set on plowing furrows,

And he keeps watch to feed his heifers.

27 The same is true for every craftsman and architect

Who works by night as well as by day—

Those who engrave the signets of seals—

He is diligent to make great variety;

His heart set on creating a lifelike image

And keeping watch to perfect his work.

28 So too is the blacksmith sitting near the anvil,

Examining closely his iron works,

The breath of the fire melting his flesh

As he struggles with the heat of the furnace.
He inclines his ear to the sound of the hammer,
And his eyes are focused on the likeness of the object.
He sets his heart on the completion of his works
And keeps watch to perfect its detail.
[29] The potter as well, sitting by his work
And turning the potter's wheel with his feet,
He is always careful about the quality of his work
And also the quantity of his output.
[30] With his arm he molds the clay,
And with his feet he curves it.
His heart is set on finishing the glazing,
And he is careful to clean the furnace.
[31] All these trust in their hands,
And each is skilled in his work.
[32] Without them a city will not be livable,
Nor will anyone sojourn or live there.
[33] Yet they will not be sought out for the council of the people,
And they will not gain prominence in the assembly.
They do not sit in the judge's seat,
Nor will they understand the sentence of judgment.
[34] They cannot give instruction in discipline or judgment,
Nor will they be found using parables;
But they will keep the fabric of the world stable,
And their prayer is in the practice of their craft.

Students of God's Word

How different is the man who devotes himself

39 To the study of the law of the Most High.
He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients
And be occupied with their prophecies.[†]
[2] He will preserve the discourse of notable men
And penetrate the subtleties of parables.
[3] He will seek out the hidden meanings of proverbs
And be engaged in the riddles of parables.
[4] He will serve in the midst of great men
And will appear before rulers.
He will travel through the land of foreign nations
And test the good and evil among men.[†]
[5] He will give his heart to rising early
Before the Lord who created him,
And will make supplication to the Most High;
And he will open his mouth in prayer
And make supplication for his sins.
[6] If the great Lord wills,
He will be filled with the Spirit of understanding.
He will pour forth words of His wisdom,
And in prayer he will give thanks to the Lord.
[7] He will direct his counsel and knowledge aright,
And he will reflect on His hidden things.
[8] He will reveal instruction in his teaching
And boast in the law of the Lord's covenant.
[9] Many will praise his understanding,
And it will never be blotted out.
His memory will not disappear,

And his name will live through all generations.

10 Nations will proclaim his wisdom,

And the assembly will proclaim his praise.

11 If he lives long, he will leave a name greater than a thousand,

And if he goes to his rest, his work is completed.

Praise for God's Works

12 I have yet more to tell, and I will describe it in detail;

For I am filled like a full moon.

13 So hear me, O holy sons,

And bud forth like a rose

Springing up by a running stream.

14 Like frankincense, emit a sweet fragrance,

And blossom forth like a lily.

Send forth a fragrance

And sing a hymn of praise.

Bless the Lord in all His works;[†]

15 Ascribe majesty to His name

And give thanks to Him in praise,

With songs on your lips and with lyres;

And thus you shall say in thanksgiving:[†]

16 “All things are the works of the Lord,

For they are exceedingly good.

And every command shall be in His appointed time.”

No one cay say, “What is this? Why is that?”

For every question will be answered in His appointed time.

17 By His word the waters stood as a heap

And the reservoirs of the waters by the word of His mouth.[†]

18 By His command all His good pleasure is done,

And no one will diminish His salvation.

19 The works of all flesh are before Him,

And nothing can be hidden from His eyes.[†]

20 From age to age He looks upon them,

And nothing is marvelous to Him.

21 No one can say, “What is this? Why is that?”

For all things were created for their uses.

22 His blessing covers the dry land like a river

And drenches it like a flood.

23 As He turns fresh waters into salt,

So the heathen will inherit His wrath.

24 As His ways are straight to the holy,

So they are an occasion of stumbling to the lawless.[†]

25 As from the beginning good things were created for the good,

So evil things for sinners.

26 The basic needs of a man's life

Are water, fire, iron, salt, and wheat flour,

And milk, honey, the blood of the grape, olive oil, and clothing.[†]

27 As all these things are good for the godly,

So they turn into evil for sinners.

28 There are spirits created for vengeance,

And in His anger they strengthen their scourges.

In the time of consummation they will pour out their might

And appease the wrath of Him who made them.

29 Fire, hail, famine, and death:

All these things are created for vengeance.

30 The teeth of wild animals, scorpions and snakes,

And the avenging sword that drives the ungodly to destruction—

31 They shall be glad at His commandment

And be prepared for His service on earth;

And when their times come, they will not transgress His word.

32 Therefore from the beginning I was determined and resolved,

And left this in writing:[†]

33 All the works of the Lord are good,

And He will supply every need in its hour.

34 No one can say, “This is worse than that,”

For all things will be well pleasing in their time.

35 So now sing praise with all your heart and voice,

And bless the name of the Lord.

Life's Afflictions

40 Hard work was created for every man

And a heavy yoke for the sons of Adam,

From the day they come forth from their mother's womb

until the day they return to the mother of all.[†]

2 The conception of things to come and the day of death

Trouble their thoughts and cause fear of heart—

3 From the one sitting on a glorious throne

To the one humbled in earth and ashes,

4 From the one wearing purple and a crown

To the one clothed in burlap,

There is anger, envy, trouble, and unrest,

And fear of death and fury and strife.

[5] When it is time for rest on his bed,

His night of sleep alters his knowledge.

[6] He gets little or no rest, and afterward in his sleep,

As though on a day of watch,

He is troubled by the vision of his heart,

Like one who escapes from the face of battle.

[7] In the exact time of need he awakes

And is amazed there was nothing to fear.

[8] With all flesh, from man to animal,

And upon sinners seven times more, there will be:

[9] Death and bloodshed; strife and the sword;

Distresses and famine; and ruin and affliction.

[10] All these things were created for the lawless,

And because of them the flood came.

[11] Whatever comes from the earth returns to the earth,

And whatever comes from the waters returns to the sea.

The Wise and Unwise

[12] Every bribe and wrongdoing will be blotted out,

But faithfulness shall stand forever.[†]

[13] The wealth of the unrighteous will dry up like a river

And sound forth and cease like great thunder in the rain.

[14] A generous man will rejoice,

But transgressors will come to ruin.

[15] The offspring of the ungodly shall not grow branches,

For they are unclean roots on a hard rock.

[16] Weeds growing by any water or riverbank

Will be plucked out before any grass.

17 Grace is like a paradise in blessing,

And almsgiving endures forever.

18 The life of the self-reliant and the worker will be sweet,

But he who finds a treasure is better off than both.

19 Having children and building a city establish a name,

But a blameless wife is accounted better than both.[†]

20 Wine and music gladden the heart,

But love of wisdom is better than both.

21 The flute and harp give sweet melody,

But a pleasant tongue is better than both.

22 The eye will desire grace and beauty,

But the green shoots of grain are better than both.

23 A friend and companion meet at an appointed time,

But a wife meeting with her husband is better than both.

24 Brothers and help are for a time of affliction,

But almsgiving rescues better than both.[†]

25 Gold and silver will make the foot secure,

But counsel is esteemed more valuable than both.

26 Wealth and strength will lift up the heart,

But the fear of the Lord is better than both.

There is no loss in the fear of the Lord,

And with it there is no need to seek for help.

27 The fear of the Lord is like a paradise of blessing

And covers a man better than any glory.[†]

28 My child, do not live the life of a beggar,

For it is better to die than to beg.

29 When a man looks at another's table,

He is living an irrational life.

For he will pollute his soul with another's food.

But a rational and educated man will guard himself against that.

30 Begging will be sweet in the mouth of a shameless man,

But in his belly a fire will be kindled.

Dealing with Death

41 O death, how bitter is the memory of you

To a man at peace with his possessions,

To a man without distractions and prosperous in everything,

And still strong enough to enjoy his food.[†]

2 O death, your judgment is good

To the man in need and failing in strength

In his extreme old age, distracted by everything,

And stubborn and short on patience.

3 Do not fear the judgment of death;

Remember those before you and after you.

4 This is the judgment from the Lord to all flesh,

And how can you reject the good pleasure of the Most High?

Whether you lived ten or a hundred or a thousand years,

There is in Hades no inquiry into your life.

5 The children of sinners are loathsome children,

And they frequent the dwellings of the ungodly.[†]

6 The inheritance of the children of sinners will perish,

And with their seed the disgrace will continue.

7 The children will blame their godless father,

For because of him they will be denounced.

[8] Woe to you, the ungodly men

Who forsook the law of God Most High.

[9] And when you are born, you will be born to a curse,

And when you die, your portion will be a curse.

[10] Whatever is from the earth shall return to the earth,

So the ungodly go from a curse to destruction.

[11] The mourning of men is about their bodies,

But the evil name of sinners will be blotted out.

[12] Have regard for your name,

For it will remain with you longer

Than a thousand great chests of gold.[†]

[13] The days of a good life are numbered,

But a good name will remain forever.

[14] Observe instruction and live in peace, my children,

But hidden wisdom and invisible treasure—

What benefit are these?

[15] A man who hides his foolishness

Is better than a man who hides his wisdom.

Shame, Proper and Improper

[16] Therefore, be ashamed on the basis of my word,

For it is not good to protect every kind of shame,

And not everything is highly esteemed by all with confidence.

[17] Be ashamed of fornication before father or mother;

Of a lie before your leader or ruler;

[18] Of an offense before a judge or ruler;

Of lawlessness before the assembly of the people;[†]

[19] Of wrongdoing before your partner or friend;

Of theft in the place where you dwell.

[20] Be ashamed before the truth of God and His covenant,

And of bad manners at the table;

[21] Of contemptuous behavior in receiving and giving;

Of silence before those who greet you;

[22] Of looking at a prostitute;

Of rejecting the appeal of a kinsman;

[23] Of carrying off someone's portion or gift,

And of staring at another man's wife;

[24] Of meddling with his maidservant—

And do not come near her bed.

[25] Be ashamed of insulting words before friends,

And do not be insulting after making a gift;

[26] Of repeating and telling what you hear

And revealing secrets.[†]

[27] So be truly modest

And find favor before every man.

42 Do not be ashamed of the following things,

And do not let partiality lead you to sin:[†]

[2] Of the Law and covenant of the Most High,

And of a judgment to acquit an ungodly man;

[3] Of keeping accounts with a partner or a traveling companion,

And of dividing an inheritance among friends;

[4] Of accurate scales and balances,

And the acquisition of much or little;

[5] Of profit from business with merchants,

And of much discipline of children,

And of making the sides of an evil servant bleed.[†]

6 Where there is an evil wife, a seal is good;

And where there are many hands, lock things up.

7 Whatever you deliver, do it by number or weight;

And put in writing everything you give or receive.

8 Do not be ashamed of the instructing of the unwise and foolish,

Or of the extremely old man who passes judgment on the young;

Then you will be truly instructed

And approved before all men.[†]

Fathers and Daughters

9 A daughter keeps her father secretly wakeful,

For worry over her takes away his sleep;

Lest in her youth she passes the time to marry,

And lest in her marriage she be hated;[†]

10 In her virginity lest she be defiled

Or become pregnant in her father's house;

Having a husband, lest she be unfaithful,

Or though married, lest she be childless.

11 Keep a strict watch over a headstrong daughter,

Lest she make you a laughingstock to your enemies,

A source of gossip in the city

And notorious among the people,

And a disgrace to you before the great multitude.

12 Do not look upon anyone for beauty

And do not sit in the midst of women.

13 For a moth comes out of garments,

And the evil of a woman comes from a woman.[†]

[14] The evil of a man is better

Than a woman who does what is good,

Yet brings shame and disgrace.[†]

God's Glorious Works

[15] I shall now remember the works of the Lord,

And by the words of the Lord

I shall describe His works that I see.[†]

[16] The sun gives light and looks down on everything,

And its work is full of the Lord's glory.[†]

[17] The Lord did not enable His saints

To describe all His wonders,

Which the Lord Almighty established

That the universe might be established in His glory.[†]

[18] He traced out the abyss and the human heart

And understands their craftiness;

For the Most High possesses all knowledge

And sees into the signs of an age.[†]

[19] He proclaims what has been and what shall be

And reveals the footstep of hidden things.

[20] No thought escapes Him;

Not even one word is hidden from Him.[†]

[21] He has adorned the mighty works of His wisdom,

For He is from everlasting to everlasting;

Nothing can be added or taken away,

And He needs no one to be His counselor.

[22] How precious are all His works,

And how sparkling to behold.

23 All these things live and endure forever, for every need,

And all are obedient.

24 All things are in pairs, one opposite the other,

And He made nothing incomplete.

25 One thing strengthens the good of another,

And who can have enough of beholding His glory?

Sun, Moon, and Stars

43 The exultation of the heavenly heights

Is the firmament of purity,

The form of heaven with the vision of glory.[†]

2 The sun, when it appears, making proclamation as it goes forth,

Is a wonderful instrument, a work of the Most High.[†]

3 At noon it dries up the land,

And who can endure its burning heat?

4 A man kindling a furnace works in burning heat,

But the sun burns the mountains three times as much,

Breathing out fiery steams,

And sending forth shining beams, it dims the eyes.

5 Great is the Lord who made it,

And by His command it hastens its journey.

6 He also made the moon to serve in its season

As a declaration of times and an everlasting sign.

7 From the moon comes the sign of a feast,

A light that wanes as it completes its course.

8 The month is named according to the moon,

Being increased wondrously in its phases, A vessel encamped on high,

Shining in the firmament of heaven.

9 The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven,

A world shining in the high places of the Lord.

10 By the words of the Holy One they stand according to His judgment

And do not grow weary in their watches.

The Majestic Creation

11 Behold the rainbow and bless Him who made it,

Exceedingly beautiful in its brightness.[†]

12 It circles heaven with its glorious arc,

And the hands of the Most High laid out its course.

13 By His command He makes the snow to fall,

And speeds the lightning by His judgment.[†]

14 Therefore the storehouses are opened

And the clouds fly forth like birds.

15 By His majesty He condenses the clouds,

And the hailstones break into pieces.

16 At His appearing the mountains are shaken,

And by His will the south wind blows.

17 The voice of His thunder makes the earth tremble,

And so do the hurricane from the north and the whirlwind as well.

18 He sprinkles the snow like birds flying down,

And its descent is like grasshoppers alighting.

The eye marvels at the beauty of its whiteness,

And the heart is astonished at its raining down.

19 He pours the hoarfrost like salt upon the earth,

And when it freezes, it becomes like pointed thorns.

20 A cold north wind blows

And ice freezes on the water,

And forms on every pool of water,

And clothes the water like armor.

21 He consumes the mountains and burns up the desert,

And withers the green herbage like fire.

22 A mist quickly heals it all,

And falling dew brings refreshment from the heat.

23 By His reasoning He quieted the great deep

And planted islands in it.

24 Those who sail the sea recount its dangers,

And we are amazed at the reports coming to our ears.

25 For therein are the incredible and wondrous works,

A diversity of many living things,

And a created order of huge sea creatures.

26 Because of Him His messenger has a prosperous journey,

And by His word all things are held together.[†]

How Do We Praise Him?

27 We will say many things and not reach the end,

But the sum of our words is seen in this: “He is the all.”[†]

28 How shall we ever be able to adequately praise Him?

For He is greater than all His works.

29 Fearful is the Lord and exceedingly great,

And wondrous is His power.

30 Glorify the Lord and exalt Him as much as you are able,

For He will surpass even that.

And when you exalt Him, put forth all your strength;

Do not grow weary, for you cannot exalt Him enough.

31 Who has seen Him and will describe Him?

And who can magnify Him as He truly is?

32 There are yet many hidden things greater than these,

For we have seen but few of His works.

33 For the Lord made all things

And gives wisdom to the godly.†

In Praise of Honored Men

44 Let us now praise honored men and our fathers.†

2 The Lord established His great glory

And majesty from the beginning through them.

3 There were those who ruled in their kingdoms

And were men renowned for their power,

Giving counsel through their understanding

And proclaiming prophecies.†

4 There were leaders of the people by their counsels

And understanding of learning for the people,

Wise in their words of instruction.

5 There were composers of music,

And they set forth verse in writing,

6 Wealthy men with great resources,

Living in peace in their dwelling-places.

7 All these were honored in their generations

And in their days were a source of boasting.

8 There were those who left behind a name

That men might declare their praises.

[9] There were also those whom no one remembers,

Who perished as if they never existed;

And they died as if they had not been born,

And so have their children after them.

[10] Nevertheless, these were men of mercy,

Whose righteousness lives with God.

[11] The good they did remains with their seed,

And their inheritance with their children's children.

[12] Their seed stands with the covenants,

And their children as well for their sake.

[13] Their seed shall remain forever,

And their glory will not be blotted out.

[14] Their bodies were buried in peace,

And their name lives to all generations.

[15] Peoples will tell of their wisdom,

And the assembly will proclaim their praise.

Enoch

[16] Enoch pleased the Lord and was translated

As an example of repentance for all generations.

Noah

[17] Noah was found perfect

And was righteous in the time of wrath,

In which he was rescued in exchange.

Therefore a remnant was left on the earth

When the flood came.[†]

[18] Everlasting covenants were made with him

That all flesh would not be wiped away again by a flood.

Abraham and His Sons

19 Abraham was a great father of many nations,

And no one is found like him in glory.

20 He kept the law of the Most High,

Who made a covenant with him.

He established a covenant in his flesh,

And he was found faithful in testing.

21 Therefore He affirmed by an oath

That nations would be blessed in his seed;

And He would multiply him like the dust of the earth,

And exalt his seed like the stars in number,

And cause them to inherit from sea unto sea,

And from the River to the ends of the earth.[†]

22 And with Isaac He established the same assurance,

For the sake of Abraham his father.

23 A blessing for all men and the covenant He made

Rest upon the head of Jacob.

He acknowledged him with His blessings

And gave him an inheritance.

Then He divided his portions among twelve tribes.

Moses

45 He brought from him a man of mercy

Who found favor in the eyes of all flesh,

Beloved by God and man,

Moses, whose remembrance is blessed.[†]
[2] He made him equal in glory to the saints
And magnified him in the fears of his enemies.
[3] With his words he caused signs to cease,
And the Lord honored him in the presence of kings.
He gave him commands for His people
And showed him His glory.
[4] He sanctified him because of his faithfulness and gentleness
And chose him out of all flesh.
[5] He caused him to hear His voice,
Then led him into the darkness
And gave him the commandments face to face:
The law of life and knowledge,
To teach Jacob His covenant
And His judgments to Israel.

Aaron

[6] He exalted Aaron, a holy man like himself,
His brother from the tribe of Levi.
[7] He established an everlasting covenant with him
And gave him the priesthood of the people.
He blessed him with orderly behavior
And covered him with an adornment of glory.[†]
[8] He clothed him with the consummation of boasting
And confirmed him with instruments of strength:
The linen breeches, the long robe, and the ephod.
[9] And He encircled him with tassels,
With many golden bells all around,

To sound their ring at his steps,

Making their ringing sound

As he walked in the temple,

A reminder for the children of his people.

10 With a holy garment, with gold and hyacinth

And purple cloth with embroidered work,

With the oracle of judgment, the Urim and Thummim,

With woven scarlet by the work of an artisan,

11 With entwined scarlet, the work of a skilled craftsman,

With precious stones engraved like a seal

In a setting of gold, in a cut stone, a jeweler's work,

With a memorial in engraved letters,

According to the number of the tribes of Israel.

12 He set a golden crown over the priestly turban,

A figure of the holy seal, a distinction of honor,

The work of an expert,

Things desirable to the eyes, richly adorned!

13 There was never so much beauty before his time.

No outsider was ever clothed in these garments,

Only his sons and his offspring perpetually.

14 His sacrifices shall be a whole burnt offering

Perpetually, twice every day.

15 Moses ordained him and anointed him with holy oil.

It was an eternal covenant for him

And for his seed forever,

To minister to the Lord and serve as priest;

To bless His people in His name.[†]

[16] He chose him from all the living
To offer sacrifices to the Lord,
Incense and sweet-smelling offerings as a remembrance
To make atonement for Your people.

[17] He gave him authority with His commandments
In covenants of judgments,
To teach Jacob the testimonies
And to enlighten Israel in His law.

[18] Outsiders conspired against him
And were jealous of him in the desert,
The men who gathered with Dothan and Abiram,
And even the company of Korah with anger and wrath.

[19] The Lord saw and was not pleased,
And they were brought to an end by the anger of His wrath.
He performed wonders against them
To consume them in His flaming fire.

[20] He also brought Aaron glory
And gave him an inheritance.
He divided the firstfruits for him;
He prepared bread in abundance from the firstfruits.

[21] For they will eat the sacrifices to the Lord,
Which He gave to him and to his seed.

[22] But in the land of the people
He will have no inheritance,
And there is no portion for him among the people;
For the Lord Himself is his portion and his inheritance.[†]

Phineas.

23 Then Phineas the son of Eleazar is the third in glory,
When he showed zeal in the fear of the Lord;
And he stood fast when the people turned away,
By the goodness of the eagerness of his soul,
And he made atonement for Israel.
24 Therefore He established a covenant of peace with him,
To be in charge of the sanctuary
And leader of his people,
That the priesthood might be with him and his seed forever.
25 A covenant was also established with David,
The son of Jesse from the tribe of Judah.
The heritage of the king is from son to son only,
And the heritage of Aaron is for his seed.
26 May He give you wisdom in your heart
To judge His people in righteousness,
That their good things might not disappear,
And their glory throughout their generations.[†]

Joshua and Caleb

46 Mighty in battle was Joshua the son of Nun
And successor to Moses in prophecies.
He became, in accordance with his name,
A great savior of God's chosen ones,
To punish the enemies who rose up against them
That he might give Israel its inheritance.[†]
2 How glorious he was when he lifted up his hands
And stretched out his sword against the cities.

3 Who stood so firm before him?

For he led the wars for the Lord.[†]

4 Was not the sun held back by his hand,

And one day become as two?[†]

5 He called upon the Most High, the Lord,

When enemies oppressed him from all sides.

Then the great Lord answered him

With hailstones of mighty power.

6 He shattered that nation with war,

And at the descent of Beth Horon

He destroyed his opponents,

So the nations might know his full armor,

That he fought his battle in the sight of the Lord.[†]

7 For indeed he followed behind the Lord.

Even in the days of Moses he showed mercy,

He and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh:

They withstood the assembly

To prevent the people from sinning

And to stop their evil murmuring.

8 Indeed, these two alone were preserved

From the six hundred thousand on foot,

To lead them into an inheritance,

Into a land flowing with milk and honey.

9 The Lord gave Caleb strength

And remained with him until old age;

For he went up to the hill country,

And his seed took it as an inheritance,

[10] So all the children of Israel

Might know that it is good to follow the Lord.

The Judges

[11] The judges also, each by his name,

Those whose heart did not fall into idolatry,

And whoever did not turn away from the Lord—

May their memory be blessed!

[12] May their bones revive from their place,

And may the name of those honored live again in their sons![†]

Samuel

[13] The prophet of the Lord, Samuel, beloved by his Lord,

Established a kingdom and anointed rulers for his people.

[14] He judged the assembly by the law of the Lord,

And the Lord watched over Jacob.

[15] By his faithfulness he proved to be a true prophet,

And by his words he was known to be faithful in vision.

[16] Thus he called upon the Lord, the Mighty One,

When enemies troubled him on every side,

And when he offered a young lamb.

[17] Then the Lord thundered from heaven

And with a great sound made His voice heard.

[18] He destroyed the leaders of the Tyrians

And all the rulers of the Philistines.

[19] And before the time of his sleep in perpetuity,

Samuel called men to witness

Before the Lord and His anointed:

"I have not taken any man's possessions,

Even to my sandals."

Indeed, no man brought any charges against him.[†]

20 Even after he fell asleep, he prophesied

And showed the king his end,

And raised up his voice out of the earth

With a prophecy to wipe away the lawlessness of the people.[†]

Nathan and David

47 Then after this Nathan rose up

To prophesy in the days of David.[†]

2 As the fat was divided from the peace offering,

So David was separated from the sons of Israel.[†]

3 He played with lions as with young goats,

And with bears as with lambs of sheep.

4 Did he not slay a giant in his youth,

And remove the disgrace from the people

When he took in his hand a stone for a sling

And struck down the arrogance of Goliath?

5 For he called upon the Lord Most High,

And strength was given to his right hand

To defeat the mighty man in battle,

To exalt the power of his people.

6 So for his tens of thousands they glorified him

And praised him for the blessings of the Lord

when they brought him a diadem of glory.[†]

7 For he destroyed his enemies all around,
Reduced to nothing his enemies the Philistines,
And crushed their power to this very day.
8 In his every work, he gave thanks with a word of praise
To the Holy One, the Most High;
And he sang a hymn with all his heart
And loved his Maker.[†]
9 He placed psalm-singers before the altar
To make sweet melody with their voices.[†]
10 He gave dignity to the feasts
And set in order the appointed times throughout the year
For them to praise His holy name,
And for the sanctuary to resound from early morning.
11 The Lord took away his sins,
Exalted his power forever,
And gave him a covenant of kings
And a throne of glory in Israel.[†]

Solomon and His Successors

12 After him there arose his wise son,
Who lodged in a broad space because of him.
13 For Solomon reigned in days of peace,
To whom God gave rest on every side
That he might establish a house for His name
And prepare a sanctuary to last forever.[†]
14 How wise you were in your youth,
And filled with understanding like a river.
15 Your soul covered the earth,

And you were filled with the parables of riddles.

16 Your name was known to islands far away,

And you were loved for your peace

17 And for your songs, proverbs, and parables;

Nations marveled at you because of your interpretations.

18 In the name of the Lord God,

Who is called the God of Israel,

You collected gold like tin

And multiplied silver like lead.

19 But you lay down beside women

And were enslaved by your body.[†]

20 You brought disgrace on your honor

And defiled your seed

So as to bring wrath upon your children;

And they were pierced by your lack of good sense.

21 Thus one kingdom became two,

For out of Ephraim there began a disobedient kingdom.

22 But the Lord did not abandon His mercy

Nor corrupt any of His words.

Neither did He wipe away the descendants of His chosen one,

Nor did He remove the seed of the one who loved Him.

He gave a remnant to Jacob,

And to David a root from his stock.

23 When Solomon rested with his fathers,

He left behind him one of his sons,

Lacking in good sense and understanding,

Rehoboam, who turned away the people by his counsel.[†]

24 There was also Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,

Who caused Israel to sin

And led Ephraim on the road to sin.

Then their sins were multiplied exceedingly

So as to remove them from their land.

25 They sought every wickedness

Until punishment came upon them.

Elijah

48 Then Elijah the prophet rose up like fire,

And his word burned like a lamp.[†]

2 He brought a famine upon them,

And in his zeal he reduced them in number.

3 By the word of the Lord he shut up heaven,

And also three times he brought down fire.

4 So by your wonders you were honored, O Elijah,

And who can boast like you?

5 You raised the dead from death

And from Hades by the word of the Most High.[†]

6 You brought down kings to destruction,

And from their bed, those who had been honored.[†]

7 You heard rebuke at Sinai,

And at Horeb the judgments of punishment.[†]

8 You anointed kings for retribution

And prophets to serve after you.

9 You were taken up in a fiery whirlwind,

In a chariot of flaming horses.

10 It is written that you will come at the proper time with rebukes

To calm the wrath of God before it breaks forth in fury,

To turn the heart of the father to the son,

And to restore the tribes of Jacob.

11 Blessed are those who saw you

And who fell asleep with love,

For indeed we will surely live.[†]

Elisha

12 Elijah was covered by the whirlwind,

And Elisha was filled with his spirit.

And in his days he trembled before no ruler,

And no one oppressed him.[†]

13 No word could overcome him,

And after death his body prophesied.[†]

14 As in his life he did wonders,

So even in death his works were amazing.

15 For all these things the people did not repent,

Nor they did turn away from their sins

Until their land was plundered;

Then they were scattered over all the earth.

16 But a people few in number were left

And a ruler in the house of David.

Some of them did what was virtuous,

But some multiplied sins.

Hezekiah and Isaiah

17 Hezekiah fortified his city

And brought water into its midst.
He dug through the hard rock with iron
And constructed cisterns for the water.[†]
18 In his days, Sennacherib came up
And sent out the Rabshakeh, and he retreated.
Then he lifted up his hand against Zion
And boasted in his arrogance.[†]
19 So their hearts and hands were shaken,
And they suffered pain like women giving birth.
20 Then they called upon the merciful Lord,
Stretching out their hands toward Him.
Thus the Holy One quickly heard them from heaven
And rescued them by the hand of Isaiah.
21 He struck the camp of the Assyrians,
And his angel destroyed them.
22 For Hezekiah did what was pleasing to the Lord
And grew strong in the ways of David his father,
Which Isaiah the prophet commanded,
The one great and faithful in his vision.
23 In his days the sun moved backward
And lengthened the life of the king.[†]
24 With a great spirit he saw the last things
And encouraged those who mourned in Zion.
25 He showed what was to come to the end of time,
And the hidden things before they came to pass.[†]

Josiah and Jeremiah

The remembrance of Josiah is like the composition of incense

49 Prepared by the work of the perfumer.
In every mouth it is sweet like honey
And like the music at a banquet with wine.
[2] He led in the conversion of the people,
And he removed the abominations of lawlessness.
[3] He directed his heart to the Lord,
And in days of lawlessness he strengthened godliness.
[4] Except for David, Hezekiah, and Josiah,
All offended continually,
For they forsook the law of the Most High.
The kings of Judah failed,
[5] For they gave their power to others
And their glory to a foreign nation.
[6] They set fire to the chosen city of the sanctuary
And desolated her streets[†]
[7] According to the word of Jeremiah;
For they did him evil,
He who was sanctified as a prophet while still inside his mother,
To root out, to afflict, and to destroy,
And likewise to build and to plant.

Ezekiel and the Twelve Prophets

[8] Ezekiel himself saw a vision of glory,
Which the Lord showed him on a chariot of cherubim.[†]
[9] For He remembered his enemies with a thunderstorm
And did good to those who directed their ways aright.
[10] May He indeed revive the bones

Of the twelve prophets from their place.

For they encouraged the people of Jacob

And redeemed them with steadfast hope.[†]

Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah

11 How shall we magnify Zerubbabel?

He was surely like a seal upon the right hand,

12 And so was Jeshua the son of Jozadak,

Who in their days built the house

And raised up a holy temple to the Lord,

One prepared unto eternal glory.

13 There is the lasting memory of Nehemiah,

Who raised for us the walls that had fallen;

And he established gates and locks

And raised again our home sites.

Others of Honor

14 No one like Enoch was created upon the earth,

For he himself was taken up from the earth.[†]

15 Neither has a man like Joseph been born,

The leader of his brothers and the support of his people;

And they watched over his bones.

16 Shem and Seth were honored among men,

And Adam over every living thing in creation.

Simon, Son of Onias

50 There was Simon, the high priest and son of Onias,

Who repaired the house during his life

And strengthened the temple in his days.[†]

2 He also laid the foundation of the double high wall,

The fortified wall surrounding the temple.

3 In his days the cistern for the waters was dug,

A reservoir like a sea in circumference.

4 He was concerned about how to save his people from ruin,

And he strengthened the city to withstand siege.[†]

The Day of Atonement

5 So was he honored when the people gathered round

As he came out from behind the veil![†]

6 Like the morning star in the midst of the clouds,

Like the moon when it is full;

7 Like the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High,

And like the rainbow shining in clouds of glory;

8 Like the bloom of the rose in the days of firstfruits,

Like lilies by a spring of water,

Like a sprig of frankincense in the summer;

9 Like fire and incense in the censer,

Like a solid gold vessel decorated with every precious stone;

10 Like an olive tree sprouting fresh fruit,

And like a cypress tree rising into the clouds.

11 When he took up a robe of honor

And was clothed with the perfection of boasting

In his ascent to the holy altar,

He glorified the court of the sanctuary.

12 When he received the portion from the hands of the priests

While standing by the hearth of the altar, A crown of brethren surrounding him,

He was like a sapling of cedar in Lebanon;

And they encircled him like the trunks of palm trees,

13 All the sons of Aaron in their glory,

And the offering to the Lord in their hands

Before all the assembly of Israel.

14 Finishing the services at the altars

And arranging the offering to the Most High, the Almighty,

15 He stretched out his hand to the cup

And poured a libation of the blood of the grapes.

He poured it out on the foundation of the altar,

A fragrant scent to the King of all, the Most High.[†]

16 Then the sons of Aaron cried out,

Sounding out the trumpets of hammered work,

A great noise to be heard

As a remembrance before the Most High.[†]

17 Then all the people hastened in common

And fell with their faces on the ground

To worship their Lord, the Almighty God, the Most High.

18 The singers also praised Him with their voices,

And their song was sweetened with a variety of sounds.

19 The people also prayed to the Lord Most High,

In prayer before the Merciful One,

Until the order of the Lord was ended

And they finished His liturgy.

20 Then going down he lifted up his hands

Over the entire assembly of the children of Israel, And to boast in His name.

21 Then they bowed down in worship a second time

To receive the blessing from the Most High.[†]

Praise of Honored Men Concluded

22 And now bless the God of all,

Who does great things in every way,

Who exalts our days from our birth

And deals with us according to His mercy.[†]

23 May He give us gladness of heart,

And may there be peace in our days,

In Israel as in the days of old.

24 May He entrust with us His mercy,

And let Him redeem us in our days.

Author's Summary

25 With two nations my soul is angered,

And the third is not a nation:[†]

26 Those who reside on the mountain of Samaria and the Philistines,

And the foolish people who dwell in Shechem.

27 Jesus, son of Sirach, son of Eleazar the Jerusalemite,

Who poured wisdom forth in this book,

I inscribed instruction in understanding and knowledge.[†]

28 Blessed is he who will conduct himself by these,

For by putting these things in his heart

He will be made wise.

29 For if he does these things,

He will grow strong in all things,

For the light of the Lord is his path.

A Psalm of Thanks

51 I will give thanks to You, O Lord and King,

And I will praise You as my God and Savior.

I give thanks to Your name.[†]

2 For You have been my protector and helper,

And You redeemed my body from destruction

And from the snare of a slanderous tongue,

From the lips of those who work falsehood.

And before all those who stood by, You were a helper,

And You redeemed me,

3 According to Your great mercy and Your name,

From being devoured as one prepared for food

At the hands of those who sought my soul;

From many afflictions that I endured,

4 From suffocation by an encircling fire,

And from the midst of a fire I did not start;

5 From the depths of the belly of Hades

And from the tongue of the unclean and the word of a liar—[†]

6 The slander of an unrighteous tongue before the king.

My soul drew near unto death,

And my life was near Hades below.

7 They surrounded me on all sides,

And there was no one to help me.

I looked for the help of men, but there was none.

8 Then I remembered Your mercy, O Lord,

And Your work which is from of old,

For You lift up those who wait upon You,

And You save them from the hand of their enemies.

9 I sent up my supplication from the earth

And prayed about the instability caused by death.

10 I called upon the Lord, the Father of my Lord,

That He might not forsake me in the days of affliction,

When I am helpless against the arrogant.

I will praise Your name continually,

And I will sing a hymn with thanksgiving.[†]

11 My prayer was heard,

For You saved me from destruction

And rescued me from a time of evil.

12 Therefore I will thank and praise You,

And I will bless the name of the Lord.

Striving for Wisdom

13 While I was still young, before I went on my travels,

I sought wisdom openly in my prayer.

14 Before the temple I prayed about her,

And I will search for her to the end of my life.

15 From blossoms to ripening grapes,

My heart rejoiced in her.

My foot embarked on her righteous path,

And from my youth I hunted for her.[†]

16 I inclined my ear a little and received her.

I found much instruction for myself.

17 There was progress for me in her.

To Him who gives me wisdom, I will give glory.

18 For I purposed to practice wisdom;

And I was zealous for the good

And was not put to shame.†

19 My soul strove earnestly for her,

And I examined myself closely in my performance of the law.

I stretched out my hands to the heights

And mourned my ignorance of her.

20 I directed my soul to her,

And in purification I found her.

I acquired a heart for her from the beginning;

Therefore, I was not forsaken.

21 My heart was stirred to search for her,

And therefore I gained a good possession.†

22 The Lord gave me a tongue as my reward,

And I will praise Him with it.

23 Draw near to me, untaught ones,

And lodge in my school.

24 Why do you say that you are lacking in these things,

Yet you let your souls thirst exceedingly?

25 I opened my mouth and said,

“Gain wisdom for yourselves without money.†

26 Place your neck under her yoke,

And let your soul receive her instruction.

She is near that you might find her.

27 See with your own eyes that I labored little,

But found much rest for myself.

28 Partake of instruction with a great amount of silver,

And gain much gold with it.

29 May your soul be gladdened by His mercy,

And may you not be put to shame when you praise Him!

30 Do your work before the appointed time,

And He will give you your reward in His appointed time.”

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The Book of Hosea

Author—The prophet Hosea (commemorated October 17) is traditionally considered the author of this work. He was of the tribe of Issachar and his name means “salvation” or “deliverance.”

Date—Hosea's prophecy occurred about 750 BC, during the reign of Jeroboam II (786–746) and also after that king's death.

Major Theme—*God's love and faithfulness to His people.* Hosea's marital experience is used as a parable in the book, illustrated by his faithfulness to his unfaithful wife Gomer. Hosea is also one of the prophets who emphasize the importance of knowing God (6:6) in steadfast love, instead of substituting vain and empty sacrifices and burnt offerings to come into His presence.

Background—Hosea was a contemporary of the prophets Amos (in the Northern Kingdom of Israel) and Isaiah and Micah (in the Southern Kingdom of Judah). His prophecy was directed to the Northern Kingdom. The time of Hosea was marked by great material prosperity but also national anxiety in Israel. The people in their complacency and insecurity turned to the gods of the pagans (primarily Baal and Ashtoreth) for guidance. Hosea saw these pagan religions as the exact opposite of God's revelation to His people. Hosea saw it as his calling to bring wayward Israel back to its covenant with the Lord.

Outline

I. Introduction: Author and Time of the Prophecy (1:1)

II. Hosea and Gomer as Images of God's Dealings with Unfaithful Israel (1:2–3:5)

  A. The children as signs (1:2–2:1)

  B. The unfaithful wife—Gomer and Israel (2:2–3:5)

III. God's Faithfulness and Israel's Unfaithfulness (4:1–14:10)

  A. Israel's unfaithfulness (4:1–6:3)

  B. Israel's punishment (6:4–10:15)

  C. The compassionate and faithful love of God (11:1–14:10)

1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea the son of Beeri in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel.[†]

Hosea's Family

2 The beginning of the word of the Lord to Hosea. The Lord said to Hosea,

“Go, take to yourself a wife of fornication

And children of fornication;

For the land will surely go a-whoring

By departing from the Lord.”[†]

3 So he went and took Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Again the Lord said to him,

“Call his name Jezreel;

For in a little while

I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu,

And I will make to cease the kingship of the house of Israel.[†]

[5] It shall be in that day

That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

[6]Then she conceived again and bore a daughter. So God said to him,

“Call her name Lo-Ruhamah,

For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel,

But will surely set Myself in array against them.[†]

[7] But I will have mercy on the house of Judah

And will save them by the Lord their God.

I will not save them with bow,

Nor with sword, nor by war,

Nor by chariots, nor by horses or horsemen.”

[8]Now after she weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived again and bore a son. [9]So the Lord said,

“Call his name Lo-Ammi,

For you are not My people,

And I am not your God.[†]

Israel Will Be Restored

[10] “Yet the number of the children of Israel

Shall be as the sand of the sea,

Which shall not be measured or numbered.

Then it shall come to pass

In the place where it was said to them,

‘You are not My people,’

Even then they shall be called

The sons of the living God.

[11] The children of Judah and the children of Israel

Shall be gathered together.

They shall appoint themselves one head

And come up out of the land;

For great shall be the day of Jezreel.[†]

2 “Say to your brother, ‘My People,’ And to your sister, ‘Pitied.’

Gomer and Israel Are Unfaithful

[2] “Plead with your mother, plead,

For she is not My wife,

And I am not her Husband.

I will remove her fornication out of My presence

And her adultery from between her breasts,[†]

[3] That I may strip her naked

And make her again as she was at the day of her birth.

I will make her desolate and as a dry land,

And I will kill her with thirst.[†]

[4] “I will not have mercy upon her children;

For they are children of fornication.

[5] For their mother went a-whoring.

She that bore them disgraced herself,

For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers,

Who give me my bread and my water,

And my garments and my linen clothes,

My oil and my necessities.’[†]

[6] “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns.

I will stop the ways so she shall not find her path.

7 She will follow after her lovers

But not overtake them.

She will seek them but not find them.

She will say,

‘I will go and return to my former husband;

For it was better for me than now.’

8 For she did not know I gave her corn, wine, and oil,

And multiplied silver to her;

But she turned the silver and gold over to Baal.

9 “Therefore I will take back

My corn in its season,

And My wine in its time.

I will remove My raiment and My linen clothes

That she may not cover her nakedness.

10 Now I will expose her uncleanness before her lovers,

And no one shall by any means

Deliver her out of My hand.

11 I will take away all her gladness, her feasts,

And her festivals at the New Moon,

And her Sabbaths,

And all her solemn assemblies.

12 “I will destroy her vines and her fig trees,

All things of which she said,

‘These are my wages that my lovers have given me.’

But I will make them a testimony;

And the wild beasts of the field, the birds of the sky,

And the reptiles of the earth shall devour them.

13 I will repay her For the days of Baalim,

Wherein she sacrificed to them,

And put on her earrings and her necklaces,

And went after her lovers;

But she forgot Me," says the Lord.[†]

God Has Mercy on His People

14 "Therefore, behold, I will lead her astray

And make her as desolate,

And I will speak to her heart.[†]

15 I will give her possessions from there,

And the Valley of Achor to open her understanding.

She will be humbled there

According to the days of her infancy,

And according to the days of her coming up

Out of the land of Egypt.

16 "Then it shall come to pass in that day,"

Says the Lord,

"That she will call Me 'My Husband,'

And shall no longer call Me 'Baalim.'

17 For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth,

And their names shall be remembered no more.

18 In that day I will make a covenant for them

With the wild beasts of the field,

And with the birds of the sky,

And with the reptiles of the earth.

I will break the bow, the sword, and the battle from off the earth,

And will cause them to dwell safely.

[19] “I will betroth you to Myself forever;

Yes, I will betroth you to Myself

In righteousness and justice,

And in mercy and compassions.[†]

[20] I will betroth you to Myself in faithfulness,

And you shall know the Lord.

[21] “It shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord,

“That I will listen to heaven,

And it shall listen to the earth.

[22] The earth shall listen to the corn,

And the wine, and the oil;

And they shall listen to Jezreel.

[23] I will sow her to Myself on the earth,

And will love her that was not loved,

And will say to that which was not My people,

‘You are My people!’

And they shall say,

‘You are the Lord my God!’ ”

Israel Will Return to the Lord

3 Then the Lord said to me, “Go yet again and love a woman that loves evil things, an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, for they look after strange gods and love raisin cakes.”[†] [2]So I bought her for myself for fifteen pieces of silver, a homer of barley, and a jar of wine.[†] [3]I said to her, “You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not commit fornication, neither shall you be for another man; but I will be for you.” [4]For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, without an altar, without a priesthood, and without symbols of revelation. [5]Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they shall be amazed at the Lord and at His good things in the latter days.[†]

God's Judgment on Israel

4 Hear the word of the Lord,

You children of Israel,

For the Lord has a judgment for the inhabitants of the land:

“There is no truth or mercy

Or knowledge of God in the land.[†]

[2] Cursing and lying, murder and theft

And adultery gushed forth in the land,

And blood is mingled with blood.

[3] Therefore the land shall mourn

And be diminished with all the things that dwell in it:

The wild beasts of the field, the reptiles of the earth,

And the birds of the sky,

And the fish of the sea shall come to an end;

[4] That neither may anyone judge, nor analyze another;

But my people are as a priest who is spoken against.

[5] “Thus you shall be weak by day,

And the prophet shall be weak with you;

I have compared your mother to the night.[†]

[6] My people are like as those who have no knowledge.

Because you have rejected knowledge,

I will also reject you from being a priest to Me;

And because you have forgotten the law of your God,

I also will forget your children.

7 According to their multitude,

So they sinned against Me;

I will turn their glory into dishonor.

8 They will eat the sins of My people

And take away their lives because of their wrongdoings.[†]

9 The priest shall also be as the people;

So I will punish him for his ways

And repay him for his counsels.[†]

10 They shall eat and not be satisfied;

They have gone a-whoring and shall by no means prosper,

Because they have abandoned holding fast to the Lord.

Israel's Idolatry

11 “The heart of My people has gladly engaged

In fornication, wine, and strong drink.

12 They asked counsel by means of signs

And they reported answers to them by their staves.

They have gone astray in a spirit of whoredom

And grievously gone a-whoring from their God.

13 They have sacrificed on the tops of the mountains,

And on the hills they have sacrificed

Under the oak and poplar

And under the shady tree,

Because their shade was good.

Therefore your daughters shall go a-whoring,

And your daughters-in-law shall commit adultery.

14 But I will not show care for your daughters

When they commit fornication,

Nor your daughters-in-law

When they commit adultery;

For they mingled themselves with harlots

And sacrificed with the initiated ones;

And the people who understood

Entangled themselves with a harlot.

15 “But you, O Israel, be not ignorant,

And do not go, men of Judah, to Gilgal;

And do not go up to Beth Aven

Nor swear by the living Lord.

16 For Israel was maddened like a mad heifer;

Now the Lord will feed them

Like a lamb in a wide place.

17 Ephraim, joined with idols,

Has laid stumbling blocks in his own way.

18 He has chosen the Canaanites;

They have grievously gone a-whoring;

They have loved dishonor through her rudeness.

19 You are a blast of wind in her wings,

And they shall be ashamed because of their altars.

Warnings for Israel and Judah

5 “Hear these things, O priests, And attend, O house of Israel!

Listen, O house of the king!

For judgment is with you

Because you have been a snare in Mizpah

And a net spread on Tabor,

[2] Which they that hunt the prey have fixed;

But I will be your instructor.[†]

[3] I know Ephraim, and Israel is not far from Me;

For now Ephraim has gone grievously a-whoring;

Israel is defiled.

[4] “Their deliberations did not allow them

To return to their God,

For a spirit of fornication is in them,

And they have not gotten to know the Lord.

[5] The arrogance of Israel

Shall be brought low before His face,

And Israel and Ephraim shall become weak

Due to their wrongdoings;

And Judah also shall become weak with them.

[6] “They shall go with sheep and calves

Diligently to seek the Lord;

But they shall not find Him,

For He has withdrawn Himself from them.

[7] For they have forsaken the Lord

Because strange children have been born to them.

Now the rust shall devour them along with their heritages.[†]

[8] “Blow the trumpet on the hills,

Sound aloud on the heights,

Proclaim in Beth Aven:

‘Benjamin is confused.’

[9] Ephraim has vanished in the days of reproof;

Among the tribes of Israel I have shown faithful things.

10 “The princes of Judah became as those

Who remove the boundaries;

I will pour out my fury upon them as water.[†]

11 Ephraim oppressed his adversary;

He trod over judgment,

For he began to go after vanities.

12 Therefore I will be as a confusion to Ephraim

And as a sting to the house of Judah.

13 “Ephraim saw his disease

And Judah his pain;

Then Ephraim went to the Assyrians

And sent ambassadors to King Jareb.

But he could not heal you,

And your pain shall in no way cease from you.

14 Wherefore I am as a panther to Ephraim

And as a lion to the house of Judah.

So I will grasp and go away;

And I will take, and there shall be none to rescue.

15 I will go and return to My place

Until they are destroyed,

And then they shall seek My face.[†]

Return to the Lord

6 “‘Let us go and return to the Lord our God;

For He has grasped and will heal us;

He will smite and plug the wound with lint.[†]

2 After two days He will heal us.

In the third day we shall rise

And live before Him.[†]

3 Let us know, let us pursue

That we might know the Lord.

We shall find Him ready as the daybreak,

And He will come to us

As the early and latter rain to the earth.’[†]

Israel and Judah Are Unrepentant

4 “What shall I do to you, O Ephraim?

What shall I do to you, O Judah?

Your mercy is as a morning cloud

And as the early dew that goes away.

5 Therefore I have cut off your prophets;

I have slain them with the words of My mouth,

And My judgment shall go forth as the light.

6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,

And the knowledge of God

More than whole burnt offerings.[†]

7 But they are as a man who transgresses the covenant;

There they despised Me.

8 Gilead is a city working vanity with troubling water.

9 Your strength is that of a pirate;

The priests have hidden the way;

They have murdered the people of Shechem,

For they have done lawlessness.

10 In the house of Israel I have seen horrible things;

There is the fornication of Ephraim;

Israel and Judah are defiled.

11 Begin to harvest for yourself

When I return the captives of My people.

7 “When I have healed Israel, Then shall the wrongdoing of Ephraim

And the evil of Samaria be revealed,

For they have worked falsehood.

A thief shall come in to him,

Even a robber taking spoil in his way,

2 That they may sing together

As men singing in their heart.

I remember all their evils;

Now their own counsels have encircled them;

They were before My face.

3 They gladdened kings with their evils

And princes with their lies.

4 “They are all adulterers,

Like an oven heated for cooking,

Burning with a flame during the kneading of the dough

Until it is leavened.

5 In the days of our kings,

The princes began to be inflamed with wine;

He stretched out his hand with pestilent fellows.

6 Wherefore their hearts are inflamed like an oven

While they were falling down all the night.

Ephraim is satisfied with sleep;

The morning is come;

He is burnt up like a flame of fire.

[7] They are all heated like an oven

And have devoured their judges.

All their kings are fallen;

There was not among them one that called upon Me.

[8] “Ephraim is mixed among his peoples;

Ephraim became a cake not turned.[†]

[9] Strangers devoured his strength,

And he knew it not.

Grey hairs came upon him,

And he knew it not.

[10] The pride of Israel shall be humbled before his face;

Yet they have not returned to the Lord their God,

Neither have they diligently sought Him in spite of all this.

Trusting Other Nations Is Futile

[11] “Ephraim was like a silly dove, not having a heart;

He called to Egypt, and they went to the Assyrians.[†]

[12] Whenever they shall go, I will cast My net upon them;

I will bring them down as the birds of the sky.

I will chastise them through the news of their affliction.

[13] “Woe to them, for they have turned away from Me!

They are cowards,

For they have committed impious deeds against Me.

Yet I redeemed them,

But they spoke falsehoods against Me.

[14] Their hearts did not cry aloud to Me,

But they wailed upon their beds.

“They slashed themselves for oil and wine;

They were chastised by Me.

15 I strengthened their arms,

But they devised evils against Me.

16 They turned aside to nothing;

They became as a stretched bow.

Their princes shall fall by the sword;

They will be despised in the land of Egypt

Because of their unrestrained tongue.

Israel's Apostasy

8 “He shall come into their midst like the land,

Like an eagle against the house of the Lord,

Because they broke My covenant

And acted impiously against My law.[†]

2 They shall cry out to Me, saying,

‘O God, we know You.’

3 For Israel has turned away from good things;

They have pursued an enemy.

4 “They made kings for themselves, but not by Me.

They have ruled, but they did not make it known to Me.

They made idols for themselves with their silver and gold

That they might be utterly destroyed.

5 Get rid of your calf, O Samaria.

My anger is kindled against them.

How long will they be unable to purge themselves in Israel?

6 A workman made it, And it is not God;

Therefore your calf, O Samaria, was a deceiver.

7 “For they sowed wind-damaged seeds,

And their destruction shall await them;

A sheaf of corn cannot produce flour;

And even if the seeds should produce it,

Strangers would devour it.

[8] Israel is swallowed up.

Now he has become as a worthless vessel among the nations.

[9] For they have gone up to the Assyrians;

Ephraim has sprouted again against himself;

They loved gifts.

[10] Therefore they shall be handed over to the nations.

Now I will receive them,

And they will stop awhile to anoint a king and princes.

[11] “Because Ephraim has multiplied altars,

His beloved altars have become sins to him.

[12] I will write a multitude of statutes for him,

For his statutes are considered as strange things,

As well as his beloved altars.[†]

[13] For if they should offer a sacrifice and eat flesh,

The Lord would not accept them.

Now He will remember their wrongdoings

And take vengeance on their sins.

They have returned to Egypt,

And they shall eat unclean things among the Assyrians.

[14] “Israel has forgotten Him who made him.

They have built temples,

And Judah has multiplied walled cities;

But I will send fire upon his cities,

And it shall devour their foundations.”

Punishment for Israel

9 Rejoice not, O Israel,

Neither make merry, as other peoples,

For you have gone a-whoring from your God.

You have loved for hire

Upon every threshing floor of wheat.

2 The threshing floor and winepress did not know them,

And the wine disappointed them.

3 They did not dwell in the Lord's land.

Ephraim dwelt in Egypt,

And they shall eat unclean things among the Assyrians.

4 They have not offered wine to the Lord,

Neither have their sacrifices been pleasing to Him,

But like the mourning bread to them.

All that eat shall be defiled

Because their bread shall be for their own life;

It shall not come into the house of the Lord.[†]

5 What will you do in the day of public festival

And in the day of the Lord's feast?

6 Therefore, behold, they go forth from the trouble of Egypt.

Memphis shall receive them

And Machmas shall bury them.

As for their silver, destruction shall inherit it,

And thorns shall be in their tents.

7 The days of vengeance have come;

The days of your recompense have come;

And Israel shall be afflicted

As the prophet that is mad, as a man deranged.

By reason of the multitude of your wrongdoings

Your madness has abounded.

[8] The watchman of Ephraim was with God,

But the prophet is a crooked snare in all his ways.

They have planted the madness firmly

In the house of God.

[9] They have corrupted themselves

As in the days of Gibeah.

He will remember his wrongdoings;

He will take vengeance on his sins.

[10] “I found Israel as grapes in the wilderness,

And I saw their fathers as an early guard at their fig tree.

They went in to Baal Peor

And were shamefully estranged;

And the beloved ones became abominable.

[11] The glory of Ephraim has flown away as a bird:

Their glories from birth, birth-pains, and conception.

[12] For even if they should rear their children,

Yet they shall be utterly bereaved.

For woe to them! My flesh is of them.

[13] Ephraim, even as I saw,

Presented their children as a prey;

Ephraim was ready to bring out his children to slaughter.”

[14] Give to them, O Lord!

What will You give to them?

A childless womb and dry breasts.

15 “All their evils are in Gilgal,

For there I hated them.

Because of their evil practices,

I will cast them out of My house.

I will not love them any more.

All their leaders are disobedient.

16 Ephraim underwent trouble;

He is dried up at his roots;

He shall bear fruit no more.

Wherefore, even if they should beget children,

I would kill the desired fruit of their womb.”

17 God shall reject them

Because they have not hearkened to Him.

So they shall be wanderers among the nations.

Israel's Judgment and Captivity

10 Israel is a luxuriant vine;

Her fruit is abundant.

According to the multitude of her fruits

She has multiplied her altars;

According to the wealth of his land

He has set up pillars.[†]

2 They have divided their hearts;

Now shall they be utterly destroyed.

He shall raze their altars to the ground;

Their pillars shall experience distress.

3 For now they will say,

“We have no king,

Since we did not fear the Lord.

As for a king, what would he do for us?”

[4] As he speaks words With false motives,

He would make a covenant.

Thus judgment will spring up

As a weed on the soil of the field.

[5] The inhabitants of Samaria

Shall dwell near the calf of Beth Aven,

For its people mourned for it.

To the degree that they rebelled against it,

So they will rejoice at its glory

Because it was removed from them.

[6] For they bound it up for the Assyrians

And carried it away as a gift to King Jareb.

Ephraim shall receive it as a gift,

And Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

[7] Samaria has cast off her king

Like a twig on the surface of the water,

[8] And the altars of Aven, the sins of Israel,

Shall be removed.

Thorns and thistles shall come upon their altars,

And they shall say to the mountains, “Cover us,”

And to the hills, “Fall on us.”

[9] “From the days of Gibeah, Israel has sinned;

There they stood.

The war on that hill against the children of unrighteousness

Did not overtake them.

[10] I came to chastise them,

And peoples shall be gathered against them

When they are chastised for their two sins.

[11] Ephraim is a heifer taught to love victory,

But I will come upon the fairest part of her neck.

I will mount Ephraim;

I will pass over Judah in silence;

Jacob shall prevail against him.”

[12] Sow to yourselves in righteousness;

Gather in the fruit of life;

Light for yourselves the light of knowledge;

Seek the Lord till the fruits of righteousness come upon you.

[13] Why have you passed over ungodliness in silence

And reaped its wrongdoings?

You have eaten the fruit of deception,

For you have hoped in your chariots,

In the abundance of your power.[†]

[14] Therefore destruction shall rise up among your people,

And all your walled places shall be gone,

As Beth Arbel in the time of Prince Shalman.

In the days of battle,

They dashed the mother to the ground upon the children.

[15] Thus will I do to you, O house of Israel,

Because of your evil deeds.

Early in the morning were they cast off;

The king of Israel has been cast off.

God's Love for Rebellious Israel

11 “For Israel is a child, and I loved him,

And out of Egypt I have called his children.[†]

[2] As I called them,

So they departed from My presence.

They sacrificed to the Baals,

And burned incense to graven images.

[3] “Yet I bound the feet of Ephraim.

I took him on My arm,

But they did not know that I healed them.[†]

[4] When men were destroyed,

I drew them with the bands of My love,

And I will be to them as a man

Smiting another on his cheek.

I will look with favor to him;

I will prevail with him.

[5] “Ephraim dwelt in Egypt;

And the Assyrian himself was his king,

Because he would not return.

[6] The sword became weak in his cities,

And he ceased to war with his hands;

For they shall consume themselves

With their own intrigues.

[7] His people shall hold onto His habitation;

But God shall be angry with His precious things,

And shall not at all exalt him.

[8] “How shall I deal with you, Ephraim?

How shall I protect you, Israel?

What shall I do with you?

I will make you as Admah and as Zeboiim.

My heart is turned about;

My repentance is utterly thrown into confusion.[†]

9 I will not act according to the fury of My wrath;

I will not abandon Ephraim to be utterly destroyed.

For I am God and not man;

The Holy One among you;

And I will not enter into the city.

10 “I will go after the Lord.

He shall utter His voice as a lion;

For He shall roar,

And the children of the waters shall be amazed.

11 They shall be amazed as a bird out of Egypt

And as a dove out of the land of the Assyrians;

And I will restore them to their houses,”

Says the Lord.

A Charge against Israel and Judah

12 “Ephraim has encompassed me with falsehood,

And the house of Israel and Judah with ungodliness.

But now God knows them,

And he shall be called God's holy people.

2 But Ephraim is an evil spirit.

He has chased the east wind all the day.

He has multiplied empty and vain things

And struck a covenant with the Assyrians.

He made business with oil in Egypt.

3 “The Lord has a judgment against Judah

So as to punish Jacob according to his ways,

And He will repay him according to his practices.

4 He kicked his brother in the womb,

And in his toils he regained strength with God.

5 He prevailed with the Angel and was strong.

They wept and entreated Me.

They found Me in Bethel,

And there a word was spoken to them.[†]

6 So the Lord God Almighty shall be his memorial.

7 You shall return to your God;

Therefore, observe mercy and judgment,

And draw near to your God continually.

8 “As for Canaan,

There is a balance of wrongdoing in his hand,

For he has loved to oppress.

9 As for Ephraim, he said,

‘Nevertheless, I am rich;

I have found relief for myself.’

But none of his labors shall be found in him,

Because of the wrongdoings by which he sinned.

10 “But I the Lord your God brought you up

Out of the land of Egypt.

I will yet again cause you to dwell in tents

According to the days of the feast.

11 For I will speak to the prophets,

And I have multiplied visions,

And by the authority of the prophets

I was represented.”

12 If Gilead does not exist,

Then the leaders in Gilead were false when they sacrificed,

And their altars were like mounds on a parched field.

13 Jacob retreated into the plain of Syria,

And Israel served for a wife

And kept watch for a wife.

14 The Lord brought Israel

Out of the land of Egypt by a prophet,

And by a prophet he was preserved.

15 Ephraim was angry and excited;

Therefore his blood shall be poured out upon him,

And the Lord shall repay him for his disgrace.

Relentless Judgment on Israel

13 According to the word of Ephraim,

He received ordinances for himself in Israel

And established them for Baal; then he died.

2 So now they have sinned increasingly

And have made for themselves

A molten image with their silver,

According to the fashion of idols,

The work of craftsmen done for them.

They say, “Sacrifice men,

For the calves have come to an end.”

3 Therefore they shall be as a morning cloud

And as the early dew that passes away,

Like chaff blown away from the threshing floor

And as smoke out of the chimney.

[4] “But I am the Lord your God,

Who makes the heaven firm and creates the earth,

Whose hands have created the whole host of heaven.

But I did not show them to you that you should seek after them.

I brought you up from the land of Egypt,

And you shall know no God but Me;

And there is no Savior besides Me.

[5] I tended you as a shepherd in the wilderness,

In an uninhabited land.

[6] When they had their pastures,

They were completely filled,

And their hearts were exalted;

Therefore, they forgot Me.

[7] “So I will be to them as a panther

And as a leopard by way of the Assyrians.

[8] I will meet them as an excited she-bear,

And I will rend the hardness of their heart.

The lions’ whelps of the thicket shall devour them there;

The wild beasts of the field shall rend them in pieces.

[9] “O Israel, who will help you in your destruction?

[10] Where is this king of yours?

Let him save you in all your cities.

Let him judge you, of whom you said,

‘Give me a king and a prince.’

[11] Thus I gave you a king in My anger
And took him back in My wrath.
[12] “Ephraim is a conspiracy of unrighteousness;
His sin is hidden.
[13] Pains as of a woman in travail shall come upon him.
He is your unwise son,
For he shall not stand in the destruction of your children.
[14] “I will deliver them out of the hand of Hades
And will redeem them from death.
Where is your penalty, O death?
O Hades, where is your sting?
Pity is hidden from My eyes.”[†]
[15] Forasmuch as he will cause
A division among his brethren,
The Lord shall bring upon him
A hot wind from the desert,
And shall dry up his springs
And drain his fountains.
He shall dry up his land
And spoil all his precious vessels.
14 Samaria shall be utterly destroyed,
For she has resisted her God;
And they shall fall by the sword.
Their infants shall be dashed against the ground
And their pregnant women ripped up.

Restoration of Israel

[2] Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God,

For you became weak through your wrongdoings.

3 Take with you words

And turn to the Lord your God.

Speak to Him,

That you may not receive the reward of unrighteousness,

But that you may receive good things.

We will render in return the fruit of our lips.[†]

4 Assyria will not save us;

We will not mount on horseback.

Let us no longer say to the works of our hands,

“Our gods.”

He who is among you shall have mercy on the orphan.

5 “I will restore their dwellings.

I will love them willingly,

For he has turned away My wrath from them.[†]

6 I will be as dew to Israel;

He shall bloom as the lily

And cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

7 His branches shall spread,

And he shall be as a fruitful olive tree,

And his fragrance shall be as the smell of Lebanon.

8 They shall return and dwell under his shadow;

They shall live and be satisfied with corn,

And he shall flower as a vine;

His memorial shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

9 “To Ephraim: What has he to do any more with idols?

I have humbled him

And I will strengthen him.

I am as a leafy juniper tree.

From Me your fruit is found.”

10 Who is wise and will understand these things?

Or prudent and will know them?

For the ways of the Lord are straight,

And the righteous shall walk in them;

But the ungodly shall become weak in them.

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The Book of Amos

Author—Amos, which means “burdened” or “bearer.” He is commemorated on June 15.

Date—About 754 BC, “two years before the earthquake” (1:1, 2), which was so severe that Zechariah wrote about it 200 years later.

Major Theme—*God's wrath is to be feared:* “A lion shall roar, and who will not fear?” (3:8). Crimes committed against the Jews by their neighboring nations will be the first to be punished. Then God's wrath will turn to the kingdom of Israel for their sins of oppression of the poor (2:6), incest (2:7), indulgence (3:15), gluttony and drunkenness (4:1). The other theme is the promise of Israel's restoration if they repent, or of foreign captivity if they do not repent.

Background—Amos was born in the small rural village of Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem. He was a goatherd and a tender of sycamore, a contemporary of Hosea. Amos may have known Jonah and Elisha when he was young, and Isaiah and Micah when he was older. He prophesied to the Southern Kingdom (Judah) from 795–754 BC. His prophecies were the first to be written down, perhaps because he was the first prophet to proclaim the end of God's covenant with Israel for their stubborn unrepentance. The prophecies occurred approximately 30 years before the Assyrians captured Samaria in 721 BC, during the time when the two kingdoms were divided. Josephus wrote that a great earthquake took place (1:1) when Uzziah was struck with leprosy. The Israelites had amassed great wealth because of their control over the trade routes, which had created an aristocratic class. Amos was sent to Bethel to warn the king and the people of the Northern Kingdom to repent. The priests, who were tired of his prophecies, clubbed Amos to death.

Outline

I. Superscription (1:1)

II. Introduction (1:2)

III. Judgments on the Nations (1:3–2:16)

IV. Prophecies against Israel (3:1–5:17)

V. Prophecy Regarding Exile (5:18–6:14)

VI. Visions of Divine Justice (7:1–9:10)

VII. The Restoration of Israel (9:11–15)

Judgment of the Nations

1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.[†]

[2]And he said, “The Lord proclaims out of Zion, and out of Jerusalem He gives a shout. The pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel is dried up.”

[3]Thus says the Lord: “For three sins of Damascus and for four, I shall not turn away from it; for they sawed open the pregnant wives of the men of Gilead with a saw made of iron.[†] [4]So I shall send fire into the house of

Hazael, and it will consume the foundations of the son of Hadad. [5]And I shall shatter the bars of the gate of Damascus into pieces. I will put to death those dwelling in the plains of Aven, and I will cut in pieces the people of Charran. The notable people of Syria will be led away captive," says the Lord.

[6]Thus says the Lord: "For three sins of Gaza and for four, I shall not turn away its punishment, for they took prisoner the whole captivity of Solomon and held them as slaves in Edom. [7]And I shall send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it will consume its foundations. [8]I shall put to death those dwelling in Ashdod and remove the people of Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish," says the Lord.

[9]Thus says the Lord: "For three sins of Tyre and for four, I shall not turn away its punishment, for they imprisoned the captivity of Solomon to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. [10]And I shall send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it will consume its foundations."

[11]Thus says the Lord: "For three sins of Edom and for four, I shall not turn away its punishment, because Edom pursued his brother with a sword and ravaged the womb on the earth. And as a testimony he took captive those shuddering in fear, and he sustained his violence in battle. [12]Therefore I shall send a fire upon Teman that will consume the foundations of its walls."

[13]Thus says the Lord: "For three acts of ungodliness by the sons of Ammon and for four, I shall not turn away its punishment, for they ripped open women with child in Gilead so as to expand their territory.

[14]Therefore, I shall kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah. It shall consume her foundations with shouting in the day of war, and she shall be shaken in the days of her destruction. Their kings shall go into captivity, their priests and their princes together,” says the Lord.

2 Thus says the Lord: “For three sins of Moab and for four, I shall not turn away its punishment, for he burned the bones of the king of Edom to ashes. [2]Therefore I shall send a fire against Moab, and it will consume the foundations of their cities, and in helplessness Moab shall die with shouting and with the sound of a trumpet. [3]And I shall put to death the judge from her midst and slay all her princes with him,” says the Lord.

Judgment against Israel and Judah

[4]Thus says the Lord: “For three sins of the sons of Judah and for four, I shall not turn away its punishment, for they rejected the law of the Lord and did not keep His ordinances. And the vain idols made by their fathers led them astray. These were lies their fathers followed. [5]So I shall send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the foundations of Jerusalem.”

[6]Thus says the Lord: “For three sins of Israel and for four, I shall not turn away its punishment, for they sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals.[†] [7]They trample the heads of the poor into the dust of the earth, and turn away the afflicted and pervert the way of the humble. A son and his father go in to the same handmaiden in order to profane the name of their God. [8]And having bound their clothes with cords, they made curtains by the altar, and they drank wine gained through false accusations in the house of their God.

[9]“Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars and who was as strong as an oak tree. It was I who dried up his fruit from above and his roots beneath the ground. [10]And it was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and led you forty years through the wilderness, that you would inherit the land of the Amorite. [11]I took some of your sons as prophets and some of your young men to be consecrated. Is this not so, O you children of Israel?” says the Lord. [12]“But you gave the consecrated ones wine to drink and commanded the prophets, saying, ‘Do not prophesy!’ [13]Behold, for this reason, I weigh you down, just as a wagon being filled with sheaves is weighed down. [14]Therefore, escape will be totally lost to the swift, and the strong will certainly lose his strength, and the warrior will in no way be able to save his life. [15]The archer will not stand his ground, and the swift foot will not escape danger, and the horseman will be completely unable to save his life. [16]The strong will find no confidence in their strength; the naked will flee away in that day,” says the Lord.

The Lord's Case against Israel

3 O house of Israel, hear this word the Lord has spoken against you, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,[†] [2]“Out of all the families of the earth, I have especially known you. Therefore I shall exact vengeance upon you for all your sins. [3]If two people walk together, will each one not come to know the other? [4]Will a lion roar from his lair in the forest if he has no prey? Will a lion's whelp cry out from his den if he has nothing?[†] [5]Will a bird fall to the earth without a fowler? Will a snare be sprung if it has caught nothing? [6]If a trumpet is sounded in a city, will not the people be alarmed? If evil should be in a city, has not the Lord brought it?[†] [7]For the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals instruction to His servants the prophets. [8]A lion shall roar, and who will not fear? The Lord God speaks, and who will not prophesy?

[9]“Proclaim it in the regions among the Assyrians and to the lands of Egypt, and say, ‘Gather yourself to the mountains of Samaria, and behold the many remarkable things in her midst and the oppression that is within her. [10]She does not know the things that will come against her,’ says the Lord, ‘she stores up injustice and misery in her lands.’ ” [11]Therefore thus says the Lord God: “O Tyre, your land round about you shall be made desolate, and your strength shall be sapped from you, and your lands shall be plundered.” [12]Thus says the Lord: “As when a shepherd takes two legs or a piece of an ear out of the mouth of a lion, so shall the sons of Israel be taken out who dwell in Samaria in the presence of a foreign people, and in Damascus.[†]

[13]“Hear, O priests, and testify against the house of Jacob,” says the Lord God Almighty, [14]“for in the day I exact vengeance against Israel for their sins, I shall also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel and tear down the horns of the altar, and they will fall to the ground. [15]I will demolish and knock down the turreted house upon the summer house, and I shall destroy the ivory houses along with many other houses as well,” says the Lord.

Israel's Boundless Sin

4 Hear this word, O heifers of Bashan who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who trample the needy, and who say to their lords, “Bring us wine that we may drink!” [2]The Lord swears by His holiness:

“Behold, the days shall come upon you, for they will seize you with weapons and cast you and those with you into boiling cauldrons. [3]You shall be brought out naked before one another and be cast out on Mount Hermon,” says the Lord God.

[4]“You come to Bethel and act lawlessly and multiply your transgressions in Gilgal. You bring your sacrifice in the morning and your tithes every three days. [5]Moreover, outside they read things of the Law and call for professions. Proclaim that the children of Israel love these things,” says the Lord God. [6]“And in all your cities I gave you cleanness of teeth, and in all your places a lack of bread. Yet you did not return to Me,” says the Lord. [7]“And also, I withheld rain from you for the three months before the harvest. I caused it to rain upon one city while I withheld rain from another. On one field it rained, but where it did not rain, the crops withered.[†] [8]So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied. Yet,” says the Lord, “you did not return to Me.”

The Lord Smites Israel for Her Sin

[9]“I struck you with a parching and blight. When you multiplied your gardens, your vineyards, your fig trees, and your olive trees, the caterpillar devoured them. Yet you did not turn back to Me,” says the Lord. [10]“I sent forth death against you by way of Egypt, and I killed your young men with a sword, together with your captured horses. And in My wrath I brought fire upon your army camps. Yet you did not return to Me,” says the Lord.[†] [11]“I overthrew you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you became like a torch that burns out after being plucked out of the fire. Yet even after all this you did not return to Me,” says the Lord.

[12]“Therefore, O Israel, thus shall I do to you, and because I will do thus to you, make yourself ready to call upon your God, O Israel! [13]For behold, I am the One who strengthens the thunder, and creates the wind, and proclaims His Anointed One to mankind, making the daybreak and the darkness, while treading upon the high places of the earth. The Lord God Almighty is His name!”[†]

A Lamentation for Israel

5 O house of Israel, hear this word of the Lord, a lamentation which I take up against you. [2]The virgin of Israel has fallen; she will rise no more; she tripped over her land, and there is no one who shall raise her up.[†]

[3]For thus says the Lord God: “From the city where a thousand went out, in this group there will yet remain a hundred. And in that from which a hundred went out, ten will be left to the house of Israel.”

A Call to Repentance

[4]For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: “Seek Me, and you will live. [5]But do not seek Bethel, nor go into Gilgal, nor cross over to the Well of Oath, for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing. [6]Seek the Lord and live, lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph and devour it, with no one to extinguish the fire for the house of Israel.[†] [7]The Lord is He who brings about justice on high and righteousness on the earth![†]

[8]“He makes all things. He transforms the darkness into the morning and makes the day dark as night; He calls forth the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth. The Lord God Almighty is His name.[†] [9]He rains ruin upon the strong and brings misery upon the fortress.

[10]“They hated him who reproved in the gates and abhorred the upright word.[†] [11]They tread upon the poor and take bribes from him. They built houses of hewn stone, yet they shall not dwell in them. They planted pleasant vineyards, but they shall not drink wine from them. [12]For I know your many transgressions and the enormity of your sins, devouring the righteous and taking bribes, turning away the poor at the gate. [13]Because of this, the prudent keep silent in this time, for it is an evil time. [14]Seek good and not evil so that you may live, so that the Lord God Almighty will be with you. As you have said,[†] [15]‘We hated evil and loved good.’ And restore justice in the gate that the Lord God Almighty may have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.”

[16]Therefore the Lord God Almighty says, “There shall be wailing in all the streets, and it shall be said in all the highways, ‘Woe! Woe!’ The farmer shall be called to mourning and lamentation, as will those skilled in wailing and complaining. [17]There shall be lamentation in all your streets because I shall pass through the midst of you,” says the Lord.

[18]Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! What is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness and not light. [19]It will be as though a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him! As though he rushed into the house, leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him! [20]Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light? Is it not a deep darkness, with no brightness in it?

[21]"I hate, I reject your feast days. I do not savor your sacred assemblies.[†] [22]Though you offer Me burnt offerings and meat offerings, I will not accept them. I will not regard your fattened peace offerings. [23]Take away from Me the sound of your songs, for I will not hear your musical instruments. [24]Instead, let justice run swiftly as does water from the mountain, and let righteousness be as a stream that cannot be crossed.

[25]"O house of Israel, did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings those forty years in the wilderness? [26]You have carried the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Raiphan, which you made for yourselves. [27]Therefore I shall exile you beyond Damascus," says the Lord—the Almighty God is His name.[†]

Woe to the Complacent

6 Woe to those who feel secure in Zion and who trust in Mount Samaria. They have gathered the notable heads of the nations who go there.[†] [2]O house of Israel, all of you, go and see. Go to Hamath the great, and then go down to Gath of the Philistines, the most powerful of all those kingdoms. See if their territory is greater than your territory. [3]You who are approaching the evil day, who draw near and hold false sabbaths. [4]You who lie on beds of ivory, who stretch out on your couches and eat kids from the flock and suckling calves from the midst of the herds, [5]who applaud the sound of stringed instruments, considering them as if permanent and not fleeting, [6]who drink filtered wine and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, and have suffered nothing because of the affliction of Joseph. [7]Therefore, now they shall be taken captive first, and the neighing of horses will be cut off from Ephraim. [8]For the Lord has sworn by Himself, saying, “I abhor all the pride of Jacob, and I hate his lands. Therefore I shall destroy the city and all its inhabitants.”

[9]Then it shall come to pass that if ten men remain in one house, they will die. [10]But a remnant will remain, and they will diligently endeavor to remove the bones of their relations from the house; and one will say to those standing before the house, “Are there any more with you?” Then someone will say, “None.” And he will say, “Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the Lord.”

[11]For behold, the Lord commands, and He shall break the great house into bits and the little house into pieces. [12]Will horses run on rocks? Do they keep silent among mares? Yet you turned justice into anger and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness;[†] [13]you who rejoice vainly, who say, “Have we not possessed horns by our own power?” [14]“But, behold! I shall raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel, and they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath to the river of the west.”

Powerful Acts of Judgment

7 Thus the Lord showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at dawn; and behold, one locust, Gog, was the king. [2]And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, “O Lord, Lord, be merciful! Who will raise up Jacob? For he is small![†] [3]Repent, O Lord, concerning this.” And the Lord said, “It shall not be.”

[4]Thus the Lord showed me: Behold, the Lord called for judgment by fire, and it engulfed the great deep and devoured the Lord's portion. [5]Then I said, “Lord, Lord, cease, who will raise Jacob? For he is small! [6]Relent, Lord, concerning this.” “This also shall not be,” said the Lord.

[7]Thus He showed me: Behold, a man stood on a wall made of adamant, with adamant in his hand.[†] [8]And the Lord said to me, “Amos, what do you see?” And I said, “Adamant.” Then the Lord said, “Behold, I am placing adamant in the midst of My people Israel. I shall not pass by them anymore. [9]The joyful altars will be abolished, and the sacrifices of Israel will be laid waste. I shall rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

[10]Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, “Amos conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. [11]For thus Amos has said: ‘Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely be led away captive from their own land.’ ” [12]Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. Live out your life there and prophesy there. [13]But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, his royal residence.”

[14]Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “I was no prophet nor the son of a prophet. I was but a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit.[†] [15]Then the Lord took me from the sheep, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’ [16]Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord: ‘You say, Do not prophesy to Israel, and do not stir up the house of Jacob.’ [17]Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword. Your land shall be

divided by a survey line, and you shall die in a defiled land. Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land.' "

The Bird-Catcher's Basket

8 Thus the Lord showed me: Behold, a bird-catcher's basket. [2]And He said, "Amos, what do you see?" So I said, "A bird-catcher's basket." Then the Lord said to me, "The end has come upon My people Israel. I shall not pass by them anymore. [3]And the recessed ceilings of the temple shall wail in that day," says the Lord, "for many are fallen in every place; I will bring silence upon it."

[4]Therefore, hear this, you who oppress the poor in the morning and use tyranny to drive the needy from the land, [5]saying, "When does the month end so we can barter? and the Sabbath end so we can open the storehouses? So we can falsify the balancing scales to our favor, and thereby receive greater profits by deceit; [6]when the poor man can be acquired for silver and the downcast for sandals; when we can trade in any kind of product?" [7]The Lord swears against the arrogance of Jacob; He will not forget any of your works. [8]Will not the land be disturbed by these things, and will not everyone dwelling in it mourn? Even as a flooding river comes to an end, so too the flood waters of the river of Egypt return to their banks.[†]

[9]"And it will come to pass in that day," says the Lord God, "the sun will set at noon, and the light of day will grow dark over the land. [10]And I shall turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation. I shall place sackcloth on every waist and make every head bald. They shall be as one mourning a beloved one, and those with them as a day of grief."

A Famine for Lack of the Word of the Lord

[11]“Behold, the days will come,” says the Lord, “that I shall send a famine across the land; not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but famine to hear the words of the Lord.[†] [12]The waters will be unsettled as far as the sea. And from the north to the east men will scurry about seeking to find the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. [13]And in that day the fair virgins and the strong young men will faint from want of water. [14]Those who swear by the sin-offering of Samaria, and who say, ‘O Dan, your god lives; O Beersheba, your god lives!’ They shall fall and never rise again.”

A Vision of the Altar

9 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said, “Strike the mercy seat, and the gateway of the temple shall be shaken. And cut through to the heads of all of them, and I will slay the remnant of them with the sword. He who flees shall not get away, and he who escapes from them shall not be delivered.[†] [2]Though they may attempt to bury themselves in Hades, from there My hand shall drag them out, and though they climb up to heaven, from there I shall bring them down. [3]Though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, from there I shall search and take them. Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea, from there I shall command the serpent, and it will bite them. [4]And though they go into captivity before their enemies, from there I shall command the sword, and it will slay them. And I shall set My eyes on them for evil and not for good.”

[5]The Lord, the Lord God Almighty, is He who takes hold of the land and causes it to shake, and all who dwell there shall mourn; for its destruction

shall come up as the flood of a river and shall then return to its banks as the River of Egypt. [6]He who builds his ascent to the heaven and establishes His promise on the earth, who calls the water of the sea, and pours it out on the face of the earth—the Lord God Almighty is His name. [7]“O sons of Israel, are you not as the sons of the Ethiopian to Me?” says the Lord. “Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians out of Kir?

[8]“Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the kingdom of sinners, and I shall destroy it from the face of the earth. Yet I shall not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,” says the Lord. [9]“For I commanded, and I will winnow the house of Israel among all the nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not a grain will fall upon the ground. [10]All the sinners of My people who say, ‘No evil will draw near, neither will it overcome us,’ shall die by the sword.

Restoration after Judgment Is Past

[11]“In that day I shall raise up the fallen tabernacle of David, and I shall rebuild its ruins and repair its damages and rebuild it as in the days of old,[†] [12]that the remnant of men and all the nations upon whom My name is called will seek Me,” says the Lord, who does this thing.[†] [13]“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when the threshing will overtake the harvest, and grapes will ripen at the time the seed is sown, and the mountains will drip sweetness, and all the hills shall share in it. [14]I shall bring back the captives of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them. They will plant vineyards and drink wine from them. They also will make gardens and eat fruit from them. [15]I shall plant them on their land; no longer

will they be uprooted from the land which I have given them,” says the Lord God Almighty.

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The Book of Micah

Author—Micah, which means, “who is like the Lord?” He is commemorated on August 14.

Date—Tradition holds that Micah prophesied from 740–686 BC and that his book was written before 720 BC.

Major Theme—*God's destruction of evildoers and His goodness to the faithful*. In the midst of a very dark time, Micah delivers the messianic prophecies of hope and deliverance for the faithful remnant. He foretells the New Covenant, the Incarnation, Christ's birth at Bethlehem, Christ's sufferings, the Church and its persecutions, the conversion of Gentiles, and a time of peace.

Background—The prophet Micah prophesied during a time of spiritual and moral decadence in the midst of great affluence throughout the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. He witnessed the adoption of the idolatry of the Canaanites by Samaria and Judah. Micah was the son of Joram, from the tribe of Ephraim. He prophesied to both kingdoms. Micah was known as the prophet of the poor and the herald prophet. His contemporaries were Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea.

Outline

I. God's Judgment against Israel and Judah (1:1–16)

II. The Upper Classes Guilty of Injustice (2:1–3:12)

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    - D. Israel's victory after purging of idolatry (5:9–14)
- IV. God's Judgment of Israel's Ungratefulness (6:1–16)
- V. A Remnant Will Receive God's Mercy (7:1–20)
    - A. Lamentation for the sins of corruption (7:1–6)
    - B. The prophet's assurance of hope (7:7)
    - C. The faithful will trust in God's mercy (7:8–10)
    - D. The Messiah's victory (7:11–20)

1 The word of the Lord came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, and Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, concerning what he saw as it relates to Samaria and Jerusalem.[†]

Judgment against Israel and Judah

[2]Hear these words, O people! Give heed, O earth, and all that is in it. For the Lord God shall be among you for a witness against you, the Lord from His holy house. [3]For behold, the Lord is coming out of His place. He will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. [4]The mountains will shake under Him, and the valleys will melt like wax before the fire, like water pouring down a steep incline.[†] [5]All of this is for the transgression of Jacob and the sin of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the sin of the house of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?

[6]“I will make Samaria become as a shed in the field and a vineyard for planting, and I will tear down her stones in confusion and expose her

foundations.† [7]And they shall cut all of her carved images into pieces and burn down all her houses of prostitution with fire. And I shall utterly destroy all her idols, for she gathers from the price of prostitution and has accumulated from the price of a harlot.”†

A Lamentation

[8]On account of this she will wail and lament. She will walk barefoot and naked, beating her breast in mourning as a serpent, and mourn as the daughters of Sirens.† [9]For her calamity overwhelms her, for it has come to Judah, as far as to the gate of My people—to Jerusalem. [10]Those of Gath, do not exalt yourselves, and those of the house of Aphrah, do not rebuild your house from laughter; sprinkle dust on your laughter.† [11]The one living in Shaphir, dwelling comfortably in her cities, did not come to mourn her neighbor; she will receive a calamity of grief from you.

[12]Who has begun to do good for her who dwells in distress? For evils have come down from the Lord upon the gates of Jerusalem, [13]even the sound of a chariot and horseman. Those dwelling in Lachish—she was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion—for in you were found the transgressions of Israel. [14]Because of this He will cause men to be sent forth as far as the inheritance of Gath, vain houses, for they have become vanity to the kings of Israel, [15]until they bring the heirs to you, O inhabitants of Lachish; the inheritance shall come as far as Adullam, even the glory of the daughter of Israel. [16]Shave your hair and make your head bald as an eagle for the sake of your precious children; increase your widowhood, for they have been taken captive.

The Sins of Judah

2 They devised wickedness and were scheming evil on their beds, and at
daybreak they put their plan into action, for they did not lift up their
hands to God.[†] [2]They coveted fields and plundered orphans; they
oppressed families and plundered a man and his house, a man and his
inheritance. [3]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am devising evils
against this tribe from which you shall not lift up your neck, nor will you
suddenly walk upright, for this is a time of evil.[†] [4]In that day a parable
shall be taken up against you, and a dirge will be wailed, saying, ‘In misery
we have suffered hardship. The portion of my people has been measured
out with a measuring line, and there was no one who was able to stop Him.
Our fields have been divided among them.’[†] [5]Therefore there will be no
one to put out a measuring line for a lot for you in the assembly of the Lord.

[6]“Do not shed tears, nor even weep over these things; for He will not
dismiss the reproaches [7]who says, ‘The house of Jacob has provoked the
Spirit of the Lord; are these not His practices? Are not His words good with
Him, and have they not proceeded as predicted? [8]And previously, for
enmity my people resisted against His peace. They flayed his skin to
remove hope in the ravages of war. [9]Therefore those leading my people will
be cast out of their luxurious homes; they have been driven out because of
their wicked practices. Draw near to the everlasting mountains.’ ”

[10]Arise and depart, for this is not a final resting place for you on account
of uncleanness; you have been utterly destroyed by corruption. [11]You were
pursued by no one pursuing! You pursued a spirit built on a falsehood; it

drips on you, into the wine and the intoxicating drink, and by reason of the drop of this people, it shall happen.[†]

Future Deliverance

[12]“Jacob will be completely gathered together with all of them. I shall wait, expecting the remnant of Israel. By him, I will cause their return as sheep in trouble, as a flock in the midst of their fold. From the breach made before them, they will rush out from among their captors. [13]They will break through the gate of captivity, and their king comes out before their presence. And the Lord shall lead them.”

Rulers and False Prophets Judged

3 He will say, “Hear these things, O heads of the house of Jacob, and you remnant of Israel. Is it not for you to know judgment?[†] [2]you who hate good and love evil; you who seize their skins in order flay them and cut their flesh off their bones?[†] [3]who devoured the flesh of my people by removing their skin, breaking their bones, and dividing them as merely flesh for the cauldron and as meat for the pot?”[†]

[4]Thus they will cry out to the Lord, but He will not hear them. Instead, He will turn His face from them at that time because they have done wickedly in their deeds against themselves.

[5]Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who were proclaiming peace upon them while they themselves ate, but who, when nothing was put in their mouths, stirred up war against them: [6]“Therefore to you there will be darkness instead of vision, and to you there

will be darkness instead of prophecy. For the sun will set on the prophets, and the day shall become very dark on them. [7]And the seers of dreams will be put to shame, and the prophets will be laughed to scorn. And all the people will speak evil of them, because there will be no one heeding them.”

[8]Surely I shall strengthen myself in the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of power, to proclaim to Jacob his ungodliness and to Israel his sins.[†] [9]Indeed, hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and the remnant of the house of Israel, you who despise judgment and are perverting everything that is upright, [10]who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with injustice. [11]Her leaders make decisions founded on a bribe, and her priests give answers for pay, and her prophets prophesy for money. And they lean on the Lord, saying, “Is not the Lord with us? No harm can come upon us.” [12]Therefore on account of you, Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall be as a shed in the field, and the mountain of the house as a grove of trees.

The Lord Shall Reign

4 And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord will be revealed. It will be raised up on the top of the mountains, and it will be exalted far above the hills, and peoples will hasten to it. [2]And many nations will go there and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. They will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. [3]And He will judge between many peoples and rebuke strong nations afar off. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into sickles. Nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. [4]But everyone shall be at rest under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord Almighty has spoken these things. [5]For all the peoples shall walk each one his own way, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

[6]"In that day," says the Lord, "I shall gather her who has been broken, and I will welcome her who has been exiled, even those whom I have rejected.[ω] [7]And I shall make her who has been broken into a remnant, and her that was rejected into a strong nation. So the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion henceforth and forever. [8]And you, O daughter of Zion, dark tower of the flock, on you it will come and enter in, even the former kingdom of Babylon to the daughter of Jerusalem."

[9]And now, why have you experienced such evils? Was there no king in your midst? Or did your counsel perish? For your birth pangs have seized you as one in labor. [10]Suffer birth pains and take courage, O daughter of Zion, and draw near like a woman giving birth; for now you will be exiled from the city, and you will abide in the flat open country, and you will have come as far off as Babylon; and from that place the Lord your God shall redeem you from the hand of your enemies.[†]

[11]Now many nations have gathered against you, saying, "We will rejoice, and our eyes will gaze upon Zion." [12]But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord nor perceive His counsel, for He gathered them like sheaves for the threshing floor.

[13]“Arise and thresh them, O daughter of Zion, for I shall make your horns iron, and I will make your hooves bronze. And you will cause the nations to melt away, and you will winnow many peoples. You will dedicate their abundance to the Lord and their strength to the Lord of all the earth. [14]Now the daughter of Ephraim will be blockaded by a siege wall; for he ordered affliction against us, and they shall smite the tribes of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.”

A Ruler Out of Bethlehem

5 “And you, O Bethlehem, House of Ephrathah, though you are fewest in number among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me the One to be ruler of Israel. His goings forth were from the beginning, even from everlasting.”[ω] [2]Therefore He shall give them up until the appointed time for her to give birth, and then the remnant of their brothers will return to the sons of Israel. [3]And He shall stand and see, and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, and they will dwell in the glory of the name of the Lord their God, for now they will be magnified unto the ends of the earth. [4]And she will have peace; for when the Assyrian comes into our land and goes up upon our country, then seven shepherds and eight attacks from men will be raised up against them.

[5]They will tend the Assyrian with a sword and the land of Nimrod in her trench. And He shall deliver you from the Assyrian should he come into your land, and should he come up over your borders. [6]And the remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, as dew falling from the Lord and as lambs in a field of grass, in order that none among the sons of men may assemble together nor resist.[†] [7]And the

remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, as a lion among the cattle in the forest, and as a young lion among a flock of sheep, which, whenever it passes through, seizes and carries off its prey, and there is none to rescue. [8]But your hand will be exalted above those oppressing you, and all your enemies will be completely cut off.

[9]“And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord, “I shall utterly destroy your horses from your midst and destroy your chariots. [10]I shall utterly destroy the cities of your land and demolish all your strongholds. [11]And I shall drive away your sorceries out of your hands, and there shall be no soothsayers among you. [12]I shall utterly destroy your carved images and the sacred pillars from your midst, and you will no longer worship the work of your hands; [13]and I shall cut off your sacred groves from your midst and destroy your cities. [14]And I shall exact vengeance on the nations with wrath and anger among those who did not heed.”

The Lord Has a Case against Israel

6 Now hear the word of the Lord. The Lord says, “Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.[†] [2]Hear, O mountains, the judgment of the Lord, and you valleys, the foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a case against His people, and He will contend with Israel. [3]O My people, what have I done to you? How have I grieved you? Answer Me![†] [4]For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent you Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam. [5]O My people, remember now what King Balak of Moab plotted against you, and what answer Balaam the son of Beor gave to him from the reeds as far as to Gilgal, that the righteousness of the Lord might be known."

[6]How shall I come to understand the Lord and devote myself to the Most High God? Shall I reach Him with burnt offerings? with year-old calves? [7]Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams? or with a myriad of streams of oil? Should I give my firstborn for my ungodliness, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? [8]He has shown you, O man, what is good. Or what does the Lord seek from you but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to be ready to walk with the Lord your God?[†]

[9]The Lord's voice shall be proclaimed in the city, and He shall save those who fear His name. "Hear, O tribe, who will put the city in order? [10]For is there not a fire there, and the house of the lawless storing up lawless treasures with insolent unrighteousness? [11]Will the lawless be justified by a balance scale or a bag of deceitful weights [12]from which they accumulated their ungodly wealth? And those that dwell in the city have spoken lies and exalted themselves with their own mouth.

[13]"Therefore I will begin to smite you; I will destroy you because of your sins. [14]You shall eat but not be satisfied, and there will be darkness upon you, and he will depart without being noticed, and you will not be rescued; and all who do escape will be given over to the sword. [15]You will sow, but you will not reap. You will press olives, but you will not anoint yourself with oil. And you will make wine, but you will not drink any of it, and the statutes of my people will be utterly abolished. [16]For you have kept the ordinances of Omri and done all the works of the house of Ahab. You

walked in their counsels, so that I should deliver you over to complete destruction and make your inhabitants into a hissing, and you will bear the reproach of the peoples.”

Trust Not in Men

7 Woe is me! For I have become like one harvesting stubble, like one gleaning small grapes after the vintage grapes are picked, but not finding for myself any cluster of first fruit to eat. Woe is me, O my soul! [2]For the God-fearing man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among the men. They all lie in wait, even unto blood, and each one grievously oppresses his neighbor. [3]They prepare their hands for evil; the prince demands a gift, and the judge speaks flattering words; it is the desire of their soul. “Thus I shall take away [4]their good things as the moth who eats away, and as one proceeding by the rule in the day of the watch. Alas! alas! the time of your vengeance is come; now shall be their lamentation. [5]Do not trust in friends, nor put your hope in those who govern. Beware of your wife and do not tell her anything. [6]For a son dishonors his father, a daughter will rise up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are all the people of his own house.”[†]

Hope in the Lord

[7]But I will look to the Lord. I will wait for God my Savior, for my God will hear me. [8]Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy, for though I have fallen, yet will I arise, because even if I should sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. [9]I will endure the wrath of the Lord, for I sinned against Him, until He pleads my cause; for He will execute my judgment and will

bring me out into the light, and I will perceive His righteousness. [10]And my enemy will see it, and he who says to me, “Where is the Lord your God?” will be clothed with shame. And my eyes will look upon him, and now he will be for trampling upon as mud in the streets.

[11]In the days when your bricks are being plastered—that day will be your destruction, and your ordinances will be abolished. [12]In that day even your cities will be leveled to the ground and divided among the Assyrians; your fortified cities will be divided from Tyre as far as the River of Syria; it will be a day of flood and chaos. [13]And the land will become totally desolate together with those dwelling in it, because of the fruit of their practices.

[14]Shepherd Your people with Your staff, the sheep of Your inheritance, those dwelling solitarily in the thicket in the midst of Carmel. They will feed in Bashan and in Gilead, as in days of old. [15]And as in the days of your departure from the land of Egypt, you will see many wonders. [16]The Gentiles will see and be ashamed of all their might. They will cover their mouth with their hands, and their ears will become deaf. [17]They shall lick the dust like serpents crawling on the earth; they will be confounded in their confinement and be amazed at the Lord our God, and they will be afraid of You.

[18]Who is a God like You, removing wrongdoings and passing over the ungodliness of the remnant of His inheritance? He does not keep His anger as a witness, for He delights in mercy.[†] [19]He will return and have compassion on us. He will subdue our transgressions, and all our sins will

be cast into the depths of the sea. [20]You will give truthfulness to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, as You swore to our ancestors from days of old.

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The Book of Joel

Author—Traditionally the prophet Joel (commemorated October 19), son of Pethuel, of the tribe of Reuben. His is a common Jewish name, meaning “Yahweh is God.” Nothing is known of his life outside of his short prophecy.

Date—Any number of dates have been suggested for Joel's life. Fathers such as Ss. Jerome and Isidore place Joel in the time of the prophets Isaiah and Hosea, about 740 BC. Tradition held Joel to be one of the earlier prophets; modern scholars are undecided about the matter, often placing him at about 450–400 BC, after the restoration of Israel from exile.

Major Theme—*Ultimately, the Lord is victorious.* Three major themes are prominent. (1) A call summoning the people of God to turn their sorrow into penitence (1:1–2:17). (2) The faithfulness of God to rise up on behalf of His people, restore their prosperity, and bring the nations to justice (2:18–27). (3) The coming of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity (3:1–5). Joel emphasizes the universal mission of the Spirit, anticipating the Day of Pentecost, when He is poured out on all flesh.

Background—It is likely the prophet Joel wrote in the face of a double disaster—the attack of military aggressors such as the Babylonians, and the onset of a plague of locusts. The prophet freely switches between the two calamities, likening them to each other. As the narrative proceeds, Joel employs two distinct prophetic genres: (1) he calls his people to contrition and repentance; and (2) he uses vivid apocalyptic imagery to convey deep spiritual truths. The contrast created by these two approaches prompted St. Jerome to comment, “Joel is clear at the beginning, but at the end more obscure.”

Outline

I. Devastation in Israel (1:1–20)
II. Call to Repentance (2:1–17)
III. The Deliverance of the Lord (2:18–27)
IV. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (3:1–5)
V. The Judgment of the Nations (4:1–17)
VI. The Prosperity of Zion (4:18–21)

1 The word of the Lord came to Joel the son of Pethuel.[†]

Invasion of the Locusts and the Caterpillars

[2]Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all of you inhabiting the land. Have such things happened in your days or in the days of your fathers?[†] [3]Tell your children about this, and your children to their children, and their children to the next generation. [4]What the caterpillars have left is eaten by the grasshopper, and what the grasshoppers have left is eaten by the locust, and what the locusts have left is infected with red blight.[†]

[5]Get sober, you who are drunk from your wine, and weep, mourn all you who drink wine, for joy and gladness are removed from your mouth.[†] [6]For a nation strong and numberless came up against My land. His teeth are the teeth of a lion and his molars those of a young lion.[†] [7]He laid waste My vine and

splintered My fig tree. He diligently searched out and uprooted My vine, peeling off its outer bark.

[8]Mourn before Me more than a virgin bride clothed with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.† [9]The meat-offering and the drink-offering are removed from the house of the Lord. Mourn, you priests, you who serve at the altar,† [10]for the fields languish and the land mourns; for the grain withers, the wine is dried up, and the olive oil is scarce. [11]The farmers are exhausted. Mourn for the sake of your fields of wheat and barley, for the harvest from the field has been lost.† [12]The vine is shriveled up, and the fig trees are scarce in number. The pomegranate and the palm tree, the apple tree and all the trees of the field are withered, for they put to shame the delight of the sons of men.†

[13]Gird yourself with sackcloth and wail, you priests. Mourn, you who serve at the altar. Go in, sleep in sackcloth, you who minister unto God, for the grain-offering and drink-offering are withheld from the house of your God.† [14]Sanctify a fast. Call a solemn assembly. Gather all the elders and all the people of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out fervently to the Lord.†

[15]Alas! Alas! Alas! For the day of the Lord draws near, and it will come as misery upon misery.† [16]The food is completely destroyed before your eyes; joy and gladness are removed from the house of your God. [17]The heifers are restless in their stalls, and the storehouses are emptied. The winepresses are broken down; the grain is withered. [18]What will we store up for ourselves? The herds of cattle groaned because there was no pasture, and the flocks of sheep are no more.

[19]O Lord, I will cry out to You, for fire has devoured the pleasant places of the wilderness, and a flame burned all the trees of the field.[†] [20]And the cattle of the field also look up to You, because the brooks are dried up and fire has devoured the pleasant places of the wilderness.[†]

The Day of the Lord

2 Sound the trumpet in Zion; make a proclamation in My holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land be confounded, for the day of the Lord is near,[†] [2]a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of cloud and of dense fog. About daybreak a people both strong and great in number will be spread upon the mountains, the likes of whom have never been nor will come after them, not even for many generations. [3]Before them is a consuming fire and behind them a flame set ablaze. Before them the land is as a paradise of splendor, but behind them a desolate plain; no one will be able to escape them.

[4]Their outward appearance is as the appearance of horses, and thus as horsemen they will pursue.[†] [5]They shall bound upon the tops of the mountains as the sound of chariots, as the sound of a flame of fire devouring straw, as a great number of mighty men setting themselves in battle array. [6]Before them the people will be crushed; every face shall be as the blackness of a cauldron. [7]As warriors they shall march quickly, and they will climb the walls like men of war. Everyone shall march in formation; they will never break their ranks. [8]They will not separate from their comrades and will march weighed down with their arms. And though they fall by their arrows, even so they will not be stopped. [9]They will seize the city and run on the wall. They will climb into the houses and enter the windows as do thieves. [10]Before their presence the land will be confounded, and the sky will be shaken. The sun and

moon will grow dark, and the stars will hold back their brightness. [11]And because the day of the Lord is great and exceedingly glorious, the Lord shall utter His voice before the face of His army, for His army is numberless, and the works of His words are mighty. Who shall resist?

[12]Now says the Lord your God, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting and wailing and with mourning;[†] [13]rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is merciful and compassionate. He is longsuffering and plenteous in mercy and repents of evils. [14]Who knows if He will return and change His mind—if He will leave a blessing behind Him, even an offering and drink-offering to the Lord our God?”

[15]Sound the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; [16]gather the people, sanctify the congregation, call out the elders, and gather the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom go out from his bedchamber and the bride out of her bridal chamber. [17]Between the porch and the altar, the priests of the altar, ministering to the Lord, will each be weeping and will say, “O Lord, spare Your people; do not give Your inheritance to reproach, that the Gentiles should rule over them, lest they should say among the Gentiles, ‘Where is their God?’ ”[†]

God's Blessing upon His People

[18]But the Lord was zealous for His land and spared His people. [†] [19]And the Lord answered His people and said, “Behold, I send you wheat, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied with them. I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations, [20]and I will drive the army from the north away from you, and I shall force him into a dry land. I will drown his face in the eastern sea

and his back in the western sea; its stench and foul smell will rise up, because he has done powerful works.”[†]

[21]O land, be of good courage; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things.[†] [22]Take courage, you beasts of the field, for the plains of the wilderness have budded, and the trees bear their fruit. And again the vine and the fig tree yield their full potency.[†] [23]And you children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God, for He gives food that is right for you, and He will shower you as before with the early and the late rain.[ω] [24]The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the presses of wine and olive oil will overflow. [†] [25]“And I will restore to you the years the grasshopper and the locust have eaten, and for the blight, and the caterpillar, even for My great army, which I sent against you. [26]You will eat abundantly and be satisfied and will praise the name of the Lord your God for what He has so wondrously done unto you. And My people will not be put to shame forever. [27]Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel; that I am the Lord your God, and there is no other but Me. And at no time will My people be put to shame forever.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

3 “After this it shall come to pass that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.[†] [2]And in those days I shall pour out My Spirit on My servants and on My handmaids. [3]And I shall give wonders in the heavens and upon the earth, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. [4]The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes to pass. [5]And it shall be that whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord Himself said, and there shall be proclamation of the good news to those whom the Lord Himself called.[††]

The Coming Day of Judgment

4 “For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,[†] [2]I shall also gather all the nations together and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and there I will enter into judgment against them on account of My people and My inheritance Israel, who were dispersed among the nations—against those who divided My land,[†] [3]and who cast lots over My people, and traded boys for prostitutes, and sold girls for the wine they drank. [4]Indeed, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coast of Philistia, what have you to do with Me? Are you paying Me back for a grudge you hold against Me? If so, I shall return your retaliation swiftly and immediately upon your own head,[†] [5]because you have taken My silver and My gold and taken My precious possessions into your temples, [6]and because you sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the sons of the Greeks in order to exile them far from their borders.[†] [7]Behold, I shall raise them up from the place where you sold them, and I shall return your retribution upon your own head. [8]I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them into captivity to a far distant nation, for the Lord has spoken.”

[9]Proclaim these things among the nations: “Prepare for war; arouse the warriors; draw near and go up, all you men of war.[†] [10]Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, ‘I am

strong.’[†] [11]Assemble together and join in, all you nations round about. And in that place, gather yourselves together; let the gentle be warlike. [12]Let all the nations rouse themselves and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I shall sit to judge all the nations round about.

[13]“Bring out the sickles, for the harvest is ripe. Come in and tread the grapes, for the winepress is full, the wine vats overflow; for their wickedness is multiplied.[†] [14]The news resounded in the valley of judgment, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of judgment. [15]The sun and moon shall become dark, and the stars shall withdraw their light.[†] [16]And the Lord shall cry out from Zion, and He shall utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and earth will quake, but the Lord shall keep His people safe and shall strengthen the sons of Israel.[†] [17]So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, the one dwelling in Zion on My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be a holy city, and no more will strangers pass through her.

The Final Restoration of God's Own

[18]“And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip sweetness, and milk shall flow from the hills, and all the brooks of Judah shall flow with water. And a fountain shall flow out from the house of the Lord, and it will supply water to the Valley of Acacias. [19]Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a wilderness because of the wrongdoings against the people of Judah, because of the innocent blood shed in their land.[†] [20]But Judah shall be inhabited forever and Jerusalem unto generations of generations. [21]And I shall avenge their blood and shall not let it go unpunished. The Lord shall dwell in Zion.”[†]

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The Book of Obadiah

Author—The prophet Obadiah, whose name means “servant of the Lord.” Nothing is known about him except that he wrote down this brief prophecy.

Date—Sometime near 587 BC. Internal evidence (vv. 11–14) seems to connect the book to the time of the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. If this is the case, Obadiah would be a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah.

Major Theme—*The destruction of Edom and the restoration of Israel.*

Background—The people of Edom (the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob) were intense rivals and enemies of Israel. They even assisted the Babylonians in the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC and took the occasion to occupy some of the territory of Judah. God raised up the prophet Obadiah to pronounce judgment on Edom's arrogance and to proclaim that the Lord is the defender of what is right and the vindicator of the poor and the oppressed.

Outline

I. The Judgment on Edom and Its Destruction (vv. 1–14)

II. The Day of the Lord (vv. 15–21)

  A. Deliverance for Mount Zion (vv. 15–18)

  B. The Kingdom of God established on earth (vv. 19–21)

Judgment of Edom

[1]The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God to Edom: “I heard a report from the Lord, and He sent out a message to the nations, saying, ‘Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle.’[†] [2]Behold, I have made you least among the nations; you are greatly dishonored.[†] [3]The arrogance of your heart exalts you, dwelling as you do in the clefts of the rocks, as one overconfident in his habitation, saying in his heart, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’ [4]If you should ascend as the eagle, and if you should make your nest amongst the stars, from there I shall bring you down,” says the Lord.[†] [5]“If thieves come upon you or robbers by night, then to what place will you escape? Will they not steal a considerable amount for themselves? And surely if grape-gatherers come to you, will they not leave a gleaning? [6]How Esau has been searched out, and his hidden things seized! [7]All your allies force you to your borders. Men at peace with you oppose you and prevail against you. They set an ambush below you; there is no understanding in them.

[8]“In that day,” says the Lord, “I shall destroy the wise men from Edom and understanding from the mountain of Esau.[†] [9]And your warriors from Teman will be terrified, in order that everyone from the mountain of Esau may be cut off. [10]Because of the slaughter and ungodliness against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you will be cut off forever. [11]Because of that day in which you stood back and only watched the capture, his forces being led away as captives by foreigners; in the day when they entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem—on that day you were as one of them. [12]And you should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of foreigners, and you should not have rejoiced against

the children of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor spoken boastfully on the day of distress.[†] [13]Neither should you have gone into the gates of the people on the day of their suffering. Neither should you have looked upon their gathering in the day of their ruin, and you should not have joined in the attack on their forces in the day of their destruction. [14]Nor should you have stood at their mountain passes to put to death those escaping; nor should you have taken prisoner those fleeing from them in the day of trial.

[15]“For the day of the Lord is near against all the nations. For as you have done, it shall be done to you in the same manner. Your recompense shall return on your own head.[†] [16]For in the same way that you drank on My holy mountain, so too shall all the nations drink wine. They will drink and will be brought down, and it will be as if they never existed.

[17]“But deliverance will come to Mount Zion, and it will be holy. And the house of Jacob shall obtain their inheritance as their rightful inheritance. [18]And the house of Jacob shall be the fire, and the house of Joseph the flame; but the house of Esau shall be the stubble and will be devoured in flames, and no one of the house of Esau will survive,” for the Lord has spoken.

[19]And those who dwell in the Negev shall inherit the mountain of Esau, and those of the Sephelah the land of the Philistines. They will inherit the mountain of Ephraim, the plains of Samaria and Benjamin, and the land of Gilead.[†] [20]For the captivity of the sons of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanite as far as Zarephath; the captivity of Jerusalem as far as Ephratha shall possess the cities of the Negev. [21]And those who have been

rescued shall ascend from Mount Zion to exact vengeance on the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.[†]

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The Book of Jonah

Author—The prophet Jonah (commemorated September 21) is traditionally considered to be the author. He was an inhabitant of the city of Gath Hepher (4Kg 14:25) within the tribal borders of Zebulun, about five miles north of Nazareth. His name means “a dove.”

Date—Perhaps 784–772 BC. The experience of Jonah occurred during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel (790–750 BC).

Major Theme—*The universality of God's mercy.* The compassion of the Lord is not limited to the Jews, but extends to all people, even to the enemies of God's people. Jonah's reluctance to carry out God's command and his disappointment when God acts mercifully are a result of his narrow-minded nationalism, shared with many Jews of the postexilic period.

Background—The only other historical reference to Jonah comes from 4Kg 14:25, which mentions “Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher.” In the Orthodox Church's liturgical tradition, the Book of Jonah is read in its entirety on Holy Saturday. The third-day deliverance of Jonah from the great fish is a foretaste of the third-day Resurrection of Christ.

We sing, “Jonah was enclosed but not held fast in the belly of the whale; for, serving as a figure of You, who were buried in the tomb, he leapt forth from the monster as from a bridal chamber and he called out to the watch:

O you who keep guard falsely and in vain, you have forsaken your own mercy.”

Outline

- I. First Calling of Jonah (1:1–2:11)
    - A. Jonah's disobedience (1:1–3)
    - B. God's judgment and rescue (1:4–16)
    - C. Jonah's prayer and deliverance (2:1–11)
- II. Second Calling of Jonah (3:1–4:11)
    - A. Jonah's obedience (3:1–4)
    - B. Nineveh's repentance (3:5–10)
    - C. Jonah's complaint (4:1–3)
    - D. God's rebuke (4:4–11)

Jonah Flees from the Lord

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,[†] [2]“Arise and go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach in it; for the cry of her wickedness has come up to me.”[†] [3]But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish, paid his fare, and boarded the ship to set sail with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

[4]But the Lord raised up a great wind upon the sea, and there came about a mighty tempest, and the ship was in danger of breaking up. [5]And the mariners were afraid and cried out, each one to his god. And they cast out the cargo of the ship into the sea, attempting to lighten the ship. But Jonah

had gone below into the hold of the ship, had gone to sleep, and was snoring.[†]

[6]The captain came to him and said, “Why are you snoring? Get up and call upon your God, that your God may keep us safe so we do not perish.” [7]And each one said to his shipmate, “Come! Let us cast lots and find out on whose account this calamity is upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

[8]Then they said to him, “Tell us, what is your occupation? Where do you come from and from what country and people are you?” [9]And he said to them, “I am a servant of the Lord, and I worship the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”[†] [10]Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you did?” For the men knew he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. [11]Then they said to him, “What should we do to you that the sea will calm itself for us?” For the sea continued to be tempestuous, and the waves rose up even higher. [†] [12]And Jonah said to them, “Take me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea will grow calm for you, for I know this great tempest is upon you because of me.”

[13]And the men tried hard to return to the land, but were unable to do so, for the sea arose and grew even more tempestuous against them. [14]Then they cried out to the Lord and said, “Please, O Lord, do not let us perish on account of this man's life, nor bring righteous blood upon us; for you, O Lord, have brought this about.”[†] [15]So they took up Jonah and threw him

into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. [16]And the men feared the Lord even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and vowed vows.

Jonah's Song of Thanksgiving

2 Now the Lord commanded a huge sea creature to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the sea creature three days and three nights.[†]
[2]And from the belly of the sea creature, Jonah prayed to the Lord his God,[†]
[3]and said:

“I cried out in my affliction to the Lord, my God,

And He heard my voice;

Out of the belly of Hades, You heard the cry of my voice.[†]

[4] You cast me into the depths of the heart of the sea,

And rivers encompassed me;

All Your surging waters and Your waves passed over me.

[5] And I said, ‘I have been driven away from Your sight;

Shall I again look with favor toward Your holy temple?’[†]

[6] Water is poured over me to my soul;

The lowest depth encircled me;

My head plunged into the clefts of the mountains.

[7] I descended into the earth,

The bars of which are everlasting barriers;

Yet let my life ascend from corruption, O Lord, my God.

[8] When my soul was failing from me, I remembered the Lord.

May my prayer be brought to You, into Your holy temple.

[9] Those who follow vanity and lies forsake their own mercy.

[10] But with a voice of thanksgiving and praise,

I will sacrifice to You.

As much as I vowed, I shall offer up to You,

To You, the Lord of Deliverance.”[†]

[11]Then the Lord commanded the sea creature, and it cast up Jonah onto the dry land.

The Repentance of Nineveh

3 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, [2]“Arise and go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach there according to the message I previously spoke to you.”[†] [3]So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, just as the Lord spoke. Nineveh was an exceedingly great city to God, a journey of about three days. [4]And Jonah began to enter into the city, going a day's journey, where he proclaimed and said, “Yet three days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

[5]And the men of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least.[†] [6]Then the word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and put on sackcloth, and sat upon ashes.[†] [7]And it was proclaimed and spoken in Nineveh by the king and by his great men, saying, “Let not the men, cattle, oxen, or sheep taste anything, eat, or drink water.” [8]So the men and the cattle were clothed with sackcloth, and they cried out fervently to God; and they each turned back from their evil ways and from the wrongdoings of their hands, saying, [9]“Who knows if God shall have a change of heart and turn from His fierce anger, that we should not perish?” [10]And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways. And God had a change of

heart about the evil which He said He would do to them, and He did not do it.

Jonah Is Grieved by the Lord's Compassion

4 But Jonah was deeply grieved and was troubled.[†] [2]So he prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, were these not my words when I was yet in my land? Therefore I saw the need to flee to Tarshish; because I knew You to be compassionate and merciful, longsuffering and abundant in mercy, and willing to change your heart concerning evils. [3]And now, Master, Lord, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

[4]And the Lord said to Jonah, “Are you exceedingly grieved?”[†] [5]Then Jonah went out of the city and seated himself opposite it. There he made for himself a tent and sat under its shade, until he might observe what would happen to the city. [6]And the Lord God commanded a gourd, and it came up over the head of Jonah to be a shade over his head, to shield him from his discomforts. Jonah rejoiced with great joy because of the gourd. [7]But early the next morning, God commanded a worm, and it smote the gourd, and the gourd withered up. [8]And when the sun rose, God commanded a burning east wind; and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah, and he grew faint and despaired of his life. And he said, “It is better for me to die than to live.” [9]Then God said to Jonah, “Are you exceedingly grieved on account of the gourd?” And he said, “I am exceedingly grieved, even unto death.” [10]And the Lord said, “You took pity on the gourd, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came up during the night and perished before the next night. [11]And shall I Myself not take pity upon Nineveh, the great city, in which dwell more than one hundred and twenty

thousand people who do not know either their right hand or their left—and many livestock?”[†]

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The Book of Nahum

Author—The prophet Nahum (commemorated December 1). His name means “consolation.” He was from the tribe of Simeon and a contemporary of the prophets Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk.

Date—Between 663 BC (the fall of Thebes) and 612 BC (the fall of Nineveh)

Major Theme—*God's judgment and the destruction of Nineveh* (capital of the Assyrian Empire) for its idolatry, oppression, cruelty, and wickedness. Justice will prevail. God is the Lord of history and of all nations, and their destinies are in His hands. Christ is revealed as the One who brings good tidings and proclaims peace (1:15).

Background—The Assyrians had invaded Israel and Judah several times in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. They were ruthless and cruel to the conquered peoples, deporting them to other lands and bringing in foreigners to mingle with the few Jews who were left. The prophet Jonah was sent by God to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh during this time, and they repented. However, within a few generations the evil and wickedness of their forefathers returned, and the city was at its zenith of power and wickedness when the prophet Nahum prophesied its destruction.

Outline

I. Nahum Receives the Prophecy (1:1)

II. The Lord Is Nineveh's Judge (1:2–14)

    - A. The Lord's vengeance, power, and goodness (1:2–8)
    - B. Nineveh's overthrow and Judah's peace (1:9–14)
- III. The Judgment of Nineveh (2:1–14)
    - A. Description of the siege and capture of the city (2:1–9)
    - B. The city's desolation and former glory contrasted (2:10–14)
- IV. Nineveh's Total Destruction (3:1–19)
    - A. The sins of Nineveh (3:1–7)
    - B. Nineveh compared with Egypt (3:8–10)
    - C. The city's doom in spite of wealth and strength (3:11–19)

The Lord Judges His Enemies

1 The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.[†]

[2]God is jealous, and the Lord is an avenger; the Lord is avenging with fury; the Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries and drives out His enemies. [3]The Lord is patient and His power is great, but the Lord will not acquit the guilty. His way is in destruction and in a whirlwind; the clouds are the dust of His feet.[†] [4]He threatens the sea and makes it dry, and he dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel have diminished, and the flowers of Lebanon have died out.[†] [5]By Him the mountains are shaken and the hills quake, and the earth heaves at His presence—the whole earth and all who dwell in it. [†] [6]Who can stand before His wrath? Who can withstand the fierceness of His anger? His fury melts away ruling powers, and He shatters the rocks into pieces.

[7]The Lord is merciful to those who wait on Him in the day of affliction, and He knows those who reverence Him. [8]For with an overwhelming flood He shall make an end to those rising up, and darkness will pursue His enemies.[†] [9]What do you plot against the Lord? He shall bring about a complete end to it; He will not twice punish with affliction for the same thing, [10]for the enemy shall be laid bare even to the foundations, and consumed as twisted yew, even as fully dried stubble.

[11]From out of you shall come forth a plot against the Lord, counseling things hostile to Him. [12]Thus says the Lord who rules over many waters: “In the same manner you will be torn apart, and the report of you will no longer be heard. [13]And now I will break his rod from off you, and I will break your bonds.” [14]The Lord shall Himself give a command concerning you: “Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. I will utterly destroy the graven and molten images out of the house of your god. I shall dig your grave, and that quickly!”

The Judgment of Nineveh

2 Behold, on the mountains the feet of him that brings good tidings and proclaims peace. O Judah, celebrate your feasts, pay your vows; for in no way shall they pass through you as one who is beaten. He is completely destroyed; he has been removed.[†] [2]The one being delivered from affliction has come up breathing in your presence. Watch the road, gird your loins, and be valiant in your strength!

[3]For the Lord has turned away the pride of Jacob, just as He did the pride of Israel, for the shakers have shaken them off and completely destroyed

their branches. [4]The weapons of their power from men—mocking mighty men with fire, the reins of their chariots in the day of their readiness, and their horsemen—shall be thrown into a state of confusion [5]in the streets, and the chariots shall clash and become entangled with one another in the broad roads. Their appearance is as torches of fire and flashing lightning.[†] [6]And their great men will be remembered, and they will flee by day. They will be weak as they go on their way; they will hasten to the walls, and they will prepare their advance defenses.[†]

[7]The gates of the rivers have been opened, and the palaces have fallen into ruin, [8]and the foundation has been exposed. She has gone up, and her bondwomen were led away as doves moaning in their hearts. [9]And as for Nineveh, her waters are as a pool of water, and fleeing away, they did not stand; there was no one paying attention.

[10]They were plundering the silver, they were plundering the gold—and there was no end of her treasures; they have been weighed down by all her precious things. [11]There is thrusting, shaking, and tumult, and breaking of hearts and weakening of knees, agony in every loin, and the face of each one appearing as the blackening of a pot.[†]

[12]Where is the dwelling place of the lions and the feeding place for her cubs? Where did the lion go, that the lion's cub should go where there is none to scare him away? [13]The lion carried off sufficient prey for his cubs, and he strangled prey for his lions and filled his lair with prey, even his dwelling-place of plunder. [14]“Behold, I am against you,” says the Lord Almighty; “I shall burn up your multitude in smoke, and the sword will

devour your lions. I shall utterly destroy your prey from the land, and your deeds shall never again be heard.”[†]

The Wickedness of Nineveh

3 O city of blood, totally false and full of unrighteousness: the prey will not be touched. [2]The cracking of whips and the sound of rumbling wheels, the galloping horses and bounding chariots, [3]cavalrymen in full charge with the glistening of swords and the glittering of weapons, a multitude of wounded and of heavy falling; and there was no end to her nations, but they will be weak in their bodies [4]because of the abundance of sexual immorality. She is a prostitute who is cultured and pleasing, skilled in the art of sorcery, selling the nations with her sexual immorality and the people by her sorceries.[†]

[5]“Behold, I am against you,” says the Lord God Almighty. “I shall uncover your backside in your presence, and I shall make known your shame to the nations and your disgrace to the kingdoms. [6]I shall cast abominable filth upon you according to your uncleanness, and I shall cause you to be a public example. [7]And it will be that all who see you will turn away from you and say, ‘Wretched Nineveh, who shall lament her? Where shall I seek consolation for her?’ ”

[8]Prepare yourself a portion, tune the string of the lyre, and prepare a portion for Amon, the one dwelling by the rivers with the river round about her, whose dominion is the sea and the water her walls. [9]Ethiopia is her strength, and Egypt as well, and there is no limit to her flight, and the Libyans became her helper. [10]And she will go into captivity as a prisoner,

and they will dash her infants to the ground at the heads of all the streets; they will cast lots over all her splendid things, and all her nobles will be bound in chains. [11]And you will become drunk and be disregarded. You will seek for yourself a place of refuge from your enemies. [12]All your strongholds are as fig trees having a watchman: if shaken, they will fall into the mouth of the eater! [13]Behold, your people are as women among you. The gates of your land shall be wide open to your enemies, and fire will destroy the bars of your gates.

[14]Draw water for the siege and fortify your strongholds. Trample the clay and tread it with straw; make it stronger than brick. [15]There the fire will devour you, and the sword will utterly destroy you. It will devour you as a locust, and you will be oppressed as a locust. [16]You have multiplied your commerce beyond the stars of heaven; the locust has attacked and flown away. [17]As a grasshopper, your crowd of half-breeds has suddenly left, as a locust perched on a hedge on a frosty morning; the sun rises and it flies away. It does not know its place. Woe to them! [18]Your shepherds slumber; the king of Assyria put your nobles to rest; your people departed to the mountains, and there was no one expecting them. [19]There is no healing your destruction. Your wound is festering. All those hearing the news of you shall clap their hands over you, for upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?

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The Book of Habakkuk

Author—The prophet Habakkuk (commemorated December 2). Some traditions tell us he was the son of Sapnat, of the tribe of Simeon, prophesying in Judah six hundred years before Christ, in the time of King Manasseh. This would make him a contemporary of the Prophets Nahum, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Zephaniah.

Date—About 605 BC, during the weakening and collapse of the Southern Kingdom of Judah (626–586 BC) and before the arrival of the Babylonians in Palestine.

Major Theme—*The problem of evil*. Habakkuk agonizes in his soul that wickedness, strife, and oppression are rampant in Judah, but God seemingly does nothing about it. His perplexity intensifies when he learns God will judge Judah by the hands of the Babylonians, who are more wicked and ruthless than those being judged! In the end, he learns to rest and trust in God's dealings with His creation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is prophesied in this book as the Lord in His holy temple (2:20) and the One who comes from afar to visit His People with salvation (3:3—quoted in the hymns of the Royal Hours of the Nativity).

Background—Our Orthodox tradition states that this same prophet was indeed the one who was miraculously transported to Babylon and who visited and ministered to Daniel the Prophet in the lions’ den (Bel and the Serpent 33–37). Habakkuk entered into rest in great old age, and his relics were discovered during the reign of Theodosius the Great in the fourth century.

The prophecy is set against the backdrop of the approaching Babylonians, who destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC. The people of Judah were living in wealth and luxury, and the society was showing signs of rot and collapse. The rich were unjust and greedy, disregarding the needs of the poor, the widows or the orphans. The judges were entirely corrupt.

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1)

II. Habakkuk's First Outcry to God (1:2–4)

III. God's Response (1:5–11)

IV. Habakkuk's Second Complaint to God (1:12–2:1)

V. God's Answer (2:2–20)

  A. Woe to the greedy man (2:2–11)

  B. Woe to the violent and bloodthirsty man (2:12–17)

  C. Woe to him who trusts in idols (2:18–20)

VI. The Prayer of Habakkuk (3:1–19)

1 The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.†

The Prophet Complains of Injustice

[2]How long, O Lord, shall I cry out to You, and You will not hear me? Being wronged I cry out to You; You will not save.† [3]Why have You shown me hardship and suffering, to look upon misery and ungodliness? Judgment is before me, and the judge takes bribes. [4]Therefore the law is disregarded

and justice is done ineffectually, for the ungodly oppress the righteous; therefore justice shall go forth perverted.

The Lord Answers

[5]“Behold, you scoffers, take notice; look and be amazed and be gone, for I am working a work in your days which you would not believe even if someone told it to you.[†] [6]For behold, I am raising up against you the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation that marches through the breadth of the earth to take possession of dwellings that are not theirs. [7]He is terrible and awesome. His judgment and dignity proceeds from himself.[†] [8]Their horses bound more swiftly than leopards, and they are more fierce than the wolves of Arabia. His horsemen will ride out far away. They will spread out from afar, and they will fly as an eagle eager for its food. [9]Destruction will come upon the ungodly, opposing their advances from the opposite side, and like sand will he gather the captivity.[†] [10]And he will revel in kings, and princes will be his plaything; he shall mock every fortified city and put up a siege mound and capture it. [11]Then he will change his spirit, and he will pass through and he will make an atonement saying, ‘This strength is from my god.’ ”[†]

A Further Complaint of Injustice

[12]Are You not from everlasting, O Lord God, my Holy One? O Lord, surely we shall not die. O Lord, You have ordered it for judgment; He has formed me to reprove for His instruction.[†] [13]His eye is too pure to see evil, and You are not able to look upon affliction. Why then do You pay attention to those who scoff and keep silence when the ungodly swallow up the just?

[14]And will you make men to be like the fish of the sea and as the reptiles
with no one leading them?[†] [15]He has brought up destruction with a
fishhook, drawn it with his casting net, and gathered it in his dragnets.
Because of this he will be glad, and his heart will rejoice. [16]On account of
this he will sacrifice to his dragnet and burn incense to his casting net. For
by them he has enriched his portion, and his foods are choice. [17]Therefore,
he will throw out his casting net, and he will not spare to kill all the nations.

The Lord Answers the Prophet's Complaints

2 I will stand on my watch, mounted upon the rock, and see what He shall
say to me, and what might I answer when I am reproved?[†]

[2]And the Lord answered me and said, “Write the vision distinctly upon a
tablet, that he who reads it may flee.[†] [3]For the vision is yet for an appointed
time, and it will come up at the end, and it will not be in vain; if he should
tarry, wait for him, for he will surely come, and he will not tarry.[†]

[4]“If any man should shrink back, My soul will not be well pleased in
him; but the righteous shall live by My faith.[†] [5]But the one who is drunk
and the scoffer, the man who boasts, shall accomplish nothing; he widened
his soul as the grave, and as death he is never satisfied, and he will gather to
himself all the nations and will take to himself all the peoples.[†] [6]Shall not
all these take up a parable against him and a proverb for his history? And
they shall say, ‘Woe to him who multiplies to himself possessions which are
not his. How long will this continue? And who heavily presses down his
yoke?’[†] [7]For suddenly those biting at him shall rise up, and they who plot
against you will sober up, and you shall be as plunder to them. [8]Because

you have plundered many nations, all the people who remain shall plunder you, because of the men's blood and the sins of the land, and of the city and all who dwell in it.

[9]“Woe to him who takes advantage of evil gain for his own house, so that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the hand of evil. [10]You counseled shame to your house, and you wiped out many peoples, and your soul sinned.[†] [11]Therefore, the stones will cry out from the wall, and the beetle will speak out of wood.[†]

[12]“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed, who establishes a city by wrongdoing. [13]Are not these things from the Lord Almighty? And many a people have utterly perished in fire, and many nations have been disheartened. [14]For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord; it shall cover them as water.[†]

[15]“Woe to him who gives clouded and intoxicating drink to his neighbor, that he might look upon his private parts. [16]Drink to the fullness of the dishonor of your glory. Quake and tremble! The cup in the right hand of the Lord has surrounded you, and it has gathered disgrace upon your glory.[†] [17]For the ungodliness of Lebanon shall cover you, and the distress of wild beasts will terrify you, because of the blood of men and the ungodliness of the land and all who dwell in it.

[18]“What benefit is a graven image, since men carve it? They have formed it into a molten image, a false image. For the one who made the thing trusts in that which is formed by him, to make idols that cannot speak.

[19]“Woe to him saying to the wood, ‘Awake and rise up,’ and to the dumb stone, ‘Be exalted.’ It is a merely a fantasy, being but a hammered piece of gold and silver. There is no living breath in it at all. [20]But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be reverent before Him.”[†]

The Prophet's Prayer

3 The prayer of the prophet Habakkuk, with an ode.

[2] Lord, I have heard Your report and was afraid;

I considered Your works and was greatly astonished.

You shall be known between the two living creatures;

In the approaching years You shall be acknowledged;

You will be revealed when the time comes.

When my soul is troubled,

You will in wrath remember mercy.[†]

[3] God will come from Teman,

The Holy One from the mount of shaded leafy trees. *Pause.*

His excellence covered the heavens,

And the earth was full of His praise.[†]

[4] His brightness will be like the light;

Horns will be in His hand,

And He established a mighty love of His strength.[†]

[5] Before His face a word will go forth;

It will go out by the shoes of His feet.

[6] The earth stood and was shaken to and fro;

He looked and the nations melted away.

The mountains were shattered by force;

The everlasting hills wasted away.

7 In the place of distresses, I saw His eternal ways.

The tents of the Ethiopians will be dismayed,

Even the tents of the land of Midian.

8 Were you angry, O Lord, with the rivers?

Or was Your wrath against the rivers,

Or was Your fury against the sea,

That You will mount on Your horses,

And Your chariot is salvation?

9 “You will stretch your bow against scepters,” says the Lord. *Pause*.

The land of rivers shall be torn asunder.

10 Many peoples will see you and be in travail,

Dispersing waters from its course.

The abyss uttered its voice;

Raising its form on high.

11 The sun arose, and the moon stood in its course;

At the light of Your arrows they went forth,

At the flashing of Your gleaming weapons.

12 You will bring low the land with threatening;

You will break the nations in wrath.

13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people,

To save Your anointed ones.

You brought death upon the heads of the lawless;

You brought bonds upon their neck. *Pause*.

14 You cut off the heads of rulers in amazement;

They shall tremble in it.

They will break their bridles

Like a poor man eating secretly.

[15] You ran your horses into the sea,

Churning up the many waters.

[16] I kept watch, and my belly trembled

From the sound of the prayer of my lips;

And trembling penetrated into my bones.

And my very frame of mind was troubled.

I shall rest in the day of tribulation

To go up to the people of my sojourn.

[17] For though the fig tree will not bear fruit

And there be no grapes on the vines;

The labor of the olive tree fail

And the fields yield no food;

Though the sheep have no pasture

And there be no oxen in the cribs;

[18] Yet I will glory in the Lord;

I will rejoice in God my Savior.

[19] The Lord God is my strength;

He will direct my feet to the end;

He will set me upon high places,

So to conquer by His song.

ZEPHANIAH

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The Book of Zephaniah

Author—The prophet Zephaniah (commemorated December 3), from the tribe of Simeon. His name can be rendered “God has hidden.” It appears he was of royal blood, tracing his ancestry back to King Hezekiah (715–686 BC), and he was a resident of Jerusalem (1:4).

Date—About 627–625 BC. The holy prophet Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah (1:1), who reigned in Judah from 640 to 609 BC. He was a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.

Major Theme—*Judgment and blessing on Judah.*

Background—Zephaniah found himself prophesying in times that were both perilous and promising. During the long reign of Manasseh (696–642 BC), the religion and morality of Judah had been brought to an all-time low. The people practiced Baal worship, worship of the stars, and even human sacrifice, probably to please their Assyrian overlords. However, in the eyes of the holy prophet, these practices were nothing less than unbridled wickedness.

Manasseh repented of his wickedness (C2hr 33:12); however, his son Amon did not, and the people continued their pagan practices. When Josiah came to the throne in 640 BC, there were many who yearned for a return to the God of the fathers and were ready both to hear Zephaniah's message and to follow King Josiah in his zeal for reform.

Outline

- I. Author and Setting of the Prophecy (1:1)
- II. Judgment of Judah: The Day of the Lord (1:2–2:3)
    - A. Judah's idolatry and destruction (1:2–6)
    - B. Officials and royalty punished (1:7–9)
    - C. Merchants and complacent judged (1:10–13)
    - D. The Day of the Lord is at hand (1:14–2:3)
- III. Judgment of the Nations (2:4–3:8)
    - A. Philistia (2:4–7)
    - B. Moab (2:8–11)
    - C. Ethiopia (2:12)
    - D. Assyria (2:13–15)
    - E. Jerusalem (3:1–8)
- IV. Redemption and Restoration of Zion (3:9–20)
    - A. The righteous remnant (3:9–13)
    - B. Rejoicing in Zion (3:14–20)

The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

1 The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.[†]

[2]“Let all things be totally consumed from the face of the earth,” says the Lord. [3]“Let man and cattle cease. Let the birds of the air and the fish of the sea be consumed. I shall drive mankind from the face of the land,” says the Lord. [4]“I shall stretch out My hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I shall remove the names of Baal from this

place and the names of the priests— [5]those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops and who swear oaths by the Lord and who swear oaths by their king— [6]those who turn away from the Lord, neither seeking the Lord nor holding steadfastly to Him.

[7]“Fear before the presence of the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is at hand. The Lord has prepared His sacrifice; He has sanctified His guests. [8]And it shall be in the day of the Lord's sacrifice that I shall take vengeance on the princes and on the king's house, and upon all clothed with strange garments. [9]And I will openly take vengeance upon all those in the gates in that day, on those who fill the house of the Lord their God with ungodliness and deceit.

[10]“And in that day,” says the Lord, “there will be from the gate the sound of shouting from men killing, and a wailing from the second gate along with a great destruction from the hills. [11]Mourn, those of you dwelling here, being cut down in pieces; for all the people are like Canaan. All those exalting in silver are utterly destroyed.

[12]“And it shall come to pass in that day that I shall search Jerusalem with a lamp and shall take vengeance on the men having scorned their charge, the ones saying in their hearts, ‘The Lord shall not do any good, nor shall He do any harm.’[†] [13]And their power will be for plundering and their houses for complete destruction. And they will build houses, but will not live in them; and they will plant vineyards, but will not drink of their wine.

[14]“For the great day of the Lord is near. It is near and quick. The sound of the day of the Lord is bitter and harsh. [15]A mighty day of wrath has been

appointed: a day of affliction and distress, a day of unseasonable happenings and destruction, a day of gloom and darkness, a day of cloud and vapor, [16]a day of the trumpet and shouting against the fortified cities and the high towers. [17]I will greatly afflict the men, and they will walk as blind men, for they sinned against the Lord; and He shall pour out their blood as dust and their flesh as dung. [18]Their silver and gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord, but the whole land shall be consumed by the fire of His zeal; for He will bring about a speedy end to all those who dwell in the land.

Judgment against the Nations

2 “O untaught nation, be gathered together and united to one another, [2]before you become like a flower that passes away, before the anger of the Lord comes upon you, before the day of the wrath of the Lord comes upon you! [3]Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth. Bring about justice, seek righteousness, and give answer to these things, so you may be sheltered in the day of the Lord's wrath.

[4]“For Gaza shall be for pillaging, and Ashkelon shall be for extermination. Ashdod shall be driven out at midday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. [5]Woe to those dwelling on the seacoast, neighbors of the Cretans; O Canaan, land of the Philistines, the word of the Lord is against you, and I shall destroy you out of your dwelling place. [6]Crete shall be a pasture for flocks and folds for sheep. [7]The seacoast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; upon them they shall pasture their flocks in the houses of Ashkelon; in the evening they will rest because of the presence of the

children of Judah, for the Lord their God has cared for them and has removed their captivity.[†]

[8]“I have heard the insults of Moab and the cruel acts of the people of Ammon, by which they have berated My people and exalted themselves against My borders. [9]Therefore, as I live,” says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, “Moab shall be like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah, and Damascus is like a heap left on the threshing floor and ruined forever; and the remnant of My people will plunder them, and the remnant of My nation will inherit them.” [10]This is their punishment because they have reproached and exalted themselves against the Lord Almighty. [11]The Lord shall show Himself to be against them and shall utterly destroy all the gods of the earth, and they will worship Him, each one from his place, even all the islands of the nations.

[12]“O Ethiopians, you are the slain of My sword.” [13]And He shall stretch out His hand to the north and destroy the Assyrian, and make Nineveh a waterless desolation, as a desert. [14]And flocks will graze in the midst of her, even all the wild animals of the land; and the chameleons and hedgehogs will sleep in her coffered ceilings, and wild animals will cry out between her breaches and ravens in her gates, for her loftiness was as a cedar. [15]This is the contemptuous city who dwells in hope, who says in her heart, “I am, and there is none beside me.” How she has even become a desolation, a pasture for wild beasts! Everyone passing through her will hiss and shake his fists.

Woe to Jerusalem

3 Alas, the glorious and ransomed city! The dove[†] [2]did not listen to the voice, nor did she accept correction, nor did she trust in the Lord, and she did not draw near to her God. [3]Her rulers are in her as roaring lions, and her judges are as wolves of Arabia that remain until morning. [4]Her prophets borne by the wind, men who are scoffers, the bearers of the spirit, are men who are scorners. Her priests profane the holy things and live contrary to the law. [5]But the Lord in her midst is just and will never act unjustly. Morning by morning He will give His judgment in the light, and it is not concealed; He does not grant injustice by extortion nor injustice by strife.

[6]“I have brought down the arrogant with destruction, and their cornerstones are destroyed. I will make their streets totally desolate, so that none can pass through. Their cities are destroyed because there is no one to live or dwell in them. [7]I said, ‘But fear Me and receive instruction, and you will not be completely uprooted from the face of it—for much vengeance I have taken against her.’ Prepare yourself, rise early in the morning, for every last small grape left for the gleaners has been spoiled.

[8]“On account of this, wait for Me,” says the Lord, “until the day of My rising up as a testimony. For My judgment shall be for the gathering of the nations, to receive kings to pour out upon them all My fierce anger, for all the earth shall be consumed with the fire of My jealousy.[ω]

[9]“For then I shall transform for the people a language for her generation, for all to call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him under one yoke. [10]From the boundaries of the rivers of Ethiopia they will bring offerings to

Me. [11]In that day, you will not be ashamed of all your practices in which you acted profanely against Me. For at that time I will take away from you the contempt of your arrogance, and you shall no longer be haughty upon My holy mountain. [12]And I will leave among you a gentle and humble people, who will show reverence to the name of the Lord. [13]The remnant of Israel will not commit unrighteousness nor speak vanities; neither will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they will feed and lie down, and there will be no one terrifying them."

Promised Blessings for Jerusalem

[14]Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Cry aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Be glad and rejoice with your whole heart, O daughter of Jerusalem![ω] [15]The Lord has taken away your iniquities and ransomed you from your enemies. The Lord, the King of Israel, is in your midst; you will no longer see any evil. [16]At that time the Lord shall say to Jerusalem, "O Zion, be of good courage; do not let your hands grow slack. [17]The Lord your God is with you. The Mighty One shall save you. He shall bring gladness upon you and will renew you with His love. He will delight over you with joy as in a day of feasting. [18]I shall gather together your broken ones. Alas! who has taken up a reproach against her?

[19]"Behold, at that time I will act among you for your sake," says the Lord. "I will save the oppressed and welcome those being rejected. I will make them a praise and renowned throughout the whole earth. [20]And they shall be put to shame in that day when I do well with you, at the time when

I shall receive you, for I will make you praised and renowned among all the peoples of the earth when I return your captivity,” says the Lord.

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The Book of Haggai

Author—The author is the prophet Haggai, whose name means “festal.” He is the first of the postexilic prophets and a contemporary of the prophet Zechariah. Jewish tradition suggests he was a priest.

Date—520 BC, during the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia. Four prophetic messages were delivered over a period of four months.

Major Theme—*Forsake life's comforts and rebuild the temple.* Other themes revolve around the consequences of disobedience (1:6, 11; 2:16, 17) and the blessings of obedience (2:7–9, 19). A further prophetic theme points to the building of the Church from among the Gentiles (2:7).

Background—In 587 BC, the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and carried the Jews into exile in Babylon. In 539 BC, the Persian king Cyrus conquered the Babylonians and decreed that the Jews could return to their homeland. The rebuilding of the temple was begun by the remnant that returned. Theodoret of Cyrrus points out, “Since the completion of the construction was interrupted partly on account of the wickedness of their enemies and partly on account of their own sluggishness, Haggai, the blessed prophet, induced the people to begin rebuilding the temple.” It was finished and consecrated five years after the Book of Haggai was written, in 515 BC.

Outline

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. First Prophetic Message: Exhortation to Rebuild the Temple (1:2–15)
  - A. The people's excuse (1:2–4)
  - B. God's response to their disobedience (1:5–11)
  - C. The people go to work (1:12–15)
- III. Second Prophetic Message: Future Glory of the Temple (2:1–9)
  - A. God's presence is with the people in their work (2:1–5)
  - B. The “choice things” to come, filling the house with glory (2:6–9)
- IV. Third Prophetic Message: God Will Bless the Nation's Obedience (2:10–19)
  - A. Holiness and uncleanness (2:10–14)
  - B. Further consequences of disobedience (2:15–17)
  - C. Immediate blessings: the reward of faithfulness (2:18, 19)
- V. Fourth Prophetic Message: God's Promise to Zerubbabel (2:20–23)
  - A. Judgment of kings and nations (2:20–22)
  - B. The calling and role of Zerubbabel (2:23)

1 In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying, “Speak to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, from the tribe of Judah, and Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest, this message. [2]‘Thus says the Lord Almighty: “This people says, ‘The time has not come to build the Lord's house.’ ” ’ ”

The Command to Rebuild the Lord's House

[3]Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, [4]“Is it time for you to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house stands in ruins?” [5]Now therefore, thus says the Lord Almighty: “Consider your

ways! [6]You have sown much and brought in little. You have eaten, but you are not satisfied. You have drunk, but not to get drunk. You have clothed yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

[7]Thus says the Lord Almighty: "Carefully consider your ways! [8]Go up to the mountain and cut wood and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the Lord. [9]Thus says the Lord Almighty: "You looked for much, but little came, and when it was brought into the house I blew it away, because My house is desolate while each one of you hurries to his own house; [10]because of this the heavens above you will withhold the dew, and the earth withhold its fruit. [11]And I shall bring a sword upon the land and upon the mountains, and upon the grain and upon the wine and upon the oil, and upon whatever the ground brings forth, and on men and livestock, and on all the labor of their hands."

[12]Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, heeded the word of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him to them, and the people feared in the presence of the Lord. [13]Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, said these words to the people: "I am with you, says the Lord." [14]So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God,[†] [15]on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

The Future Glory of the New Temple

2 In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the Lord spoke by Haggai the prophet, saying, [2]“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, saying, [3]‘Who among you saw this house in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Is this not in your eyes as being nothing? [4]Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ says the Lord; ‘be strong, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,’ says the Lord, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ says the Lord Almighty. [5]‘And My Spirit remains among you; take courage!’ [6]For thus says the Lord Almighty, ‘Once more I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land;[†] [7]and I will shake all nations, and the choice things of all the nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord Almighty.[†] [8]‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord Almighty. [9]‘The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and peace of soul for a possession to everyone who builds and raises this temple.’ ”[†]

The Corrupting Effect of the Unclean

[10]On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet, saying,[†] [11]“Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying,[†] [12]“If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and the edge touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?” ’ ” Then the

priests answered and said, “No.” [13]And Haggai said, “If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?” So the priests answered and said, “It shall be unclean.” [14]Then Haggai answered and said, ‘ “So is this people, so is this nation before Me,’ says the Lord, ‘and so are all the works of their hands. Whoever comes near them shall be unclean because of their early burdens; they shall be distressed because of their toils; and you have hated him who rebukes in the gates.

[15]‘And now consider from this day forward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord, [16]what manner of people you were; when you put twenty ephahs of barley into the bin, and there were but ten; when you came to the wine vat to draw out fifty measures from the press, but only twenty were there. [17]I struck you with barenness and blight and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,’ says the Lord. [18]‘Establish your hearts from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid. Give careful thought to this: [19]Is the seed still on the threshing floor? And as yet, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit? But from this day I shall bless you.’ ”

A Promise Made to Zerubbabel

[20]And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,[†] [21]“Speak to Zerubbabel from the tribe of Judah, saying, ‘I shall shake heaven and earth and the sea and the dry land. [22]I shall overthrow the thrones of kings, and I

will destroy the power of the kings of the nations, and I shall overthrow both chariots and riders. The horses and their riders will come down; everyone by the sword of his brother. [23]In that day,' says the Lord Almighty, 'I shall take you, Zerubbabel, My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and shall make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you.' "

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The Book of Zechariah

Author—Zechariah, whose name means “he whom God remembers.” He was born in Babylon, returning to Judah in 537 BC. Zechariah's prophetic ministry was well established in Babylon among the people in captivity. He was from the tribe of Judah, succeeding his grandfather Addo as a prophet. Haggai was his contemporary. Zechariah is commemorated on February 8.

Date—520–480 BC. Zechariah's prophecies coincide with those of Haggai.

Major Theme—*Encouraging the returned captives to rebuild the temple*. The prophecies of Zechariah are messianic, apocalyptic, and eschatological. Zechariah foretold Christ's coming in lowliness and humility (6:12; 13:7), His rejection and betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (11:12, 13), His crucifixion (13:7), His priesthood (6:13), His heritage (6:13; 9:9; 14:9, 16), His coming in glory (14:4), His building of the Lord's temple (6:12, 13), his reign (9:10, 14), and His establishment of peace and prosperity (3:10; 9:9, 10).

As to the apocalyptic and eschatological emphasis, the prophecies foretold the invasion of Jerusalem (12:1–3; 14:1, 2), the victory of Judah's enemies (14:2), the Lord's defense of Jerusalem (14:3, 4), the judgment on the nations (12:9; 14:3), the geographical changes in Judah (14:4, 5), the commemoration of the Feast of Tabernacles in the messianic age (14:16–19), and the fulfillment of the prophecies about the holiness of the Israelites (14:20, 21).

This book also develops the theology of angels, as God communicates through them to Zechariah. Many New Testament apocalyptic images are foreshadowed in this book.

Background—In the first year of Cyrus the Great of Persia, a decree was issued permitting the return of the Jews to Jerusalem with a commission to rebuild the temple. The Israelites were led back by Zerubbabel and Joshua. Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, was the heir to the throne of David. In 520 BC, Zechariah and Haggai attempted to rouse the remnant of returned exiles to rebuild the temple.

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–6)
II. The Eight Night Visions (1:7–6:8)
III. The Symbolic Crowning of Joshua (6:9–15)
IV. Obedience Better than Fasting (7:1–14)
V. The Promise of the Future (8:1–23)
VI. The Rejection and Reception of the Messiah (9:1–14:21)

A Call to Conversion

1 In the eighth month of the second year of the reign of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, son of Berechiah, son of Addo the prophet, saying,[†] 2 “The Lord has been very angry with your fathers,[†] 3 and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord,[†] 4 “And do not become like your fathers, whom the former prophets accused, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty:

“Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ ” But they did not pay attention or heed Me,” says the Lord.[†]

[5]“Your fathers—where are they? And the prophets—will they live forever?[†] [6]But receive My words and My ordinances as I commanded by My Spirit to My servants the prophets who overtook your fathers.” And they answered and said, “As the Lord Almighty determined to deal with us, according to our ways and according to our practices, thus He dealt with us.” ’ ”[†]

The Vision of the Four Horses

[7]In the second year of the reign of Darius, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, this is the month Sabat, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Addo the prophet, saying,[†] [†] [8]I saw a vision in the night, and behold, a man was mounted on a red horse, and he stood in the midst of the two shaded mountains, and behind him were red, dapple gray, piebald, and white horses.[†] [9]And I said, “My lord, what are these?” And the angel talking to me said, “I will show you what these are.” [10]And the man who stood in the midst of the mountains replied and said to me, “These are those whom the Lord sent forth to go out into all the earth.” [11]And they answered the Angel of the Lord, who stood in the midst of the mountains, and said, “We have gone out into all the earth, and behold, all the earth is inhabited and is at peace.”[†]

[12]Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, “O Lord Almighty, how long will You show no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, which You disregarded these seventy years?”[†] [13]And the Lord Almighty

replied to the angel who was speaking to me with kind and comforting words. [14]And the angel speaking to me said to me, “Cry out, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty: “I have been jealous for both Jerusalem and Zion with great jealousy,[†] [15]and I am exceedingly angry with the nations joining together against her, with whom I was only a little angry, but then they joined together with evil intent.” [16]Therefore, thus says the Lord: “I shall return to Jerusalem with compassion, and in her My house shall be rebuilt,” says the Lord Almighty, “and a measuring line shall indeed be stretched out over Jerusalem.” ’ ” [17]And the angel talking to me said to me, “Cry out again, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Cities shall yet overflow with prosperity, and hereafter the Lord will have mercy on Zion and will choose Jerusalem.” ’ ”

The Vision of the Four Horns

2 And I looked up, and behold, four horns.[†] [2]And I said to the angel who talked with me, “My lord, what are these?” And he said to me, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah and Israel.” [3]And the Lord showed me four craftsmen. [4]And I said, “What are they coming to do?” And he said, “These are the horns that scattered Judah and broke Israel in pieces, and not one of them looked up, and they come forth to sharpen these with their hands, the four horns—the nations that lifted their horn up against the land of the Lord to scatter it.”

The Glory of the New Jerusalem

[5]And I looked up, and behold, a man, and in his hand was a measuring line.[†] [6]And I said to him, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To

measure Jerusalem to see its width and its length.” [7]And behold, the angel who was speaking to me stood up, and another angel went to meet him. [8]And he spoke to him, saying, “Run and speak to that young man, saying, ‘Jerusalem shall be fruitfully inhabited by reason of the multitude of men and livestock in the midst of her. [9]And I will be for her a wall of fire all around,’ says the Lord, ‘and I will be in glory in the midst of her,’ says the Lord.”

[10]“Oh! Oh! flee from the land of the north,” says the Lord, “because I will gather you together from the four winds of heaven,” says the Lord.[†] [11]“Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.” [12]For thus says the Lord Almighty: “He has sent Me out after glory to the nations that plundered you, for the one who assails you is as one who assails the apple of His eye. [13]For behold, I bring My hand against them, and they shall be plunder to those serving them, and you will know the Lord Almighty sent Me.

[14]“Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I am coming to you, and I will dwell in your midst,” says the Lord. [15]“And in that day many nations shall flee to the Lord for refuge, and they will be His people, and they will dwell in your midst, and you shall know the Lord Almighty has sent Me to you. [16]And the Lord will inherit Judah, His portion in the holy land, and He will still choose Jerusalem. [17]Let all flesh fear before the presence of the Lord, for He has roused Himself from His holy clouds.”[†]

Joshua the High Priest

3 And the Lord showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the presence of the Angel of the Lord, and the devil stood at his right hand to oppose him.[†] [2]And the Lord said to the devil, “The Lord rebukes you, O devil, even the Lord choosing for Himself Jerusalem rebukes you. Behold, is this one not like a brand plucked from the fire?”[†] [3]And Joshua was clothed in filthy garments and stood before the Angel.[†] [4]And He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And He said to him, “Behold, I have taken your iniquities away from you. Now clothe him with a long robe, [5]and place upon his head a clean miter.” So they clothed him and put a clean miter on his head, and the Angel of the Lord was standing by.

[6]Then the Angel of the Lord testified to Joshua, saying, [7]“Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘If you walk in My paths and if you keep My commands, you shall judge My house; and if you will diligently guard My courtyard, I will give you those to walk in the midst of these who stand here. [8]Hear then, O Joshua the high priest, you and your neighbors sitting before you, for these men are prophets; for behold, I bring forth My servant the Dayspring. [9]For the stone which I place before the face of Joshua, upon one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I am digging a pit,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will search out every wrongdoing of that land in one day. [10]On that day,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘each of you will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree.’ ”[†] [†]

The Lampstand and the Olive Trees

4 And the angel who spoke to me came again and awakened me as when a man is awakened out of his sleep.[†] [2]And he said to me, “What did you see?” And I said, “Behold, I have seen a lampstand made of solid gold, and a bowl at its top, and seven lamps upon it, and the seven tubes to its lamps; [3]and over it two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and one on the left.”[†] [4]And I asked the angel who was speaking to me, “What are these, my lord?” [5]And the angel speaking to me answered, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” [6]And he answered and spoke to me, saying, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, ‘Not by mighty power nor by strength, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.[†] [7]‘Who are you, O great mountain, to set this right before the face of Zerubbabel? For I will bring forth the stone of the inheritance, its grace equaling My grace.’ ”

[8]And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [9]“The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will complete it, and you will know the Lord Almighty has sent Me to you. [10]For who has scorned the day of small beginnings? They shall rejoice and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel: these seven are the eyes of the Lord, which look upon all the earth.”

[11]And I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees at the right of the lampstand and at its left?”[†] [12]And I inquired a second time and said to him, “What are the two branches of the olive trees in the handles of the two golden tubes that pour forth and bring oil to the golden channels?” [13]And he said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No,

my lord.” [14]And he said, “These are the two sons of richness who stand beside the Lord of all the earth.”

The Flying Sickle

5 I turned and looked up, and behold a flying sickle.[†] [2]And he said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a flying sickle, twenty cubits in length by ten cubits wide.” [3]And he said to me, “This is the curse going out over the face of the whole earth, for every thief on this side shall be punished with death, and everyone on that side who swears falsely shall be punished by death.”[†] [4]“And I will bring it forth,” says the Lord Almighty, “and it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall settle in the midst of his house and destroy it, both its timber and its stones.”

[5]And the angel who was talking to me came out and said to me, “Look up and see this that is going forth.”[†] [6]And I said, “What is it?” And he said, “This is the measuring basket that goes forth.” And he said, “This is their wrongdoing in all the land.” [7]And behold, a talent of lead was being lifted up, and behold one woman sat in the midst of the measuring basket.[†] [8]And he said, “This is lawlessness.” And he threw it into the midst of the measure, and he threw the lead weight into the mouth of it.

[9]Then I looked up to see, and behold two women going forth, and the wind was in their wings. They had wings like the wings of a stork, and they took up the measuring basket into the air between heaven and earth. [10]And I asked the angel speaking to me, “For what reason do they carry this basket

for measuring?” [11]And he said to me, “To prepare and to build a place for it in the land of Babylon. They will place it there upon its own place.”

The Four Chariots

6 I turned and looked up; I looked and beheld four chariots coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze.[†] [2]With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses,[†] [3]with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot piebald horses. [4]And I replied to the angel speaking to me, “What are these, my lord?” [5]And the angel who spoke with me answered and said, “These are the four winds of heaven, and they are going forth to stand before the Lord of all the earth. [6]The black ones went out to the land of the north, and the white horses went out after them, and the piebald horses went to the land of the south. [7]The dapple gray horses went out and looked to go around over all the earth.” And He said, “Go and travel over all the earth.” And they traveled over all the earth. [8]And He called out and spoke to me, saying, “Behold, the ones going out to the land of the north have given rest to My anger in the land of the north.”

[9]And the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [10]“Take the things of the captivity from the rulers, from its useful men and from those having come to understand it, and on that day you shall enter into the house of Josiah, son of Zephaniah, who has come out of Babylon; [11]take silver and gold and make crowns, and set them on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. [12]And you will say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Behold the man, Orient is His name, and He shall rise up from

below the horizon, and He shall build the house of the Lord.[†] [13]And He shall receive power and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and a priest shall be by His right hand, and there will be peaceful counsel between both of them.’ ” [14]And the crown shall be to those who endure patiently, to His useful men, and to those coming to understand it, and for the favor of the son of Zephaniah, and for a psalm in the house of the Lord. [15]And those far away from them will come and will build in the house of the Lord. You shall know the Lord Almighty sent Me to you, and this will come to pass if you will listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God.”

True Fasting

7 And it came to pass, in the fourth year of Darius the king, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev,[†] [2]when Sharezer and Regem-Melech and his men went to Bethel to propitiate the Lord,[†] [3]speaking to the priests in the house of the Lord Almighty and to the prophets, saying, “The holy offering has come in here in the fifth month—just as I have done for a considerable number of years.” [4]And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying,[†] [5]“Speak to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying, ‘Though you fasted or mourned in the fifth or seventh months, lo these seventy years, did you at all fast for Me? [6]And if you do eat or drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves? [7]Are these not the words the Lord spoke by the hand of the former prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and thriving, and the cities around her, and the hill country and the plains were inhabited?’ ”

[8]And the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying,[†] [9]“Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘Render a just judgment; show mercy and compassion each

to his brother. [10]Do not oppress the widow, or the orphan, or the foreigner, or the poor. And let not one remember in his heart any wrong of his brother.’

[11]“But they refused to pay attention, and without reason turned their backs and stopped their ears so they should not hear. [12]And they made their hearts disobedient so as not to heed My Law, nor to hear the words the Lord Almighty sent by His Spirit by the hand of the former prophets. And there came great wrath from the Lord Almighty. [13]And it shall come to pass as He said, for they did not listen. So they will cry out, but by no means will I listen to their prayers,” says the Lord Almighty.[†] [14]“And I shall cast them out among all the nations which they did not know, and behind them the land shall become utterly worthless from traveling through or for coming back, for they made the chosen land a desolation.”[†]

The Future Restoration of Israel

8 And the word of the Lord Almighty came, saying,[†] [2]“Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘I have been zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion, zealous for her with great zeal and fervor.’ [3]Thus says the Lord: ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called a True City, and the Mountain of the Lord Almighty the Holy Mountain.’[†]

[4]“Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘Elderly men and elderly women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one holding his cane in his hand for the multitude of their days.[†] [5]And the streets will be filled with boys and girls dancing in her streets.’ [6]Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘If it is impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it

also be impossible in My sight?' says the Lord Almighty.[†] [7]Thus says the Lord Almighty: 'Behold, I shall deliver My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west. [8]I shall bring them in and settle them in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be to Me a people and I will be to them a God in truth and in righteousness.'

[9]"Thus says the Lord Almighty: 'Let your hands be strong, you who hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets, from the day that the house of the Lord Almighty was founded, and from the time the temple was built.[†] [10]For before those days, men's wages will not be profitable and a price for livestock will not even exist, and because of affliction there will be no peace for those going out and those coming in, and I will send forth all men, each against his neighbor. [11]But now I do not do to the remnant of this people as in the former days,' says the Lord Almighty.[†] [12]'Rather I will show forth peace, for the vine shall give its fruit, the earth her produce, the heaven its dew, and I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people. [13]And it shall come to pass that as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you will be for a blessing; be of good courage and strengthen your hands.'

[14]"For thus says the Lord Almighty: 'As I purposed to afflict you when your fathers provoked Me to anger,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and I did not relent, [15]so now in these days I have prepared and purposed to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; be of good courage. [16]These are the things you shall do: speak the truth, each man to his neighbor, and judge with peaceful judgment in your gates,[†] [17]and let none of you plan evil in

his heart against his neighbor, and do not love a false oath, for all these things I hate,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

[18]And the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, saying, [19]“Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘The fourth-month fast, and the fifth-month fast, and the seventh-month fast, and the tenth-month fast shall be for joy and gladness and in good feasts to the house of Judah. And you will rejoice, and you will love truth and peace.’[†] [20]Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘Yet many people will have come and those inhabiting many cities; [21]and the inhabitants of five cities will come together to one city, saying, “Let us go to beseech the Lord and to seek out the face of the Lord Almighty; and I will go also.” [22]And many peoples and many nations will come to seek out the presence of the Lord Almighty in Jerusalem and to obtain the favor of the presence of the Lord.’ [23]Thus says the Lord Almighty, ‘In those days, if ten men from all the tongues of the nations stop you, even if they grab hold of the hem of a Jewish man, they will be saying, “We will go with you, for we heard God is with you.” ’ ”[†]

Judgment of Israel's Enemies

9 The burden of the word of the Lord against the land of Hadrach, and of Damascus his sacrifice, for the Lord looks upon men and on all the tribes of Israel.[†] [2]And on Hamath in her borders, Tyre and Sidon, because they are very wise. [3]For Tyre built a fortress for herself and stored up silver like dust and collected gold like mud in the streets. [4]Therefore, the Lord shall possess her as an inheritance, and shall strike against her power in the sea, and she shall be consumed by fire. [5]Ashkelon shall see it and fear; and

Gaza, even she shall suffer greatly, and Ekron will be ashamed because of her transgression. The king will perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall no longer be inhabited.

[6]“And foreigners shall settle in Ashdod, and I will bring down the pride of the Philistines. [7]I will remove their blood from their mouth and their abominations from between their teeth, and this also will be left to our God. And they shall be as a captain of a thousand in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite. [8]And I will raise up a fortress around My house that none may pass through nor return back, and no longer shall anyone come against them to drive them out, for I have now seen with My own eyes.[†]

The Coming King

[9]“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Proclaim it aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you; He is righteous and saving; He is gentle and mounted upon a donkey, even a young foal.[† ω] [10]He will utterly destroy the chariots out of Ephraim and the horse out of Jerusalem. The bow of war shall be utterly destroyed, and there shall be abundance and peace among the nations. He shall rule over the waters as far as the sea and over the rivers to the ends of the earth.

[11]“And by the blood of your covenant, you freed your prisoners from the pit having no water.[†] [12]You prisoners from the congregation, you shall live in the fortress, and for one day of your exile, I will repay to you double. [13]For I have bent you, O Judah, for Myself as a bow; I have filled Ephraim. And I will arouse your sons, O Zion, against the sons of the Greeks, and I will handle you as the sword of a warrior.” [14]And the Lord will be over

them, and He shall go forth like a lightning bolt. The Lord Almighty shall sound with the trumpet and shall go forth with the tumult of His threat. [15]The Lord Almighty will shield them, and they shall devour their enemy and overwhelm them with sling-stones. They will drink them down as wine, and they shall fill the bowls as at the altar. [16]And on that day, the Lord their God will deliver them, His people, as a flock, for sacred stones will roll across His land. [17]For if anything of His be good, and anything of His be fair, there shall be grain for the young men and the fragrant wine for the virgins.

The Ransomed People of God

10 Ask for yourself rain from the Lord during the time of the early rain and the late rain. The Lord made a great display and will give winter rain to each crop in the field.[†] [2]Therefore the ones speaking proclaimed troublesome things, and the seers false visions, and they told false dreams; they spoke vain words of comfort. They have been driven away like sheep, and they have lost heart because there was no healing.

[3]“My anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I will care for the lambs. The Lord God Almighty shall visit His flock, the house of Judah, and shall appoint them as His stately warhorse. [4]For from Himself He observed attentively, and from Himself He ordered—even from Himself a bow in anger; from Him shall go forth every oppressor. [5]And as warriors, they will be trampling as grapes the clay on the roads. They shall array themselves in battle array, for the Lord is with them, and the horsemen will be put to shame.

[6]“And I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph, and I will settle them, for I have loved them; and they shall be as though I had not turned away from them, because I am the Lord their God, and I will hear them. [7]And they shall be like the warriors of Ephraim, and their heart shall rejoice as with wine; and their children shall see it and be glad, and their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. [8]I will make a sign for them and gather them in, for I will redeem them, and they shall be multiplied according to their previous number.

[9]“And I will sow them among the peoples, and those far off will remember Me. They will rear their children, and they will return. [10]And I shall bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them in from the Assyrians. I shall bring them into the land of Gilead and into Lebanon; not even one of them will be left behind. [11]They will pass through the narrow sea and will strike the waves of the sea, and all the full depths of the rivers shall be dried up. All the arrogance of the Assyrians shall be taken away, and the scepter of Egypt shall be stripped away. [12]And I will strengthen them in the Lord their God, and they shall boast in His name,” says the Lord.

The Shepherds

11 Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let the fire devour your cedars.[†] [2]Let the pine wail, for the cedar has fallen; because the mighty men have been greatly afflicted. Wail, oak trees of the Basanite land, for the thickly wooded forest has fallen. [3]The sound of wailing is from the shepherds, for their greatness has been brought low; the sound of roaring lions, the arrogance of the Jordan has languished. [4]Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Tend the sheep of the slaughter like a shepherd, [5]the ones whose possessors have slaughtered and did not repent, and those selling them said, ‘Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich and the shepherds themselves suffered nothing because of them.’ [6]Therefore I will no longer spare the inhabitants of the land,” says the Lord, “but behold, I will deliver men up, each one into the hand of his neighbor and into the hand of his king. They shall cut the land into pieces, and I will not deliver them from their hand.”

The Two Staffs

[7]But I shall tend the sheep of the slaughter in the land of Canaan, and I will take to myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty and the other one I called Line, and I shall tend the flock. [8]And I shall cut off three shepherds in one month, and my soul shall be weighed down by them, for their souls have roared against me. [9]And I said, “I will not tend to you; that which dies, let it die, and that which perishes, let it perish, and let the rest of them devour the flesh each of his neighbor.”

[10]And I shall take my staff Beauty, and I shall cast it away, to break my covenant which I made with all the people.[ω] [11]And in that day they will be scattered about. And the Canaanites shall know the flock is kept safe, for this is the word of the Lord. [12]And I shall say to them, “If it is fitting in your judgment, give me my payment, or refuse it.” And they established my wage at thirty pieces of silver.[†] [13]And the Lord said to me, “Drop them into the smelting furnace and see if it is proven, as in the same manner I

was proven for their sake.” And I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the smelting furnace in the house of the Lord. [14]And I threw aside the second staff, the Line, to disband the possessions between Judah and Israel.

[15]And the Lord further said to me, “Take even for yourself the equipment of a shepherd, of an unskilled shepherd. [16]For behold! I raise up a shepherd against the land, one who will not care for the sheep who are abandoned, nor seek the scattered ones, nor heal the injured, nor even guide the healthy. But instead, he will devour the flesh of the choice ones, and he will tear them apart joint by joint. [17]Woe to you shepherding the flock carelessly, forsaking the flock! The sword shall be against his arms, and against his right eye; his right arm shall be completely withered, and his right eye shall become totally blind!”

The Coming Deliverance for Judah

12 The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel: Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him: [2]“Behold, I make Jerusalem as a gate being shaken to all the peoples surrounding her; for in Judea there shall be a siege against Jerusalem.

[3]“And it shall come to pass in that day that I shall make Jerusalem a stone to be walked upon by all the nations. Everyone trampling her underfoot will utterly mock her, and all the nations of the earth shall come together against her. [4]In that day,” says the Lord Almighty, “I shall smite every horse with bewilderment, and I shall bring a state of total confusion

against its rider. But I shall open My eyes upon the house of Judah, and I shall smite all the horses of the nations with blindness. [5]And the captains of thousands of Judah shall say in their hearts, ‘We shall find for ourselves those inhabiting Jerusalem with the Lord Almighty, their God.’ [6]In that day I will make the captains of thousands of Judah as a burning torch of fire among the trees and like a torch in dried straw. They shall consume all nations surrounding her, both on the right and on the left, and Jerusalem will again dwell by herself. [7]And the Lord shall preserve the dwelling places of Judah as at the beginning, that the boast of the house of David and the pride of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not magnify themselves over Judah.

[8]“And in that day, it shall come to pass that the Lord shall defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and in that day, the one who is weak among them will be as the house of David, and the house of David as the house of God, as the Angel of the Lord before them. [9]It shall come to pass in that day that I shall seek to drive away all the nations that come against Jerusalem. [10]And I will pour the spirit of grace and compassion upon the house of David and those inhabiting Jerusalem, and they shall look upon Me whom they mocked, and they will mourn for Him as for a beloved one, and they shall grieve profoundly as for a firstborn son.[†]

[11]“In that day, the lamentation in Jerusalem shall be very great, like the mourning for the pomegranate orchard being cut down in the plain. [12]And the land itself shall mourn throughout the tribe, the tribe of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the tribe of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; [13]the tribe of the house of

Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the tribe of Symeon by itself and their wives by themselves; [14]and all the remaining tribes, every tribe by itself and their wives by themselves.

The End of False Prophets and Idols

13 “In that day every place shall be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [2]And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord of hosts, “that I will utterly destroy the names of the idols from the land, and their remembrance shall be no more. I will remove the false prophets and the unclean spirit from the land.

[3]“And it shall come to pass that if a man still prophesy, his father and his mother who begot him will say to him, ‘You will not live, for you spoke falsehoods in the name of the Lord,’ and his father and his mother who begot him will bind him when he prophesies. [4]And it shall come to pass in that day that the prophets shall be put to shame, each by his vision when he prophesies, and they will put on a leather skin of hair because they spoke lies. [5]And one will say, ‘I am not a prophet, for I am a tiller of the soil; a man brought me up thus from my youth.’ [6]And I will say to him, ‘What are these wounds in the middle of your hands?’ And he will say, ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of my beloved.’

[7]“O sword, raise up against My shepherds, and against My fellow-man,” says the Lord Almighty. “Smite the shepherds and draw out the sheep, and I shall bring My hand against the shepherds.[†] [8]And it will come to pass in all the land,” says the Lord, “two of every three will be utterly destroyed and shall die, but the other third will be left in it.[†] [9]And I shall bring the

remaining third through the fire, and I shall try them as silver is tried, and I will prove them as gold itself is proven. He will call upon My name, and I will hear him, and I will say, ‘This is My people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’ ”

The Day of the Lord

14 Behold, the days of the Lord come, and your plunder will be divided among you.[†ω] [2]And I shall gather together all the nations to war against Jerusalem. The city shall be taken, the houses plundered, the women defiled, and half of the city will go forth into exile, but the rest of My people shall not be utterly cut off from the city. [3]And the Lord will go forth and prepare for battle against those nations, as in the day of His battle array in the day of war.[†] [4]And on that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, half towards the east and half towards the sea, a very great divide; and half the mountain shall lean toward the north and half of it toward the south. [5]And the valley of my mountains will be blocked up, and the ravine of the mountains will be joined as far as Azal. And it will be blocked up as he had blocked it up in the days of the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah the king of Judah, and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Him. [6]And in that day, it shall be that there will not be any light, but there shall be cold and frost [7]for one day, and that day shall be known to the Lord. It will be neither a day nor a night, but towards evening there will be light.

[8]And in that day living water shall come forth out of Jerusalem, half of it toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea. So it will be in both

summer and spring.[†] [9]And the Lord shall be King of all the earth, and in that day the Lord shall be one Lord, and His name one name, [10]encircling all the land, even the wilderness from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Rama shall remain in her place; from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate; to the Gate of the Corners, and to the Tower of Hananeel, as far as the king's winepresses, [11]they will dwell in her, and it will no longer be a curse. Jerusalem shall dwell securely.

[12]And this will be the downfall with which the Lord will strike all the nations, as many as made war against Jerusalem. Their flesh will be eaten away as they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall pour out of their sockets, and their tongue shall melt away in their mouth. [13]In that day there shall be a state of great bewilderment upon them from the Lord. Each of them will seize the hand of his neighbor, and his hand will become locked with the person near to him. [14]And Judah shall draw up for battle in Jerusalem, and He will gather together the strength of all the surrounding peoples: the gold, the silver, and the apparel in great abundance. [15]And this will be the overthrow of the horses and the mules, the camels and the donkeys, and all the cattle that are in those camps throughout this downfall.

[16]And it shall come to pass that whoever may be left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem, they too will go up every year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. [17]And it shall be that whoever from all the tribes of the land will not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, even these will be added to the others. [18]And if the nation of Egypt shall not go up nor attend, upon these will come the downfall which the Lord will strike on all the nations,

as many as do not come up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.[†] [19]This will be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations, as many as do not come up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

[20]In that day, there will be engraved in the bridle of every horse, “Holy to the Lord Almighty,” and the kettles in the house of the Lord will be like bowls before the altar. [21]And every kind of kettle in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty; and all who sacrifice will come and take from them and shall cook in them. And in that day the Canaanite shall no longer be in the house of the Lord Almighty.[†]

MALACHI

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The Book of Malachi

Author—Malachi, whose name means “angel” or “messenger.” Whatever he prophesied, that very day an angel of God appeared and repeated his message. Malachi spoke with his angel face-to-face as to a friend. Malachi was born in Sopha (Supha), of the tribe of Levi, after the return of the captives from Babylon. He prophesied after the consecration of the temple in Jerusalem, 515 BC. He is commemorated on January 3.

Date—500–350 BC, based on the contents of the book.

Major Theme—*Turn from sin, for the day of the Lord is coming.* Malachi considers the temple, the priesthood, and true worship as the spiritual foundation not only for the people of his day, but also for the messianic kingdom to come. Even in the midst of a multitude of sins and evildoings, Malachi looked ahead with hope to see a new day dawning when Elijah (that is, John the Baptist) would be sent and the darkness would disappear with the coming of the Christ.

Background—After the reconstruction of the temple, the Israelites began grumbling against God, neglecting true worship. In spite of the many times God had delivered them, the people were ungrateful and forgot their history, saying, “And how has God shown His love?” (1:2). The priesthood neglected their sacred duties, no longer teaching the Law, accepting inferior sacrifices (1:7, 8) from men who oppressed the widows and orphans, and abandoning their lawful wives and children (2:14–16). Empty ritualism, hypocrisy, irreverence, apostasy, sorcery, and idolatrous practices were common (3:5). Because of the sins of the priests and the people, droughts, disease, and misfortunes were commonplace. The Book of Malachi addresses these issues.

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1)

II. God's Love for Israel (1:2–5)

III. Israel Rebuked for Unfaithfulness (1:6–2:17)

IV. The Messiah's Coming Judgment (3:1–7a)

V. Tithing Will Restore God's Blessing (3:7b–15)

VI. The Faithful Will Be Vindicated (3:16–18)

VII. The Day of the Lord (3:19–24)

The Lord's Love for Israel

1 The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of His messenger Malachi. Take it to heart![†]

[2]“I have loved you,” says the Lord. “But you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’ Was not Esau the brother of Jacob?” says the Lord. “Yet Jacob I have loved,[†] [3]but Esau I have hated, and I have appointed his borders for destruction and made his heritage as dwellings of the wilderness.” [4]Because one will say, “Edom has been destroyed, but let us return and rebuild the desolate places,” thus says the Lord, Ruler of all: “They may build, but I will throw down. They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord has placed Himself forever. [5]Your eyes will see, and you will say, ‘The Lord is magnified beyond the borders of Israel.’

Defiled Offerings

[6]“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then, I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is the reverence due to me?” says the Lord Almighty. “You priests are the ones who disparage My name, yet you say, ‘In what way have we disparaged Your name?’ [7]You offer defiled bread on My altar, but you say, ‘How have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the Lord is contemptible and the food placed upon it is contemptible.’[†] [8]And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is that not evil? Offer it then to your ruler! See if he will accept it, if he will accept it favorably,” says the Lord Almighty.

[9]“But now earnestly entreat the face of your God and pray to Him. These things have been done by your hands; shall I accept these from you?” says the Lord Almighty.[†] [10]“For this reason, even among you the doors will be shut, and you will not burn an offering on My altar. I have no pleasure in you,” says the Lord Almighty, “nor will I accept an offering from your hands. [11]For from the rising of the sun even to its going down, My name has been glorified among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering, for My name shall be great among the Gentiles,” says the Lord Almighty.[†] [12]“But you profane it in that you say, ‘The table of the Lord is defiled; and the food placed upon it is contemptible.’[†] [13]And you said, ‘Oh, what a weariness!’ And I have blown these away,” says the Lord Almighty. “And you bring prey, the lame, and the sick, and when you bring an offering, should I accept these from your hands?” says the Lord Almighty. [14]“But cursed be the man who is able,

who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—for I am a great King," says the Lord Almighty, "and My name is glorious among the nations.

Contemptible Priests

2 "And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. [2]If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name," says the Lord Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessing; indeed I will curse it, and I will scatter your blessing, and you will have it no more because you do not take this to heart. [3]Behold, I am turning my back on you, and I will smear dung on your faces, the dung of your feasts, and I will carry you away at the same time.[†] [4]Then you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant is with the sons of Levi," says the Lord Almighty.[†]

[5]"My covenant of life and peace was with him, and I gave this to him that he might reverently fear Me, that he might be established before My name. [6]The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from lawlessness. [7]For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty.[†]

[8]"But you have departed from the way; you weakened many in the law and corrupted the covenant of Levi," says the Lord Almighty. [9]"Therefore I also made you contemptible and disregarded before all nations, because you have not guarded My ways but have shown partiality in the law."

[10]Did not one God create you? Do you not all have one father? Why, then, does each of you forsake his brother to profane the covenant of your fathers?[†] [11]Judah was forsaken, and an abomination has occurred in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah profaned the holy things of the Lord, which He loved, and sought out foreign gods. [12]The Lord will destroy the man who does these things until he is humiliated from the tents of Jacob and from among those who offer sacrifice to the Lord Almighty.[†]

The Tragedy of Divorce

[13]And you do these things which I hate. You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and moaning because of troubles, yet still thinking it is worthy to look upon your sacrifice or take it as acceptable from your hands.[†] [14]And you say, “Why?” Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have forsaken; yet she is your companion and the wife of your covenant. [15]But did He not make another, having a remnant of His Spirit? Yet you ask, “What else does God seek but offspring?” But take heed to your spirit, and do not forsake the wife of your youth. [16]“But if you hate her and send her away,” says the Lord God of Israel, “ungodliness will obscure your thinking,” says the Lord Almighty. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not forsake her.” [17]You weary the Lord with your words, yet you say, “In what way have we wearied Him?” In that you say, “Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them,” or, “Where is the God of justice?”[†]

Messenger of the Covenant

3 “Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come into His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom you desire. Behold, He is coming,” says the Lord Almighty.[†] [2]“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can withstand His appearance? For He enters like a refiner's fire and as soap in one's wash.[†] [3]He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver and gold. He will purify the sons of Levi and pour them out as purified gold and silver, and they will bring an offering to the Lord in righteousness. [4]Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years.

[5]“And I will draw near to you in judgment, a swift witness against sorcerers, adulterers, those who swear falsely by My name, those who exploit wage-earners, those who oppress widows and afflict orphans, those who pervert the justice due foreigners, and those who do not fear Me,” says the Lord Almighty.[†] [6]“For I am the Lord your God; I have not changed. But you, O sons of Jacob, have not abstained[†] [7]from the sins of your fathers. You have turned away from My ordinances and have not kept them.

Tithing Brings God's Blessing

“Return to Me and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty. “But you say, ‘In what way shall we return?’ [8]Will a man insult God? Yet you have insulted Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we insulted You?’ You kept back your tithes and offerings.[†] [9]You most certainly turned your back on Me, you and the whole nation, and you insulted Me. [10]You brought all the produce into the storehouses—but it will be plundered in its house. Return now in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not open for you the floodgates of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it is overflowing. [11]And I shall send it to you for food and I will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor will the vine in the field fail to bear fruit," says the Lord Almighty. [12]"And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.

[13]"You spoke harsh words against Me," says the Lord, "yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'[†] [14]You have said, 'One who serves God is foolish; what profit have we from keeping His ordinances, and why do we go as suppliants before the face of the Lord Almighty? [15]And now we call foreigners blessed, and those doing lawless deeds are raised up—they even oppose God and go free.'"

[16]Then those who feared the Lord spoke these things each to his neighbor, and the Lord listened and heard them, and He wrote a book of remembrance before His face for those who feared the Lord and reverenced His name.[†] [17]"They shall be mine," says the Lord Almighty, "in the day that I make them My possession, and I will choose them as a man chooses his own son who serves him. [18]Then you shall return, and you will discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

The Day of the Lord

[19]"For behold, the day of the Lord is coming, burning like an oven. And it will burn them up, and it shall be that all foreigners and all who do wickedly will be stubble; and the day that is coming shall burn them up," says the Lord Almighty, "and neither root nor branch will be left of them.[†]

[20]But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings, and you shall go forth leaping as little calves released from their bonds.[†] [21]You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under your feet on the day I do this," says the Lord Almighty. [22]"Behold, I will send you Elijah before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.[†] [23]And he will turn the heart of the father to his son, and a man's heart to his neighbor, lest I come and strike the earth completely. [24]Be in remembrance of the Law of Moses My servant as I commanded him, with its statutes and judgments, at Horeb for all Israel."[†]

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The Book of Isaiah

Author—According to both Jewish and Christian tradition, Isaiah the son of Amoz is the author of this book. Isaiah, which means “the salvation of God,” was from the tribe of Judah and was the nephew of King Amaziah (796–767 BC) of Judah. He is commemorated on May 9.

Date—The time period is mentioned as “in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” This places the book about 745–680 BC, from approximately 25 years before the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom to about 40 years after it.

Major Theme—*“The Holy One of Israel” (1:4), who punishes His unrepentant people but later will redeem them.* The prophet's vision of the glory of God (1:6ff) is one of infinite transcendence. Man's role is one of faith in response to God's holiness and vision for the world. Isaiah revealed the Messiah in amazing detail—as if he were telling history instead of the future. He even describes the Theotokos (ch. 7) and how she is to conceive and bear God the Son incarnate with her virginity intact. Isaiah describes the suffering of Christ (ch. 53) together with His Resurrection from the dead, proclaiming His kingdom as if it had already happened.

Background—Assyria was growing in power under Tiglath-Pileser, who turned to the west after his conquests to the east. He saw the kingdom of Israel fall to Assyria's might along with other nations along the

Mediterranean coast. Seeing his people taken captive, Isaiah turned to warn the Southern Kingdom of Judah to trust in God alone.

Outline

I. Israel and the Nations (1:1–35:10)

  A. The judgment of Judah (1:1–4:1)

  B. The restoration of Zion (4:2–6)

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  E. The Assyrian threat (7:1–10:4)

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  I. Further judgment for the nations (28:1–35:10)

II. Historical Section (36:1–39:8)

III. The Salvation of God's People: The Messiah (40:1–57:21)

  A. God comforts His people (40:1–46:13)

  B. Cyrus of Persia as God's agent and the defeat of Babylon (47:1–48:22)

  C. The Messiah (49:1–57:21)

IV. The Coming Kingdom of God (58:1–66:24)

  A. True worship of God (58:1–14)

  B. The forgiveness of God's people (59:1–60:22)

  C. The coming of the Messiah (61:1–11)

  D. The judgment of God on His people (62:1–63:6)

  E. The remnant (63:7–65:16)

  F. The rule of God at the end of time (65:17–66:24)

1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw against Judah and Jerusalem in the kingdom of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.[†]

[2]Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth. For the Lord has spoken: “I have begotten and brought up sons, but they rejected Me. [3]The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know Me, and the people do not understand Me.” [4]Alas, sinful nation, a people full of sins, an evil seed, lawless children. They forsook the Lord; they provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel.[†] [5]Why should you still be struck as you continue in lawlessness? The whole head is in pain, and the whole heart in sadness. [6]From the feet all the way to the head, there is no soundness in them, only wounds and bruises and festering sores. They have not been closed or bandaged, or soothed with ointment. [7]Your land is desolate; your cities are burned with fire. Strangers take over your land in your presence and it is made desolate, overthrown by foreign people. [8]So the daughter of Zion is forsaken, like a tent in a vineyard, like a hut in a garden of cucumbers, like a besieged city. [9]Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah.[†]

[10]Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom. Give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah: [11]“What is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” says the Lord. “I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of lambs. I do not desire the blood of bulls and he-goats.[†] [12]When you come to appear before Me, who required these things from your hands to tread My court? [13]Although you should bring fine wheat flour, it is vain. Incense is an abomination to Me. I cannot endure your new

moons, and Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies, and fasting and holy day. [14]Your new moons and feasts My soul hates. You have become a dissatisfaction to Me; I will not forgive your sins. [15]When you stretch forth your hands to Me, I will turn My eyes from you. Although you make many prayers, I will not listen to you. Your hands are full of blood. [16]Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean. Put away the evils from your souls before My eyes. Cease from your evils.[ω] [17]Learn to do good. Seek judgment and redeem the wronged. Defend the orphan and justify the widow. [18]Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "although your sins are like crimson, I shall make them white like snow, and although they are as scarlet, I shall make them white like wool. [19]If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good things of the land. [20]But if you are unwilling and disobedient, you shall be devoured by the sword," for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

[21]How the faithful city of Zion has become a prostitute! It was full of judgment. Righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.[†] [22]Your silver is worthless; your tavern-keepers mix wine with water.[†] [23]Your rulers are disobedient and companions of thieves. Everyone loves bribes and follows after rewards. They do not defend the orphans, nor do they regard the cause of the widow.[†] [24]Therefore says the Master, the Lord of hosts: "Woe to the mighty ones of Israel, for My anger against the adversaries will not cease; and I will execute judgment on My enemies.[†] [25]I will bring My hand upon you and purge you completely. I will destroy those who disobey and remove all the lawless from you; I will humble all the arrogant. [26]I will establish your judges as at the first and your counselors as at the beginning.

Afterward, you shall be called the city of righteousness, Zion, the faithful mother-city.” [27]For her captives shall be saved with judgment and with mercy. [28]The lawless and sinners shall be destroyed together. Those who forsake the Lord shall come to an end. [29]For they shall be ashamed of the idols they desired and the gardens they longed for. [30]For they shall be as a terebinth tree that has lost its leaves; like a garden with no water. [31]Their strength shall be as broken fiber and their works as sparks of fire. The lawless and the sinners will burn together, and no one shall quench them.

2

The word that came from the Lord to Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem.[ω]

[2]Now it shall come to pass in the last days, the mountain of the Lord and the house of God shall be visible on the tops of the mountains and exalted above the hills. All the Gentiles shall come to it.[†] [3]Many Gentiles shall travel and say, “Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will proclaim His way to us, and we shall walk in it.” For the law of the Lord shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. [4]He shall judge between the Gentiles and rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

[5]O now, house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord. [6]For He forsook His people, the house of Israel, for as from the beginning, their land is filled with divinations—like the land of foreigners—and many children of foreigners were born to them. [7]Their land is filled with silver

and gold, and there is no end to their treasures. Their land is also filled with horses; there is no end to their chariots. [8]Their land is also filled with the abominations of their works, and they worship the works of their hands, which their fingers made. [9]A man bows down and each man humbles himself, but I will not forgive them. [10]Enter now into the rocks and hide in the earth from the face of the Lord, for fear and the glory of His might when He rises to smite the earth. [11]For the eyes of the Lord are lofty, and man is humble. The haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. [12]For the day of the Lord of hosts shall come upon all who are insolent, arrogant, high and lifted up, and they shall be humbled; [13]and upon every cedar tree of Lebanon, high and lifted up, and upon every oak of Bashan, [14]and upon every mountain and lofty hill, [15]and upon every high tower and fortified wall, [16]and upon every ship of the sea, and upon every sight of beautiful ships. [17]Every man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall fall. The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. [18]But they shall hide all the things made by hands. [19]They shall carry them into the caves and cracks of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from fear of the Lord's presence and the glory of His might when He arises to strike the earth. [20]For in that day, man will cast away his abominations of silver and gold, which they made to worship worthless things and bats, [21]so as to enter into the holes of solid rocks and clefts of the rugged rocks, from fear of the Lord and the glory of His might when He arises to strike the earth.

3 For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, takes away from Judah and from Jerusalem the strong man and the strong woman; the strength of bread and the strength of water; [2]the mighty man and the man of war; the judge, the prophet, the diviner, and the elder; [3]the captain of fifty, the wonderful counselor, the skillful artisan, and the prudent disciple. [4]“I will give children to be their princes, and mockers shall rule over them. [5]The people will collapse, every one on another and every one on his neighbor. The child will be arrogant toward the elder and vulgar toward the honorable.” [6]When a man takes hold of his brother or his father's servant, saying, “You have clothing; you be our ruler and let my food be under your roof.” [7]In that day, he will protest, saying, “I will not be your ruler, for in my house there is neither food nor clothing. I will not be the ruler of this people.” [8]For Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen, because their tongues are lawless and they are disobedient to the Lord. Now their glory is humbled. [9]The shame on their face witnesses against them. They declare and exhibit their sin as Sodom. Woe to their soul, for they planned evil upon themselves, [10]saying, “Let us hand over the righteous man, for he is burdensome to us.” They shall eat the fruit of their doings.[†] [11]Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. [12]“O My people, your punishers gather you, and those who make demands of you rule over you. O My people, those who bless you lead you astray and trouble the path of your feet.” [13]The Lord stands up to plead and stands to judge His people. [14]The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of His people and His princes: “For you set fire to My vineyard and the plunder of the poor is in your houses. [15]What do you mean by crushing My people and grinding the faces of the poor?”

[16]Moreover the Lord says, “Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, because they walk and mince as they go, making a jingling with their feet,[†] [17]therefore the Lord will humble the chief daughters of Zion. The Lord will uncover their secret parts.” [18]In that day, the Lord will take away the glory of their garments and adornments: the hair-clasps, the tassels, the crescents, [19]the necklace, and the ornament on their faces; [20]even the collection of glorious adornment, the anklets and the armlets, the bracelets for the right arm and the finger-rings and the earrings, [21]the garments dyed and decorated with purple, [22]the house-coats and transparent Lyconian garments, [23]the fine linen—the hyacinthine and scarlet and flax interwoven with gold and hyacinth—and the flowing veils. [24]And so it shall be, instead of a sweet smell there will be dust; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of a golden ornament of the head, baldness; and for your deeds, instead of purple, you will have sackcloth. [25]Your most handsome son, whom you love, shall fall by the sword, and your mighty shall fall by the sword. [26]And your chests of adornments shall lament and mourn, and you shall be left to sit on the ground.

4 Seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, “We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by your name, to take away our disgrace.” [2]In that day, the Lord will shine in counsel and glory on the earth, to exalt and glorify those of Israel who remain. [3]And it shall come to pass that those who remain in Zion and in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem, [4]because the Lord shall wash away the filth of the sons and the daughters of

Zion, and shall purge the blood of Jerusalem from their midst by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning.[†] [5]He shall come and there shall be with regard to Mt. Zion and everything round about, a cloud to overshadow it by day, and as it were smoke and light of fire burning at night, and it shall be covered altogether with glory. [6]It shall be for shade from the heat, for a place of shelter, and for a hiding-place from inclement weather and rain.

5 “Now I will sing to My Beloved a song of My Beloved regarding My vineyard: There was a vineyard for My Beloved, a place in power and richness.[†] [2]He placed a wall around it and fortified it. He planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst and also made a winepress in it. So I waited for it to bring forth grapes, but it produced thorn-plants. [3]And now, man of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, judge between Me and My vineyard. [4]What shall I yet do for My vineyard that I have not done for it? For I waited for it to bring forth grapes, but it produced thorn-plants. [5]But now I will tell you what I shall do to My vineyard: I shall remove its wall and it shall be for booty. I shall break down its wall and it shall be trampled underfoot. [6]I will forsake My vineyard. It shall not be pruned or cultivated, but thorns shall sprout forth as in a barren land. I will also command the clouds not to rain on it.” [7]For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the man of Judah is His beloved plant. I waited for it to bring forth judgment, but it brought forth lawlessness, and not righteousness, but a cry.

[8]Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, to take something from their neighbor. Surely you will not dwell alone in the land.[†] [9]For these things reached the ears of the Lord of hosts, for though many

large and beautiful houses should be built, they shall be desolate, for there shall be no one to live in them. [10]For where ten yoke of oxen shall work, the land shall yield one jar, and whoever sows six homers shall receive three measures. [11]Woe to those who rise early in the morning to follow intoxicating drink; to those who continue until night, for wine shall inflame them. [12]For they drink wine with the harp, the strings, the tambourine and flute, but they do not look at the deeds of the Lord, nor consider the works of His hands!

[13]Therefore my people became captives, because they did not know the Lord; and a multitude died through hunger and thirst for water. [14]Hades enlarged itself and opened its mouth continually. The glorious, the great, the wealthy, and the troublesome shall descend into it. [15]A man shall be humiliated, and a man shall be dishonored; and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled. [16]But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and the Holy God shall be glorified in righteousness. [17]Those plundered shall be fed as bulls, and lambs shall eat on the waste places of those taken away.

[18]Woe to those who draw sins to themselves as with a long rope and lawlessness as with the strap of a cow's yoke, [19]who say, “Let Him speedily hasten what He will do that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel come, that we may know it!” [20]Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! [21]Woe to those who are intelligent in their own eyes and expert in their own sight! [22]Woe to your strong ones who drink wine and the mighty ones who mix intoxicating drink, [23]who justify the ungodly for a bribe and take away justice from the righteous

man! [24]Therefore in the manner that stubble shall be burned by coals of fire and consumed by a violent flame, their root shall be like chaff and their flower shall go up like dust, for they did not will to do the law of the Lord of hosts, but despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. [25]Thus the wrath of the Lord of hosts is furious against His people. He laid His hand on them and struck them. The mountains were provoked, and their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the road. For all this His anger was not turned away, but His hand is still uplifted.

[26]Consequently He shall take up a banner to the nations from afar and will whistle to them from the ends of the earth. Behold, they are coming swiftly and with speed.[†] [27]They shall not hunger or be weary. Neither shall they slumber nor sleep. Nor shall they loose the belts from their loins. Neither shall their sandal-straps be broken. [28]Their arrows are sharp, and their bows are bent. The hooves of their horses seem like flint and their chariot-wheels like a sudden blast of wind. [29]They rush like lions, and stand like a young lion that seizes his prey and roars like a wild animal, then carries it away; and there shall be no one to deliver them. [30]In that day, they will bellow against them like the sound of the roaring sea. They will look at the land and behold harsh darkness in their despair.

6 In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. The house was full of His glory.[†ω] [2]Around Him stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. [3]And one cried to another and said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.” [4]The lintel was lifted up by the voice of those who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. [5]So I said, “Woe is me, because I am pierced to the heart, for being a man and having unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips; for I saw the King, the Lord of hosts, with my eyes!” [6]Then one of the seraphim was sent to me. He had a live coal in his hand, which he took with tongs from the altar.[†] [†] [7]He touched my mouth, and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips. Your lawlessness is taken away, and your sin is cleansed.” [8]I also heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?” Then I said, “Behold, here am I, send me.” [9]So He said, “Go, and tell this people, ‘You shall hear indeed, but not understand; and you shall see indeed, but not perceive.’[†] [10]For the heart of this people has become insensitive, and their ears hear with difficulty. They have closed their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return, and I should heal them.” [11]Then I said, “Lord, how long?” So He answered, “Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without people, and the land shall be left desolate. [12]After this God will remove the people far away, and those left in the land shall multiply. [13]Yet a tenth shall be left in it, and again it shall be for plundering, like a terebinth tree or like an acorn when it falls from its case.”

7 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, there came up Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, against Jerusalem to war against it; but they could not conquer it. [2]Then it was reported to the house of David, saying, “Syria's forces made an agreement with Ephraim.” So his soul and the soul of his people was confounded, as a tree of the woods is shaken by the wind. [3]Then the Lord said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-

Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field,[†] [4]and say to him, 'Guard yourself and be silent; do not fear, neither let your soul be disheartened because of these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for when My fierce anger is over, again I shall heal. [5]The son of Syria and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, [6]"Let us go up against Judah and talk with them, and let us turn them to our side, and let us make the son of Tabel king of it." [7]Thus says the Lord of hosts: "This counsel shall not continue, nor shall it come to pass. [8]But the head of Syria is Damascus; nevertheless, in sixty-five years the kingdom of Ephraim will cease being a people. [9]Also the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son, and if you do not believe this, neither will you understand it." ' "

[10]Moreover the Lord added this to Ahaz, saying,[ω] [11]"Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." [12]But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I tempt the Lord." [13]Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary the Lord also?[†] [14]Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Immanuel. [15]Butter and honey He shall eat before He knows to prefer evil or choose the good, [16]for before the Child knows good or evil, He refuses the evil to choose the good; and the land you fear because of the presence of the two kings will be abandoned. [17]But God will bring the king of Assyria upon you, your people and your father's house—days that have not yet come, from the days Ephraim took away from Judah the king of the Assyrians." [18]And it shall come to pass in

that day, the Lord will whistle for the fly that rules over part of the river of Egypt, and for the bee in the land of Assyria. [19]All of them will come and rest in the ravines of the country, in the clefts of the rocks, in the caves and every crevice and tree. [20]In that day, the Lord will shave—with a large and blood-drenched razor belonging to the king of Assyria beyond the river—the head and the hair of the legs, and will also remove the beard. [21]It shall be in that day, a man will rear a heifer and two sheep. [22]So it shall be, from the abundance of milk they give, everyone left in the land will eat butter and honey. [23]It shall happen in that day, wherever there could be a thousand vines worth a thousand shekels of silver, it will be a barren land with thorn-plants.[†] [24]Men will enter there with bows and arrows, for all the land will be barren and with thorn-plants. [25]Every mountain shall certainly be plowed, and there shall be no fear there from barren land and thorn-plants, for it will be a pasture for sheep and a place for oxen to roam.

8 Moreover the Lord said to me, “Take for yourself a large new book, and write on it with a man's pen concerning making a swift plunder of spoils, for it is near at hand.[†][ω] [2]Then make witnesses for Me of faithful men: Uriah and Zechariah, the son of Berechiah.” [3]Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son, and the Lord said to me, “Call his name Quickly Despoil, Swiftly Plunder; [4]for before the child shall know how to call for his father and mother, one shall take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria in the presence of the king of Assyria.” [5]The Lord also added this for me to speak as well, saying:

[6]“Because this people did not choose the water of Siloam that flows quietly, but chose Rezin and Remaliah's son to be king over you; [7]therefore,

behold, the Lord brings upon you the mighty and abundant water of the river, the king of the Assyrians, and his glory. He shall come up over every ravine of yours and walk over all your walls, [8]and take away from Judah every man able to raise his head or accomplish anything. His encampment will fill the breadth of Your land, O God with us. [9]Know this, O Gentiles, and be defeated. Give ear, all you to the very ends of the earth. Be defeated although you are strong, for even if you should be strong again, you will be defeated again. [10]Then too, whatever counsel you take, the Lord will scatter it abroad; and whatever word you shall speak, it will not continue among you, for the Lord God is with us."

[11]Thus says the Lord: "With a strong hand they rebel against the course of the way of this people, saying,[†] [12]that you should not say, 'It is hard,' for whatever this people says is hard; but do not be afraid of their terror, nor be troubled. [13]Sanctify the Lord Himself, and He shall be your fear. [14]So if you trust in Him, He shall be as a sanctuary for you, and you shall not come against Him as a stumbling stone nor as a rock of disaster. But the house of Jacob lies in wait with a snare, and those in Jerusalem with a trap. [15]Therefore many among them shall be powerless and fall, and be broken, and men who are in safety shall draw near and be conquered."

[16]Then they who seal the law so as not to learn it themselves shall be evident.[†] [17]But One will say, "I shall wait for God who turned His face away from the house of Jacob, and I will trust in Him,[†] [18]behold, I and the children God gave me." This will be for signs and wonders in the house of Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion. [19]So if they should say to you, "Seek those who call from the earth and are

ventriloquists, who speak from the belly,” should not a nation seek their God? Why do they seek the dead on behalf of the living?[†] [20]He gave the law to help them, so as not to speak such a word as this, concerning which word there are no gifts to offer with it.[†] [21]Thus a harsh famine will come upon you, and it shall be, when you are hungry, you will be grieved, and speak badly of your ruler and the idols. Then they shall look up to heaven above, [22]and on the earth below, and behold, tribulation, distress, and darkness. There will be severe despair and darkness, so dark one cannot see. [23]And the one who is in despair shall be perplexed, but only for a time.

9 Do this first and do it quickly: O country of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, and the rest dwelling along the seacoast and parts of Judea, and the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, a people who walk in darkness, behold a great light; and you who dwell in the country of the shadow of death, upon you a light will shine. [2]The multitude of the people, whom You brought down in Your joy, they shall also rejoice in Your presence, as those who rejoice in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoils. [3]For the yoke lying upon them and the rod upon their neck is taken away, for the Lord broke the rod of the exactors as in the day of Midian.[†] [4]For every robe and garment gathered by deceit, they shall repay with money, and they shall be willing to do this, even though they were burned with fire. [5]For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. His name will be called the Angel of Great Counsel, for I shall bring peace upon the rulers, peace and health by Him.[†ω] [6]Great shall be His government, and of His peace there is no end. His peace shall be upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order and establish it with righteousness and judgment, from that time forward and unto ages of ages. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.

[7]The Lord sent death against Jacob, and it came on Israel. [8]All the people will know—Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—who say in pride and arrogance of heart,[†] [9]“The bricks fell, but let us hew stones; and let us cut down sycamores and cedars, and we shall build ourselves a tower.” [10]But God shall overthrow those who rise up against them on Mt. Zion, and scatter their enemies: [11]the Syrians from the rising of the sun, the Greeks from the setting of the sun, and those who shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is still uplifted. [12]But the people did not turn until they were struck, yet they did not seek the Lord. [13]So the Lord took away head and tail from Israel, great and small, in one day. [14]The elder and those who admire persons, this is the head. The prophet who teaches lawlessness, this is the tail. [15]For those who bless this people lead them astray, and they lead them astray so as to destroy them. [16]Therefore God will have no joy in their young men, nor mercy on their orphans and widows. For all of them are lawless and evil. Every mouth speaks injustices. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is still uplifted. [17]For lawlessness burns like fire, and like dry grass, it shall be consumed by fire and burn in the thickets of the forest. It shall devour all the hills round about. [18]Because of the Lord's wrath the entire land is burned up, and the people are as fuel for the fire. No man will have mercy on his brother. [19]But one shall turn aside to the right hand, for he shall be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand and not be satisfied. Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm. [20]Manasseh shall devour Ephraim

and Ephraim Manasseh. Together they shall besiege Judah. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is still uplifted.

10 “Woe to those who write evil things, for when they write such things, [2]they turn aside judgment from the poor, and rob judgment from the needy of My people, that the widow may be their prey and the orphan a spoil. [3]What will they do in the day of visitation? For affliction will come to you from afar, and to whom will you flee for help? Where will you leave your glory, [4]so as not to fall into captivity?” For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is still uplifted.

[5]“Woe to the Assyrians! The rod of My anger and wrath are in their hands.[†] [6]I will send My wrath against a lawless nation; and I will order My people to seize spoils and plunder, to trample down their cities, and turn them into dust. [7]However, he does not think in the same way, nor does he consider the same thing in his soul; but his heart will change, so as to utterly destroy many nations. [8]If they should say to him, ‘You alone are ruler,’ [9]then he shall say, ‘Have not I taken the country above Babylon and Chalanne, where the tower was built, and taken Arabia, Damascus, and Samaria? [10]As I took these with my hand, so also shall I take all the kingdoms. Wail, O carved images in Jerusalem and Samaria! [11]For as I did to Samaria and the things made by human hands, so shall I do also to Jerusalem and her idols.’ ” [12]But it shall come to pass, when the Lord has completed all He will do on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, He will go against the arrogant heart of the king of the Assyrians and the glory of his haughty looks. [13]For he said, “I shall act in my strength and by the wisdom of my understanding. I also shall remove the boundaries of the nations and

plunder their strength. I shall shake their inhabited cities. [14]I shall overtake with my hand all the inhabited world as a nest, and take them as eggs that have been left. There is no one who can escape or oppose me."

[15]Shall the ax glorify itself without him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself without him who saws with it? It is likewise if one should lift a rod or a piece of wood. [16]But it shall not be so, for the Lord of hosts will send dishonor against your honor; and He will kindle a burning fire against your glory. [17]So the Light of Israel will be as a fire, and He will sanctify him with burning fire; and it will devour the wood like grass on that day. [18]The mountains, the hills, and the forests will be consumed, and devour both soul and body, and he who flees will be like one fleeing from a burning flame. [19]Then the remnant will be few in number, and a child shall write them.

[20]It shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel and those of Jacob who were saved will never again obey those who wronged them; but they will trust in God, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. [21]The remnant of Jacob shall trust in the Mighty God. [22]For though the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them shall be saved; for He shall accomplish the word and cut it short in righteousness. [23]For God will accomplish the word and cut it short in all the world.

[24]Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: "O My people who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian, because he shall strike you with a rod; for I am bringing a stroke upon you, that you may see the way of Egypt.[†] [25]Yet in a very short while, the wrath will cease, but My anger

shall be against their counsel.” [26]For God will stir up enemies against them, as it was in the stroke against Midian in that place of affliction; and His anger shall be by way of the sea, in the way that leads to Egypt. [27]Thus it shall come to pass in that day, his fear will be taken from you and his yoke from your shoulder, for the yoke shall be destroyed from off your shoulders. [28]For he shall come to the city of Aiath and pass on to Migron and place his property at Michmash. [29]He will pass along the valley and arrive at Aiath. Fear will seize Ramah, the city of Saul; the daughter of Gallim will flee, [30]Laish will hear; Anathoth will hear; [31]Madmenah was astounded, so too the inhabitants of Gebim. [32]Urge them today to remain in the way. Comfort with your hand the mountain, the daughter of Zion, and the hills in Jerusalem. [33]For behold, the Master, the Lord of hosts, will trouble the glorious ones with power, and the haughty in pride shall be crushed. The lofty will be humbled, [34]and the high and mighty shall fall by the sword, and Lebanon, with its high and mighty ones.

11 There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of his root.[ω] [2]The Spirit of God shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness.[†] [3]The Spirit of the fear of God shall fill Him. He shall not judge by reputation nor convict by common talk. [4]But He will judge the cause of the humble, and reprove the humble of the earth. He shall strike the earth with the word of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the ungodly. [5]He shall gird His loins with righteousness and cover his sides with truth.

[6]“The wolf shall feed with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf, the bull, and the lion shall feed together; and a little child shall lead them.[†] [7]The cow and the bear shall graze together, and their young ones shall lie down together. The lion and the ox shall eat straw together. [8]The nursing child shall play by the hole of asps, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the den of asps. [9]They shall not hurt nor be able to destroy anyone on My holy mountain, for the whole world shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as much water covers the seas.

[10]“It shall come to pass in that day that there shall be a Root of Jesse who shall arise to rule nations. The Gentiles shall hope in Him, and His resting place shall be honorable.”[†] [11]It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will show His hand again to be zealous for the remnant left of His people: left by the Assyrians and by Egypt, Babylon and Ethiopia, and by the Elamites, and from the rising of the sun, and out of Arabia.[†] [12]He shall set up a sign for the Gentiles and will assemble the lost ones of Israel. He shall gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. [13]Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the enemies of Judah shall be destroyed. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not afflict Ephraim. [14]But they shall spread sails on the ships of foreigners, and together they shall plunder the sea and the people of the East and Edom. They shall lay their hands first on Moab, but the sons of Ammon shall obey them first. [15]The Lord shall make desolate the Sea of Egypt, and He will lay His hand on the river with a violent wind, and will strike the seven channels, that men might pass across it in sandals. [16]“There shall be a highway for the remnant of My people in Egypt, and it will be for Israel as in the day he came out of the land of Egypt.”[†]

12 And in that day, you will say, “I will bless You, O Lord. Although You were angry with me, You turned away Your anger and had mercy on me. [2]Behold, God is my Savior and Lord. I will trust in Him and be saved by Him. I will not be afraid, for the Lord is my glory and my praise. He has become my salvation.” [3]You will draw water with gladness from the wells of salvation.[ω] [4]In that day, you will say, “Praise the Lord; call upon His name. Declare His glorious things among the Gentiles and make mention that His name is exalted.[†] [5]Sing to the name of the Lord, for He has done great things. Declare this in all the earth. [6]Exult and be glad, O inhabitants of Zion, for the Holy One of Israel is exalted in her midst.”

13 The vision against Babylon seen by Isaiah the son of Amoz:[†]

[2]“Lift up a sign on the mountain of the plain and raise your voice to them. Do not fear; comfort with your hand; open the gates, O you rulers. [3]I command and I lead them. They are sanctified, and I lead them. My mighty ones come to fulfill My anger—rejoicing and insulting at the same time.” [4]The sound of many nations upon the mountains, like that of many nations, the voice of kings and nations gathered together—the Lord of hosts commanded a warring nation [5]to come from a far country, from the end of heaven, the Lord and His weapons, to destroy all the inhabited world. [6]Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand, and destruction will come from God. [7]Therefore every hand will grow weary, and every man's soul will be fearful. [8]The elders will be troubled. Pangs will take hold of them, like a woman in childbirth, and they will wail at one another and be amazed; and their countenance shall change like a flame. [9]Behold, the day of the Lord is

coming, a day that cannot be averted, a day of anger and wrath, to make all the inhabited world a desert, and to destroy the sinners from it. [10]For the stars of heaven and Orion and all the ornament of heaven will not give their light. It will be dark when the sun goes forth, and the moon will not give its light. [11]“I will command evils for all the inhabited world and the ungodly because of their sins, and I will destroy the insolence of the lawless and humble the haughtiness of the arrogant. [12]Those left behind will be more valuable than fine gold tried in the fire, and a man more precious than the stone of Ophir. [13]For heaven will be angry, and the earth will be shaken from its foundations because of the fierce anger of the Lord of hosts, in the day His anger comes. [14]Those who are left shall be as the fleeing gazelle and as a wandering sheep, and there shall be no one to gather them, that a man may return to his own people and a man may seek his own country. [15]For whoever is taken will be overcome, and those who are gathered together will fall by the sword. [16]Their children also will be dashed before their eyes. They shall plunder their houses and possess their wives. [17]Behold, I will stir up the Medes against you, who will not regard silver, neither do they have need of gold. [18]They will break in pieces the bows of the young, and show your children no mercy; nor will their eyes spare your children. [19]It shall be that Babylon, called glorious by the king of the Chaldeans, will be as when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.[†] [20]It shall never be inhabited, nor will any enter it for many generations. Neither shall the Arabians pass through it, nor will shepherds take their rest in it. [21]But wild animals of the desert will rest there, and their houses will be filled with noise. Sirens will rest there, and demons will dance there.

[22]Donkey-centaurs will dwell there, and hedgehogs will make dens in their homes. It will come quickly and not delay.”

14 For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will yet choose Israel to take rest in their land. The sojourner will be added to them, and they will be added to the house of Jacob.[†] [2]Then the Gentiles will take them and bring them to their place. They will inherit them, and they will multiply in God's land as male and female servants. Those who captured them shall be captives to them, and those who ruled over them shall be ruled by them. [3]Then it shall come to pass in that day that God will give you rest from your sorrow and anger and your hard slavery in which you served them.

[4]You shall take up this lamentation against the king of Babylon, and will say in that day, “How the exacter has ceased, and the compeller ceased![†] [5]God broke the yoke of sinners in pieces, the yoke of the rulers, and [6]in His anger He struck a nation with an incurable wound; and striking a nation with a plague of anger, which did not spare them, [7]He rested in confidence. All the earth cries aloud with gladness. [8]Indeed, the trees of Lebanon rejoice against you and the cedar of Lebanon, saying, ‘From the time you fell asleep, no one has come up to cut us down.’ [9]Hades from below was embittered to meet you. All the mighty who ruled over the earth rose up to meet you. Those who raised from their thrones all the kings of the nations, [10]all shall answer and say to you, ‘You also were conquered, even as we, and are numbered among us. [11]Your glory and great gladness have come down to Hades. They will spread decay under you, and the worm will be your covering.’ [12]How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who rose up in the morning! He who sends for all the nations is crushed to the earth.[†]

[13]For you said in your mind, ‘I will ascend into heaven; I will place my throne above the stars of heaven. I will sit on a lofty mountain, on the lofty mountains toward the north. [14]I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High.’ [15]But now you shall descend to Hades, to the foundations of the earth. [16]Those who see you will marvel at you, and they will say, ‘This is the man who greatly upset the earth, who shook kingdoms, [17]and who made all the inhabited world a desert. He destroyed its cities, and did not set free those in captivity.’ [18]All the kings of the nations sleep in honor, every man in his house. [19]But you shall be cast forth on the mountains like a loathsome dead person, with many dead pierced with swords who go down into Hades; and as a garment defiled in blood, you will not be clean. [20]So you will not be clean, because you destroyed My land and killed My people. You, an evil seed, will not endure forever. [21]Prepare your children for slaughter for the sins of their father, that they may not arise and inherit the earth, and fill it with wars.”

[22]“For I will rise up against them,” says the Lord of hosts, “and I will destroy their name, their remnant and their seed”—so says the Lord— [23]“and I will make Babylon a desert, that hedgehogs may dwell there; and it shall come to nothing; and I will make it a pit of clay for destruction.” [24]Thus says the Lord of hosts: “As I said, so it shall come to pass. As I purposed, so it shall remain— [25]to destroy the Assyrians in My land and on My mountains. They shall be for trampling underfoot, and their yoke shall be taken away; and their renown shall be removed from their shoulders.” [26]This is the purpose the Lord purposed upon all the inhabited world. His

hand is lifted up over all the nations of the inhabited earth. [27]For who will reject what the holy God purposed? Who will turn away His uplifted hand?

[28]In the year King Ahaz died, this word came: [29]“Do not be glad, all you foreigners, for the yoke of him who struck you is broken to pieces. For from the seed of serpents shall come forth the young asps, and their offspring shall be flying serpents. [30]The poor will be fed by him, and poor men will rest in peace, but he shall destroy your seed with hunger, and he will destroy your remnant. [31]Wail, gates of the cities, cry out, troubled cities, even all the foreigners, for smoke is coming from the north, and you will be no more!” [32]What will the kings of the nations answer? For the Lord founded Zion, and the humble of His people shall be saved.[†]

15

The word against the land of Moab:

In the night the land of Moab shall be destroyed, for the wall of the land of Moab shall be destroyed in the night.[†] [2]Lament for yourselves, for even Dibon, where your altar is, shall be destroyed. Go there to weep over Nebo in the land of Moab. Wail, for baldness shall be on every head, and all arms shall be mutilated. [3]In her streets, dress yourselves with sackcloth and strike yourselves on her housetops. All of you cry out with bitter wailing in her streets. [4]Heshbon and Elealeh cry out until their voice is heard as far as Jahaz; therefore, the loins of the land of Moab cry aloud, for its soul shall know this. [5]The heart of the land of Moab cries aloud in itself as far as Zoar, like a three-year-old heifer. On the ascent of Luhith, they shall go up to you with weeping by way of Horonaim. She cries, “Destruction and earthquake!” [6]The water of Nemerim shall be a desert, and its grass shall fail, for there will be no green grass. [7]“Even so, will Moab be saved? For I will bring the Arabs upon the valley, and they shall take it. [8]For the cry reaches the border of the land of Moab, even of Eglaim, and its wailing as far as the well of Elim. [9]For the water of Dimon shall be full of blood, for I will bring Arabs upon Dimon. I shall take away the seed of Moab, Ariel and the remnant of Adama.

16 “I shall send them like reptiles upon the land, for is not Mount Zion a deserted rock?[†] [2]O Daughter of Moab, you shall be like a young bird taken away from a bird that has flown. Then, O Arnon, [3]take more counsel and make for her a shelter of mourning continually. In the middle of the day they flee in darkness; they are amazed; do not be led away. [4]The outcasts of Moab will sojourn with you. They will shelter you from the face of the pursuer, for your alliance has been taken away, and the ruler who trampled the land underfoot has perished from the earth.[†] [5]A throne will be established with mercy, and in the tabernacle of David, one will sit upon it in truth, judging, seeking justice, and hastening righteousness.”

[6]We heard of the insolence of Moab, exceedingly insolent. You drove away his arrogance. Your divination is not in this way, [7]no not in this way. Moab shall wail, for everyone shall wail in the land of Moab. For you will think about those who dwell in Deseth, and not be ashamed. [8]The plains of Heshbon and the vine of Sibmah swallow the nations and shall mourn. Trample down her vines. Do not reach to Jazer. Wander in the desert. Those sent were left behind, for they passed through the desert. [9]Therefore I will weep for the vine of Sibmah with the weeping of Jazer. O Heshbon and Elealeh, he struck down your trees, for I shall trample on your harvest and

vintage, and both shall fall. [10]Gladness is taken away, so too the joy from your vineyards, for in the vineyards there shall be no rejoicing; and no treaders will tread out wine in the wine vats, for the wine has ceased. [11]Therefore my belly will resound like a harp for Moab, and my inward parts like a wall you renewed. [12]Then it shall come to pass, when you are shamed (for Moab grows weary at his altars), that he will go in to pray to the things made with hands, but they will be unable to deliver him.

[13]This is the word the Lord spoke against Moab when He spoke. [14]"So now I say to you, within three years, as in the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab, with its great wealth, shall be dishonored, and he will be left few in number and not honored."

17 The word against Damascus:

"Behold, Damascus will be taken away from among cities and will fall,[†] [2]abandoned forever. It shall be a fold and resting-place for sheep. No one will pursue them. [3]There shall no longer be a strong place for Ephraim to flee to, and there shall no longer be a kingdom in Damascus and a remnant of Syrians; for you are no better than the sons of Israel and their glory," says the Lord of hosts.

[4]"In that day, there shall be an eclipse of the glory of Jacob, and the riches of his glory shall be shaken. [5]It will be as when one gathers a standing harvest and reaps ears of corn with his arm. It shall be as when one gathers heads of grain in a rich valley. [6]It shall be as when straw is left in it, or as when the berries of an olive tree, two or three on the uppermost bough, or as when four or five are left on their branches," says the Lord, the

God of Israel. [7]In that day, a man will trust in Him who made him, and his eyes will look at the Holy One of Israel. [8]They will not trust in their altars, nor in the works of their hands, which their fingers made. They will not look to their trees, nor to their abominations.[†] [9]In that day, your cities will be abandoned, as the Amorites and the Evites forsook theirs, because of the children of Israel. They will be desolate,[†] [10]because you forsook God your Savior, and have not been mindful of the Lord your helper. Therefore you will be a faithless plant and a faithless seed. [11]In the day you plant, you will be deceived; but if you sow in the morning, it will blossom into a harvest, in which you will receive an inheritance in that day; and as a man's father, you will obtain an inheritance for your sons.

[12]Woe to the multitude of many nations; as the swelling sea, so shall you be troubled; and the surging of many nations will sound like water, [13]many nations like much water, as when much water rushes violently; and he will curse him and pursue him afar, as when the dust of chaff scatters before the wind, and a sudden blast of wind whirls the dust of a wheel! [14]Toward evening there will be mourning, and before morning, he will be no more. This is the portion of those who plundered you, and the inheritance of those who robbed you of your inheritance.

18 Woe, O farthest edge of the land of ships, beyond the rivers of Ethiopia![†] [2]He sends hostages by sea and paper letters over the water, for swift messengers will go to an exalted nation and a strange and violent people. Who is beyond it, a nation without hope and trampled underfoot? Now all the rivers of the land [3]shall be inhabited, like an inhabited country. Their country shall be like a sign raised by a mountain and an audible sound like a trumpet. [4]So the Lord said to me, “There will be security in My city, as the light of the midday heat, and as a cloud of dew in the day of harvest.” [5]Before the time of harvest, when the flower has been completely formed, and the unripe grape has put forth its flower and produced sour grapes, then He shall take away the small clusters with sickles and the brushwood, and cut them off.[†] [6]Then He shall leave them together for the birds of heaven and the wild animals of the earth; and the birds of heaven shall gather upon them, and all the wild animals of the earth will come upon him. [7]At that time gifts shall be brought to the Lord of hosts by a people afflicted and peeled, and by a people great from now on and forever, a nation hoping and trampled on, which is in a part of a river of his country, to the place, Mount Zion, where the name of the Lord of hosts is called upon.

19 The vision of Egypt:

Behold, the Lord sits on a swift cloud and shall come to Egypt, and the things made by hands in Egypt shall be shaken by His presence, and their heart shall be overcome within them.[ω] [2]“Egyptians shall be stirred up against Egyptians, and a man shall fight against his brother, and a man against his neighbor, city against city and law against law.[†] [3]The spirit of the Egyptians will be troubled within them, and I will reject their counsel, and they shall consult their gods and their statues, and those who speak from the earth and are ventriloquists. [4]And I will deliver Egypt into the hands of harsh lords and kings who will rule over them,” thus says the Lord of hosts. [5]And the Egyptians will drink water from the sea, for the river will run dry and have no water. [6]The streams and canals of the river will fail; and every reservoir shall dry up, as well as every marsh of reed and papyrus. [7]All the greenery around the river and everything sown alongside the river shall be blasted by the wind and dried up. [8]The fishermen will also groan, and all who cast a fishhook into the river will also lament, and those who cast dragnets and the anglers shall mourn. [9]Shame shall fall on those who work fine flax, and those who weave fine fabric will be ashamed. [10]Those who work these things will be in pain. All who make strong drink shall grieve and suffer in their souls. [11]The rulers of Tanis are fools. As for the king's wise counselors, their counsel will be turned into foolishness. How will you say to the king, “We are sons of the wise, we are sons of kings of old”? [12]Where are your wise men now? Let them now tell you, and let them say what the Lord of hosts planned against Egypt. [13]The rulers of Tanis have failed, and the rulers of Memphis are exalted, and they shall lead Egypt astray according to tribes. [14]For the Lord prepared for them a spirit of error, and they led Egypt astray in all their works, like a drunken man who staggers and vomits. [15]There shall be no work for the Egyptians that will bring about employer and employee, and beginning and completion.

[16]In that day, the Egyptians shall be like women in fear and trembling because of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which He shall lay upon them. [17]The country of the Jews will be a terror to the Egyptians. If anyone mentions it to them, they will be in fear, because of the counsel the Lord purposed concerning it. [18]In that day, five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the name of the Lord; one city will be called the City of Justice. [19]In that day, there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the country of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its

border. [20]It will be a sign forever to the Lord in the country of Egypt, for they will cry to the Lord because of their oppressors, and the Lord will send them a Man who will save them. He will judge and save them. [21]Then the Lord will be known to the Egyptians, and in that day the Egyptians will know the Lord and offer sacrifices. Yes, they will make vows to the Lord and pay them. [22]The Lord shall strike the Egyptians with a great wound and completely heal them. They will return to the Lord, and He shall hear and heal them. [23]In that day there will be a road from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria. The Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. [24]In that day, Israel will be one of three with the Egyptians and Assyrians; a blessing in the land, [25]which the Lord of hosts blessed, saying, “Blessed are my people in Egypt, and in Assyria and Israel, My inheritance.”

20 In the year Tartan came to Azotus, when he was sent by Sargon the king of the Assyrians, and he fought Ashdod and took it,[†] [2]then the Lord spoke to Isaiah, saying, “Go and remove the sackcloth from your loins, and take your sandals off your feet.” Thus he did so, walking naked and barefoot.[†] [3]Then the Lord said, “Just as My servant Isaiah walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, [4]so shall the king of the Assyrians lead the captivity of Egypt and the Ethiopians, young men and old, naked and barefoot, exposing the shame of Egypt. [5]The Egyptians being defeated shall be ashamed before the Ethiopians, in whom they trusted, for they were their glory. [6]Those also who dwell in this island shall say, ‘Behold, we hoped to flee for help to those who were unable to save themselves from the king of the Assyrians. How then shall we be saved?’ ”

21 The vision of the desert:

As though a whirlwind should pass through the desert, coming from a desert, from a fearful land, [2]so a fearful and harsh vision was declared to me. He who is treacherous deals treacherously; the lawless one deals lawlessly. The Elamites and the ambassador of the Persians come against me. Now I will groan and comfort myself. [3]Therefore my loins are filled with feebleness, and agony seizes me as a woman giving birth. I did wrong, so I cannot hear; I am so troubled, I cannot see. [4]My heart is led astray, and lawlessness permeates me. My soul is occupied with fear. [5]Prepare the table, eat and drink. Arise, you princes, and prepare your shields. [6]For thus the Lord said to me: “Go, set a watchman for yourself and declare whatever you see.”[†] [7]So I saw two mounted horsemen, a rider on a donkey, and a rider on a camel. Listen with much attention, [8]and call Uriah to the lookout-place of the Lord. Then he said, “I stood continually during the day, and in the camp throughout the night. [9]Behold, he is coming, a rider on a chariot.” Then he answered and said, “Babylon is fallen, and all her statues and those made by hand are crushed to the ground.”[†] [10]Listen, you who remain and are suffering pain, hear what things I heard from the Lord of hosts, which the God of Israel declared to us.

[11]The vision of Edom:

He calls to me from Seir, “Guard the battlements. [12]I guard in the morning and at night. If you will inquire, inquire, and dwell with me.” [13]In the forest on the road of Dedan you will lodge. [14]Bring water to meet him who is thirsty, you inhabitants of the land of Teman; meet those who are fleeing with bread, [15]because of the multitude who are fleeing and the multitude who are wandering, and because of the multitude of swords and bent bows, and the multitude of those fallen in war. [16]For thus the Lord said to me: “Within a year, according to the year of a hired servant, all the glory of the sons of Kedar shall fail. [17]The remainder of the archers and the mighty men of the sons of Kedar shall be few, for the Lord God of Israel has spoken.”

22 The word concerning the valley of Zion:

What has happened to you, now that you have all gone up to worthless houses?[†] [2]The city is full of loud crying. Your slain men are not slain with the sword, nor are your dead those who died in war. [3]All your rulers have fled, and your captives are tightly bound, and the mighty among you have fled. [4]Therefore I said, “Let me alone; I will weep bitterly; do not labor to comfort me at the destruction of the daughter of my race.” [5]For it is a day of trouble, destruction, trampling, and error from the Lord of hosts in the Valley of Zion. They wander on the mountains, from the least to the greatest of them. [6]And the Elamites took their quivers, and there were men mounted on horses, gathered for battle. [7]It shall come to pass, your chosen valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall block up your gates. [8]They shall uncover the gates of Judah, and look in that day on the chosen houses of the city. [9]They shall uncover the secret places of the houses of the citadel of David, and see they are many. They shall see they had turned back the waters of the old pool into the city, [10]and had pulled down the houses of Jerusalem to fortify the wall for the city. [11]You also made a reservoir for yourself between the two walls of the inner old pool. But you did not look to Him who made it from the beginning, nor did you perceive Him who created it. [12]In that day the Lord of hosts called for weeping and mourning, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth.[†] [13]But instead, they celebrated in joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, so as to eat and drink wine, saying, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” [14]These things are revealed in the ears of the Lord of hosts, for this sin shall not be forgiven you until you die.

[15]Thus the Lord of hosts says, “Go into the chamber, to Shebna the steward, and say to him,[†] [16]‘What have you here, and what is this to you, that you have hewn a memorial here for yourself, and made yourself a memorial on high, and engraved a testimony for yourself in a rock? [17]Indeed the Lord of hosts will cast out and destroy such a man, and take away your robe [18]and glorious crown, and cast you into a large and unmeasured country. There you shall die, and there your beautiful chariot shall be brought to dishonor and your master's house trampled. [19]You will be taken from your stewardship and position. [20]Then it shall be in that day, I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah.[†] [21]I will clothe him with your robe and give your crown to him, and I will commit your power and your stewardship into his hands. He shall be like a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah. [22]I will give him the glory of David, and he shall rule, and no one will oppose him. [23]I will establish him as a ruler in a trustworthy place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house. [24]Everyone glorious in his father's house will trust in him, from small to great, and they will depend on him. [25]In that day,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘the man established in a trustworthy place will be removed and fall,

and the glory that was on him will be taken away; for the Lord has spoken.’ ”

23 The vision concerning Tyre:

Wail, you ships of Carthage, for Tyre has perished; and they no longer come from the land of the Citaeans, for Tyre is led captive![†] [2]To whom are the dwellers on the island likened—these merchants of Phoenicia, who cross over the sea [3]in great waters, the offspring of merchants? These merchants of the nations are like as when the harvest is gathered. [4]Be ashamed, O Sidon; for the sea has spoken, the strength of the sea has said, “I do not labor in birth, nor bear children; neither do I rear young men, nor raise virgins.” [5]Moreover when the report reaches Egypt, sorrow will take hold of them concerning Tyre. [6]Cross over to Carthage; wail, you inhabitants on this island! [7]Was this not your arrogance from the beginning, before it was handed over?[†] [8]Who purposed these things against Tyre? Is it inferior, or does it have no strength? Are not its merchants the glorious rulers of the earth? [9]The Lord of hosts purposed these things, to bring down all the arrogance of the glorious ones and to dishonor every glorious thing on the earth. [10]Cultivate your land, for ships are no longer coming from Carthage. [11]Your hand is no longer able at sea, the hand that provoked kings. The Lord of hosts has given a command concerning Canaan, to destroy its strength. [12]They will say, “No longer continue to insult and wrong the daughter of Sidon, and if you cross over to the Citians, neither will you be at rest there. [13]And if you depart for the land of the Chaldeans, this also was desolated by the Assyrians. Neither will you be at rest there, for its wall has fallen.” [14]Wail, you ships of Carthage, for your stronghold is destroyed! [15]Then it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre will be abandoned for seventy years, as the time of a king, as the time of a man; and it shall be, after the seventy years, Tyre will be as the song of a prostitute. [16]Take a harp, wander about the city, you forgotten prostitute. Play well on the harp, sing many songs, that you may be remembered. [17]And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre. She will be restored again as of old, and will be a marketplace for all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth.[†] [18]Her trade and her wages will be holy to the Lord. Her trade will not be gathered for them, but for those who dwell before the Lord, to eat, drink, and be filled, as a shared meal and a memorial before the Lord.

24

Behold, the Lord is about to lay waste the inhabited earth, and He will make it desolate, lay bare its surface, and scatter those who dwell therein.[†] [2]And it shall be that the people shall be as the priest, the servant as the lord, the maiden as the mistress, the buyer as the seller, the lender as the borrower, and the debtor as the creditor. [3]The earth shall be completely laid waste and utterly plundered, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things. [4]The earth mourns and the inhabited earth is ruined; the lofty of the earth mourn. [5]The earth acts lawlessly because of its inhabitants, for they transgressed the law and changed the ordinances, the everlasting covenant. [6]Therefore a curse shall devour the earth, because those who dwell in it sinned. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth shall be poor, and few people will be left. [7]The wine shall mourn, the vine shall mourn, and all the merry-hearted will groan. [8]The mirth of tambourines, the willfulness and wealth of the ungodly, and the sound of the harp have ceased. [9]They were ashamed; they did not drink wine; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. [10]Every city was made desolate; every house is shut up, that none may go in. [11]Wail for wine everywhere; all gladness of the earth is gone! [12]Cities shall be left desolate, and abandoned houses will be destroyed. [13]All these things shall be in the earth in the midst of the nations, in the manner someone would glean an olive tree. Thus they shall glean them when the harvest is done. [14]They shall cry aloud, and those left behind on the earth shall be glad together in the glory of the Lord. The water of the sea shall be troubled.[†] [15]Therefore the glory of the Lord will be in the islands of the sea; the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, will be glorious. [16]From the ends of the earth we heard wonderful things, and there is hope for the godly man. They will say, "Woe to the rejecters, who reject the law!" [17]Fear, a pit, and a snare are upon you who dwell on the earth. [18]It shall be that he who flees from the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth shall be shaken.[†] [19]The earth shall be completely troubled, and the earth will be completely perplexed. [20]The earth bends and will be shaken like a hut, and like a drunkard overpowered with wine; and it shall fall and be unable to stand, for lawlessness is upon it. [21]Then God will bring His hand upon the host of heaven and upon the kings of the earth.[†] [22]They will gather them and close them in a fortress and in a prison; and after many generations they shall be visited. [23]And the brick will melt and the wall shall fall, for the Lord will reign in Zion and in Jerusalem, and will be glorified before His elders.

25 O Lord my God, I will glorify You; I will sing a hymn to Your name, for You have done wonderful things, an ancient and true counsel. So

be it, O Lord.[†] [2]For You made cities into a mound; You made the
foundations of their strong cities fall. The city of the ungodly shall not be
built forever.[†] [3]Therefore the poor people will bless You, and the cities of
wronged people will praise You. [4]For You were a helper to every humbled
city, and a protection to those who were disheartened by reason of poverty.
You will deliver them from evil men, and be a shelter of the thirsty and a
breath of life to the wronged. [5]They will bless You as discouraged people,
thirsting in Zion because of ungodly men to whom You delivered us. [6]Then
the Lord of hosts shall do this to all the nations on this mountain. They shall
drink in gladness; they shall drink wine; they shall anoint themselves with
ointment [7]on this mountain. Deliver all these things to the nations, for this
is the counsel for all the nations. [8]Death prevailed and swallowed them, but
again God wiped away every tear from every face; He took away the
disgrace of His people from all the earth; for the mouth of the Lord has
spoken.[†] [9]Then it will be said in that day, “Behold, this is our God, in
whom we hoped and rejoiced exceedingly; and we shall be glad in His
salvation.”[†] [10]For on this mountain God will give them rest, and the
Moabite shall be trampled down, in the manner the threshing floor is tread
with wagons.[†] [11]He will spread forth His hands so as to humble man, to
destroy him; and He will humble his arrogance—arrogance on which he
laid his hands. [12]The height of your refuge He will humble, and bring it
down to the ground.

26 In that day they shall sing this song in the land of Judah: “Behold, we
have a strong city; He will make our salvation its surrounding wall.
[2]Open the gates; let the people enter who keep righteousness and guard the

truth, [3]and who lay hold of the truth and keep peace, [4]because they hope forever in You, O Lord, the great and eternal God, [5]who humbles and brings down those who dwell on high; the strong cities You will cast down; You will bring them down to the ground.[†] [6]The feet of the gentle and the humble shall tread them underfoot. [7]The way of the godly is straight; and the way of the godly is prepared.[†] [8]For the way of the Lord is judgment. We hope in Your name and in the remembrance of You, [9]which our soul desires at night. My spirit rises early in the morning to You, O God, for Your commands are a light upon the earth. Learn righteousness, you who dwell on the earth. [10]The ungodly man ceases; he will not learn righteousness on the earth; he will not do the truth; let the ungodly man be taken away, that he may not see the glory of the Lord. [11]O Lord, Your arm is exalted, but they did not know it. But when they know it, they shall be ashamed, for jealousy will seize an untaught people; and now fire will devour the adversaries. [12]O Lord our God, grant us peace, for You render everything to us. [13]O Lord our God, possess us; O Lord, we know no other besides You; we name Your name. [14]The dead will not see life; neither will physicians raise them. Therefore You brought evils upon them and destroyed them, and took away every male of theirs. [15]Bring more evils on them, O Lord, on the glorious of the earth. [16]O Lord, I remembered You in my hard circumstances. Your chastening to us was a small affliction.[†] [17]As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, when she draws near the time of her delivery, so we became Your beloved because of Your fear, O Lord. [18]We have been with child, we have been in pain, and we have given birth. We brought forth the spirit of Your salvation on the earth. But the inhabitants of the world shall fall. [19]The dead shall rise up; and those in the tombs shall arise. Those in the earth shall be glad, for your dew is a healing for them, but the land of the ungodly shall come to an end.”[†] [20]Come, my people, enter your closets and shut your door; hide yourself for a very short while, until the anger of the Lord is past.[†] [21]For behold, the Lord is bringing wrath from His holy place upon the inhabitants of the earth, and the earth will uncover its blood and will not cover its slain.

27 In that day, God will bring His holy, great, and strong sword upon the fleeing dragon serpent, the perverse dragon serpent that flees; and He shall destroy the dragon.[†] [2]In that day, there shall be a beautiful vineyard, and a desire to begin a hymn against a city: [3]“I am a strong city, a besieged city; I water it in vain; for it shall be taken at night, and its wall shall fall by day. [4]There is no woman who has not taken hold of it. Who will appoint me to guard straw in a field? I rejected it because of this enemy. For that very reason therefore, the Lord God did all the things He ordered. I am burned down.” [5]Those who dwell in it will cry out, “Let us make peace with Him, let us make peace.” [6]Those who come are the children of Jacob. Israel shall bud and put forth flowers, and the inhabited earth shall be filled with its fruit.[†] [7]As he struck, shall he not be thus struck? As he slew, shall he not be thus slain? [8]Fighting and denouncing he shall send them away. Did you not think with a harsh spirit about killing them in a spirit of anger? [9]Therefore the lawlessness of Jacob will be removed; and this is his blessing when I take away his sin, when they make all the stones of the altars beaten like fine dust. Their trees do not remain, and their idols shall be cut down like a distant forest.[†] [10]The flock that dwelt there shall be left like an abandoned flock, and for a long time the field will be for pasture; and there flocks shall lie down to rest.[†] [11]And after a time, there will be nothing green in it because of the withering. Come here, you women who come from that sight. For it is a people of no understanding; therefore He who made them will have no compassion on them, neither He who formed them; and He will show them no mercy. [12]And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will close it from the channel of the river to the Brook of Egypt. And you will gather the sons of Israel one by one.[†] [13]So it shall be in that day that they shall blow the great trumpet, and the lost ones in the country of the Assyrians and in Egypt will come, and they shall worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

28 Woe to the crown of arrogance, the hirelings of Ephraim, the flower that fell from the glory on top of the fertile mountain, those who are drunk without wine.[†] [2]Behold, the anger of the Lord is a strong and harsh thing, like a falling hail where there is no shelter, falling violently like a great force of water, sweeping away the country. He shall bring relief for the earth with His hands. [3]The crown of arrogance, the hirelings of Ephraim, will be trampled underfoot. [4]But the flower that fell from the hope of the glory on the top of the high mountain shall be like the forerunner of the fig. He who sees it wishes to swallow it before he gets it in his hand.[†] [5]In that day, the Lord of hosts shall be the crown of hope, woven of glory, to the remnant of My people. [6]They shall be left in a spirit of judgment upon judgment and for the strength of those who prevent slaying. [7]For these are led astray with wine and are deceived by strong drink. Priest and prophet are out of their minds by reason of wine; they stagger because of drunkenness; they go astray. This is delusion. [8]A curse will devour this counsel, for this counsel was for the sake of covetousness.

[9]To whom have we reported evils and declared a message? Those weaned from milk and withdrawn from the breasts. [10]Expect affliction upon affliction, hope upon hope, yet a little, yet a little. [11]By reason of the contempt of lips and another tongue they will speak to this people, [12]saying to them, “This is the rest for the hungry, and this is the affliction,” but they would not listen. [13]The teaching of the Lord God will be for them affliction upon affliction, hope upon hope, yet a little, yet a little, so they may go and fall backward; and they will be in danger, crushed and conquered. [14]Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you afflicted men and rulers of this people in Jerusalem. [15]Because you said, “We made a covenant with Hades, and are in agreement with death, and if the rushing storm passes through, it will not come upon us, for we made falsehood our hope, and in falsehood we shall be protected”; [16]therefore, thus says the Lord: “Behold, I lay for the foundations of Zion a costly stone, a chosen and precious cornerstone for its foundations, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.[†] [17]I will also cause judgment to be for hope, and My mercy to be for a standard. The sudden blast of wind will not pass by you who trust vainly in falsehood, [18]except it also take away your covenant of death. Your hope in Hades will also not stand when the rushing storm passes through, for you will be beaten down by it. [19]When it passes through, it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass through by day, and by night there will be an evil hope.” Learn to listen, [20]you in difficult straits. We cannot fight, and we ourselves are too weak to gather ourselves together. [21]As the mountain of the ungodly will rise up and be in the valley of Gibeon, He will do His deeds in anger, a work of bitterness. His anger will behave strangely, and His bitterness will be strange.[†] [22]So do not be

glad, neither let your bands become strong; because I heard from the Lord of hosts the things He will perform upon all the earth. [23]Give ear and hear my voice. Listen and hear my words. [24]Will the plowman plow all day? Or will he prepare the seed before he cultivates the ground? [25]When he levels its surface, does he not then sow the small black cummin, and afterward sow the wheat, the barley, and the one-seeded wheat in your borders? [26]So you will be chastised by the judgment of your God and be gladdened by it. [27]For the black cummin is not cleansed with harshness, nor will the wheel of a wagon roll over the cummin; but the black cummin is threshed with a stick, and the cummin [28]will be eaten with bread. For I will not be angry with you forever, nor will the voice of my bitterness trample you underfoot. [29]These signs came forth from the Lord of hosts. Take counsel; exalt vain comfort.

29 Woe to the city of Ariel, against which David waged war! Gather fruits year by year, for you will eat with Moab.[†] [2]For I will afflict Ariel, and her strength and wealth will be mine. [3]I will encircle you as David did, and I will put a barricade around you, and place towers around you. [4]Your words will be humbled to the earth, and your words will sink into the earth. Your speech shall be like those calling out of the ground, and your voice weakened to the ground. [5]Moreover the wealth of the ungodly shall be like the dust of a wheel and like dirt carried away. It shall be as though in an instant and suddenly [6]from the Lord of hosts; for there will be a visitation with thunder and earthquake and a great noise, and a sudden blast of wind and a devouring flame of fire. [7]The wealth of all the nations, as many as fought against Ariel, and all who wage war against Jerusalem, and all who gather against her and afflict her, shall be as one who dreams in the night. [8]They shall be like those who eat and drink in a dream, and when they awake their dream was useless, and as a thirsty man dreams, as if he is drinking but is still thirsty when he wakes, and his soul hoped in vain, so will be the wealth of all the nations that fought against Mount Zion. [9]Faint and be amazed; be overpowered, not with strong drink nor with wine, [10]for the Lord made you drink a spirit of deep sleep, and He shall close their eyes and the eyes of their prophets and rulers, who see secret things. [11]All these things shall be to you as the words of this sealed book, which if they should give to a learned man, saying, “Read this,” then he will say, “I cannot read this, for it is sealed.” [12]This book shall also be placed in the hands of an unlearned man, and one shall say to him, “Read this,” then he will say, “I do not understand writings.”

[13]So the Lord said, “These people draw near to Me and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, and they worship Me in vain, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men.[†] [14]Therefore behold, I will proceed to remove this people, and I shall remove them. I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and hide the understanding of the intelligent.” [15]Woe to those who deepen their counsel, but not through the Lord! Woe to those who take counsel in secret and whose works are in darkness! They say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us or what we do?”[†] [16]Shall you not be considered as the clay of the potter? Shall what is molded of clay say to him who molded it, “You did not create me”? Or shall the work say to him who made it, “You did not make me wisely”? [17]Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be changed like Mount Carmel, and Mount Carmel be considered a forest? [18]In that day, the deaf shall hear the words

of the book, and the eyes of those in darkness and in a fog shall see. [19]The poor also shall rejoice exceedingly in gladness because of the Lord, and the hopeless among men shall be filled with gladness. [20]The lawless man has come to an end, and the arrogant man has perished. Those who act lawlessly in malice are utterly destroyed, [21]as well as those who cause men to sin in word. They shall make all who condemn at the gates an offense, because they turned aside the righteous man with wrongdoing. [22]Therefore the Lord says this concerning the house of Jacob, whom He set apart out of Abraham: “Now Jacob shall not be ashamed, nor shall Israel now change his countenance. [23]But when their children see My works, they shall sanctify My name for My sake, and will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel. [†] [24]And those who erred in spirit shall know understanding, and those who complained will learn to obey, and the stammering tongues shall learn to speak peace.”

30 “Woe to the apostate children,” says the Lord! “You made counsel, but not through Me, and covenants, but not of My Spirit, so as to add sins to sins. [2]You proceeded to go down to Egypt, but did not ask Me, so as to be helped by Pharaoh and protected by the Egyptians. [†] [3]For the protection of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and there shall be disgrace for those who trust in Egypt. [4]For there are rulers at Tanis, evil messengers. In vain shall they labor [5]in seeking a people who will not profit, help or benefit them, but they shall be for them a shame and a disgrace.”

[6]The vision of the quadrupeds in the desert:

In affliction and distress they carry their wealth on the backs of donkeys and camels—amid lions and lion's cubs, and vipers and the offspring of flying vipers—to a nation that will not profit or benefit them, but will be for them a shame and a disgrace.† [7]For the Egyptians shall help you utterly in vain. Tell them, “This consolation of yours is in vain.”

[8]Now therefore, sit and write these things on a tablet in a book, for these things shall be for the time to come, even forever. [9]For this is a disobedient people, false children, children who are unwilling to hear the law of God.† [10]They say to the prophets, “Do not report to us”; and to those who see visions, “Do not speak to us, but speak and declare to us another deception. [11]Turn us aside from this way; remove this path from us, and take away from us the Holy One of Israel.” [12]Therefore thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel: “Because you disobeyed these words, and hoped in falsehood and grumbled and were confident in this respect; [13]therefore, this sin shall be to you like a wall ready to fall when a strong city is taken, whose fall is immediately present. [14]Its fall shall be like the breaking of a clay vessel, like that of a small jar, so as not to find among them even a fragment with which to take away fire, or draw a little water.” [15]For thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel: “When you return and groan, then you will be saved and know where you were. When you trusted in vain things, vain was your strength, and you did not will to listen.”† [16]But you said, “We will flee on horses”—therefore you shall flee. You also said, “We will ride on swift horses”—therefore those who pursue you shall be swift. [17]One thousand shall flee at the voice of one; at the voice of five, many shall flee, until you are left as a pole upon a mountain, and as one holding a banner on a hill.

[18]And again God will wait, that He may have compassion on you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you, because the Lord our God is a judge, and where will you leave behind your glory? Blessed are all those who abide in Him.[†]

[19]For a holy people shall dwell in Zion; and Jerusalem cried with wailing, "Have mercy on me." He will have mercy on you at the sound of your cry. When He sees this, He will listen to you. [20]The Lord will give you the bread of affliction and scant water; and those leading you astray will no longer approach you, but your eyes shall see those leading you astray.[†] [21]Your ears shall hear words behind you leading you astray, saying, "This is the way; let us walk in it," either to the right hand or to the left. [22]You will also remove your idols plaited with silver and covered with gold. You will grind them to powder and scatter them like the water of an indisposed woman, and thrust them away like dung. [23]Then there will be rain for the seed of your land, and the bread of produce of your land's increase will be plenteous and rich. In that day your cattle will feed in rich and large pastures. [24]Your bulls and the oxen that work the ground will eat straw prepared with winnowed barley. [25]On every high mountain and on every high hill there will be streams in that day, when many perish and the towers fall. [26]In that day, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, when the Lord heals the wound of His people and the pain of your plague.

[27]Behold, the name of the Lord comes after a long time, a burning anger. The teaching of His lips is with glory, a revelation full of wrath, and the wrath of His anger shall devour like fire. [28]His breath, like an overflowing

stream in a valley, shall reach up to the neck and be divided, to trouble the nations for their vain error; and error shall pursue and overtake them. [29]Must you always be glad, and go into My holy places continually, as those who keep a feast, and must you always go with a flute, as those who are glad when they go into the mountain of the Lord, to the God of Israel? [30]God will cause His glorious voice to be heard, and He will show the anger of His arm with anger and wrath, and the flame of a devouring fire. He shall strike violently with thunderbolts, and His wrath shall be as water and violent hail. [31]For through the voice of the Lord, the Assyrians will be defeated, as He strikes them with the rod.[†] [32]And it shall happen to him on every side, that those from whom his hope of assistance was, and in whom he trusted, shall themselves, in turn, make war on him with flutes and harps. [33]For you will be required before many days: Was it prepared for you also to reign? No, God prepared for you a deep valley, wood laid down, fire and much wood. The anger of the Lord shall be as a valley burning with brimstone.

31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not trust in the Holy One of Israel, nor seek God![†] [2]So He wisely brings evils upon them, and His word cannot be set aside, for He will rise up against the houses of evil men and against their vain hope. [3]Now an Egyptian is a man, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not a help. The Lord shall bring His hand against them, and those who help them shall become weary. All will perish together. [4]For thus the Lord said to me: “As a lion roars, and a young lion over his prey, which he took and cries out upon it until the mountains are filled with his sound, and the animals are awestruck and terrified at the fierceness of his anger, so the Lord of hosts will come down to fight for Mount Zion, even upon her mountains.[†] [5]Like birds flying about, so will the Lord defend Jerusalem. He will deliver, preserve, and save it.” [6]Return, you who planned a deep and lawless counsel. [7]For in that day, men shall renounce their idols of silver and gold, which their hands made. [8]Then the Assyrian shall fall by a sword not of man, and a sword not of man shall devour him. He shall not flee from the sword, but his young men shall be overthrown.[†] [9]For they shall be surrounded by a rock as by a barricade, and he who flees shall be caught.

32 The Lord says this: “Blessed is he who has a seed in Zion and kindred in Jerusalem. For behold, a righteous King shall reign, and rulers will govern with judgment.[†] [2]A Man will hide His words, and be hidden as from flowing water; and He will appear in Zion as a glorious river flowing in a thirsty land.[†] [3]And they will no longer trust in men, but their ears will incline to listen. [4]The heart of the sick will pay attention to listen, and the tongues that stammer will learn quickly to speak peace.” [5]Let them no longer tell a fool to rule, nor let Your servants say any longer, “Be silent.” [6]For the fool will speak foolishness, and his heart will think vain things: to practice lawlessness, to speak error against the Lord, to scatter hungry souls, and to make thirsty souls empty. [7]For the counsel of evil men plans lawlessness, to destroy the humble with unjust words, and to scatter the words of the humble with judgment. [8]But the godly plan wise things, and this counsel remains.

[9]Rise up, you rich women, and hear my voice. You daughters with hope, listen to my words. [10]In pain, yet with hope, remember that for a full year the harvest will be consumed and cease. It shall by no means come again. [11]Be amazed, be grieved, you confident ones. Strip yourselves, and gird your loins with sackcloth. [12]Beat upon your breasts because of the desirable fields and the fruit of the vine. [13]On the land of my people, thorns and grass will come up, and gladness will be taken from every house. As for the rich city, [14]the houses are deserted, and they will leave behind the wealth of the city and desirable houses. The villages will become caves forever, and the gladness of wild donkeys and pastures of shepherds— [15]until the Spirit comes upon you from on high, and the desert becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.[†] [16]Then judgment will take rest in the desert, and righteousness shall dwell in Carmel. [17]The works of righteousness will be peace, and righteousness shall ensure rest and confidence forever. [18]His people will dwell in a city of peace, and will dwell in confidence, and they will rest with riches. [19]Though hail should come down, it would not fall upon you, and those who dwell in the forests shall be as confident as those in the plain. [20]Blessed are those who sow beside all waters, where the ox and the donkey tread.[†]

33 Woe to those who distress you, though no one is causing you distress, and he who deals treacherously with you, though no one is dealing treacherously with you! Those who deal treacherously will be conquered and handed over, and like a moth in a garment they will be defeated.[†] [2]O Lord, have mercy on us; for we trust in You. The seed of the disobedient was made for destruction, but our salvation is in a time of affliction.[†] [3]The peoples were dismayed through fear of You, because of Your fearsome voice, and the nations were scattered. [4]So now the spoils of your small and great shall be gathered, as if someone might gather grasshoppers. Thus shall they make fun of you. [5]The God who dwells in the heights is holy. Zion is filled with judgment and righteousness.[†] [6]They will be handed over to the law. Our salvation is in treasures wherein is wisdom, knowledge, and godliness toward the Lord—these are the treasures of righteousness. [7]Behold therefore, they will fear you greatly, and those you feared will fear you. For messengers shall be sent entreating for peace, weeping bitterly as they ask for peace. [8]For their ways will lie desolate. The fear of the nations has ceased, and the covenant with them is taken away, and you will not reckon them as a people. [9]The earth mourns, and Lebanon is shamed. Sharon has become marshlands, and Galilee and Carmel are laid bare. [10]“Now I will arise,” says the Lord; “now I will be glorified; now I will be exalted. [11]Now you shall see, now you shall perceive; the strength of your spirit is vain; fire shall devour you. [12]The nations shall be burned up, like thorns thrown in the field and burned up. [13]Those afar off will hear what I have done; and those near will know My strength.” [14]The lawless in Zion departed; trembling will seize the ungodly. Who will tell you a fire is burning? Who will tell you about the eternal place?[†] [15]He who walks in righteousness and speaks uprightly, he who hates lawlessness and wrongdoing, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, he who stops his ears from hearing the judgment of blood, and he who shuts his eyes from seeing wrongdoing. [16]He will dwell in a high cave of a mighty rock. Bread will be given him, and his water will be plentiful.[†] [17]All of you will see a King with His glory, and your eyes will see a land from afar.[†] [18]Your soul will think about fear. Where are the scribes? Where are the advisors? Where is he who numbers those growing up, [19]both a small and great people, with whom they did not consult, nor did he know a deep-voiced people, that a despised people should not hear, and there is no understanding to him who hears? [20]Behold, there is Zion, the city of our salvation. Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a wealthy city, a tabernacle which will not be shaken. Neither shall one of the tent-pegs of its tabernacle be moved forever, nor its cords broken; [21]for the name of the Lord is great to you. There will be a place for you—rivers and brooks, broad and spacious. You will not travel this way, nor will a boat with oars. [22]For my God is great. The Lord our judge will not pass me by. The Lord is our ruler, the Lord is our king. He will save us.[†] [23]Your ropes broke apart, for the boat was not strong. Your mast could not hold, and the sails slackened. It will not raise a flag until it is taken for booty. Therefore many lame men will make it a spoil. [24]And the people who dwell among them will not say, “I am weary,” for their sin shall be forgiven.

34 Come near, you nations, and listen, you rulers. Let the earth hear and those in it, the inhabited earth and the people therein.[†] [2]For the anger of the Lord is against all the nations, and His wrath against all the number of them, to destroy them utterly and to deliver them over for slaughter. [3]Their slain and their dead shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their dead bodies, and the mountains shall be drenched with their blood. [4]Heaven shall also be rolled up like a scroll, and all the stars shall fall like leaves from a vine, as leaves fall from a fig tree. [5]My sword in heaven is soaked with blood. Behold, it shall come down on Edom, and with judgment on the people of destruction. [6]The sword of the Lord is filled with blood. It is fattened with the fat of lambs, goats, and rams. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in Edom. [7]The mighty ones shall fall with them, and the rams and the bulls. Their land shall be soaked with blood and saturated with fatness. [8]For it is the day of the Lord's judgment and the year of recompense for the cause of Zion. [9]Its valleys shall be turned into pitch and its land into brimstone. Its land shall become burning pitch. [10]It shall never be quenched day or night, and its smoke shall rise up. It shall lie waste for all time and generations. [11]But birds and hedgehogs shall live in it, and also ibises and ravens. He shall stretch out over it the measuring line of a desert, and donkey-centaurs will dwell in it.[†] [12]Its rulers shall be no more, for its kings, rulers, and great ones shall be destroyed. [13]Thorn-trees shall come up in its cities and fortresses; it shall be a habitation of sirens, a courtyard for ostriches. [14]Demons shall also meet with donkey-centaurs, and one will cry out to another. Donkey-centaurs shall also rest there, for they found themselves a place of rest. [15]There the hedgehog made its nest, and the earth preserved its children in safety. There the deer also gathered and saw one another's faces. [16]They passed by in numbers, and not one of them perished. Not one of them sought the other, for the Lord commanded them, and His Spirit gathered them. [17]He shall cast lots for them, and His hand divided it among them to graze upon. They shall inherit it for all time, and shall rest on it from generation to generation.

35 Be glad, you thirsty desert, and rejoice exceedingly, and let the desert blossom as a lily.[ω] [2]The desert places of the Jordan shall blossom abundantly and rejoice exceedingly. The glory of Lebanon and the honor of Carmel shall be given to it, and My people shall see the glory of the Lord and the majesty of our God. [3]Be strong, you relaxed hands and feeble knees. [4]Be comforted, you fainthearted. Be strong, do not fear. Behold, our God renders judgment and will render it. He will come and save us. [5]Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. [6]Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will speak clearly. For water shall burst forth in the desert, and a valley in the thirsty land. [7]The waterless desert shall become meadows, and the thirsty land springs of water. There will be the gladness of birds, a habitation of reeds and marshes. [8]A pure way shall be there, and it shall be called a holy way. No unclean man shall pass through there, neither shall there be an unclean way there. But those dispersed shall walk in it, and they shall not go astray.[†] [9]No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous animals go up on it, nor at all be found there. But the redeemed shall walk in it, [10]and those gathered by the Lord shall return and come to Zion with gladness, and with everlasting gladness over their head. For praise and exceeding joy will be on their head, and gladness shall possess them. Pain, sorrow, and sighing fled away.

36 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of the Assyrians came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.[†] [2]Then the king of the Assyrians sent Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, and he stood by the aqueduct of the upper pool, on the way of the fuller's field. [3]So Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the steward, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.[†] [4]Then the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of the Assyrians: “Why are you confident?[†] [5]Is a war carried on by counsel or mere words? Now in whom do you trust, that you disobey me? [6]Behold, you are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will puncture his hand. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt and all who trust in him. [†] [7]But will you say, ‘We trust in the Lord our God’?’ ” [8]Now therefore, make an agreement with my lord the king of the Assyrians, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them. [9]How are you able to turn back the face of one governor? Those who trust in the Egyptians for horse and rider are our servants. [10]Have we now come up without the Lord to make war against this country?”

[11]Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, “Speak to your servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the men who are on the wall.” [12]But Rabshakeh said to them, “Has my lord sent me to your lord or to you to

speak these words? Has he not sent me to speak to the men who sit on the wall, so they may eat their own dung, and drink their own urine with you?” [13]Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, “Hear the words of the great king, the king of the Assyrians. [14]Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you with words which will be unable to deliver you; [15]nor let Hezekiah say to you, “God will deliver you, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of the Assyrians.’ ” [16]Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘If you wish to be blessed, come out to me, and each of you will eat from his own vine and his own fig tree, and all of you will drink the waters of your own cistern, [17]until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, and of bread and vineyards.’ [18]Let not Hezekiah deceive you, saying, ‘God will deliver us.’ Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of the Assyrians? [19]Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? [20]Who among all the gods of these nations delivered his land from my hand, that God should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?” [21]But they held their peace and answered him not a word, because of the king's commandment not to answer him.[†]

[22]Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the steward, Shebna the scribe of the army, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

37

Thus it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.[†] [2]Then he sent Eliakim the steward, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. [3]So they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: ‘This day is a day of affliction, disgrace, rebuke, and wrath; for the pangs of childbirth have come, but there is no strength to give birth. [4]May the Lord your God hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom the king of the Assyrians sent to denounce the living God, and to insult Him with words which the Lord your God heard. Therefore you shall pray to the Lord your God for the remnant that is left.’ ” [5]So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, [6]and Isaiah said to them, “Thus shall you say to your lord: ‘The Lord says this, “Do not be afraid of the words you heard, whereby the ambassadors of the king of the Assyrians denounced Me. [7]Behold, I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his land. Then he will fall by the sword in his own land.” ’ ”

[8]So Rabshakeh returned and found the king warring against Libnah. Then the king of the Assyrians heard that[†] [9]Tirhakah king of the Ethiopians had come out to make war against him. So when he heard it, he returned and sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, [10]“Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of the Assyrians.”[†] [11]You heard what the kings of the Assyrians did to all lands by destroying them. [12]Did the gods of the nations deliver those my fathers destroyed—Gozan and Haran and Rezeph in the country of Telassar? [13]Where are the kings of Hamath and Arpad, and the kings of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?’ ” [14]So Hezekiah received the scroll

from the messengers and opened it before the Lord. [15]Then Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, saying, [16]“O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, the One who sits between the cherubim, You alone are the God of all the kingdoms of the world. You made heaven and earth. [17]Hear, O Lord, and open Your eyes, O Lord, and see the words Sennacherib sent to denounce the living God. [18]For it is true, the kings of the Assyrians laid waste the inhabited earth and their countries, [19]and cast their idols into the fire; for they were not gods, but works of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. [20]But now, O Lord our God, save us from their hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know You alone are God.”

[21]Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah and said to him, “The Lord God of Israel says this: ‘I heard what you prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of the Assyrians. [22]This is the word God has spoken concerning him: “The virgin daughter of Zion has despised and laughed you to scorn. The daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you.[†] [23]Whom have you denounced and provoked? Or against whom have you raised your voice? You have lifted your eyes on high against the Holy One of Israel. [24]By your messengers, you have insulted the Lord, for you said, ‘By the multitude of my chariots I came to the height of the mountains, to the limits of Lebanon. I cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypress trees, and entered the height of its forest region. [25]I built a bridge, and dried up the waters and every pool of water.’ [26]Did you not hear long ago the things I did? From ancient times I appointed them, but now have manifested my purpose to desolate nations in their strongholds and those who dwell in strong cities. [27]I weakened their hands, and they withered; and they became

like dry grass on the housetops and like weeds. [28]Now then, I know your resting place, your going out and your coming in. [29]Your great rage and bitterness has come up to Me. Therefore I will put a hook in your nose and a bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way you came.’ ” [30]This shall be a sign to you: You shall eat this year what you sowed, and the second year what is left over; also in the third year sow and reap; plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. [31]So the remnant in the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. [32]For out of Jerusalem a remnant shall go forth, and those saved from Mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform these things. [33]Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the king of the Assyrians: ‘He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. [34]By the way he came, by the same shall he return,’ says the Lord. [35]‘I will protect this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.’ ”

[36]Then the Angel of the Lord went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, they discovered all the dead bodies.[†] [37]Then Sennacherib king of the Assyrians departed and returned to Nineveh, and dwelt there. [38]Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword, then escaped into the land of Ararat; and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

38 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’ ”[†] [2]Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, [3]and said, “Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a true heart, and did what is pleasing in Your sight.” So Hezekiah wept loudly. [4]Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, [5]“Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: “I heard your prayer, I see your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. [6]I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of the Assyrians, and I will protect this city. [7]Now this shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that God will do this thing:[†] [8]I will turn back the shadow on the ten steps of your father's house—the steps on which the sun goes down.” ’ ” So the sun's shadow that went down on the ten steps turned back.

[9]The prayer of Hezekiah king of Judah when he was sick and recovered from his sickness: [10]“I said at the end of my days near the gates of Hades, ‘I shall leave behind the remainder of my years.’ [11]I said, ‘I shall no longer see the salvation of my God upon the earth; I shall no longer see a man among my kindred.’ [12]I left behind what remained of my life. It went away and departed from me like one who takes down a tent. My breath became in me like the web of a weaver when she draws near to cut it. [13]On that day I was given as to a lion until morning. So He broke my bones, for from day until night I was given over. [14]Like a swallow, so shall I cry; I will mourn like a dove. My eyes fail from looking to the height of heaven toward the Lord, who delivered me [15]and removed the pain of my soul. [16]O Lord, it was told You concerning this, and You revived my breath; and I was comforted and lived. [17]For You chose my soul that it should not perish, and

You cast all my sins behind me. [18]For those in Hades shall not praise You, neither will the dead bless You; nor shall those in Hades hope for Your mercy. [19]The living shall praise You as I do. For from this day forward, I shall cause children to declare Your righteousness, O Lord of my salvation, [20]and I shall not cease to bless You with the psaltery all the days of my life before the house of God."

[21]Now Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Take a cake of figs, mash them, and apply them as a plaster, and you shall recover." [22]Then Hezekiah said, "This is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord God."

39 At that time, Merodach the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters, ambassadors, and gifts to Hezekiah, for he heard he was sick and almost died, but had recovered.[†] [2]Hezekiah was very glad they came, and he showed them the house of his treasures—the oil of myrrh, the fragrant incense, the ointment, the silver and the gold—and all the treasure houses with their vessels, and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house he did not show them. [3]Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?" So Hezekiah said, "They came to me from a far country, from Babylon." [4]Then he said, "What did they see in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They saw everything in my house; there is nothing in my house they did not see, even among my treasures." [5]Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord of hosts:[†] [6]'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'when everything in your house and everything your fathers accumulated until this day shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left.' [7]God also said they shall take away some of your sons whom you begot, and make them eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” [8]So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The Lord's word you spoke is good. Let there indeed be peace and righteousness in my days.”[†]

40 “Comfort, yes, comfort My people,” says God.[†] [2]“O priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem, comfort her, for her humiliation is ended, her sin is pardoned; for she received from the Lord's hand double for her sins.” [3]The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God.[†] [4]Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill humbled; the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places into plains. [5]The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God; for the Lord has spoken.” [6]The voice said, “Cry out.” So I said, “What shall I cry?” “All flesh is grass, and all man's glory is like the flower of the field. [7]The grass withers, the flower fades, [8]but the word of our God abides forever.’ [9]O you who bring good tidings to Zion, go into the high mountain; O you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God.”[†] [10]Behold, the Lord is coming with strength, and His arm is with authority. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.[†] [11]He will feed His flock like a shepherd and gather the lambs with His arm; and He will comfort those with young.[†]

[12]Who measured the water in His hand, and heaven with a span, and all the earth with a handful? Who weighed the mountains in scales and the vales in a balance? [13]Who knows the Lord's mind, and who was His counselor; who advises Him? [14]Or with whom does He take counsel, who instructs Him, and who teaches Him judgment and shows Him the way of

understanding? [15]The nations are as a drop in a bucket and are counted as the balance of a scale; and they are counted as spittle. [16]Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its four-footed animals sufficient for a whole burnt offering. [17]All nations are as nothing and are counted as nothing. [18]To whom then will you liken the Lord, and to what likeness will you compare Him? [19]Has the workman made an image, or has the goldsmith overspread it with gold, gilding it, making a likeness of Him? [20]For the workman chooses wood that will not rot, and skillfully seeks to prepare a carved image that will not totter. [21]Will you not know? Will you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Do you not know the foundations of the earth? [22]It is He who possesses the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. It is He who stretches out heaven like a vault, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.[†] [23]He makes the rulers He establishes to rule to be as nothing; He makes the earth as nothing. [24]Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, when He shall also blow on them and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble. [25]“Now then, to whom will you liken Me, that I should be exalted?” says the Holy One. [26]Lift up your eyes on high, and see. Who displayed these things? He who brings forth their host by number; He who calls them all by name. From the greatness of His glory to the strength of His might, nothing escapes Your notice.

[27]For why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, saying, “My way is hidden from God, and my God took away my judgment and departed”? [28]So then, have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God,

the God who created the ends of the earth, neither hungers nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. [29]He gives strength to the hungry, and sorrow to those who do not grieve. [30]Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the elect shall be without strength. [31]But those who wait on God shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not hunger.

41

“Be renewed before Me, O coastlands, for the rulers will gain their strength. Let them come near and speak together, then let them declare judgment. [2]Who raised up righteousness from the east, and called it to his feet, that it should go forth? He will establish it before the Gentiles and amaze kings. He shall bury their swords in the earth and cast away their bows as sticks.[†] [3]He will pursue them, and the way of His feet will pass through in peace. [4]Who worked and performed these things? He called righteousness, He who calls it from generations of old. I, God, am the first, and into the future I Am.[†] [5]The Gentiles saw His righteousness and feared. The ends of the earth drew near and came together,[†] [6]each one judging for his neighbor, that he might help his brother. One will say, [7]‘The craftsman is strong, as is the metalworker who strikes with the hammer and forges at the same time.’ Sometimes one will say, ‘It is put together well, and they fastened it with nails. They arranged them, and they shall not be moved.’

[8]“But you, O Israel, are My servant, and Jacob, whom I chose, the seed of Abraham, whom I loved.[†] [9]I took you from the ends of the earth, and called you from its height. I said to you, ‘You are My servant. I chose you, and have not forsaken you. [10]Fear not, for I am with you. Do not go astray, for I am your God who strengthens you; and I will help and secure you with

My righteous right hand.’ [11]Behold, all your adversaries shall be put to shame and disgraced. For they shall be as though they did not exist, and all who oppose you shall perish. [12]You shall seek but not find the men who rage against you, for those who war against you shall be as though they did not exist. [13]For I am your God who holds your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not.’ [14]O Jacob, O Israel, few in number, I will help you, and I will redeem you, O Israel,” says God.[†] [15]“Behold, I will make you like new saw-shaped threshing wheels of a wagon, and you shall thresh the mountains and beat the hills to powder, and make them like chaff. [16]You shall crush them, and the wind shall carry them away; and the whirlwind will scatter them; but you shall be glad among the saints, O Israel. [17]The poor and needy shall rejoice exceedingly, for when they shall seek water, but there is none, and their tongues are parched with thirst, I, the Lord God, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. [18]But I will open rivers in the mountain and fountains in the midst of the plains. I will make the desert into marsh-meadows, and the dry land into aqueducts. [19]I will plant the cedar, the box-tree, the myrtle, the cypress, and the white poplar in the waterless ground, [20]so they may see, know, consider, and understand together that the Lord’S hand did all these things; and the Holy One of Israel created them.[†]

[21]“Your judgment draws near,” says the Lord God. “Your counsels draw near,” says the King of Jacob. [22]“Let them draw near, and tell you what will happen; or tell you about the former things, what they were; and we shall be able to understand and know them, and know what are the last things; and tell us about the future. [23]Declare to us things coming at the end

of time, and we will know you are gods. Do good and evil, and we shall marvel and see it together. [24]Where do you come from? Where does your work come from? They chose you, an abomination out of the earth. [25]I raised up one from the north and from the rising of the sun, and they shall be called by My name. Let the rulers come, and you will be trampled down, as potter's clay and as a potter tramples down the clay. [26]For who will declare the things from the beginning, that we may also know the former things and say they are true? There is no one who foretells or hears your words. [27]I will give Zion the power to rule, and I shall comfort Jerusalem in the way. [28]For I looked, and there was no one from the nations or from their idols to declare it to me. If I should ask them where they are from, they would not answer me. [29]For they are the ones who made you, so you think, and in vain they are leading you astray.

42 “Jacob is My Servant; I will help Him. Israel is My chosen; My soul accepts Him. I put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.[†] [2]He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard outside. [3]A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; but He will bring forth judgment in truth. [4]He will shine forth and not be broken until He establishes judgment in the earth; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.” [5]Thus says the Lord God, who made heaven and established it, who made firm the earth and the things in it, and who gives breath to the people in it, and spirit to those who walk on it: [6]“I, the Lord God, called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand. I will strengthen You, and give You as the covenant of a race, as the light of the Gentiles, [7]to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners who are bound, and those who sit in darkness from the prison house. [8]I am the Lord God; this is My name. I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to carved images.[†] [9]Behold, things from of old came to pass, and new things I will declare. Before they spring forth, I will tell you of them."

[10]Sing to the Lord a new song, you His realm. Glorify His name from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea and sail on it, you coastlands and you who inhabit them.[†] [11]Be glad, O desert and its villages, the homesteads and those inhabiting Kedar. Those who dwell in Petra shall be glad; they shall shout from the tops of the mountains. [12]They will give glory to God and declare His virtues in the coastlands. [13]The Lord God of powers shall go forth and crush war. He shall stir up His zeal, and cry out against His enemies with strength.[†] [14]I held My peace, and I will not always be silent and restrain Myself. Now I will be steadfast, like a woman in labor. I shall amaze and dry up together. [15]I will make the rivers into coastlands and dry up marsh-meadows. [16]I will bring the blind by a way they did not know, and will cause them to tread paths they have not known. I will turn darkness into light for them, and make crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them. [17]But they turned back. You be greatly ashamed who trust in carved images, who say to the molded images, "You are our gods."

[18]Hear, you deaf; and look up, you blind, that you may see. [19]Who is blind but My servants, or deaf but those who rule over them? The servants of God are blind. [20]You often see, but do not take heed. Your ears were opened, but you do not listen. [21]The Lord God wished to show His righteousness and to magnify His praise. [22]But I saw the people robbed and

plundered, for there was a snare in the secret chambers everywhere, and in the houses at the same time, where they hid them. They became as plunder, and there was no one to rescue the prey, and no one who said, “Restore them.” [23]Who among you will give ear to these things? Who will listen and hear what is coming? [24]Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to those who plunder him? Was it not God, against whom they sinned? For they would not walk in His ways nor heed His law. [25]So He brought upon them the fury of His wrath, and war overpowered them. They set them on fire all around, yet none of them knew or took it to heart.[†]

43 And now, thus says the Lord God who made you, O Jacob, and who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I redeemed you. I called you by your name, for you are Mine.[†] [2]If you pass through water, I am with you; and the rivers shall not overflow you. If you pass through fire, you shall not be burned up, nor shall the flame consume you. [3]For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, who saves you. I made Egypt and Ethiopia your ransom and gave Seba on your behalf. [4]Since you were precious in My sight, you became glorious, and I love you. I will give many men for you and rulers to lead you. [5]Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west.[†] [6]I will say to the north, ‘Bring them,’ and to the south, ‘Do not keep them back. Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone called by My name.’ [7]For in my glory I prepared him, and formed and made him. [8]I brought forth the blind people, and their eyes are alike blind, and their ears deaf.” [9]All the nations are gathered together, and the rulers shall be assembled from among them. Who will declare these things or tell us things from the beginning? Let them bring forth their witnesses, and be proven right; and let them speak the truth. [10]“You are My witnesses, and I am a witness,” says the Lord God, “and My Servant whom I chose, that you may know and believe, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no other God, nor shall there be after Me. [11]I am God, and besides Me there is no one who saves. [12]I proclaimed, and I saved. I denounced foreign gods so there were none among you. You are My witnesses, and I am a witness,” says the Lord God. [13]“Even from the beginning, there is no one who can deliver out of My hands; I will work, and who will reverse it?”

[14]Thus says the Lord God who redeems you, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sake I will send to Babylon and arouse all who flee, and the Chaldeans shall be bound in ships. [15]I am the Lord God, your Holy One, who made known your King, O Israel.” [16]Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea and a path in the mighty water, [17]who brings forth chariot and horse, and a mighty host. But they fell asleep, and shall not arise. They are extinguished, like a quenched lamp-wick: [18]“Do not remember the former things, nor reason about the things of old. [19]Behold, I will do new things, which shall now spring forth, and you shall know them; and l will make a road in the desert and rivers in the waterless places. [20]The wild animals of the field will bless Me, the sirens and the daughters of sparrows, because I gave water in the wilderness and rivers in the waterless place, to give drink to My race, My chosen, [21]My people whom I preserved to declare My virtues. [22]I have not called on you now, O Jacob, neither have I made you grow weary, O Israel. [23]You have not brought Me sheep for your whole burnt offerings, neither have you glorified Me with your sacrifices, nor have I wearied you with frankincense. [24]Neither have you purchased

sweet incense for Me with money, nor have I desired the fat of your sacrifices; but I set before you your sins and wrongdoings. [25]I, even I, am He who blots out your lawlessness, and I will not remember them. [26]But remember, and let us judge; tell your lawless first, that you may be made righteous. [27]Your fathers first, and their rulers after them, acted lawlessly against Me. [28]Your rulers defiled My holy things; thus I gave Jacob to destruction and Israel for reproach.”

44 Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant, and Israel, whom I chose. [2]Thus says the Lord God who made you, and formed you from the womb: “You will yet be helped; fear not, Jacob My servant, and Israel, My beloved, whom I chose. [3]For I will give water to the thirsty who walk in a waterless place. I will put My Spirit upon your seed and My blessings upon your children.[†] [4]They will spring up like grass in the midst of the water and like willows by the flowing water. [5]One will say, ‘I am God's,’ and will call himself by the name of Jacob. Another will write, ‘I am God's,’ and call himself by the name of Israel.”

[6]Thus says God, the King of Israel who delivers him, the God of hosts: “I am the first and the last; besides Me there is no God.[†] [7]Who is just as I am? Then let him stand, let him call and prepare for Me that from which I made man forever, and let them declare to you the things that are coming before they come.[†] [8]Do not hide yourselves. Have you not paid attention from the beginning, and have I not declared it to you? You are My witnesses, if there is a God besides Me? Indeed there was none. [9]All who form and carve gods are useless, and they desire things which shall not profit them; but they will be ashamed. [10]They all create a god and carve

unprofitable things. [11]All by whom they were made are withered, and let all the deaf among men be gathered together. Let them stand together, and be ashamed and dishonored together. [12]For the craftsman sharpens his iron tool, and fashions the idol with his axe, and pierces it with the awl. He works it with the strength of his arm, and will hunger and grow weak, and will not drink water. [13]The craftsman selects his wood and stretches out his rule, and fits it with glue. He makes it like the form of a man and according to the bloom of youth, to set it up in the house. [14]The wood he cut from the forest which the Lord planted, and the rain made it grow, [15]so as to be for men to burn and to take some of it to warm himself. They kindle it, and bake bread for themselves; but he works into gods what is left and worships them. [16]They burn half of it in the fire, and with the other half they bake bread for themselves. They roast meat on it, eat and are satisfied. He even warms himself and says, ‘I am comfortable, because I am warm, and have seen the fire.’ [17]And the rest of it he makes into a carved god, and worships it and prays to it, and says, ‘Deliver me, for you are my god.’ [18]They do not know how to discern because they shut their eyes, so as not to see with their eyes or understand with their heart. [19]No one considered in his heart, neither pondered in his soul, nor knew in his discernment, that he burned half of it in the fire, baked bread on its coals, roasted meat and ate, and then made the rest of it an abomination; and they worship it. [20]Know this: their heart is ashes; they go astray, and no one can deliver his soul. See, you will not say, ‘There is a lie in my right hand.’

[21]“Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel, for you are My servant; I formed you to be My servant; therefore, you, O Israel, do not forget Me.[†]

[22]For behold, I blotted out your lawlessness like a cloud and your sins like darkness. Return to Me, and I will redeem you. [23]Be glad, O heavens, for the Lord had mercy on Israel. Sound the trumpet, you foundations of the earth; shout with gladness, you mountains and hills and every tree on them. For God redeemed Jacob, and Israel will be glorified.”

[24]Thus says the Lord, who redeems you and forms you from the womb: “I am the Lord, who accomplishes all things, who alone stretched out the heavens and established the earth. [25]Who else will scatter abroad the sign of ventriloquists and the divinations from their heart, turning their shrewd men backward and making their counsel foolishness? [26]Who else establishes the word of His servant, proving the counsel of His messengers to be true? Who else says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited,’ and to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built, and the desert places shall spring forth’? [27]Who else says to the deep, ‘You shall be dried up, and I will dry up your rivers’? [28]Who else tells Cyrus to be wise, and do all My will, and says to Jerusalem, ‘You will be built, and I shall lay the foundation of My holy house’?”[†]

45 Thus says the Lord God to Cyrus, My anointed, whose right hand I hold that nations might be obedient before him, and I will break the strength of kings: I will open doors before him, and the cities will not be closed.[†] [2]“I will go before you and level mountains; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and shatter the bars of iron. [3]I will give you the treasures of darkness, and I shall open unseen secret things to you, so you may know I, the Lord God, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel. [4]For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel My elect, I will call you by your name; I will accept you, though you have not known Me. [5]For I am the Lord God. There is no God besides Me, and you have not known Me. [6]I will call you by name and accept you, so those who come from the east and the west may know there is none besides Me. I am the Lord God, and there is no other.[†] [7]I am He who prepared light and made darkness, who makes peace and creates troublesome things. I am the Lord God who does all these things. [8]Let heaven above be glad, and let the clouds sprinkle righteousness. Let the earth bring forth mercy and righteousness together. I am the Lord who created you.

[9]"As the clay of a potter, what better thing have I created? Will the one plowing plow all day? Shall the clay say to the potter who forms it, 'What are you making, for you neither work nor have hands?'[†] [10]As though one should say to his father, 'What will you beget?' Or to his mother, 'What will you bring forth?' " [11]Thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, who made the things that are to come: "Ask Me concerning My sons and daughters; and command Me concerning the works of My hands. [12]I made the earth and mankind upon it. With My hand I established heaven and commanded all the stars. [13]I raised him up to be a king with righteousness, and all his ways are right. He shall build My city and return the captivity of My people, not with ransoms or gifts," says the Lord of hosts.

[14]Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Egypt labored for you, and the merchandise of the Ethiopians and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall pass over to you. They shall be your servants and follow behind you, bound with handcuffs. They shall bow down and make supplication to you, because God is with you; and they shall say, 'There is no God besides You. [15]For

You are God, the God of Israel, the Savior, yet we knew it not.' [16]All who oppose him shall be ashamed and disgraced and shall walk in shame. Be restored to Me, O coastlands. [17]Israel is saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation. They will not be ashamed or disgraced forever."

[18]For thus says the Lord, who made heaven—this is the God who formed the earth and made it. He established it, and did not make it in vain, but formed it to be inhabited—"I Am, and there is no other. [19]I have not spoken in secret, nor in a dark place of the earth. I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain.' I Am, I am the Lord who speaks righteousness and declares the truth. [20]Assemble yourselves and come. Take counsel together, you who are saved from among the nations. Those who set up the wood of their carved image have no knowledge, and pray to gods who do not save. [21]If they will declare, let them draw near, so as to know together who caused these things to be heard from the beginning. At that time it was told you, 'I am God, and there is no other besides Me; there is no righteous God and Savior in addition to Me.' [22]Return to Me, and you shall be saved, you who are from the ends of the earth. For I am God, and there is no other. [23]I swore by Myself: righteousness will truly proceed from my mouth; My words shall not be turned away, that to Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God, [24]saying, 'Righteousness and glory shall come to Him, and all who separate themselves from Him shall be put to shame.' [25]All the seed of the children of Israel shall be made righteous by the Lord, and glorified in God."[†]

46 Bel bowed down; Dagon is crushed; their carved stones are for the wild animals and cattle. Take them bound as a burden to the weary,

[2]to the hungry, the exhausted and those who have no strength together, who shall not be able to save themselves from war, but who themselves are led away as captives.

[3]“Listen to Me, O house of Jacob and all the remnant of Israel, both those taken from the womb and those instructed from childhood,[†] [4]even to your old age: I Am, and even to your gray hairs, I Am. I bear you; I made you and will forgive you. I will take you up and save you. [5]To whom will you liken Me? Look what you contrived, you who went astray. [6]Those who contribute gold from a purse and silver on a scale, and count them out by weight, and who hire a goldsmith, they make things with their hands, and bowing down, they worship them. [7]They bear it on their shoulders and go; and if they set it somewhere, it remains there and never moves. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer, nor save him from his troubles. [8]Remember these things and groan. Repent, you who go astray; return in your heart. [9]Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other besides Me, [10]declaring beforehand the latter events before they come to pass and are accomplished together. I say, ‘All My counsel shall stand, and I will do whatever I will to do,[†] [11]calling a bird from the east and from a land afar off.’ For what I purpose to do, I speak and bring it about, and create and do it. Thus I brought him and proposed his way. [12]Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted who are far from righteousness. [13]I bring My righteousness near, and My salvation shall not delay. I give salvation in Zion and to Israel for glory.

47 “Come down and sit on the ground, O virgin daughter of Babylon; enter the darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall be prosperous no more, so as to be called comfortable and luxurious.[†] [2]Take a millstone and grind meal. Remove your veil, show your gray hair, uncover the shins, and pass through the rivers. [3]Your shame will be uncovered, and your disgrace will be seen. I will take your standard of living from you, and no longer deliver people to you. [4]He who delivers you has spoken; the Lord of hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel. [5]Sit down, you who are pierced to the heart; enter into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called the strength of a kingdom. [6]I was provoked at My people; you profaned My inheritance; I gave them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; you laid your yoke very heavy on the elderly. [7]You said, ‘I shall be a princess forever,’ but you did not understand these things in your heart, nor remember the latter end. [8]Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who sit in confidence, who says in her heart, ‘I am, and there is no other; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know bereavement.’ [9]But now these two things shall come upon you in a moment, in one day: widowhood and the loss of children. They shall come upon you in a moment because of your sorcery, the great abundance of your enchanters, [10]and your hope of evil. For you said, ‘I am, and there is no other.’ Know that your understanding of these things and your fornication will be your shame, for you said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no other.’ [11]Therefore destruction shall come upon you, and you shall not know the pit into which you will fall. Trouble shall come upon you, and you will be unable to be clear of it. Destruction shall come upon you suddenly, but you will not know it. [12]Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries which you learned from your youth, if you will be able to profit from this. [13]You are wearied in your counsels. Let the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. [14]Behold, all these shall be burned like sticks in a fire, and they shall not deliver their soul from the flame. For you have coals of fire to sit on, and these shall be your help. [15]You grew weary in your traffic from youth, and each man led himself astray, but there shall be no salvation for you.

48 “Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel and have come forth from Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord God of Israel, mentioning it, but not with truth nor with righteousness,[†] [2]and who are devoted to the name of the holy city, and lean on the God of Israel for support—the Lord of hosts is His name. [3]I still declare the former things that went forth from My mouth, and they became well known. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass. [4]I know you are stubborn, and your neck is an iron nerve; and your forehead is made of bronze. [5]Yet I told you long ago, before it came to pass. I made it well known to you, lest you should say, ‘My idols did them’; and lest you should say, ‘My carved images and my molten images commanded them for me.’[†] [6]You heard all this, yet you knew not what you heard. But I also made new things known to you, things about to happen from that present time; yet you said not so. [7]Now they come to pass, and not long ago, but you did not listen to these things in former days. You do not say, ‘Yes, I know this.’ [8]You neither know nor understand, nor have I opened your ears from the beginning. For I knew you would deal treacherously and reject them, and would be called lawless from the womb. [9]For My name's sake, I will show you My anger, and I will bring before you my glorious acts, so as not to utterly destroy you. [10]Behold, I sold you, but not for silver; and I delivered you from the furnace of poverty. [11]For My own sake, I will do this for you, because My name is profaned; and I will not give My glory to another. [12]Listen to Me, O Jacob and Israel, whom I call: I am the first, and I am forever. [13]My hand also laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand established heaven. I shall call them, and they will stand together. [14]All shall be gathered and hear: Who declared these things to them? Because I love you, I did your will against Babylon, to slay the seed of the Chaldeans. [15]I have spoken, I have called him, I have brought him, and made his way prosper.[†] [16]Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning, nor did I speak in a dark place of the earth. When it took place, I was there, and now the Lord and His Spirit have sent Me."[†] [17]Thus says the Lord who delivers you, the Holy One of Israel: "I am your God, who showed you how to find the way wherein you should walk.[†] [18]If only you had heeded My commandments, then your peace would be like a river, and your righteousness as a wave of the sea. [19]Your seed would also be like the sand, and the offspring of your womb like the dust of the ground. Neither would you be utterly destroyed now, nor would your name perish before Me."

[20]Go forth from Babylon, you who are fleeing from the Chaldeans. Proclaim a voice of gladness and let it become well known. Proclaim it to the end of the earth, and say, "The Lord delivered His servant Jacob." [21]If they shall thirst, He will lead them through the desert, and water shall flow from the rock for them. He will split the rock, the water shall flow, and My people will drink. [22]"There is no rejoicing," says the Lord, "for the ungodly."

49 “Listen to Me, O coastlands, and take heed, you Gentiles. It will stand for a long time,” says the Lord. “He called My name from My mother's womb.[†] [2]He made My mouth like a sharp sword, and hid Me under the shadow of His hand. He made Me as a chosen arrow and covered Me in His quiver.[†] [3]He said to me, ‘You are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’[†] [4]Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain and spent My strength for nothing. Therefore My judgment is from the Lord, and my labor is before My God.’ [5]Now thus says the Lord—who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, and to bring Jacob and Israel back to Him (for I shall gather and glorify them before the Lord, and My God shall be My strength)— [6]indeed He says, ‘It is a great thing for You to be called My Servant, to establish the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the dispersion of Israel. Behold, I give You as the covenant of a race and as the light of the Gentiles, that You should be the salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”

[7]Thus says the Lord, who delivers You, the God of Israel: “Sanctify Him who despises His life, who is abhorred by the nations and by the servants of rulers. Kings shall see Him and rise, and rulers also shall worship Him for the Lord's sake. For the Holy One of Israel is faithful, and He chose You.” [8]Thus says the Lord: “In an acceptable time I heard You, and in the day of salvation I helped You. I give You as a covenant to the Gentiles, to establish the earth and to inherit the inheritance of the desert;[ω] [9]saying to those in bonds, ‘Go forth,’ and to those in darkness, ‘Reveal yourselves.’ They shall feed along all their roads, and their pasture shall be along all the paths. [10]They shall not hunger, neither shall they thirst, nor shall the burning heat of the sun strike them; but He who has mercy on them will comfort them; and He shall lead them by the fountains of waters. [11]I will make every

mountains as a road, and every path as a pasture for them. [12]Behold, these come from afar, these from the north and these from the sea, and the others from the land of the Persians.” [13]Be glad, O heavens, and rejoice exceedingly, O earth. Let the mountains break out in gladness, and the hills in righteousness. For the Lord had mercy on His people, and comforted the humble of His people.

[14]But Zion said, “The Lord forsook me, and the Lord forgot me.” [15]“Will a woman forget her child, so as not to have mercy on the offspring of her womb? But even if a woman should forget these things, nevertheless, I shall not forget you,” says the Lord. [16]“Behold, I painted your walls on My hands, and you are continually before Me.[†] [17]It will be rebuilt quickly by your destroyers, and those who laid you waste shall go away from you. [18]Lift up your eyes round about, and look on them. Behold, they gather together and come to you. As I live,” says the Lord, “you shall clothe yourselves with them, and put them on as a bride's attire. [19]For your deserts and your ruined and fallen places will now be too confined because of the inhabitants; and those who swallowed you up will go far away. [20]For your children, whom you lost, will say in your ears, ‘The place is too narrow for me. Make me a place where I may dwell.’ [21]Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who has begotten these for me? For I am childless and a widow, but who reared these for me? I was left alone, but these, where are they from?’ ”

[22]Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I lift My hand to the Gentiles, and I will set up My signal to the islands. They shall bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.[†] [23]Kings shall be

your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They shall bow down to you upon the face of the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know I am the Lord, and you will not be ashamed. [24]Will someone take spoils from a mighty man? If anyone should take someone captive unjustly, will that one be saved?" [25]Thus says the Lord: "If someone should take a mighty man captive, he will also take his spoils; and he will also save the one taken captive by that strong man. For I will plead your cause and deliver your children. [26]Those who oppressed you will eat their own flesh and drink their own blood as new wine; and all flesh shall perceive that I am the Lord, who delivers you and supports the strength of Jacob."

50 Thus says the Lord: "Of what quality is your mother's certificate of divorce, by which I put her away? Or to which debtor have I sold you? Behold, you are sold for your sins, and for your lawlessness I put away your mother. [2]Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I called, was there none to obey? Is My hand unable to deliver? Or have I no strength to deliver? Behold, with My rebuke I dry up the sea, and I turn rivers into deserts; and because there is no water, their fish dry up and die of thirst. [3]I clothe heaven with darkness and make its covering like sackcloth."

[4]"The Lord gives Me the tongue of the learned, so as to know when to speak a word at a fitting time; and He causes My ear to listen each morning.[ω] [5]The Lord's instruction opens My ears, and I am not disobedient, nor do I contradict Him.

[6]"I gave My back to whips, and My cheeks to blows; and I turned not away My face from the shame of spitting.[†] [7]The Lord became My helper;

therefore, I was not disgraced. But I made My face like a solid rock and knew I would not be ashamed. [8]For He who pronounces Me righteous draws near. Who is he who judges Me? Let him oppose Me at the same time. Who is he who judges Me? Let him come near Me. [9]Behold, the Lord will help Me. Who will harm Me? Behold, all of you will grow old like a garment, and old age will devour you, as a moth does a garment.

[10]"Who among you fears the Lord? Let him listen to the voice of His Servant. You who walk in darkness and have no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon God. [11]Behold, all of you kindle a fire and feed a flame. Walk in the light of your fire and the flame you kindled. This happened to you for My sake, and you shall lie down in sorrow.

51 "Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness and seek the Lord. Look to the solid rock which you hewed, and to the hole of the pit which you dug.† [2]Look to Abraham our father and to Sarah who bore you, for he was first, and I called and blessed him, and loved and multiplied him. [3]And now I will comfort you, O Zion, and I comforted all her desert places; and I shall make her desert places like the Garden of the Lord. In it they shall find gladness and exceeding joy, and thanksgiving and the voice of praise.† [4]Listen to Me, listen, O My people and kings, give ear to Me, for law shall proceed from Me, and My judgment as the light of the Gentiles. [5]My righteousness draws near quickly, and My salvation will go forth as light, and the Gentiles will hope in My arm, and the coastlands shall wait for Me and hope in My arm.† [6]Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look to the earth below, for heaven is solid as smoke, and the earth will grow old like a garment; and the inhabitants of the earth shall die, as do these things. But

My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness will not fail.[†] [7]Listen to Me, My people who know judgment, in whose heart is My law. Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be overcome by their contempt. [8]For as a garment will be devoured by time, and as wool will be devoured by a moth, so shall they be devoured. But My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation.”

[9]Awake, awake, O Jerusalem, and put on the strength of your arm. Awake as in the beginning of days, as in the generations of old. [10]Are You not He who dried up the sea, the abundant water of the deep, and made the depths of the sea a road of passage for those who were delivered and redeemed? [11]For with the Lord's help, they shall return and come to Zion with gladness and everlasting joy; for exceeding joy. Praise and gladness shall come on them, and pain, grief, and sighing shall depart from them. [12]“I Am, I am the Lord who comforts you. Know who it is you feared, for you were fearful of mortal man and the son of man, those who wither like grass.[†] [13]You forgot the God who made you, who made heaven and laid the foundations of the earth, but all your days you feared the angry face of him who oppressed you. For he plotted to take you away, but now where is the anger of him who oppressed you? [14]For when you are saved, he will not stand still nor tarry. [15]For I am your God who troubles the sea and causes the waves to roar. The Lord of hosts is My name. [16]I will put My words in your mouth, and protect you under the shadow of My hand, with which I established heaven, and laid the foundation of the earth. I will say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’

[17]Awake, awake, rise up, O Jerusalem, who drank the cup of anger from the Lord's hand, for you drank the cup of destruction, the drinking-vessel of My anger, and emptied it out.[†] [18]There was no one to comfort you from all the children you bore, and there was no one to take hold of your hand, not even from among all the children you reared. [19]These two things are against you. Who will sympathize with you in your grief? Misfortune and affliction, famine and sword! Who will comfort you? [20]Your sons are at a loss, and they lie asleep at the end of every street like a half-boiled beet, full of the Lord's anger and forsaken because of the Lord God. [21]Therefore listen, you who are humbled and drunk, but not from wine. [22]Thus says the Lord God who judges His people: “Behold, I took the cup of destruction, the cup of My anger, from your hand, and it shall no longer be imposed on you to drink from it. [23]I will put it into the hands of those who wronged and humbled you, those who said to your soul, ‘Bow down as we pass by.’ So you put your back parallel with the ground to those who passed by.”

52 Awake, awake, O Zion; put on your strength, O Zion, and put on your glory, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer continue to pass through you.[†] [2]Shake off the dust and rise up. Sit down, O Jerusalem; put off the band from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. [3]For thus says the Lord: “You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.”[†] [4]Thus says the Lord: “My people went down to Egypt in former times to sojourn there, and they were taken to the Assyrians by force.” [5]So now, why are you here? The Lord says this: “Because My people were taken for nothing, marvel and lament.” The Lord says this: “Because of you, My name is blasphemed continually among the Gentiles. [6]Therefore My people shall know My name in that day, for I am

He who speaks. [7]I am present like springtime in the mountains, like the feet of one who announces a good report of peace, like one who preaches good things, for I will cause Your salvation to be heard, saying, ‘O Zion, your God reigns.’ ” [8]For the voice of those who guard you is raised upward, and with their voice they shall be glad together; for their eyes shall be on watch together when the Lord has mercy on Zion. [9]Break forth in gladness together, O desert places of Jerusalem, for the Lord had mercy on her, and has delivered Jerusalem. [10]The Lord will reveal His holy arm before all the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. [11]Depart, depart, go out from there, and do not touch an unclean thing. Separate yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord, [12]because you shall not go forth with tumult, nor will you go by flight. For the Lord will go before you, and the Lord God of Israel shall gather you.

[13]Behold, My Servant shall have wisdom, and He shall be exalted and glorified exceedingly.[ω] [14]Just as many shall be astonished at You, so Your form and glory shall be dishonored by men. [15]Thus many nations shall marvel at Him, and kings shall shut their mouth, because they to whom no report was brought concerning Him shall see; and they who did not hear shall understand.

53 O Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed? [2]We proclaimed His presence as a Child, as a Root in a thirsty land. He had no form or glory, and we saw Him; and He had no form or beauty.[†] [3]But in comparison to all men, His form was lacking in honor. He was a man in suffering and knew how to bear sickness. His face was turned away, and He was dishonored and not esteemed.[†] [4]He bears our sins and suffers for us, yet we considered Him to be in pain, suffering, and ill-treatment. [5]But He was wounded because of our lawlessness, and became sick because of our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruise we are healed.[†] [6]All we like sheep have gone astray. Man has gone astray in his way, and the Lord delivered Him over for our sins.[†] [7]Although He was ill-treated, He opened not His mouth. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent before his shearers, so He opens not His mouth.[†] [8]In His humiliation His judgment was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth, and because of the lawlessness of My people He was led to death.[†] [9]I will appoint evil men for His burial and rich men for His death, because He committed no lawlessness, nor was deceit found in His mouth.[†] [10]The Lord wishes to cleanse Him of His wound, and if You give an offering for sin, Your soul shall see a long-lived seed.[†] [11]The Lord wishes to take away the pain of His soul, to show Him light, to form Him with understanding, and to pronounce righteous the Righteous One who serves many well; and He shall bear their sins. [12]Therefore He shall inherit many, and will divide the spoil with the strong, because His soul was delivered over to death. He was considered among the lawless, and He bore the sins of many, and was delivered over because of their sins.[†]

54 “Be glad, O barren woman who does not bear; break forth and cry out, you who are not in travail, for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,” says the Lord.[†] [2]“Enlarge the place of your tent and courtyard; set it up; do not avoid it; lengthen your ropes and strengthen your pegs.[†] [3]Spread out further to the right and the left, and your seed shall inherit the Gentiles. You shall cause the desolate cities to be inhabited. [4]Fear not that you were shamed, neither be confounded and disgraced; for you will forget your former shame and will not remember the disgrace of your widowhood. [5]For it is the Lord who is your Maker; the Lord of hosts is His name. He is your Deliverer, and He shall be called the God of Israel by all the earth. [6]The Lord has not called you like a woman forsaken and fainthearted, nor like a wife hated from her youth," says your God. [7]"I forsook you for a short while, but with great compassion I will have mercy on you. [8]In a little anger I turned away My face from you, but in everlasting compassion I will have mercy on you," says the Lord who delivered you. [9]"This little anger is to Me as it was at the time of Noah's Flood, when I swore to him regarding the earth, that I would no longer be angry with it, neither would I again threaten to remove its mountains nor move its hills.[†] [10]So neither shall My compassion fail you, nor shall your covenant of peace be removed; for the Lord who is merciful to you has spoken.

[11]"Servile and unstable, you were not comforted. Behold, I am preparing you carbuncle for your stone and sapphire for your foundations,[†] [12]and I will make your battlements jasper and your gates crystal stones, and the enclosing wall of your temple choice stones. [13]I will cause all your children to be taught by God, and your children to be in great peace. [14]You shall be built in righteousness. Keep away from wrongdoing, and you will not be afraid, and trembling shall not come near you. [15]Behold, resident aliens shall come to you because of Me, and they shall flee to you. [16]Behold, I created you, not as a metalworker who blows coals in the fire and brings out a vessel fit for work; and I created you, not for ruin so as to destroy you. [17]I

will not prosper any instrument of destruction used against you, and every voice raised against you in judgment, you shall overcome them all; and your adversaries shall be judged guilty. This is the inheritance for those who serve the Lord, and you shall be my righteous ones," says the Lord.

55 "You who are thirsty, go to the water, and all who have no money, go and buy wine and fat, and eat and drink without money and price.[†ω] [2]Why do you value at the price of money, and give your toil for what does not satisfy? Listen to Me and eat good things, and your soul will delight in good things. [3]Incline your ears and follow my ways. Listen to Me, and your soul shall live in good things; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the holy and faithful things of David. [4]Behold, I made him a witness among the Gentiles, a ruler and commander to the Gentiles. [5]The Gentiles, which did not know you, shall call upon you, and the peoples who did not understand you shall take refuge in you, because of your God, the Holy One of Israel; for He glorified you."

[6]Seek God, and when you find Him, call upon Him when He draws near to you. [7]Let the ungodly man abandon his ways, and the lawless man his counsels; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; for He shall forgive your sins abundantly. [8]"For My counsels are not as your counsels, neither are your ways My ways," says the Lord.[†] [9]"But as heaven is distant from earth, so is My way distant from your ways, and your thoughts from My mind. [10]For as rain comes down, or snow from heaven, and does not return until it saturates the earth, and it brings forth and produces, and gives seed to the sower and bread for food,[†] [11]so shall My word be, whatever proceeds from My mouth. It shall not return until it

accomplishes whatever I willed, and I shall prosper your ways and My commandments. [12]For you shall go forth with gladness and shall be taught with joy, for the mountains and hills shall exult to receive you with joy; and all the trees of the field shall applaud with their branches. [13]Instead of the broom-tree shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle; and the Lord shall be for a name and for an everlasting sign, and He shall not fail.”

56 The Lord says this: “Guard judgment and do righteousness, for My salvation draws near, and My mercy shall be revealed.[†] [2]Blessed is the man who does these things, and the man who lays hold on them; and who keeps the Sabbaths, so as not to profane them, and keeps his hand free from wrongdoing.” [3]Let not the foreigner who is devoted to the Lord say, “The Lord therefore will separate me from His people,” and let not the eunuch say, “I am a withered tree.” [4]The Lord says this to the eunuchs: “As many as keep My Sabbaths, and choose the things I will, and lay hold of My covenant,[†] [5]I will give them a notable place in My house and within My wall, a place better than that of sons and daughters. I will give them an eternal name, and it shall not fail. [6]I will also give an eternal name to the foreigners who devote themselves to the Lord, to serve Him and to love His name, to be His male and female servants, and to all who keep My Sabbaths so as not to profane them, and who hold fast to My covenant.[†] [7]I will lead them to My holy mountain and gladden them in My house of prayer. Their whole burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon My altar, for My house shall be called House of Prayer for All Nations,” [8]says the Lord who gathers the dispersed of Israel; “for I will gather together a congregation to Him.”

[9]All you wild animals of the fields and all you wild animals of the thicket, come and eat. [10]See, all are blinded; they do not know how to be discerning; all are dumb dogs unable to bark; dozing on a bed, loving to sleep. [11]They are shameless dogs in their soul and do not know satisfaction. They are evil and have no understanding. All follow their own ways, each according to his own will.

57 See how the righteous man perishes, and no one takes it to heart. Righteous men are taken away, and no one notices it; and the righteous man is taken away from the presence of wrongdoing.[†] [2]His burial shall be in peace, for he was taken from the midst of it. [3]“But come here, you lawless sons, a seed of adulterers and of a prostitute.[†] [4]In whom did you delight? And against whom did you open your mouth? Against whom did you loosen your tongue? Are you not the children of destruction, a lawless seed? [5]You are those who call upon their idols under leafy trees and slay their children in the midst of the rocks. [6]That is your portion, this is your lot, for you poured out drink offerings to them, and to them you offered up sacrifices; therefore, shall I not be angry for these things? [7]On a high and lofty mountain, there was your bed, and there you carried up your sacrifices. [8]Also behind the posts of your door, you put your memorials. You supposed if you departed from Me, it would be a better thing. You loved those who slept with you, [9]and multiplied your fornication with them. You increased their number far away from you, and sent ambassadors beyond your borders. You turned aside and humbled yourselves, even to Hades. [10]You grew weary with many ways, but you did not say, ‘I will cease strengthening myself,’ for you practiced these things; therefore, you did not supplicate Me. [11]Whom did you respect and fear, so as to lie to Me, and not remember Me, nor take Me into your heart and mind? So when I see you, I disregard you, for you do not fear Me. [12]And I will declare My righteousness, and your evils, which will not profit you. [13]When you cry out, let them deliver you in your tribulation, for wind and storm will take them and carry them all away. But those who hold fast to Me shall possess the land and inherit My holy mountain. [14]They shall say, ‘Cleanse the ways before His face, and take away the obstacles from the way of My people.’ ”[†]

[15]The Lord, the Most High who dwells on high forever, the Holy One among His saints, whose name is the Lord Most High, who rests among His saints, and who gives patience to the fainthearted and life to the brokenhearted, says this:[†] [16]“I will not punish you forever, nor will I always be angry with you, for My Spirit shall go forth from Me, and I made every breath. [17]Because of sin for a time I grieved him, and struck him, and turned away My face from him; and he was grieved, and he went on sorrowful in his ways. [18]I saw his ways, and healed him; and I comforted him, and gave him true comfort. [19]There is peace upon peace to those far off and those near; and the Lord says, ‘I will heal them.’ [20]But wrongdoers shall be tossed here and there by waves, and be unable to rest. [21]There is no joy to the ungodly,” says the Lord God.

58 “Cry aloud with strength, and spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to My people their sins, and to the house of Jacob their lawlessness.[†] [2]They seek Me day by day, and desire to know My ways. As a people who did righteousness, and did not forsake the judgment of their God, they now ask Me about righteous judgment, and desire to draw near to God,† [3]saying, ‘Why have we fasted, but You did not see it? Why have we humbled our souls, but You did not know it?’ Because in the days of your fasts, you seek your own wills, and mistreat those under your authority. [4]If you fast for condemnations and quarrels, and strike a humble man with your fists, why do you fast to Me as you do today, so your voice may be heard in crying? [5]I did not choose this fast, and such a day for a man to humble his soul; nor if you should bow your neck like a ring and spread sackcloth and ashes under yourself, could you thus call such a fast acceptable. [6]I did not choose such a fast,” says the Lord; “rather, loose every bond of wrongdoing; untie the knots of violent dealings; cancel the debts of the oppressed; and tear apart every unjust contract. [7]Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house. If you see a naked man, clothe him, nor shall you disregard your offspring in your own household.† [8]Then your light shall break forth as the morning, and your healing shall spring forth quickly. Your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of God shall cover you. [9]Then you shall cry out, and God will hear you. While you are still speaking, He will say, ‘Behold, I am here.’ If you take away your fetter and the pointing of the finger, and the word of grumbling,† [10]and if you give bread to the hungry from your soul, and satisfy the humble soul, then your light shall rise up in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as midday. [11]God shall be with you continually, and you shall be satisfied as your soul desires. Your bones shall be enriched, and you shall be like a well-watered garden and like a spring of water that does not fail. Your bones will arise and be enriched like a green plant, and they shall inherit generations of generations.† [12]Your ancient deserts shall be built, and your ancient foundations shall be from generation to generation. You shall be called Builder of Walls, and will rest on the paths within them.[†] [13]If you turn away your foot from work because of the Sabbath, so as not to do your desires on the holy day, and if you shall call the Sabbath joyful, holy to your God, and not take away your foot for work, nor speak a word in wrath from your mouth, [14]then you shall trust in the Lord; and He will bring you to the good things of the land, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things.”

59 Is the Lord's hand unable to save? Is His ear heavy so as not to hear?[†] [2]But your sins stand between you and your God, and He turned His face from you because of your sins, so as not to have mercy. [3]For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with sins; and your lips speak lawlessness, and your tongue plots wrongdoing.[†] [4]No one speaks righteous things, nor is there true judgment. They trust in worthless things and speak vain things; for they conceive trouble and give birth to lawlessness. [5]They hatch the eggs of asps, and weave a spider's web. He who is about to eat of their eggs finds a sterile and broken egg, and in it a basilisk. [6]Their web shall not become a garment, nor will they clothe themselves with their works; for their works are works of lawlessness. [7]Their feet run swiftly to evil to shed blood. Their thoughts are the thoughts of undiscerning men, and destruction and misery are in their ways. [8]They do not know the way of peace, and there is no judgment in their ways; for the paths they travel are corrupt, and they do not know peace. [9]Therefore judgment departed from them, and righteousness does not lay hold of them. While they waited for light, darkness came upon them, and while they waited for the dawn, they walked in darkness. [10]They groped around for a wall like blind men, and like men who have no eyes they groped around. They shall fall at midday as though it were midnight, and shall groan like dying men. [11]They shall proceed together like a bear and a dove: We waited for judgment, but there is none, and salvation departed far away from us. [12]For our lawlessness is great before You, and our sins oppose us; for our lawlessness is with us, and we know our unrighteous deeds.[†] [13]We acted in an ungodly manner, and we lied and departed backwards from our God. We spoke unjustly, and were disobedient; and we conceived and meditated on unrighteous words from our heart. [14]We departed backwards from judgment, and righteousness stands far off. For the truth is consumed in their ways, and they could not pass by a straight path. [15]Truth was taken away, and they turned away their mind so as not to understand. But the Lord saw this and was not pleased, because there was no judgment. [16]He also saw there was no man, and He observed, but there was no one to help. He defended them with His arm and established them with His mercy. [17]He put on righteousness as a breastplate and placed the helmet of salvation on His head. He clothed Himself with the garment and covering of vengeance,[†] [18]as a recompense of recompenses, even a rebuke to His adversaries. [19]Those from the west shall fear the name of the Lord, and those from the east, His glorious name; for the wrath of the Lord shall come like a violent river; it shall come with anger. [20]He who delivers shall come for Zion's sake, and He shall turn back ungodliness from Jacob.[†] [21]“This shall be My covenant with them,” says the Lord. “My Spirit who is upon you, and My words I caused to be in your mouth shall not fail from the mouth of your seed; for the Lord has spoken it, from now and forever.

60 “Shine, shine, O Jerusalem, for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.[†][ω] [2]Behold, darkness and gloom shall cover the earth upon the nations, but the Lord will shine on you; and His glory shall be seen upon you. [3]Kings shall come to your light, and the Gentiles to your brightness. [4]Lift up your eyes all around, and see your children gathered together. Behold, all your sons come from afar, and your daughters shall be lifted upon their shoulders.[†] [5]Then you will see, fear and be amazed in your heart, because the wealth of the sea and of nations and peoples shall change their course and turn to you. [6]Herds of camels shall come to you, and the camels of Midian and Ephah shall cover you. All those from Sheba shall come bearing gold, and they shall bring frankincense and proclaim the good news of the Lord's salvation.[†] [7]All the sheep of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, and the rams of Nebaioth shall come to you. They shall offer acceptable sacrifices upon My altar, and My house of prayer shall be glorified. [8]Who are these who fly like clouds and like doves with young? [9]The coastlands waited for Me, and the ships of Tarshish among the first, to bring your children from afar, and silver and gold with them for the sake of the Lord's name, and because the Holy One of Israel is glorified. [10]Foreigners shall build your walls, and their kings shall defend you; for I struck you because of My wrath, and I loved you because of My mercy. [11]Your gates shall be opened continually, and they shall not be shut day or night, to bring you the power of the Gentiles, and their kings leading them.[ω] [12]For the nations and their kings who will not serve you shall perish, and those nations will be utterly desolate. [13]The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, with the cypress, the pine, and the cedar together, to glorify My holy place. [14]The sons of those who humbled and provoked you shall go to you in fear, and you shall be called City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. [15]Because you were forsaken and hated, and there was no one to help you, therefore I will make you an eternal joy, the gladness of generations to generations. [16]You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles and eat the wealth of kings. You shall know I am the Lord who saves you and the God of Israel who delivers you. [17]Instead of bronze, I will bring you gold, and instead of iron, I will bring you silver, and instead of wood, I will bring you bronze, and instead of stones, iron. I will establish your rulers in peace and your bishops in righteousness. [18]Unrighteousness shall no longer be heard in your land, neither destruction nor distress within your boundaries, but your walls shall be called Salvation, and your gates Sculptured Work. [19]The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor shall the rising of the moon shine on you at night, but the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and God, your glory. [20]For your sun shall no longer set, nor shall your moon be eclipsed, for the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be fulfilled. [21]Also your people shall all be righteous, and they shall inherit the land forever, guarding what they planted, the works of their hands, for glory. [22]The few in number shall become thousands, and the lesser shall become a great nation. I the Lord will gather them together at the appointed time.

61 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because of which He anointed Me. He sent Me to proclaim good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind;[† ω] [2]to declare the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of recompense, and to comfort all who mourn; [3]to give those who mourn in

Zion glory instead of ashes, the oil of gladness to those who mourn; the garment of glory instead of a spirit of indifference. They shall be called generations of righteousness, the planting of the Lord for glory.[†] [4]They shall build the ancient deserts, raise up those formerly abandoned, and renew the desert cities that laid waste for generations. [5]Foreigners shall come and shepherd your sheep, and aliens shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; [6]but you shall be called priests of the Lord and the ministers of God. You shall eat the strength of nations and be admired because of their wealth. [7]So they shall inherit the land a second time, and eternal gladness shall be upon their head.[†] [8]For I am the Lord, who loves righteousness and hates robberies of wrongdoing. I will give their labor to the righteous and will make with them an everlasting covenant. [9]Their seed and their offspring shall be known among the Gentiles. All who see them shall know these are the seed blessed by God; [10]and they shall have exceeding gladness in the Lord."

Let my soul rejoice exceedingly in the Lord, for He clothed me with the garment of salvation and the tunic of gladness. He put a miter around me like a bridegroom and adorned me with ornaments like a bride.[†ω] [11]As the earth causes its flower to grow, and as a garden its seeds, so shall the Lord cause righteousness to rise up, and exceeding joy before all the Gentiles.

62 For Zion's sake I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until My righteousness goes forth as light, and My salvation burns like a lamp. [2]The Gentiles will see your righteousness, and kings your glory; and one will call you by your new name, which the Lord shall name. [3]You shall also be a crown of beauty in the Lord's hand, and the diadem of a kingdom in the hand of your God.[†] [4]You shall no longer be called Forsaken, and your land shall not be called Desert; for you shall be called My Will, and in your land, the Inhabited Earth. [5]As a young man lives in wedlock with a virgin, so shall your sons dwell with you, and as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so the Lord shall rejoice over you. [6]I will place guards on your walls all day and all night, O Jerusalem, who shall never keep silent in the remembrance of the Lord.[†] [7]For there shall be no one like you, O Jerusalem, when He amends and makes you the pride of the earth.[†] [8]The Lord swore by His right hand and by the strength of His arm, “I will not give your grain and your food to your enemies, and the sons of foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you labored;[†] [9]but rather, those who gather the food shall eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather the grapes shall drink their wine in My holy courts. [10]Go through My gates, make a way for My people, throw the stones off the road, and lift up a standard for the Gentiles.”[†ω] [11]For behold, the Lord caused this to be heard to the ends of the earth: “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your Savior is come, and has His reward, and His work before His face.’ ” [12]One shall call them a holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, and you shall be called a City Sought for and Not Forsaken.

63 Who is this who comes from Edom with red garments from Bozrah, so beautiful in His apparel, with force of strength? “I speak of righteousness and saving judgment.” [2]Why are Your garments red and Your apparel as one who treads in a winepress?[†] [3]“I am full of the treading of grapes, and there is no man with Me among the nations. I trampled them in My anger, and crushed them like earth, and brought down their blood to the ground. [4]For the day of recompense has come upon them, and the year of redemption has arrived. [5]I looked, but there was no helper; and I observed, but there was no one to help; therefore, My arm delivered them, and My anger was suddenly present. [6]So I trampled them in My wrath and brought their blood down to the ground.”

[7]I remembered the Lord's mercy, the praises of the Lord in all things in which the Lord recompenses us. The Lord is a good judge to the house of Israel, and He deals with us according to His mercy, and according to the multitude of His righteousness.[†] [8]He said, “Surely My people, My children, have not rejected Me?” So He became their salvation. [9]Not an elder or an angel, but the Lord Himself saved them from all their tribulation, because He loved them and spared them. He redeemed and took them up, and lifted them up all the days of old. [10]Yet they disobeyed Him and grieved His Holy Spirit. So He turned against them with hostility and waged war on them. [11]Then He remembered the days of old, He who brought up the shepherd of His sheep from the land. Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in them?[†ω] [12]Where is He who led Moses with His right hand, the arm of His glory? He overpowered the water by His presence to make for Himself an everlasting name.[†] [13]He brought them through the deep, like a horse through the desert, yet they did not grow weary. [14]Like cattle through the plain, the Spirit came down from the Lord and guided them. Thus You led Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name.

[15]Return from heaven, and look from Your holy and glorious dwelling-place. Where are Your zeal and Your strength; where is the multitude of Your mercy and Your compassion, so as to be patient with us?[†] [16]You are our Father, although Abraham did not know us, and Israel did not

acknowledge us; but You, O Lord, are our Father. You delivered us, and from the beginning Your name was upon us. [17]Why have you led us astray, O Lord, from Your path, and hardened our hearts so as not to fear You? Return for the sake of Your servants, for the sake of the tribes of Your inheritance,[†] [18]that we may inherit a small portion of Your holy mountain. [19]For our adversaries trampled down Your sanctuary, and we have become as we were from the beginning, when You did not rule us, neither did we call upon Your name. [20]If You open heaven, trembling shall take hold of the mountains before You, and they shall melt as wax melts before the fire.

64 The fire shall burn up the adversaries, and the Lord's name shall be manifest among the adversaries; and the nations shall be troubled by Your presence.[†] [2]When You do glorious things, trembling shall take hold of the mountains because of You. [3]From of old we have not heard, nor have our eyes seen any God but You, and Your works which You shall do for those who wait for Your mercy. [4]For mercy shall meet with those who do righteousness, and they shall remember your ways. Behold, You were angry, for we sinned; therefore, we went astray.[†] [5]We all are become as unclean, and all our righteousness is like a filthy rag. We fall off like leaves because of our wrongdoings; thus the wind will carry us away.[†] [6]There is no one who calls upon Your name and who remembers to take hold of You; for You turned away Your face from us, and delivered us over because of our sins. [7]And now, O Lord, You are our Father, and all we are clay, the work of Your hands. [8]Do not be exceedingly angry with us, and do not remember our sins in an opportune time. And now look upon us, for we are all Your people. [9]The city of Your holy place has become a desert. Zion is like a desert, and Jerusalem is for a curse. [10]The house, our holy place and the glory our father blessed, has been burnt with fire, and all our glorious things have become extinct. [11]You tolerated all this, O Lord, and were silent; and You humbled us exceedingly.

65 “I was manifest to those who did not seek Me; I was found by those who did not ask for Me. I said, ‘Behold, I am here,’ to a nation that did not call on My name. [2]I stretched out My hands the whole day long to a people who disobeyed and contradicted Me, who did not walk in the true way, but after their sins.[†] [3]This is a people who provoke Me continually to My face. They sacrifice in gardens and burn incense on bricks to the demons, which do not exist;[†] [4]and they sleep in graves and caves for the sake of dreams, they who eat swine's flesh and the sauce of their sacrifices, which defiles all their vessels; [5]who say, ‘Stay away from me; do not come near me, for I am clean.’ This is the smoke of My anger; a fire burns in it all day long. [6]Behold, it is written before Me: I will not be silent,” says the Lord, “until I repay into their bosom their sins and the sins of their fathers, [7]who burned incense on the mountains and reproached Me on the hills. I will repay their works into their bosom.”

[8]Thus says the Lord: “As the grape shall be found in a cluster, and they shall say, ‘Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing from the Lord in it,’ so shall I do for the sake of him who serves Me. For his sake I will not destroy them all. [9]I will bring forth the seed of Jacob and the seed of Judah, and they shall inherit My holy mountain. My elect shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there. [10]There shall be in the forest a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor shall be for the resting place of herds for My people

who sought Me. [11]But you are those who forsook Me, and forget My holy mountain, and prepare a table for the devil, and fill a drink-offering to Fortune. [12]I will deliver you to the sword, and all of you shall fall in the slaughter; because I called you, but you did not obey; I spoke, but you refused to listen. You did evil in My sight, and did not choose the things I willed."

[13]Therefore, thus says the Lord: "Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall hunger. Behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall thirst. Behold, My servants shall be glad, but you shall be ashamed. [14]Behold, My servants shall rejoice exceedingly in gladness, but you shall cry out because of the pain in your heart; and you shall wail from the crushing of your spirit. [15]For you shall leave your name as an example of excess to My elect, and the Lord shall destroy you. But those who serve Him shall be called by a new name, [16]which shall be blessed upon the earth. For they shall bless the true God, and those who swear upon the earth shall swear by the true God; for they shall forget their former tribulation, and it shall not come into their heart.[†]

[17]"For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and they shall not remember the former things, nor shall these things come into their heart.[†] [18]But they shall find gladness and exceeding joy in her, for behold, I will make Jerusalem an exceeding joy, and My people gladness. [19]I will rejoice exceedingly in Jerusalem, and I will be glad in My people. There shall no longer be heard in her a voice of weeping, nor a voice of crying. [20]There shall not be the untimely death of a child there, nor shall there be an old man who does not fulfill his time. For a young man shall be a hundred years

old, but a sinner who dies at a hundred years old shall be cursed. [21]They shall build houses and dwell in them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat their produce. [22]But they shall not build, and others inhabit; and they shall not plant, and others eat. For according to the days of the tree of life, so shall be the days of My people, and the works of their labors shall not grow old. [23]My elect shall not labor in vain, nor shall they bear children to be a curse; for they are a seed blessed by God; and their offspring shall be with them. [24]It shall be, before they cry out, I will listen to them; while they are still speaking, I will say, ‘What is it?’ [25]The wolves and lambs shall feed together, and the lion, like the ox, shall eat chaff; and the serpent, the ground as bread. They shall not injure, neither destroy in My holy mountain,” says the Lord.

66 Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is My throne, and earth is the footstool of My feet. What kind of house will you build for Me? Or what kind is the place of My rest?[†] [2]For My hand made all these things, and all these things are Mine,” says the Lord; “and upon whom will I show respect, but to the humble and the peaceful and to him who trembles at My words. [3]But the lawless man who sacrifices a calf is as he who kills a dog; and he who offers a grain offering, as he who offers the blood of a pig; and he who offers incense for a memorial, as he who is a blasphemer. These chose their ways and their abominations, which their soul willed. [4]But I will choose their mockeries, and I will repay them; because I called, but they did not obey Me; I spoke, but they did not listen; but they did evil in My sight, and things I did not will, they chose.”

[5]Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at His word. Speak, our brethren, to those who hate us and detest us, that the Lord's name may be glorified and seen in their gladness, so they may be ashamed.[†] [6]A voice of crying from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord is fully repaying His enemies. [7]“Before she travails in labor to give birth, before the pain of birth pangs comes on, she escapes it and bears a male.[†] [8]Who has heard such a thing, and who has seen anything like this? Has the earth travailed in one day, or has a nation given birth at once? For Zion travailed and gave birth to her children.[†] [9]But I raised this expectation, yet you did not remember Me,” says the Lord. “Behold, do I not cause one woman to beget, but another to be sterile?” says God. [10]“Be glad, O Jerusalem, and celebrate holy days in her. All you who love her, rejoice exceedingly, and all you who mourn over her;[†] [11]that you may nurse and be satisfied by the breast of her consolation; that you may take pleasure in nursing because of the entrance of her glory.” [12]For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will turn to them like a river of peace and like a brook, to flood them with the glory of the Gentiles. Their children shall be taken up on shoulders and comforted on knees. [13]Like someone a mother comforts, so also will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” [14]You shall see, and your heart will rejoice. Your bones shall rise up like a pasture, and the Lord's hand shall be known by those who fear Him; but He shall threaten the disobedient.

[15]For behold, the Lord shall come like a fire, and His chariots like a sudden blast of wind, to render His vengeance with anger and His renunciation with a flame of fire.[†] [16]For all the earth shall be judged in the fire of the Lord, and all flesh with His sword; and many shall be wounded

by the Lord. [17]“Those who purify and cleanse themselves in the gardens and porches, who eat the meat of a pig or any abomination, they shall be destroyed together at the same time,” says the Lord; [18]“and I know their works and their reasoning. I am coming to gather all the nations and tongues, and they shall come and see My glory. [19]And I will leave signs upon them, and those among them who are saved, I will send forth to the Gentiles: to Tarshish, and Pul and Lud and Tubal, and to Greece and to the coastlands far off, to those who have not heard My name, nor seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.[†] [20]They shall bring your brethren from among all the Gentiles as a gift to the Lord, with horses and chariots, in litters drawn by mules and covered with sunshades, to the holy city of Jerusalem,” says the Lord, “just as the children of Israel would bring Me their sacrifices with psalms into the house of the Lord.[†] [21]I shall take some of them to be My priests and Levites,” says the Lord. [22]“For just as the new heaven and the new earth which I make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord, “so shall your seed and your name remain. [23]It shall come to pass from month to month and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall worship before Me in Jerusalem,” says the Lord. [24]“They shall go forth and see the dead bodies of the men who transgressed against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be extinguished; and they shall be a vision to all flesh.”

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Verses in Jeremiah Chapter 52

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The Book of Jeremiah

Author—Jeremiah, “the one whom God appoints or exalts.”

Date—Jeremiah prophesied from about 627 to 582 BC.

Major Themes—*Destruction and captivity.* Jeremiah prophesied the persecutions and destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; he also foretold the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. He exhorted the people to repent, promising hope for those who remain faithful to the Lord. He prophesied there would come a “new covenant” (38:31–34) to be inscribed in every believer's heart, inaugurated and fulfilled through Christ God, the Messiah of Israel.

Background—Jeremiah was called the “weeping prophet.” He shed many tears during the dark and despairing time of the Babylonian captivity. He began prophesying during King Josiah's reign (640–609 BC). Jeremiah was also known as “the prophet of the interior life” because he preached a personal knowledge of God and the forgiveness of sins (38:31–34). The bulk of his message was such a heavy burden to him that it broke even his own heart (8:19–21).

Outline

I. Jeremiah's Call from God (1:1–19)

II. Warnings and Promises to Judah (2:1–25:13)

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- VII. Summaries of Events (44:1–52:28)
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    - B. The ruler Gedaliah (46:4–48:18)
    - C. Foray into Egypt (49:1–51:30)
    - D. Baruch, Zedekiah, and Jehoiachin (51:31–52:28)

1 The word of God came to Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah of the priests, who lived in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.[†] [2] The word of God came to him in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth

year of his reign.[†] [3]The word also came in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

The Prophet Is Chosen

[4]Thus the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [5]“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I sanctified you. I established you a prophet to the nations.”[†] [6]Then I said, “O Lord and Master, behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am a youth.”[†] [7]But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command, you shall speak. [8]Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,” says the Lord. [9]Then the Lord put forth His hand to me and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. [10]Behold, this day I am setting you over the nations and kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy, to rebuild, and to plant.”

[11]The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” So I replied, “I see a staff made from an almond tree.” [12]Then the Lord said to me, “You see well, for I keep watch to perform the works of my words.”

[13]Again the word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” Then I said, “A boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north.” [14]The Lord said to me, “From the north, evil things will inflame all who inhabit the land. [15]For behold, I will call together all the kingdoms of the land of the north,” says the Lord, “and they shall come; and each shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all the walls

surrounding her, and against all the cities of Judah. [16]I will speak to them
with judgments concerning all their vices, because they forsook Me, burned
incense to foreign gods, and worshiped the works of their hands.[†] [17]As for
you, gird your loins and arise, and speak to all whatever I command you. Do
not be afraid of their faces nor tremble before them, for I am with you to
deliver you," says the Lord. [18]"For behold, on this day I have established
you as a fortified city and as a fortified bronze wall against all the kings of
Judah, against its rulers, and against the people of the land. [19]They will fight
against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver
you," says the Lord.

God's Charges against Israel

2 Again the Lord said, "Thus says the Lord: [2]'I remember your compassion
and youth and your love and maturity, so as to follow the Holy One of
Israel,' says the Lord.[†] [3]'Israel, the beginning of His harvest, was holy to the
Lord. All who devour him shall transgress, and evils will come upon them,' "
says the Lord.

The Worship of Baal

[4]Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all families of the house
of Israel. [5]Thus says the Lord: "What transgression have your fathers found
in Me, so as to go far from Me, to follow after vain and worthless things?
[6]They did not say, 'Where is the Lord, who led us out of the land of Egypt,
who guided us in the wilderness, in an unknown and untrodden land, a land
that was waterless and barren, in which no one traversed and where no son of
man dwelt?' [7]I brought you into Carmel to eat its fruit and its good things,

but you entered and defiled My land, and made My heritage an abomination. [8]The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’ But those who handle the law did not trust Me, and the shepherds acted profanely toward Me. The prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after unprofitable things.

THE PROPHETS

The holy Prophets of Israel played a unique and critical role in their society. They repeatedly called the people back to their commitment to obey and worship only the one true God; they warned of foreign invasions; they protested against social and economic injustice; and they even rebuked kings face to face for their sinfulness (2Kg 12:1–15; 3Kg 18:17, 18; 20:1–29; 2Ch 12:1–8; 16:7–10). In times of crisis they were consulted by kings to discern the Lord’s will (4Kg 3:5–20; 8:7–15; 22:8–20; Jer 21:1–14). Yet their most significant task was prophesying about the coming of the Messiah, the King of Kings.

Through prayer, asceticism, repentance, and the practice of virtue, the Prophets were particularly receptive to the Holy Spirit—He “Who spoke by the Prophets,” as the Nicene Creed declares. St. Basil the Great writes, “In souls pure and cleansed from all defilement, the prophetic gift shines clear.” Most unique was the preparation received by St. John the Baptist, the greatest of the Prophets (Mt 11:7–14), who was “filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb” (Lk 1:15).

The backgrounds of the Prophets were varied. Amos was a shepherd (Am 1:1; 7:14, 15), Ezekiel a priest (Ezk 1:1–3), Daniel a young nobleman reared in captivity at the royal court in Babylon (Dan 1:3–6), Deborah a judge and military leader (Jdg 4:1—5:31), and Huldah was the wife of the keeper of the king’s wardrobe (4Kg 22:14). Also varied were their responses to the Lord’s call. For example, Moses and Jeremiah protested (Ex 3:7—4:17; Jer 1:4–6), and Jonah immediately tried to flee from the Lord (Jon 1:1–3). Isaiah, on the other hand, though acutely aware of his own sinfulness said, “Here am I, send me” (6:8). Moses, Jeremiah (Jer 1:7—2:2), and Ezekiel (Ezk 2:1—3:14) all received repeated reassurances from the Lord that He would be with them to strengthen them in fulfilling their prophetic calling.

The Prophets vividly demonstrated their willingness to obey the Lord when asked to do unusual things in dramatized prophecies. Ezekiel drew a picture of Jerusalem on a clay tablet and pretended to besiege it (Ezk 4:1–3); he was also asked to take a sword and cut off his hair and beard and burn part of it (5:1–13; see 12:1–15). Jeremiah buried a linen sash by the Euphrates River (Jer 13:1–11); Isaiah walked naked and barefoot for three years (Is 20:1–6); Hosea was commanded to marry a harlot (Hos 1:1–3).

Sometimes the Prophets experienced fierce opposition from the authorities—kings, priests, and even other prophets—who resented the condemnatory messages being delivered. Micaiah was slapped and imprisoned for being the only one of about four hundred prophets who dared to tell King Ahab of Israel the true word of the Lord (3Kg 22:2–38). Jeremiah was threatened with death by his fellow citizens of Anathoth (Jer 11:19–23) and later by the priests and the false prophets (33:1–19); and he was imprisoned under King Zedekiah (44:1–21; see 20:1, 2). The priest of Bethel tried to expel Amos out of Israel (Am 7:10–13). According to tradition, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos all were executed, as was St. John the Baptist (Mt 14:1–12; see Lk 11:47–51; Mt 23:29–37; 2Ch 24:17–22; Jer 33:20–23; Heb 11:32–38).

At times certain Prophets even wanted to die, such as Elijah (3Kg 19:1–4) and Jonah (Jon 4:1–3). But the Prophets always reaffirmed their reliance upon God's will and their hope in His mercy (Lam 3:21–41). In this, as well as in their sufferings for our Lord's sake, the holy Prophets serve as important examples for us who have received, at our Baptism and Chrismation, the gift of the same Holy Spirit who came upon them.

[9]“Therefore I will yet bring charges against you,” says the Lord, “and I will bring charges against the sons of your sons. [10]For pass by the islands of Chettim and see. Send to Kedar and consider diligently. See if such things happened,[†] [11]whether nations will change their gods; though they are not gods. But My people changed their glory to a glory from which they will not profit. [12]Heaven was amazed at this and was exceedingly horror-struck,” says the Lord. [13]“For My people have committed two evils: They forsook Me, the fountain of living water, and hewed for themselves broken cisterns, unable to hold water.[†]

Forsaking the Lord

[14]“Is not Israel a slave or household servant? [15]The young lions roared at him with their growl and made his land desolate, and her cities were demolished, no longer livable. [16]Also the sons of Memphis and Tahpanhes know you and mock you. [17]By forsaking Me, did you not bring these things upon yourself?” says the Lord your God. [18]“Now, what concern of yours is the road to Egypt, or drinking the waters of the Nile? Why concern yourself about the road to Assyria, or drinking the water of his rivers? [19]Your own

rebellion will chastise you, and your vices will convict you. You will know and experience the bitterness of your forsaking Me," says the Lord your God.

"But I have taken no joy in you," says the Lord your God, [20]"for from of old you have splintered your yoke and have broken your chain to pieces. You have said, 'I will not serve You, but I will go to every high hill and under every shade tree to indulge in my fornication.' [21]I planted a fruitful vine for you, one most healthy and sweet, yet you turned it into a vine unknown to Me, with a taste of bitterness. [22]Though you wash in soap and evermore use lye on yourself, still you remain defiled in your wrongdoings before Me," says the Lord. [23]"In what way will you say, 'I was not a disciple of Baal, nor am I defiled'? Consider your ways, which lead you to the common burial place. Know what you have done, for Baal's voice cries out late in the day.[†] [24]He extends his ways over the waters of the desert, for he is borne along as by the wind in the desires of his soul. He is given over to them. Who will turn him back? All who seek him will not grow weary, but they will find him in his humiliation. [25]Therefore, turn your feet away from this uneven path and from the thirst in your mouth, for he says, 'I will act like a man,' because he loves strangers and goes after them.

[26]"The sons of Israel, their kings and rulers, their priests and even their prophets shall be ashamed, like the shame of a thief when he is caught. [27]For they said to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to the stone, 'You have begotten me.' They have turned their backs to Me, and not their faces; yet in the time of their evils, they will say, 'Arise and save us.' [28]But where are the gods you made for yourself? Will they arise and save you when you are in oppression? For in the same number as you have cities, O Judah, you have

gods, and according to the number of thoroughfares in Jerusalem, they sacrifice to Baal.

Denial of Sin

[29]“Why do you speak to Me? All of you have been ungodly, and all of you have acted lawlessly against Me,” says the Lord. [30]“In vain I struck your children, for you accepted no chastisement. Like a destroying lion, a sword devoured your prophets, but you did not fear.” [31]Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: “Was I really a desert to Israel, or a barren land? Then why did My people say, ‘We will not be dominated, and no more will we come to You’? [32]Can a bride forget her ornaments, or a virgin her breast-band? Yet for days without number My people forget Me. [33]Yet what good will you practice in your ways so as to seek love? None. But you also did evil so as to defile your ways. [34]The death of innocent souls was found at your hands. I did not find them by digging in the earth, but under every oak tree. [35]Yet you said, ‘But I am innocent, so let Your anger turn from me.’ Behold, I pass judgment against you because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’ [36]Why did you deal so very contemptuously so as to repeat your ways? But you will be ashamed of Egypt as you were of Assyria.[†] [37]For you will go out henceforth with your hands on your head, because the Lord rejected your hope; and you will not prosper in it.

Israel Is Defiled

3 “If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him to become another man's, may she turn back and return to him again? Would not such a woman be greatly defiled? But you committed fornication with many shepherds and have returned to Me," says the Lord. [2]"Lift up your eyes straight ahead and see. Where have you not been defiled? You sat for them along the roads like a deserted crow, and defiled the land with your fornications and vices. [3]Yes, you have many shepherds as an occasion of stumbling for yourself. The appearance of a prostitute has come upon you, but you shamelessly deny all this. [4]Have you not called Me, as it were, a home, a father, and a founder of your virginity? [5]Will this appearance continue forever, or be maintained to the end? Behold, you said and did these evil things as you were able."

A Call to Return

[6]Again the Lord said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "You saw what the habitation of Israel did to Me? They went up on every high mountain and under every shady tree to commit fornication there.[†] [7]Yet after Israel committed all these acts of fornication, I said, 'Return to Me,' but she did not return. Faithless Judah also saw Israel's faithlessness. [8]I also saw it, and because of all the things in which the habitation of Israel committed adultery and was overtaken in it, therefore I put her away and placed in her hands a certificate of divorce. Yet even after this, faithless Judah did not fear, but she, too, proceeded to commit fornication. [9]Her fornication was good for nothing, for she committed adultery with wood and stone. [10]In all of this, faithless Judah did not turn to Me with her whole heart, but falsely."

[11]Again the Lord said to me, "Israel justified herself more than faithless Judah. [12]Go and read these words toward the north, and you shall say, 'Return to Me, O habitation of Israel,' says the Lord, 'and I will not set My face against you. I am merciful,' says the Lord, 'and I will not be wrathful

forever. [13]However, realize your wrongdoing, for you behaved in an ungodly way against the Lord your God; and you passed on your evil ways to foreigners under every shady tree, because you did not obey My voice.

[14]"Return, O sons who have turned away," says the Lord, "for I will rule over you and receive you—one from a city and two from a family—and I will lead you to Zion. [15]I will give you shepherds according to My heart, and they will thoroughly shepherd you with knowledge.[†] [16]It shall come to pass that if you multiply and increase in the land in those days," says the Lord, "they will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the Holy One of Israel.' It will not enter their heart, nor be named or visited; neither will this be done any more. [17]In those days and at that time, they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord, and all the Gentiles shall be gathered to it. They shall no longer walk after the reasoning of their evil heart. [18]In those days, the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north, and from all the countries to the land I gave as an inheritance to their fathers.

[19]"I declare" (may it be, O Lord!) "that I will set you among children and give you a choice land, the inheritance of the Almighty God of the Gentiles; and I declare that you shall call Me Father, and you shall not turn away from Me.[†] [20]Nevertheless, as a wife rejects her husband, so the house of Israel has rejected Me," says the Lord. [21]"For a sound from lips was heard, even bitter crying and the entreaty of the sons of Israel; because they did wrong in their ways and forgot their holy God. [22]Return, O sons, return, and I will heal your ruin."

[23]“Behold, we will be Your servants, for You are the Lord our God. Indeed, the hills and the power of the mountains were as a lie, for our salvation is only through the Lord our God. [24]But from our youth, shame devoured the labors of our fathers: their sheep, their cattle, their sons and their daughters. [25]We fall asleep in our shame and dishonor covers us, because we sinned against the Lord our God. From our youth even to this day, we and our fathers did not obey the voice of the Lord our God.”

4 “If Israel returns to Me,” says the Lord, “he shall return. If he puts away abominations from his mouth, and fears My presence, [2]and swears that the Lord lives with truth, judgment, and righteousness, then the Gentiles shall bless in Him, and in Him they shall praise God in Jerusalem.” [3]For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and those dwelling in Jerusalem: “Plow for yourselves the untilled fields, and do not sow among thorns. [4]Circumcise yourselves to God, all you men of Judah and those dwelling in Jerusalem, and circumcise the hardness of your heart, lest My anger come forth like fire and burn; and there shall be no one who quenches it, because of the presence of your evil practices.”[†]

Warning of Disaster

[5]Declare in Judah and let it be heard in Jerusalem, and say, “Blow the trumpet in the land, and cry out loudly, saying, ‘Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the fortified cities.’ [6]Pick up and flee toward Zion. Hurry. Do not stop! For I bring disaster from the north and great destruction.” [7]The lion has come up from his den, and the destroyer of nations has arisen. He has come forth from his place to make the land desolate, and the cities will be laid

waste, no longer livable. [8]For this, clothe yourself with sackcloth, lament and wail, saying, “The anger of the Lord has not turned back from us.”

[9]“In that day it shall come to pass,” says the Lord, “that the heart of the king and the heart of the rulers shall perish. The priests shall be amazed and the prophets shall wonder.” [10]Then I said, “O Lord and Master, surely You deceived this people and Jerusalem when You said, ‘You shall have peace,’ but behold, the sword reaches to their soul.”

[11]At that time, they will say to this people and to Jerusalem, “There is a spirit of wandering in the desert, for the way of the daughter of My people is not clean nor holy. [12]A spirit of completion will come to Me now, for I speak judgments against them. [13]Behold, he shall come up like a cloud, and his chariots like a whirlwind, for his horses are swifter than eagles. They will say, ‘Woe to us, for we are in ruin!’ ”

[14]O Jerusalem, wash the vices from your heart that you may be saved. How long shall your painful thoughts be within you?[†] [15]For the voice of one declaring from Dan will come, and anguish will be heard from Mount Ephraim: [16]“Remind the nations, for they have come. Announce to those in Jerusalem the gatherings of those from afar, for they uttered their voice against the cities of Judah. [17]They completely surrounded her, like those who guard a field, for you rejected Me,” says the Lord. [18]“Your ways and practices have brought these things upon you. This evil is your own, for it is bitter, because it took hold of your heart.”

Jeremiah's Sorrow for Israel

[19]I am pained to the depth of my belly and in the senses of my heart. My soul is in great commotion, and my heart is torn asunder. I will not be silent, for my soul hears the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. [20]It calls for a ruinous crushing, for the whole land is in ruin. Suddenly the tabernacle is in ruin, and my coverings are torn apart. [21]How long will I see people fleeing and hear the sound of trumpets? [22]“For the leaders of My people do not know Me. They are foolish and unwise sons. They are wise to do evil, but do not know how to do good.”[†]

[23]I looked upon the earth, and behold, it was nothing, and into the sky, and there were no stars in it. [24]I saw the mountains, and they were trembling; and I saw all the hills, and they were shaking. [25]I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were alarmed. [26]I saw, and behold, Carmel was deserted, and all the cities were burnt with fire at the presence of the Lord, and because of His fierce anger they were destroyed.

[27]Thus says the Lord: “The whole land shall be desolate, yet I will not destroy it completely. [28]Let the earth mourn for these things, and let the sky above grow dark, for I have spoken and will not repent. I have sworn and will not turn back from it. [29]From the sound of the horse and the bow strung with an arrow, the whole land retreated. They crawled into caves, hid in the groves, and climbed up on the rocks. Every city is forsaken, and not a man dwells in them. [30]As for you, what will you do, though you clothe yourself with crimson and adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, though you daub your eyes with myrrh? Your adornment is in vain. Your lovers rejected you, and they seek your life. [31]For I heard your voice groaning, like the sound of a woman giving birth, like the voice of the daughter of Zion whose anguish is

like that of one who gives birth the first time, who grows weary and whose hands lose their strength; and she says, ‘Woe is me, for my soul faints because of those killed!’

God's Judgment Is Just

5 “Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and you will see and know; and seek in her streets if you can find a man, if there is anyone who does judgment and seeks faithfulness; and I shall be merciful to them,” says the Lord.[†] [2]“Though they say, ‘As the Lord lives,’ therefore, do they not make an oath with lies?” [3]O Lord, Your eyes are on faithfulness. You chastised them, but they have not grieved. You consumed them, but they were unwilling to receive correction. They set their faces harder than a rock and did not will to return.

[4]Therefore I said, “Perhaps they are poor, because they are weak and do not know the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of God.[†] [5]I will go to the great men and speak to them, for they do not know the way of the Lord and the judgment of God.” But behold, they altogether crushed the yoke and broke the bonds. [6]Therefore a lion from the thicket struck them, and a wolf destroyed them, even to their houses; and a leopard kept watch against their cities. Everyone who goes out from them shall be hunted, because they multiplied their ungodliness and grew strong in their turning away.

[7]“In what way shall I be merciful to you? Your sons forsook Me and swore by those who are not gods. I pastured them, but they committed adultery and lodged in the houses of prostitutes. [8]They were lusty horses. Each one neighed after his neighbor's wife. [9]Shall I not visit them for these things?” says the Lord. “Shall not My soul take vengeance on such a nation as this?

[10]“Go upon her outer fortifications and tear them down, but do not ruin them completely. Leave the support foundations, for they belong to the Lord.[†] [11]The house of Israel and the house of Judah dealt very treacherously with Me,” says the Lord. [12]They lied to their own Lord, and said, “These things are not so. Evil will not come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine. [13]Our prophets were as wind, and the word of the Lord did not exist in them.”[†]

[14]Therefore, thus says the Lord Almighty: “Because you prophets spoke this word, behold, I will cause My words to be fire in your mouth, and this people to be wood, and the fire shall devour them. [15]Behold, O house of Israel,” says the Lord, “I will bring a nation against you from afar. It is a nation whose spoken language you shall not understand. [16]They are all mighty men. [17]They shall eat up your harvest and your bread, and they shall devour your sons and daughters, along with your sheep and cattle, and your vines, fig trees, and olive groves. With a sword they shall destroy your fortified cities in which you trust.

[18]“Nevertheless, it shall come to pass in those days,” says the Lord your God, “that I will not make a complete end of you. [19]It will be that when you say, ‘Why did the Lord our God do all these things to us?’ then you shall answer them, ‘Because you served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve foreigners in a land not yours.’[†]

[20]“Declare this in the house of Jacob, and let it be heard in Judah. [21]Hear these things now, O people, foolish and heartless. They have eyes that see not, they have ears that hear not. [22]Do you not fear Me?” asks the Lord.

“Have you no fear before My presence, I who placed the sand as the bound of the sea, a perpetual decree, so it shall not pass beyond? Though it be in a constant uproar, yet it shall not prevail; and though its waves toss, yet they shall not pass over it. [23]But this people has an inattentive and disobedient heart. They turned aside and departed.[†] [24]They did not say in their heart, ‘Let us now fear the Lord our God, who gives us both the early and the late rain, according to the fullness of the season, and preserves the harvest He ordained for us.’ [25]Your lawlessness turned these things away, and your sins withdrew the good things from you. [26]For the ungodly were found among My people. They set traps to destroy men, and they caught them. [27]As a trap set for birds is full, so their houses are full of deceit; therefore, they became great and grew rich. [28]They transgressed judgment and do not plead the cause of the orphan, nor the cause of the widow. [29]Shall I not visit them for these things?” says the Lord. “Shall not My soul take vengeance on such a nation as this?

[30]“Bewilderment and horrible things have come upon the land. [31]The prophets prophesy unrighteous things, and the priests applaud with their hands. My people also love to have it so. But what will you do after these things?”

Destruction Is Coming from the North

6 Be strong, O sons of Benjamin, in the midst of Jerusalem. Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and for the sake of Beth Haccerem, set up a signal; because evil looms from the north, and great destruction is coming.[†] [2]Your crown will be taken away, O daughter of Zion. [3]Shepherds and their flocks will come to her, and they shall pitch their tents against her all around; and they shall feed their flocks, each with his hand. [4]Get ready to war against her, to rise up against her in battle at noon. Woe to us! Because the day draws to a close, and the shadows of evening come to an end. [5]Arise and go up in the night, and utterly destroy her foundations.[†]

[6]For thus says the Lord: “Cut down her trees; pour out your power against Jerusalem, O false city. There is oppression in her entirely. [7]As a reservoir chills down water, so evil causes her to grow cold. Ungodliness and misery will be heard in her presence continually. [8]Be instructed, O Jerusalem, by pain and affliction, lest My soul depart from you; lest I make you a land not to be trodden, where no one shall dwell.” [9]For thus says the Lord: “Glean, glean as a vine the remnant of Israel; return them as one who gathers for his basket.”[†]

[10]To whom shall I speak and testify? Will it be heard? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, and they cannot hear. Behold, the word of the Lord was an insult to them, and they do not wish to hear it.[†] [11]“I was filled with my anger, but held fast and did not end their lives. I will pour it out against the children from the outside, against the youth of the assembly; and the husband and wife will be taken together, the elder full of days. [12]Their houses shall be turned over to others, together with their wives and fields. For I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of this land,” says the Lord. [13]“Because from the least of them even to the greatest, everyone accomplished lawlessness. From the priest even to the false prophet, everyone acted falsely. [14]With contempt they healed the calamity of My people incompletely, saying, ‘Peace, peace.’ But where is peace? [15]They were ashamed because they failed; but they were not ashamed as those truly ashamed, for they did

not recognize their dishonor. Therefore, they shall utterly fall when they do fall, and at the time of their visitation they shall perish,” says the Lord.

[16]Thus says the Lord: “Stand in the ways and see, and ask about the eternal pathways of the Lord. See what the good way is and walk in it. Here you will find purification for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’[†] [17]I set watchmen over you. Listen to the sound of their trumpet. But they said, ‘We will not listen.’[†] [18]Therefore the Gentiles heard, and those who shepherd their flocks.[†] [19]Hear, O earth. Behold, I will bring evils upon this people, the fruit of their turning away, because they did not heed My words, but rejected My law. [20]Why do you bring frankincense to Me from Sheba and cinnamon from a far country? Your whole burnt offerings are not acceptable, and your sacrifices are not sweet to Me.”[†] [21]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will bring weakness upon this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall be weak. The neighbor and his friend shall perish.”

[22]Thus says the Lord: “Behold, a people will come from the north, and a nation will be raised from the farthest parts of the earth. [23]They will take hold of bow and spear; and they are reckless and will show no mercy. Their voice is like the roaring sea, and they are deployed on horses and chariots. They shall draw up in battle order as a fire for war against you, O daughter of Zion.”

[24]You will say, “We heard the report of them, and our hands became feeble. Distress takes hold of us as pains of a woman in labor.” [25]Do not go out into the field nor walk along the ways, for the swords of enemies linger on every side. [26]O daughter of my people, dress yourself in sackcloth and

sprinkle yourself with ashes. Make for yourself a bitter lamentation as if for a beloved son, because suddenly misery will come upon you.

[27]“I gave you an assayer to prove you among the peoples, and you shall know Me when I test their way. [28]They all are inattentive and walk perversely. They are bronze and iron, and all have corrupted themselves. [29]The blowpipe and the lead failed because the fire gave out. The silversmith coins money in vain, and their evils have not melted away. [30]Call them rejected silver, because the Lord rejected them.”

Trust Not in Lying Words

7 Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah. [2]Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Amend your ways and your practices, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.[†] [3]Do not entrust yourselves to lying words, for they will not profit you when you say, ‘It is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.’ [4]For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your practices, if you thoroughly bring about judgment between a man and his neighbor, [5]and do not oppress the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place or walk after foreign gods to your hurt, [6]then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land I gave to your fathers of old and forever.

[7]“But if you trust in lying words from which you cannot profit, [8]and you murder, commit adultery, steal, swear to do wrong, burn incense to Baal, and walk after foreign gods you do not know so as to do evil, [9]and come and stand before Me in the house wherein My name is called and say, ‘We have

not abstained from doing all these abominations,’ [10]then is this house, called by My name, a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I have seen it.[†]

[11]“But go to My place in Shiloh, where I caused My name to dwell before, and see what I did to it because of the vices of My people Israel,” says the Lord. [12]“Now then, because you did all these works, and I spoke to you but you did not hear Me, and I called you but you did not answer, [13]therefore, I will also do to this house, called by My name in which you trust, and the place I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. [14]I will cast you out of My sight as I cast out your brethren—all the seed of Ephraim.

[15]“Therefore, do not pray for this people, nor consider them worthy to be shown mercy. Do not pray nor come to Me about them. I will not hear you. [16]Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? [17]Their sons gather wood, and their fathers kindle the fire, while their women knead cake dough for the host of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to foreign gods to provoke Me to anger.[†] [18]Do they provoke Me to wrath?” says the Lord. “Do they not provoke themselves to the shame of their own faces?” [19]Therefore, thus says the Lord: “Behold, My wrath and anger is poured out on this place, on men and cattle, on every tree of their field, and on all the fruits of the land. It will burn and not be quenched. [20]Gather your whole burnt offerings with your sacrifices, and eat meat.”

[21]Thus says the Lord: “For I did not speak to your fathers, nor command them concerning whole burnt offerings and sacrifices in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt.[†] [22]But I commanded them this word, saying, ‘Listen to My voice, and I will be to you as God, and you shall be to Me as a people. Walk in all My ways I commanded you, that it may be well with

you.’ [23]Yet they did not hear Me and did not attend their ear. Instead, they walked in the devices of their heart and went backward, not forward. [24]From the day their fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I sent you all My servants, the prophets. I sent them by day and early in the morning. Yes, I sent them. [25]But they did not hear Me, nor did their ear attend. Instead, they stiffened their neck even more than their fathers.

False Worship Will Be Judged

[26]“Therefore, you shall speak this word to them: [27]‘This is the nation that heard not the voice of the Lord, nor received correction. Faith has perished from their mouth. [28]Cut off your hair and cast it away. Take up a lamentation on your lips, for the Lord has rejected and repudiated the generation that does these things.’ [29]For the sons of Judah did the evil thing in My sight,” says the Lord. “They set their abominations in the house called by My name, to defile it. [30]They also built the altar of Tophet in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command them, nor consider in My heart.[†] [31]Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when they will no longer say, ‘the Altar of Tophet,’ or, ‘the Valley of the Son of Hinnom,’ but instead, ‘the Valley of the Slain’; and they will be buried in Tophet, for there is no other place. [32]The dead of this people will also be food for the birds of heaven and the wild beasts of the land. No one will scare them away.[†] [33]I shall cause to cease the glad and joyful voice, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, from the cities of Judah and the thoroughfares of Jerusalem. For the whole land shall be desolate.

The Relics Are an Example

8 “At that time,” says the Lord, “they shall bring out of their graves the bones of the kings of Judah and its rulers, the bones of the priests and the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.[†] [2]They shall dry them before the sun and the moon, and before all the stars and the hosts of heaven, which they loved and served, and after which they walked, devoted themselves, and worshiped. They are not to be mourned nor buried; but they are to be an example on the face of the earth, [3]because they chose death rather than life. They are also to be an example to all the remnant left from that generation, in every place wherever I banish them.”

False Teaching Will Be Judged

[4]For thus says the Lord: “Will not he who falls arise? Or he who turns away, will he not return? [5]Why therefore has this My people turned away from Me in a shameful way, strengthened themselves in their choice, and were not willing to return? [6]Indeed, give ear and listen. Will they not speak thus: ‘There is no man who repents of his vices, saying, “What have I done?’ ” The runner ceases to run his race, as a sweating horse ceases to run when he is tired. [7]Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed time, as do the turtledove and the swallow of the field. The sparrows watch for the times of their coming. But My people do not know the judgments of the Lord.

[8]“How can you say, ‘We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us’? The lying pen becomes vanity for the scribes.[†] [9]Wise men are put to shame and convicted, for they rejected the word of the Lord. What wisdom is in them? [10]I will give their wives and fields to others as an inheritance. [11]They will gather together their fruits. There are no grapes on the vines, nor figs on the fig trees, and the leaves have fallen off. [12]They will say, ‘Why do we sit still?

Assemble yourselves, and let us enter the strong cities. Let us be rejected, for God has cast us out and given us gall to drink, because we sinned against Him.[†] [13]Let us come together for peace, but there was nothing good, and for a time of healing, but behold, trouble. [14]We will hear the swift sound of His horses coming from Dan. The whole land quakes from the neighing of His horse-drawn chariots. He will come and devour the land and its fullness, the city and those who dwell in it.’ [15]For behold, I send forth lethal serpents among you, for which there are no charms. [16]They shall bite you mortally with the pain of your disturbed heart.”

Jeremiah Weeps for His People

[17]Behold, the voice of the daughter of my people cries out from a far land, “Is not the Lord in Zion? Is her King not there?” “No, because they provoked Me to anger with their carved images and foreign vanities.”[†] [18]They will say, “The summer is gone, the harvest is past, and we are not saved.”[†]

[19]I am saddened because of the ruin of the daughter of my people. Pains have seized me as one who gives birth. [20]Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician? Why is no healing taking place for the daughter of my people?[†] [21]Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that I might weep day and night for this people of mine, for the wounded of the daughter of my people?[†]

9 Who will give me lodging in a deserted place, that I might leave my people and depart from them? For they are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.[†]

[2]“They bent their tongues like a bow. Falsehood, not faith, prevails in the land. For they went from evil to evil, and have not known Me. [3]Let each take heed to his neighbor, and not trust their brothers, for every brother will utterly deceive, and every friend will walk treacherously. [4]Each will mock at his friend and not speak the truth. Their tongue learns to speak lies, and they do wrong. They do not pause to turn back. [5]There is usury upon usury, deceit upon deceit. They are unwilling to know Me.”

[6]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will set them on fire and test them; I shall do so because of the evil of the daughter of My people. [7]Their tongue is a wounding arrow, and the words of their mouth are deceitful. One speaks peaceably to his neighbor, but has hatred in his heart. [8]Shall I not visit them for these things?” says the Lord. “Shall not My soul take vengeance on such a people as this? [9]Take up a wailing on the mountains and a lamentation on the paths of the desert; for they cease from being a people. They do not hear the sound of existence from the birds of the sky, nor even from cattle. They were astonished; they were gone. [10]I will put Jerusalem into captivity, and it will become a dwelling place of serpents. I will make the cities of Judah desolate, beyond habitation.”[†]

[11]Who is a wise man? Let him understand this. Let him declare to you by the word of the Lord to him why the land was ravaged by fire, and became like a desert no one could pass through. [12]The Lord answered me, “Because they forsook My law which I set before their face, and they did not hear My voice. [13]Instead, they walked after what pleased their evil heart, and after the idols their fathers taught them.” [14]Therefore, thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Behold, I will feed them as a matter of necessity, and give them the

water of bitterness to drink. [15]I will also scatter them among the Gentiles, amongst whom neither they nor their fathers are known. I shall send a sword after them until I consume them with it.”

The People Weep in Shame

[16]Thus says the Lord: “Call for the mourning women and let them come. Send for the wise women and let them give utterance. [17]Let them take up a lamentation over you. Let your eyes run with tears, and your eyelids flow with water. [18]For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion, ‘How we have been afflicted and greatly ashamed, because we forsook the land and were cast out of our dwellings.’ ” [19]Indeed, O women, hear the word of God, and let your ear receive the words of His mouth. Teach your daughters wailing, and a woman a lamentation to all her neighbors. [20]For death will come through your windows and enter your land, to destroy the children from outside and the youth from the streets. [21]The dead men shall be as an example in the open country of your land, like grass after it is mowed, when there shall be none to gather it.

[22]Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man boast in his might, nor let the rich man boast in his riches.”[†] [23]Instead, let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows that I am the Lord, who shows mercy, judgment, and righteousness on earth, for in these is My will,” says the Lord. [24]“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, “that I will visit upon all the circumcised their uncircumcision. [25]I will visit Egypt, Judea, Edom, the sons of Ammon and the sons of Moab, and all who dwell in the desert—all who shave their face. For all these nations are

uncircumcised in the flesh, but all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in their heart.”[†]

Let the Idols Perish

10 O house of Israel, hear the word of the Lord, for He has spoken to you. [2]Thus says the Lord: “Do not learn the ways of the Gentiles, and do not be afraid because of signs from the sky, for they themselves reverence these. [3]For the customs of the peoples are vain. This vanity is a tree cut from the forest, the work of a craftsman, or it is a molten image. [4]They are embellished with silver and gold with a hammer, and they strengthen them with nails so they will not move. [5]They will be taken up and carried, for they cannot walk by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, because they cannot do evil, nor is there any good thing in them. [6]The silver is worked in relief, and they cannot travel anywhere. The silver overlays come from Tarshish, the gold from Uphaz. All handiwork is the work of goldsmiths and craftsmen, and they will dress them in hyacinth and purple.”

[7]Thus you shall say to them, “Let the gods that did not make heaven and earth perish from the earth and from under this heaven.”[†]

[8]The Lord—who made the earth in His strength, who restores the inhabited world in His wisdom and discernment—stretched out heaven,[†] [9]and the abundance of water in heaven; and He brings up clouds from the ends of the earth. He made lightning for the rain, and brings light out of His storehouses. [10]Every man is made foolish because of this knowledge, and every goldsmith is put to shame by his carved images; because they cast false gods that have no spirit in them. [11]They are vain works that are ridiculed,

and in the time of His visitation they shall be destroyed. [12]Such is not the portion for Jacob, for He who formed all things is Jacob's inheritance. The Lord is His name.

Desolation Is Coming to Judah

[13]This inheritance resides in the elect and gathers together your existence outside the land. [14]For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will overthrow those who reside in this land with affliction, that your wound might be discovered.” [15]Alas for your ruin! Your wound is painful, and I say, “Indeed, this is my wound, and it overtakes me. [16]My tabernacle endures hardship and is ruined, and all my skin coverings are torn apart. My sons and my sheep are no more, and there is no place left for my tent, nor for my curtains.[†] [17]For the shepherds act foolishly and no longer seek out the Lord. Therefore, the whole pasture does not understand, thus the sheep are scattered. [18]Behold, there is a sound of news, and an earthquake comes from the land of the north to cause the cities of Judah to disappear, making them the nesting place of sparrows.

[19]I know, O Lord, that man's way is not his own, nor will a man go and prosper in his own pursuit. [20]Chastise us, O Lord, but with judgment and not in anger, lest You make our numbers few.[†] [21]Pour out Your anger on the Gentiles who do not know You, and on the generations who did not call on Your name; because they devoured Jacob and utterly destroyed him, and they laid waste his pasture.

God's Covenant Is Ignored

11 The word came from the Lord to Jeremiah, saying, [2]“Hear the words of this covenant, and you shall speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [3]You shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Cursed is the man who will not hear the words of this covenant, [4]which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, ‘Hear My voice, and do all I command you, so you shall be to Me as a people and I will be to you as God, [5]that I may confirm the oath I swore to your fathers, to give to them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is today.’ ” ’ ” Then I answered and said, “O Lord, may it be so.”

[6]Then the Lord said to me, “Read aloud these words in the cities of Judah and outside Jerusalem, saying, ‘Hear the words of this covenant and do them.’ ” [7]But they did not. [8]Again the Lord said to me, “A conspiracy was found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [9]They turned back to the wrongdoings of their forefathers who were unwilling to hear My words. Behold, they go after foreign gods to serve them. Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah rejected My covenant which I made with their fathers.”

[10]Therefore, thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will bring calamities on this people from which they cannot escape; and they shall cry out to Me, but I will not listen. [11]Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense. But will they save them in the time of their calamities? [12]O Judah, your gods were based on the number of your cities, and according to the number of streets in Jerusalem, you appointed altars to burn incense to Baal.

[13]“Do not pray for this people, and do not consider them worthy in petition; for I will not hear their prayer in the time they cry out to Me or in

the time of their distress.[†] [14]Why has My beloved done a detestable thing in My house? Will prayers and holy offerings remove your vices from you? Will you escape by means of these? [15]The Lord called your name a pleasant olive tree, a good shade tree in appearance. At the sound of its pruning, a fire was kindled against it. Great is the affliction coming upon you. Its branches have become worthless. [16]For the Lord who planted you has proclaimed troubles against you in return for the evil the house of Israel and the house of Judah did against themselves when they offered incense to Baal and provoked My wrath."

A Plot against Jeremiah

[17]O Lord, teach me, and I will know. Then I saw their purpose.[ω] [18]For I did not know I was like an innocent lamb led to be sacrificed. They plotted an evil device against me, saying, "Come, let us put wood in his bread, and destroy him root and branch from the land of the living, so his name might not be remembered any longer."[†] [19]But, O Lord, You who judge righteously, who tests minds and hearts, let me see Your vengeance on them, for I have revealed my righteous plea to You.

[20]Therefore thus says the Lord against the men of Anathoth, against those who seek my life, and who say, "Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, lest you die by our hands"—[†] [21]"Behold, I will visit them. The young men shall die by the sword, and their sons and daughters shall die by famine. [22]There shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring calamities on the inhabitants of Anathoth in the year of their visitation."

Jeremiah Pleads His Case

12 O Lord, You are righteous, that I may plead my case with You, to speak t You concerning judgments. Why does the way of the ungodly prosper, and all who deal treacherously flourish?[†] [2]You planted them, and they took root. They bear children and are fruitful. You are near in their mouth, but far from their mind. [3]But You, O Lord, know me. You have proven my heart before You. Set them apart for the day of slaughter. [4]How long will the land mourn and the grass of the field wither, because of the vices of those who dwell in it? The cattle and the birds are destroyed, because they said, "God will not see our ways."

The Lord Answers Him

[5]"Your feet run and grow weary. How then will you prepare yourself to run with horses? You are confident when the land is peaceful, but what will you do when the Jordan floods the land?[†] [6]But even your brothers and the house of your father dealt treacherously with you. They cried out and gathered together in pursuit of you. Do not trust them because they will speak fair words to you.

[7]"I forsook My house and left My inheritance. I gave My beloved inheritance into the hands of its enemies.[†] [8]For My inheritance became to Me like a lion in the forest. It raised its voice against Me; therefore, I hated it. [9]Is not My inheritance the cave of a hyena to Me, or a cave it walks around? Gather together all the wild beasts of the field and let them come to devour her. [10]Many shepherds destroyed My vineyard and defiled My portion. They turned My pleasant portion into an impassable desert. [11]It was made a complete ruin. The whole land was utterly destroyed for My sake, because there was no man who took it to heart. [12]The tormentors come to every

passage in the desert, because the sword of the Lord will devour from one end of the land to the other. No flesh has any peace. [13]Sow fires and reap thorns. Their portions will not profit them. Be ashamed of your boasting because of your disgrace before the Lord.”

[14]For thus says the Lord: “Concerning all the evil neighbors who touch My inheritance, which I divided to My people Israel—behold, I shall draw them away from their land and will cast out Judah from their midst.[†] [15]Then it shall come to pass, after I cast them out, that I will return them and have mercy on them. I will settle them, each in his inheritance and each in his land. [16]It shall be that if they carefully learn the way of My people, to swear by My name, saying, ‘The Lord lives,’ as they taught My people to swear by Baal, so they shall be built as a nation in the midst of My people. [17]But if they do not return, I will remove that nation by destruction and ruin.”

The Sash: A Symbol of Israel

13 Thus says the Lord: “Go and get yourself a linen sash and put it around your waist, but let it not pass through the water.”[†] [2]So I got the sash according to the word of the Lord, and put it around my waist.

[3]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [4]“Take the sash from around your waist. Arise and go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole in the rock.”[†] [5]So I went and hid it by the Euphrates as the Lord commanded me. [6]Again it came to pass that after many days the Lord also said to me, “Arise and go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash I commanded you to hide there.” [7]Then I went to the Euphrates River and dug, and took the

sash from the place where I buried it. Behold, it was rotted and good for nothing.[†]

[8]Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [9]“Thus says the Lord: ‘In this manner I will destroy the insolence of Judah and that of Jerusalem. [10]The great insolence of those who are unwilling to obey My words, and who walk after foreign gods to serve and worship them, they shall be like this sash—good for nothing. [11]For as a sash clings to the waist of a man, so I caused the house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me, so as to become a notable people to Me, as a boast and a glory; but they would not listen to Me.’

Wine Bottles: A Warning to Israel

[12]“Thus you shall say to this people: ‘Every bottle shall be filled with wine.’ But if they say to you, ‘Do we not know for certain every bottle will be filled with wine?’ [13]Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land with intoxicating drink: their kings, the sons of David who sit on his throne, their priests, their prophets, and Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [14]I will scatter them, a man and his brother, together with their fathers and their sons. I will not desire them,” says the Lord, “nor spare them, nor have compassion on them in their destruction.” ’ ”

How Long, O Jerusalem?

[15]Listen and give ear. Do not exalt yourselves, for the Lord has spoken. [16]Give glory to the Lord your God before it grows dark, and causes your feet to stumble on the dark mountains. You shall wait in anticipation of the light,

but the shadow of death will be there; and they shall bring you into darkness. [17]Now if you will not hear, your soul will weep secretly because of your insolent countenance, and your eyes will bring forth tears, for the Lord's flock is broken apart.[†] [18]Say to the king and to the nobles, “Humble yourself and sit down, for your crown of glory is removed from your head.” [19]The cities to the south were shut, and there was no one to open them. Judah is sent away completely as a settlement. [†]

[20]Lift up your eyes, O Jerusalem, and see those who come from the north. Where is the flock given to you, the sheep of your glory? [21]What will you say when they visit you? For you taught them lessons in the beginning against yourself. Shall not pains of agony seize you, like a woman who gives birth? [22]But if you say in your heart, “Why have these things happened to me?” Because of the multitude of your wrongdoings, your backside was uncovered so your heels might be exposed. [23]If an Ethiopian could change his skin or a leopard its spots, so you who learned evil might also be able to do good.

[24]“Therefore I scattered them like sticks, carried by the wind into the desert. [25]This is your lot and your portion for your disobedience against Me,” says the Lord, “because you forgot Me and trusted in falsehoods. [26]I will uncover your backside to your face, and your dishonor will be seen.[†] [27]For I have seen your adultery and neighing, and the alienation of your fornication, the abomination of your fornication on the hills and in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! For you were not cleansed so as to follow Me. How long will it still be?”

Sword, Famine, and Death

14 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah concerning the drought, saying,[†] [2]“Judah mourns, and her gates are empty. They are darkened in the land, and the cry of Jerusalem goes up. [3]Her nobles sent their young ones for water, but they found no water in the wells. So they returned with their water containers empty. [4]The works of the land failed, for there was no rain. The farmers were ashamed and covered their heads. [5]The deer also gave birth in the field, but left because there was no grass. [6]The wild donkeys stood in the wooded glens and sniffed the wind. Their eyes failed, for there was no grass because of the wrongdoing of the people.”

[7]Our sins rise up against us, O Lord. Do to us for Your sake, because our sins are many before You; for we sinned against You. [8]O Lord, the steadfast endurance of Israel, You deliver us in the time of evils. Why have You become as a sojourner in the land, and like a native of the land who turns elsewhere to lodge? [9]Will You be like a man who sleeps, or as a man who is unable to save? But You are in our midst, O Lord, and we are called by Your name. Do not forget us.

[10]Thus says the Lord to this people: “They love to wander and have not refrained from it; therefore, God is not pleased with them. Now He will remember their wrongdoings.”

[11]Again the Lord said to me, “Do not pray about this people for their good. [12]When they fast, I will not hear their petition, and when they present whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, I will not take pleasure in them. For I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by death.”

[13]Then I said, “O Lord, behold their prophets prophesying, and say, ‘You shall not see the sword, nor shall there be famine among you; for I will give you truth and peace in the land and in this place.’ ”[†] [14]Then the Lord said to me, “The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, nor commanded them; nor have I spoken to them. Because of false visions, divinations, prophesying by the way of birds, and by the purposes of their hearts, they prophesy to you. [15]Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy lies in My name: ‘I did not send them.’ They say, ‘Sword and famine shall not be upon this land.’ They shall die in the deathbed of sickness, for the prophets shall die in famine. [16]The people to whom they prophesy shall be cast into the thoroughfares of Jerusalem because of the edge of the sword and famine. There shall be no one to bury them, for even their wives, sons, and daughters shall so die. I will pour out their evils upon them.

[17]“So you shall speak this word to them: ‘Let your eyes flow with tears night and day. Let them not cease; for in ruin, the daughter of My people was crushed to pieces, and her wound was very painful. [18]If I go out into the plain, then behold, there are the soldiers wounded by the sword. If I enter into the city, then behold, there is the pain of famine, for priest and prophet have traveled to a land they do not know.’ ”

[19]Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul departed from Zion? Why did You strike us, and there is no healing for us? We waited for peace, but there was no good thing; for a time of healing, but behold, there was trouble. [20]We know, O Lord, our sins and the wrongdoings of our fathers, for we sinned against You. [21]Stop for Your name's sake. Do not destroy the throne of Your glory. Remember, and do not break Your covenant with us.

[22]Is there anyone among the idols of the Gentiles able to cause rain? Or will the sky yield its fullness at their request? Are You not He? Therefore, since You made all these things, we will wait for You.[†]

The Lord Will Not Give In

15 Then the Lord said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My soul would not be favorable toward them. Send away this people, and let them depart.[†] [2]It shall be, that if they say to you, ‘Where should we depart?’ you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “As many as are for death, to death, and as many as are for the sword, to the sword, and as many as are for famine, to famine, and as many as are for captivity, to captivity.’ ” [3]I will punish them in four ways,” says the Lord, “the sword for slaughter, the dogs for tearing in pieces, the wild beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky for eating and destruction.[†] [4]I will deliver them into distress to all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, for all he did in Jerusalem.

[5]“Who will spare you, O Jerusalem? Who will fear for you? Who will turn back to ask peace for you? [6]You turned away from Me,” says the Lord. “You will go backward, and I will stretch out My hand and destroy you. I will no longer leave them unpunished. [7]I will scatter them in a dispersion. In the gates of My people, they are deprived of children. They destroyed My people because of their vices. [8]Their widows multiply more than the sand of the sea. I brought upon the mother of a young son misery at midday. I suddenly cast upon her trembling and anxiety. [9]She who gave birth to seven has been left empty, and her soul has succumbed to misfortune. The sun set for her when it

was still noonday. She was put to shame and insulted. I will give their remnant to the sword in the presence of their enemies.”[†]

Jeremiah Senses Failure

[10]Woe is me, my mother! You gave birth to me as a man who is condemned and at variance with the whole earth. I have neither helped anyone, nor has anyone helped me. My strength has failed among those who curse me. [11]O Master, may this be the time of their prosperity. Surely I stood before You in the time of their calamities and in the time of their affliction for their good against the enemy. [12]The Lord says, “Will iron be known? But your strength is a bronze covering. [13]I will give your treasures as plunder in all your boundaries, in exchange for all your sins. [14]For I will enslave you to your surrounding enemies in a land you have not known. For a fire has been kindled from My anger, and it shall burn upon you.”

[15]O Lord, remember me and visit me. Let me go unpunished because of those who persecute me. Do not bear long with them. Know how I have met with disgrace for Your sake at the hands of those who reject Your words. [16]Make an end to them, and Your word shall be the gladness and joy of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Lord, the Almighty. [17]I did not sit in their council while they mocked, but I feared because of Your power. I sat alone, for I was filled with bitterness. [18]Why do those who grieve me prevail against me? My wound is severe, but from where will I be healed? It has indeed become to me as deceitful water that has no faithfulness.[†]

The Lord Restores Jeremiah

[19]Therefore thus says the Lord: “If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before My face. If you bring forth what is honorable from what is unworthy, you shall be as My mouth. They shall return to you, but you shall not return to them.[†] [20]I will cause you to be like a strong brazen wall to this people. They will fight against you, but not prevail, because I am with you to save you, [21]to deliver you from the hand of evil men, and to set you free from the hand of pestilent men.”

Jeremiah's Conduct and Message

16 The Lord God of Israel says, “Do not take a wife,[†] [2]nor shall you beget either a son or a daughter in this place.” [3]For thus says the Lord concerning the sons and daughters begotten in this place, and their mothers who gave birth to them, and their fathers who beget them in this land: [4]“They shall die by a death caused by disease, and shall not be lamented or buried; for they shall be as an example on the face of the land. They shall be for the wild beasts of the earth and the birds of heaven; and they shall fall by the sword and die of hunger.”

[5]Thus says the Lord: “Do not enter their mourning feast, nor go to lament and grieve with them; for I have removed My peace from this people.[†] [6]They must not mourn, nor cut themselves; and they shall not shave themselves. [7]Bread shall not be broken in mourning for them as a consolation for the dead, nor shall they give one a cup to drink as a consolation for his father and mother.[†] [8]You shall not enter their banquet-house to sit with them or to eat and drink.” [9]For thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Behold, before your eyes and in your days, I will bring to an end from this place the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

[10]“It shall come to pass that when you shall announce all these words to this people and they say to you, ‘Why has the Lord pronounced all these evils against us? What is our wrongdoing, and what sin did we commit before the Lord our God?’ [11]Then you shall say to them, ‘Because your fathers forsook Me,’ says the Lord, ‘for they went after foreign gods; and they served and worshiped them. They forsook Me, and did not keep My law. [12]But you acted in ways more evil than your fathers; for behold, you, each one of you, walk after the evil pleasures of your heart and do not obey Me. [13]Therefore I will cast you out of this land and into a land neither you nor your fathers know; and there you shall serve other gods, who will show you no mercy.’

God's Promise to Jew and Gentile

[14]“Therefore behold, days are coming,” says the Lord, “when no more will they say, ‘The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ [15]but, ‘The Lord lives who brought up the house of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the countries where they were driven out.’ For I will restore to them their land which I gave to their fathers.[†]

[16]“Behold, I will send many fishermen, and they will fish them. After this, I will send many hunters, and they will hunt them upon every mountain, upon every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.[†] [17]For My eyes are on all their ways, and their wrongdoings are not concealed from My eyes. [18]For I will repay double for their evil and their wrongdoings, whereby they desecrated My land with the carcasses of their abominations and filled My inheritance with their lawlessness.”

[19]O Lord, my strength, my help, and my refuge in the day of evils, to You the Gentiles shall come from the ends of the earth and say, “How false were the idols our fathers acquired for themselves, and there is nothing beneficial in them.”[†]

[20]“If a man will create gods for himself,” says the Lord, “even so, they are not gods. [21]Because of this, behold, I will show them My hand at this time and make known to them My power; and they will come to know that My name is the Lord.

The Agony of Apostasy

17 “Cursed is the man who puts his hope in man, and who will strengthen the flesh of his arm in him, and withdraws in his heart from the Lord.[†] [2]For he shall be like a shrub in the desert. He shall not see when good things come, but shall dwell in salt lands along the sea and in the desert, in a salt land where no one dwells. [3]But blessed is the man who puts his trust in the Lord, for the Lord shall be his hope. [4]He shall be like a flourishing tree alongside the waters which spreads its roots toward the moisture. He will not fear when the burning heat comes, for He shall be like the root in a grove in the year of drought. He shall not fear, for he shall be like a tree that does not cease yielding its fruit.

[5]“The heart is deep beyond all things, and it is the man. Even so, who can know him?[†] [6]I, the Lord, examine hearts and test minds, to give each man according to his ways and the fruits of his practices. [7]A partridge coos and collects eggs she did not lay. So is a man who obtains his wealth, but not with

judgment. In the midst of his days his riches will forsake him, and at the time of his end he will be foolish.”

[8]An exalted throne of glory is our sanctuary. [9]O Lord, the patient endurance of Israel, let all who forsake You be ashamed. “Let those who fall away from Me in apostasy be written in the earth, that they forsook the Lord, the fountain of life.”

Jeremiah's Prayer for Protection

[10]Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Save me, and I shall be saved, for You are my boast. [11]Behold, they say to me, “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come.” [12]But I have not become weary in following after You, nor have I desired the day of man. You know the words that proceed from my lips are before Your face. [13]Do not be as a stranger to me, and spare me in the evil day. [14]Let those who persecute me be put to shame, but may I not be ashamed. May they, but not I, be terrified. Bring upon them an evil day and crush them with a double destruction.

Sanctify the Sabbath

[15]Thus says the Lord: “Go and stand in the gates of the sons of your people through which the kings of Judah come in and go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem.[†] [16]You shall say to them, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah and all Judea, and all of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. [17]Thus says the Lord: “Guard your souls, and take up no burdens on the Sabbath days, neither go out through the gates of Jerusalem. [18]On the Sabbath days, carry no burdens with you from your houses, nor do any work. Instead, sanctify the Sabbath days, as I commanded your fathers. But they did

not hear, and did not incline their ears. [19]They stiffened their neck more than their fathers, so as not to hear Me or receive instruction.

[20]“Thus it shall come to pass that if you hear Me,” says the Lord, “so as not to carry burdens through the gates of this city on the Sabbath days, but to sanctify the Sabbath days and do no work therein, [21]then there shall enter through the gates of this city kings and rulers, sitting on the throne of David and riding in their chariots and on their horses, they and their rulers, men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This city itself shall be inhabited forever. [22]They shall come from the cities of Judah, and from around Jerusalem and the land of Benjamin, and from the lowlands and the mountains, and from the south, bringing whole burnt offerings and a sacrifice, and incense, manna, and frankincense. They will bring praise to the house of the Lord.

[23]“But it shall come to pass that if you will not hear Me so as to sanctify the Sabbath days, and bear no burdens, nor enter the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath days, then I will kindle a fire in her gates. It will consume the streets of Jerusalem and will not be quenched.” ’ ”

Potter and Clay

18 The word that came from the Lord to Jeremiah, saying,[†] [2]“Arise and go down to the potter's house. There you shall hear My words.” [3]Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he was forming something of wet clay upon the stones. [4]The vessel he formed in his hands failed. So he again made himself another vessel as it pleased him to do.

[5]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [6]“Surely as this potter, am I not able to form you, O house of Israel? Behold, you are as the clay of the potter in My hands. [7]I shall declare a decree concerning a nation or a kingdom, to remove and destroy them. [8]But if this nation turns away from all their evils, then I will repent concerning the calamities I considered to do to them. [9]If I shall declare a decree concerning a nation or a kingdom to rebuild and to plant it, [10]but they do evils in My sight so as not to hear My voice, then I will repent concerning the good I spoke to do for them.

[11]“Therefore now, speak to the men of Judah and those inhabiting Jerusalem for Me, saying, ‘Behold, I form calamities and devise a plan against you. Therefore, let each turn away from his way of evil and do good in your practices.’ ”

God's Warning Is Spurned

[12]But they said, “We will act like men and walk after our inclinations, and each one of us will do the evils pleasing to his heart.”

[13]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Ask now of the Gentiles, ‘Who has heard of such exceedingly horrible things as what the virgin of Israel did?’ [14]Will nourishing streams of water not flow from rocks or snow from Lebanon? Will water turn aside when violently pushed by the wind? [15]For My people have forgotten Me. They offer incense in vain and are sick in their ways, leaving the ancient ways to embark on impassable paths, [16]so as to appoint their land for destruction and a perpetual hissing. All who pass through it shall be amazed and shake their head. [17]I will scatter them like a burning wind before the face of their enemies. I will show them the day of their destruction.”

Jeremiah Is Ridiculed

[18]Then they said, “Come and let us devise a plan against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the intelligent, nor a word from the prophet. Come and let us strike him down with the tongue, and we will hear all his words.”[†]

[19]O Lord, hear me, and give ear to the voice of my plea for what is right. [20]Surely evil things are repaid for good things; for they spoke words against my soul and concealed punishment meant for me. But remember, I stood before You to speak good things for them, so as to turn away Your wrath from them. [21]Therefore give their sons to the famine and gather them to the power of the sword. Let their wives become childless and widowed, and let their men be put to death. In war, let their young men fall by the sword. [22]Let a cry be heard in their houses, for You shall bring robbers upon them suddenly, because they formed a plan to take me and hid snares against me. [23]O Lord, You know all their counsel against me so as to put me to death. Do not let their wrongdoings go unpunished, nor blot out their sins from before Your face. Let their weakness come before You, and in the time of Your anger deal with them.

Broken Jar, Broken City

19 Then the Lord said to me, “Go and obtain an earthen-baked wine-jar, and you shall lead some of the elders of the people and some of their elder priests [2]out to the graveyard of the sons of their children, by the entry of the Gate of Charsith. There you shall read all the words I will speak to you.[†] [3]You shall say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings and men of Judah, you inhabitants of Jerusalem and all entering by these gates. Thus says the

Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I bring calamities upon this place, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will ring.

[4]“Because they forsook Me, and alienated this place, and offered incense in it to foreign gods, which neither they nor their fathers knew, and because the kings of Judah filled this place with the blood of the innocent [5]and built high places for Baal so as to burn up their sons in the fire, which things I did not command or speak, nor consider in My heart. [6]Therefore behold, days are coming,” says the Lord, “when this place shall no longer be called the Fall, or the Graveyard of the Son of Hinnom, but the Graveyard of Slaughter. [7]For I shall destroy the counsel of Judah and the counsel of Jerusalem in this place. I shall cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives. I will give their dead as food for the birds of heaven and for the wild animals of the earth. [8]I will appoint this city for desolation and for hissing. Everyone passing by it will scowl and hiss because of all her misfortune. [9]They shall eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and each shall eat the flesh of those in the passage who are his neighbors in the blockade, and in the siege in which their enemies shall besiege them.’ ”[†]

[10]“Then you shall break the wine-jar in the sight of the men who come out with you, [11]and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “In this way I will break this people and this city, as one breaks an earthen vessel which cannot be made whole again.

[12]Thus I will do to this place,” says the Lord, “and to those who dwell in it, so this city may be given as one that crumbles in pieces. [13]Therefore the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be as a place

that crumbles because of the uncleanness in all their houses, where they burnt incense upon their housetops to all the host of heaven and poured drink offerings to foreign gods.” ’ ”

[14]Then Jeremiah came from the place of the Fall, where the Lord sent him to prophesy. He stood in the court of the Lord's house and said to all the people, [15]“Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I bring upon this city, and on all the cities and villages belonging to it, all the calamities I declared against it, because they hardened their neck so as not to obey My words.’ ”

God's Warning to Pashhur

20 Now Pashhur the son of Immer, the priest who was also appointed governor in the house of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these words.[†] [2]He struck him and cast him into the stockade by the gate of the house set apart near the house of the Lord. [3]Later Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stockade, and Jeremiah said to him, “The Lord does not call your name Pashhur, but Emigrant.

[4]“For thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I will give you and all your friends as an emigrant in a foreign land. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see it. I will give you and all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon. They shall deport them as immigrants and cut them with their swords. [5]For I shall give all the strength of this city, all its labors and its treasures of the kings of Judah, into the hands of its enemies. They will carry them to Babylon. [6]You, and all who dwell in your house, shall go in captivity to Babylon. There you shall die and be buried—you and all your friends to whom you prophesied lies.’ ”

Jeremiah Is Despised

[7]O Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived. You seized me and prevailed. I am a laughingstock, for every day I am mocked continually.[†] [8]Since I laugh with my bitter word, I will call upon faithlessness and misery, for the word of the Lord has become a disgrace to me and a joke each of my days. [9]Then I said, “I will not name the name of the Lord, nor speak anymore in His name.” But His word was like a burning fire in my bones. I am weakened on all sides and no longer able to bear it. [10]For I heard the censure of many who gathered round, saying, “Let us and all the men who are his friends confront and conspire against him. Let us observe his intention and see if he can be deceived, for we will prevail against him and be avenged on him.”

[11]But the Lord was with me as a mighty warrior. Therefore they persecuted me, but were unable to discern anything they could use against me. They were greatly ashamed, for they did not understand their dishonor, which will never be forgotten. [12]O Lord, You who approve righteous acts, who understand the minds and hearts, may I see Your vengeance upon them, for I revealed my defense before You.

[13]Sing to the Lord, sing praises to Him, for He delivers the soul of the poor from the hand of those who are evil.[†]

[14]Cursed be the day I was born, the day my mother bore me. Let it not be longed for. [15]Cursed be the man who brought the good news to my father, saying, “A boy has been born to you.”[†] [16]Let that man be as these cities the Lord destroyed in anger, and did not regret it. Let them hear crying in early

morning and lamentation at noon, [17]because He did not kill me in the womb of my mother, and because my mother did not become my tomb, and her womb an unending conception.[†] [18]Why is it I came forth from her womb, to look upon hardships and sufferings and to remain in shame all my days?

God Spurns Jerusalem

[21] The word came from the Lord to Jeremiah, when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Melchiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest.[†] [2]They said to him, “Inquire of the Lord for us—for the king of Babylon besieges us—if the Lord will act according to all His wonderful works, and the king will depart from us.”[†]

[3]Jeremiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, king of Judah, [4]‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I turn back your weapons of war to gather them in the midst of this city, weapons with which you wage war against the Chaldeans, who shut you in from outside the wall. [5]For I will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a powerful arm, with anger and wrath and with great provocation. [6]I will strike all the inhabitants of this city, men and cattle, with a great death. Indeed they shall die. [7]After this,” says the Lord, “I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants, and the people left in this city from death and from famine and sword, into the hands of their enemies who seek their lives. They shall cut them down with the edge of the sword. I shall not spare them nor have compassion upon them.’ ”

[8]“Now you shall say to this people, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.[†] [9]He who remains in this city shall die by sword and famine, but he who goes out to the Chaldeans

who shut you in, he shall live. His life shall be as booty to him, and he shall
live. [10]For I have set My face against this city for calamities and not for good
things. It shall be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he shall
burn it with fire.’ ”

A Word to the House of David

[11]“O house of the king of Judah, hear the word of the Lord: [12]‘O house of
David, thus says the Lord: “Bring about judgment early in the morning, and
act uprightly, and deliver him who is plundered from the hand of the one who
wrongs him, lest My wrath be kindled like fire that shall burn with no one to
quench it. [13]Behold, I am against you who dwell in the valley of Sor, in the
plain, who say, ‘Who will terrify us?’ Or, ‘Who shall enter our dwelling?’[†]
[14]For I will kindle a fire in its woods and it shall devour all things round
about it.” ’ ”

22 Thus says the Lord: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and
there you shall speak this word, [2]and you shall say, ‘Hear the word of
the Lord, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your
house and your people, and those who enter these gates! [3]Thus says the Lord:
“Bring about judgment and righteousness, and rescue the plundered from the
hand of the one who wrongs him. Do not oppress and act ungodly toward the
resident alien, the orphan, or the widow. Do not shed innocent blood in this
place. [4]For if you will indeed perform this word, there shall enter through the
gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David. They shall ride on
horses and in chariots—they, their servants, and their people. [5]But if you do
not perform these words I Myself have sworn,” says the Lord, “this house
shall become a desolation.” ’ ”

[6]For thus says the Lord concerning the house of the king of Judah: “You are Gilead to Me, the head of Lebanon. Yet I will surely make you as a wilderness, and your cities shall not be inhabited.[†] [7]I will bring against you a man who destroys with his two-edged ax; and they shall cut down your choice cedars and cast them into the fire. [8]Then nations will pass through this city, and each will say to his neighbor, ‘Why has the Lord done so to this great city?’ [9]They will answer, ‘Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshiped foreign gods and served them.’ ”

[10]Weep not for the dead, neither lament. Weep bitterly for him who goes away, for he shall return no more to see his native land.

A Word to the Sons of Josiah

[11]For thus says the Lord concerning Shallum the son of Josiah, who reigned in the place of Josiah his father, who left this place: “He shall not return here anymore,[†] [12]but he shall die in the place where I have exiled him. He shall see this land no more.[†]

[13]“Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness and his rooms upstairs without judgment, who employs his neighbor for nothing and will not give him his pay! [14]You built for yourself a well-proportioned house with breezy rooms upstairs, lined with windows, cedar panels, and painted with vermilion. [15]Shall you reign, for you provoked Me as did your father Ahaz? They shall not eat and drink. It is better for you to bring about good judgment and righteousness.[†] [16]They did not understand and judge the cause of a lowly or poor man. Is this your not knowing Me?” says the Lord. [17]“Behold, neither your eyes nor your heart are good for anything except for

covetousness and the shedding of innocent blood, and for committing wrongdoing and murder.”

[18]Therefore thus says the Lord to Jehoiakim the king of Judah, the son of Josiah: “Woe to this man. They shall not mourn for him, saying, ‘Oh brother!’ Neither shall they weep for him, saying, ‘Alas, master!’ [19]But he shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, and they will drag him out to be discarded beyond the gates of Jerusalem.[†]

[20]“Go up to Lebanon and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan. Shout to the faraway places of the sea that all your lovers are crushed. [21]For I spoke to you concerning your transgression, but you said, ‘I will not hear.’ This has been your way from your youth. You do not hear My voice. [22]The wind shall tend all your shepherds, and your lovers shall go into captivity, for then you will be shamed and treated with dishonor because of all your lovers. [23]Those who dwell in Lebanon and who make their nest in the cedar trees, you shall groan when pangs come upon you, as those of a woman giving birth.

A Word to Jeconiah

[24]“As I live,” says the Lord, “though Jeconiah king of Judah, the son of Jehoiakim, were the signet on My right hand, still I would drag off all of you. [25]I will give you into the hands of those who seek your life, into the hands of the Chaldeans, before whose face you are afraid. [26]So I will cast all of you, and your mother who bore you, into a country where you were not born. There you shall die. [27]But they shall not return to the land they long for in

their souls. [28]Jeconiah is dishonored like a worthless vessel, for he is cast forth and driven out into a land he did not know.

[29]“O land, land, hear the word of the Lord: [30]‘Write this man as a banished man, for none at all from his seed shall be raised to sit on the throne of David, or still as a ruler in Judah.’ ”[†]

The Righteous Orient

23 “Woe to the shepherds who scatter and destroy the sheep of My pasture!” [2]Therefore thus says the Lord against those who tend My people: “You have scattered My sheep and driven them out. You did not care for them. Behold, I shall punish you according to your evil practices. [3]I will receive the remnant of My people from every land where I have driven them. I will establish them in their pasture, and they shall increase and be multiplied.[†] [4]I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them. They shall fear no more, nor be terrified,” says the Lord.[†]

[5]“Behold, days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will raise up for David the Righteous Orient, and a King shall reign. He will understand and bring about judgment and righteousness on the earth.[†] [6]In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel shall dwell in confidence. This is His name by which the Lord will call him: ‘The Lord Our Righteousness.’ ”[†] [7]The Lord says, “Therefore behold, days are coming when they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the house of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ [†] [8]but they will say, ‘The Lord lives who gathered all the descendants of Israel from the north country, from all the countries where He drove them, and restored them into their land.’ ”

False Prophets and Priests

[9]Among the prophets, my heart is broken within me, and all my bones are shaken. I am as a broken-down man overcome with wine, because of the Lord's presence and the excellence of His glory. [10]Because of these things, the land mourns and the pastures of the desert are dried up. Their way of life has become evil, and so has their strength.

[11]“For both prophet and priest are defiled, and I see their evils within My house,” says the Lord. [12]“Therefore let their way be to them as a fall into darkness; and they shall be tripped up and fall therein, because in the year of their visitation I will bring calamities upon them. [13]In the prophets of Samaria I have seen lawless actions. They prophesy through Baal and lead astray My people Israel. [14]Also in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen horrible things. They commit adultery and walk in lies. They strengthen the hands of evil men, so they might not turn back each from his evil path. They are to me like Sodom, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.” [15]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will feed them pain and give them bitter water to drink, because from the prophets of Jerusalem defilement goes out into all the land.”

[16]Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets, for they invent a futile vision for themselves. They speak from their own heart, and not from the mouth of the Lord.[†] [17]They say to those who reject the word of the Lord, ‘You shall have peace.’ To those who walk according to their own wishes, and to everyone who walks in the error of his heart, they say, ‘No evil shall come upon you.’[†] [18]For who stands in the camp of the Lord and sees His word? Who gives ear to His word and hears

it? [19]Behold, there is an earthquake from the Lord, and wrath goes forth as an earthquake. It shall come violently on the ungodly. [20]The anger of the Lord shall not turn away until He establishes it, because of the undertaking of His heart. They shall understand this in the last days. [21]I did not send these prophets, but they went forth. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied. [22]If they had stood in My counsel and heard My words, then they would have turned my people away from their evil practices.

[23]“I am a God who is near,” says the Lord, “and not a God afar off. [24]Can a man hide in secret, and I not see him? Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the Lord. [25]“I heard what the prophets said, and what lies they prophesied in My name, saying falsely, ‘I have dreamed a dream.’ [26]How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, when they prophesy the wishes of their heart? [27]They reason by their dreams so men will forget My law. Each prophet tells his neighbor to forget Me, as their fathers forgot My name in their worship of Baal. [28]The prophet in whom there is a dream, let him tell his dream; and the prophet in whom there is My word, let him tell it truthfully. What is chaff in comparison to wheat? So are My words,” says the Lord. [29]“Are not My words like a blazing fire?” says the Lord. “Are they not like an ax striking a rock?

[30]“Behold therefore, I am against the prophets,” says the Lord God, “who steal My words, each prophet from his neighbor. [31]Behold, I am against the prophets who are drowsy and put forth prophecies as mere words. [32]Behold, I am against the prophets who prophesy false dreams, and they relate them. They lead My people astray with their lies and in their deceits. Yet I did not

send them or command them. Therefore, they shall not profit this people at all.”

[33]The Lord says, “So if these people, or a prophet, or a priest, ask you, saying, ‘What is the burden of the Lord?’ you shall then say to them, ‘You are the burden, and I will strike you down.’ [34]As for the prophet and the priest and the people who say, ‘The burden of the Lord,’ then I will take vengeance on that man and his house. [35]Thus each shall say to his neighbor, and each to his brother, ‘What has the Lord answered? What has the Lord spoken?’ [36]Do not mention the burden of the Lord anymore, for the burden on a man shall be his word. [37]‘But why,’ you say, ‘has the Lord our God spoken?’ [38]Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Because you spoke this word: “The burden of the Lord”; therefore I instructed you, saying, “You shall not say, ‘The burden of the Lord.’ ” [39]Therefore behold, I take and strike you, and the city I gave to you and to your fathers. [40]I will bring everlasting disgrace upon you, and a perpetual dishonor which shall not be forgotten.’

[41]“Therefore behold, days are coming,” says the Lord, “when they will no longer say, ‘The Lord lives who brought the house of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ [42]but, ‘The Lord lives who brought all the seed of Israel from the north, and from all the countries where He banished them, and restored them to this land.’ ”

Two Baskets of Figs

24 The Lord showed me two baskets of figs set before the temple of the Lord, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon carried away captive Jeconiah king of Judah, the son of Jehoiakim, and the rulers, the craftsmen, the prisoners, and the wealthy men from Jerusalem, and brought them to Babylon.[†] [2]One basket was full of very good figs, like the first figs that ripened. The other basket was full of very bad figs which no one could eat, because they were rotten. [3]Then the Lord said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I replied, “Good figs, very good figs, and also bad figs, figs too rotten to eat.”

[4]The word of the Lord came to me, saying, [5]“Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘As these good figs, so will I acknowledge that for good things I settled the tribe of Judah in a far land, whom I sent from this place into the land of Chaldea. [6]For I will set My eyes on them for good things, and restore them to this land for good things. I will build them up, and not tear them down. I will plant them, and not pluck them up. [7]Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be to Me as a people, and I will be to them as God. They shall return to Me with their whole heart.

[8]‘As for the bad figs, too rotten to eat’—surely thus says the Lord—‘I shall deliver them to Zedekiah the king of Judah, his nobles, and the remnant of Jerusalem, those left in this land, and those dwelling in Egypt. [9]I will cause them to be dispersed into all the kingdoms of the earth, and they will be for a disgrace, for a parable, for a hatred, and for a curse in every place where I drive them. [10]I will send famine, death, and the sword to them, until they come to an end in the land I gave to them.’ ”

Seventy Years of Disgrace

25 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, the son of Josiah, the word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah,[†] [2]which he spoke to all the people of Judah and all inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, [3]“In the thirteenth year of Josiah king of Judah, the son of Amos, even to this day, in the twenty-third year, I spoke to you early in the morning, saying,[†] [4]‘I sent My servants the prophets to you, sending them early in the morning (but you did not listen, nor did you incline your ear to hear), saying, [5]“Let each of you turn away from his evil way and evil practices, and dwell in the land I gave to you and your fathers from ages past and forever. [6]Do not go after foreign gods to serve and worship them, so you may not provoke Me with the works of your hands, to harm you.” [7]Yet you have not listened to Me.’ ”

[8]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Because you have not believed My words, [9]behold, I shall even send a family from the north and lead them against this land, and against those living in it, and against all the nations round about her. I will make it desolate and give it up to destruction. I will render it a hissing and a perpetual disgrace. [10]I will destroy from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, and the fragrance of ointment and the light of the lamp. [11]All the land shall be for desolation, and for seventy years they shall serve among the Gentiles. [12]When the seventy years are fulfilled, I will take vengeance on that nation, and I will appoint them for perpetual destruction. [13]I will bring upon that land all My words I pronounced against it, and all things written in this book.”

[14]What Jeremiah prophesied against the nations of Elam:[†]

[15]Thus says the Lord: “Let the bow of Elam, the beginning of their power, be broken. [16]For I shall bring against Elam the four winds from the four extremities of heaven, and I will scatter them by all these winds. There will

not be a nation that will not come there to drive out Elam. [17]I will terrify them before the enemies who seek their life. I will bring calamities upon them according to the wrath of My anger, and send My sword after them until I have utterly destroyed them. [18]Then I will set My throne in Elam, and from there send forth the king and his nobles.[†] [19]It shall come to pass in the last days that I will bring back the captivity of Elam," says the Lord. [20]This word concerning Elam came in the beginning of King Zedekiah's reign.

26 Concerning Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, who was by the River Euphrates in Carchemish and whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah.[†]

[2]“Take up weapons and shields, and draw near for war. [3]Saddle the horses and mount up, you horsemen. Stand ready with your helmets, advance the spears, and put on your breastplates. [4]Why are they terrified and turn back? Because their mighty ones, surrounded on all sides, will be struck as they flee in panic, and not live,” says the Lord.

[5]“Let not the swift flee. Let not the mighty man escape to the north. The forces alongside the Euphrates grow weak and fall. [6]Who is this that shall come up like a river, and like rivers flood their waters? [7]The waters of Egypt will come up like a river, for he said, ‘I will go up and cover the earth, and will destroy its inhabitants.’[†] [8]Mount the horses and prepare the chariots. Come forth, you warriors of Ethiopia, and you of Libya armed with weapons, and you Lydians, arise and bend the bow.[†] [9]That shall be the day of the Lord our God, the day of vengeance to avenge His enemies. The sword of the Lord shall devour and be fully satisfied, drunken with their blood; for the Lord of Hosts has a sacrifice from the land of the north at the Euphrates. [10]Go up, Gilead, and take balm for the virgin daughter of Egypt. In vain you multiply your medicines, but they are of no benefit to you.[†] [11]The nations heard your voice, and the land is filled with your cry; for warrior to warrior grows weak, and both fall together.”

[12]What the Lord spoke by the hand of Jeremiah concerning the coming of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon to strike the land of Egypt.

[13]“Declare in Migdol and proclaim in Memphis, and say, ‘Stand up and prepare yourselves, for the sword devours your bow.’[†] [14]Why did Apis flee from you? Your chosen calf did not remain, because the Lord utterly weakened him.[†] [15]Your multitude grew weak and fell. Each said to his neighbor, ‘Let us arise and return to our people and to the land of our nativity, from the presence of the Greek sword.’[†] [16]They cried there, ‘Pharaoh is but a noise. He has passed by the appointed time.’ [17]As I live,” says the Lord God, “Tabor is among the mountains and Carmel is by the sea, he shall come. [18]O daughter of Egypt who dwell at home, prepare for yourself goods for captivity, for Memphis shall be for destruction, and be called, ‘Woe!’ because no one will dwell in it.

[19]“Egypt is a heifer made beautiful; a rage from the north comes against her. [20]Her mercenaries in her midst are as fatted calves, well fed by her, because with one accord they also turned and fled. They did not stand, for the day of destruction and the time of their retribution came upon them. [21]Their voice is like that of a hissing serpent, for they will proceed upon the sand. They shall come against her with axes, as if cutting wood. [22]They shall cut down her oak groves,” says the Lord God, “for their number cannot at all be conjectured, since they abound more than locust trees.

[23]“The daughter of Egypt is put to shame. She is delivered into the hands of people from the north. [24]Behold, I will avenge Ammon her son against Pharaoh and those who trust in him.[†] [25]But do not fear, My servant Jacob,

neither be terrified, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, and be at ease, and sleep; for there will be no one to trouble him. [26]Do not fear, O Jacob, My servant," says the Lord, "for I am with you. I will bring an end to every nation where I drove you, but I will not cause you to cease. However, I will chasten you in the way of judgment, and not leave you wholly unpunished."[†]

27 The word of the Lord He spoke against Babylon.[†]

[2]"Declare among the Gentiles and cause it to be heard. Do not conceal what is spoken. Say, 'Babylon is conquered; Bel the fearless one has been put to shame; Merodach the luxurious one is handed over.'[†] [3]For a nation comes against her from the north. He shall destine her land for destruction, and nothing from man to animal shall dwell in it.[†] [4]In those days and at that time, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together. They shall proceed, walking and weeping and seeking the Lord their God.[†] [5]They shall ask the way until they come to Zion, for they shall set their face toward this place. They shall come and flee for refuge to the Lord their God, for the everlasting covenant shall not be forgotten.

[6]"My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds drove them out to wander on the mountains. They went from mountain to hill and forgot their marriage bed. [7]All who found them devoured them. Their adversaries said, 'Let us not leave them alone, because they sinned against the Lord, who gathered together their fathers in a pasture of righteousness.'

[8]“Be alienated from the midst of Babylon and from the land of the Chaldeans. Be like serpents in the presence of sheep. [9]For behold, I raise up assemblies of nations against Babylon from the land of the north. They will array themselves against her, and from there she shall be conquered, as the javelin of an expert warrior shall not be returned empty. [10]Chaldea shall be for plundering, and all who plunder her shall be satisfied, [11]because you celebrated and exulted while plundering My inheritance, and because you skipped like calves in pasture and butted horns like bulls.

[12]“Your mother is very ashamed, she who bore you for good things. She is the last of the nations, and a desert. [13]Because of the Lord's wrath, she will not be inhabited, but shall be for destruction. All who travel through Babylon shall be sullen, and they shall hiss at all her calamity. [14]All you who bend the bow, set yourselves in array against Babylon round about, and shoot at her. Do not spare your arrows. [15]Applaud excessively, for her hands are paralyzed. Her means of defense has fallen, and her wall is demolished; for it is vengeance from God. Take vengeance on her, for as she did, so do to her. [16]Utterly destroy the seed of Babylon, and hold fast the sickle in the time of harvest. Because of the Greek sword, each shall return to his people, and each shall flee to his land.[†]

[17]“Israel is a wandering sheep, for the lions drove him out. First, the king of Assyria devoured him, then the king of Babylon devoured his bones.” [18]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will take vengeance on the king of Babylon and upon his land, as I took vengeance upon the king of Assyria. [19]But I shall restore Israel to his pasture, and he will graze on Carmel, on Mount Ephraim and in Gilead. His soul shall be satisfied. [20]In

those days and at that time, they will seek for the wrongdoing of Israel, but it shall not exist; and they will look for the sins of Judah, but these shall not be found; for I shall be merciful to those left in the land," says the Lord.

[21]"Embark against this land bitterly, and against those who dwell therein. Avenge with the sword and destroy it," says the Lord, "and do according to all I command you. [22]A sound of war and great destruction is in the land of the Chaldeans. [23]How was the hammer of all the earth broken and crushed? How did Babylon become a desolation among the nations? [24]They will attack you, and you will be conquered, O Babylon. You will not even know you are found and taken, because you opposed the Lord. [25]The Lord opened His treasure and brought out the vessels of His wrath, because the work of the Lord God is in the land of the Chaldeans.[†] [26]For her time has come. Open her storehouses, search her like a cave, and utterly destroy her. Let nothing of her remain. [27]Dry up all her fruits and let them go down to the slaughter. Woe to them! For their day has come, and the time of their retribution.

[28]"The voice of those who flee and escape from the land of Babylon declares in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God. [29]Summon many against Babylon, even all who bend the bow. Encamp against it round about; let no one be saved from her. Repay her according to her works, and whatever she did, so do to her, for she opposed the Lord, the Holy God of Israel. [30]Her young men shall fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cast down," says the Lord. [31]"Behold, I am against you, the haughty one," says the Lord, "because the day and the time of your retribution has come. [32]Your insolence shall fail, and you will fall. There

shall be no one to cause it to arise. I will kindle a fire in its thicket, and it shall devour everything around her."

[33]Thus says the Lord: "The sons of Israel have been oppressed along with the sons of Judah, for all who took them captive oppressed them. They were unwilling to let them go. [34]He who redeemed them is strong; the Lord Almighty is His name. He shall enter into judgment against His adversaries so as to take away their land and to provoke those who dwell in Babylon.[†] [35]He will bring a sword against the Chaldeans and those inhabiting Babylon, and against her nobles and wise men, [36]and against her warriors; and they shall be weakened. [37]He will bring a sword against their horses and chariots, and against the warriors and irregular troops in her midst. They shall be like women. He will also bring a sword against its treasures, and they will be scattered over the water she trusted. [38]They will be put to shame in the islands in which they boasted, for it is a land of graven images.

[39]"Therefore apparitions shall dwell in the islands, and the daughters of sirens shall dwell therein. It shall not be inhabited anymore forever.[†] [40]As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities bordering them," says the Lord, "no man shall dwell there, and no son of man will sojourn there. [41]Behold, a people comes from the north, and a great nation and many kings shall be raised up from the ends of the earth, holding bow and dagger. [42]He is reckless and will show no mercy at all. Their voice shall roar like the sea on the horses they ride, prepared for war like fire against you, O daughter of Babylon.

[43]“The king of Babylon heard their sound, and his hands grew feeble. Anguish took hold of him, like the pangs of a woman in childbirth. [44]Behold, he shall go up like a lion from the Jordan River into the place of Aitham; for I will banish them quickly from it and set every young man against it. For who is like Me? Who opposes Me? Who is this shepherd who will stand against My presence?”

[45]Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord which He has resolved against Babylon, and the thoughts which He has reckoned against those inhabiting Chaldea. Surely the lambs of their sheep are utterly destroyed; surely the pasture is cut off from them; [46]for at the sound of the capturing of Babylon, the earth shall quake, and clamor will be heard among the nations.

28 Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I raise up against Babylon and the inhabitants of the Chaldeans a scorching heat, a wind to destroy utterly. [2]I will send violent men into Babylon, and they shall insult and ravage her land. Woe to Babylon all round in the day of her calamity. [3]Against her let the archer bend his bow, and let him who has armor put it on. Do not spare her young men; utterly destroy all her power. [4]The wounded men shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and those pierced through shall fall outside her. [5]For Israel and Judah were not bereaved of their God, the Lord Almighty, for the land was filled with their wrongdoings against the holy things of Israel.”

[6]Flee from the midst of Babylon, and everyone save his life. Do not be made to perish in her wrongdoing. For it is the time of her retribution from the Lord. He shall render repayment to her. [7]Babylon was a golden cup in

the Lord's hand, causing all the earth to be drunk. The nations drank from her wine; therefore, they were shaken.[†] [8]Babylon fell suddenly and was broken in pieces. Sing a dirge for her; take resin for her corruption, if somehow she may be healed. [9]We treated Babylon medically, but she would not heal. Let us forsake her, and let each move to his country. For her judgment draws near to heaven and is taken to the stars.

[10]The Lord brought forth His judgment. Come and let us declare in Zion the works of the Lord our God. [11]Prepare the arrows; fill the quivers. The Lord has raised up the spirit of the king of the Medes. For His wrath is against Babylon to destroy it utterly, because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of His people.[†] [12]Lift up a banner on the walls of Babylon, prepare the quivers, rouse guards, and prepare the weapons. For the Lord has taken in hand and will do what He spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon, [13]who dwell near many waters, and amidst the abundance of her treasures.

The Arm of the Lord

Truly, your end is come into your bowels.[†] [14]For the Lord has sworn by His arm, saying, “Therefore I will fill you with men as with locusts, and they will go down and speak against you.” [15]He made the land by His might, prepared the inhabited world by His wisdom, and by His understanding He stretched out heaven. [16]By His voice, He makes the sound of water in the sky and brings up the clouds from the end of the earth. He makes lightnings for rain and brings light out of His storehouses. [17]Every man is made foolish without knowledge, and every goldsmith is dishonored by his carved images; because they cast false gods, but there is no spirit of life in them. [18]It is a worthless work to be ridiculed, and in their time of visitation they shall perish.

[19]Jacob's portion is not such, because He who created all things is his inheritance. The Lord is His name. [20]“You scatter the weapons of war by Me, and by you I will scatter nations and drive away kings from you. [21]By you I will scatter the horse and its rider, and by you I will scatter the chariots and their mounted riders. [22]By you I will scatter young man and virgin, and by you I will scatter man and woman. [23]By you I will scatter the shepherd and his flock, and by you I will scatter the farmer and his farming. By you I will scatter rulers and commanders. [24]I will make Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea pay for all their vices performed against Zion, according to what you saw,” says the Lord.

[25]“Behold, I am against you, the corrupted mountain that corrupts everything in the land. I will stretch forth My hand against you and roll you down from the rocks. I will cause you to be a burnt mountain. [26]They will not take a stone from you for a corner or for a foundation. For you shall be a place of desolation forever,” says the Lord.

[27]“Lift up a banner in the land; sound a trumpet among the nations; set apart the nations against her; direct against her from Me the kingdoms of Ararat and the people of Ashkenaz to stand against her. Set siege engines against her, and bring horses like a multitude of locusts.[†] [28]Set apart the nations against her, the king of the Medes, and all of the land, its governors, and all its generals.

[29]“The earth shook and suffered toil, for the purpose of the Lord is risen up against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation and uninhabitable. [30]The warriors of Babylon ceased to wage war. They shall sit there in the siege. Their might has been broken, and they became like women. Her tents are burnt, and the bars of their gates are shattered into pieces. [31]One will pursue to meet another pursuer, one messenger to meet another messenger, to bring word to the king of Babylon that his city is taken. [32]At the end of the crossing point they were taken, their garrisons were burned with fire, and their warriors ran away.”

[33]For thus says the Lord: “The houses of the king of Babylon shall be like a threshing floor in the season for threshing. In a short while her harvest will come. [34]King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon devoured me. He divided and overtook me, a small vessel. He swallowed me up, like a dragon who filled his belly with my delicacies, and drove me out. [35]She that dwells in Zion shall say, ‘My hardships and my miseries banished me to Babylon.’ Jerusalem shall say, ‘My blood shall be upon those inhabiting Chaldea.’ ”

[36]Therefore, thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will judge your adversary and exact vengeance for you. I shall lay waste her sea and dry up her springs. [37]Babylon shall be as a desolation, and it shall not be inhabited. [38]For they rose up together as lions and as cubs of lions. [39]In their heat, I shall give them a wine-cup. I will make them drunk so they may be intoxicated, and sleep an unending sleep, and not wake up,” says the Lord.

[40]“I will bring them down like lambs for slaughter, like rams with young. [41]How has the boast of the whole earth been caught and captured? How has Babylon become as a desolation among the nations? [42]The sea came up against Babylon with the sound of her waves, and she was covered. [43]Her cities became a waterless and impassable land. Not even one man shall dwell in it, nor shall a son of man lodge in it. [44]I will take vengeance on Babylon, and bring out from her mouth what she swallowed. The nations will no longer be gathered to her. [45]In Babylon, all the wounded men of the earth shall fall. [46]You who escape, go from the land, and do not stay. You who are afar off, remember the Lord, and let Jerusalem enter your heart.”

[47]We are ashamed because we heard our disgrace. Dishonor covers our face, for strangers entered the house of the Lord among our holy things. [48]“Therefore, behold the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will take vengeance upon her carved images, and wounded men shall fall in all her land. [49]For even if Babylon ascended like heaven and she fortified the strength of her walls, yet from Me the plunderers shall come to destroy her,” says the Lord.

[50]“There is the sound of a cry in Babylon, and great destruction is in the land of the Chaldeans; [51]for the Lord utterly cut off Babylon, and destroyed from her the great voice ringing out as many waters. He appointed her voice for ruin, for misery came against Babylon. [52]Her warriors are conquered, and their bow is useless; for God repays them. The Lord renders repayment to her. [53]He will make her princes, her wise men, and her commanders completely drunk,” says the King. “The Lord Almighty is His name.”

[54]Thus says the Lord: “The wall of Babylon was made broad, but it shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall burn with fire. The peoples shall not labor in vain, nor will the nations fail in their rule.”

[55]This is the word the Lord commanded Jeremiah the prophet to say to Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. Now Seraiah was the quartermaster.[†] [56]So Jeremiah wrote in one book all the calamities that would come upon Babylon. Indeed he wrote all these words against Babylon. [57]Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon and see it, you shall read all these words. [58]You shall say, ‘O Lord and Master, You spoke against this place to destroy it, and so none should dwell in it, neither man nor animal, because it shall be desolate forever.’ [59]Then it shall come to pass, when you finish reading this book, you shall tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates. [60]After this, you shall say, ‘Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise, because of the calamities I bring upon her.’ ”[†]

29

Against the Philistines:[†]

[2]Thus says the Lord: “Behold, waters come up from the north and shall be a flooding torrent, which will flood the land, the entire city, and those dwelling in it. The men will cry out, and all those inhabiting the land will wail loudly, [3]because of the sound of his attack, the hoofs of his horses, and the rumblings of his chariots, at the noise of his wheels. Because of the weakness of their hands, the fathers did not return to their sons, [4]to destroy all the Philistines in the day to come. I shall utterly destroy Tyre and Sidon

and all the rest of their allies, because the Lord will put to death the remaining people of the islands. [5]Baldness is come upon Gaza, and Ashkelon is cast out, along with the rest of the Enakim. [6]How long will you strike, O sword of the Lord? How long will it be until you rest? Return to your sheath, rest and be exalted. [7]How shall it be quiet, for the Lord has given it a commission against Ashkelon and the regions of the seacoast, to be stirred up against the remaining countries?”

30 Against Edom:[†]

Thus says the Lord: “Wisdom is no longer in Teman. Counsel perished from the intelligent; their wisdom is gone. [2]Their place is deceived. Those dwelling in Dedan dig deep for a place to dwell, for you caused troubles. So I brought troubles upon him in the time I visited him.[†] [3]For those who gather grapes shall come to you, and they will not leave you a remnant. Like thieves by night, they will lay their hands upon your possessions. [4]For I pulled down Esau and uncovered their secret places. They shall be unable to hide themselves. They perished, each by the hand of his brother and his neighbor, [5]and it is not possible for the orphan to remain alive; but I shall live, and the widows will trust in Me.”

[6]For thus says the Lord: “Those not appointed to drink the cup drank it, and you shall not remain unpunished, nor without blame, for you will certainly drink it.” [7]For the Lord says, “I swore by Myself that you shall become impassable and a disgrace, and you shall become a curse in her midst. All her cities shall be a perpetual desert.” [8]I heard a report from the Lord, and He sent messengers to the nations, saying, “Assemble yourselves

and come against her. Rise up for war.[†] [9]I made you small among nations, contemptible among men. [10]Your insolence has risen up against you. The rashness of your heart has broken up the holes of the rocks, and has seized the strength of the lofty hill. For like an eagle he has set his nest on high, but from there I will bring you down. [11]Edom shall be inaccessible, and everyone who passes by will hiss at it.

[12]“As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, along with their sojourners,” says the Lord Almighty, “so no man shall sit there, nor shall any son of man dwell there. [13]Behold, one will come up like a lion from the midst of the Jordan to the place of Aitham, for I will quickly drive them out from it. Do you set young men against her? For who is like Me? Who will oppose Me? Who is this shepherd who will stand against Me?”

[14]Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord which He purposed against Edom, and His plan which He calculated against the inhabitants of Teman. Surely the least of the sheep are swept away; surely their dwelling place shall be laid waste for them. [15]For at the sound of their fall the earth shook, and your outcry was heard in the sea. [16]Behold, He shall look upon her as an eagle, and spread forth His wings over her stronghold. In that day, the heart of the strong men of Edom shall be as the heart of a woman with pains of childbirth.

[17]Against the sons of Ammon:

Thus says the Lord: “Are there no sons in Israel? Or have they no one to succeed them? Why then did Malcom receive Gad, and why will their people dwell in their cities? [18]Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will cause an uproar of war to be heard in Rabbah. They shall be impassable and in utter ruin. Her altars shall burn with fire. Then Israel shall take possession of his dominion. [19]Wail loudly, O Heshbon, for Gai has perished. Cry out, you daughters of Rabbah, and gird yourselves with sackcloth. Be frenzied and lament over Malcom, for he shall go into captivity, together with his priests and rulers. [20]Why, O haughty daughter, do you rejoice exceedingly in the plains of Enakim? You who trusted in your own treasures, saying, ‘Who shall come against me?’ [21]Behold, I will bring fear upon you from all who live around you. Each of you shall be scattered before his face, and there will be no one to gather you.”

[22]Against Kedar, queen of the court, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon struck:

Thus says the Lord: “Arise, go up to Kedar, and fill the sons of Kedem.[†] [23]They will seize their tents and their sheep. They shall take their garments, all their vessels, and their camels for themselves. Summon destruction against them from every side. [24]Flee! Dig very deep for a dwelling place, you who sit in the court, for the king of Babylon counsels against you and prepares a plan against you.

[25]“Rise up and go against a nation settled and dwelling at ease, who have neither gates, nor pins and bars, and who dwell alone. [26]Their camels shall be for booty, and the multitude of their cattle for destruction. I will scatter them as chaff with every wind, having their hair cut about their foreheads. I will bring their overthrow from every side. [27]The court shall

be a resting place for sparrows and untrodden forever. No man shall settle there, nor shall a son of man dwell in it,” says the Lord.

[28]Against Damascus:

“Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, for they heard the evil report. They are surprised. They are so angry they are unable to rest.[†] [29]Damascus is utterly weakened. She is put to flight. Trembling has seized her. [30]How has she not abandoned My city in their love for the village? [31]Therefore the young men shall fall in your streets, and all your warriors shall fall. [32]For I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall engulf the streets of Ben-Hadad,” says the Lord.[†]

31

Against Moab:

Thus says the Lord: “Woe to Nebo, for they are undone. Kirjathaim is taken. Amath is dishonored in its shame and defeated. [2]There is no longer any healing for Moab, nor insolence in Heshbon. He has planned evils against her. We cut her off from being a nation, and she will cease completely. A sword will go after you, [3]for a voice cries out of Horonaim, death and great destruction. [4]Moab is crushed; proclaim the destruction to Zogora. [5]For Luhith is filled with weeping. One will go up weeping on the road of Horonaim. You have heard a cry of destruction.

[6]“Flee and save your lives, for you shall be like a wild donkey in the desert! [7]Since you trusted in your strongholds, therefore you will be taken, and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity, together with his priests and rulers. [8]Destruction shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape.

The valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be utterly destroyed, as the Lord said. [9]Set a sign on Moab, for she shall be set ablaze; and all her cities shall be inaccessible. From what place shall they come to inhabit her?

[10]"Cursed is the man who does the work of the Lord carelessly, keeping back his sword from blood. [11]Moab has been at ease from his youth and trusted in his glory. He has not been poured out from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into exile. Therefore his taste is established within himself, and the smell of it does not cease.

[12]"Therefore behold, days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will send him those who put others to flight, and they will put him to flight. They shall thrash his possessions and cut up his horns.[†] [13]Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their hope, having trusted in them.[†] [14]How will you say, 'We are strong, a people skilled in war'? [15]Moab, his city, is ruined, and his choice young men have gone down to the slaughter. [16]The day of Moab is near at hand, and the evil he did moves swiftly to judgment. [17]All you who surround him, move against him. All you who know his name, say, 'How is the renowned staff broken, the rod of might?'

[18]"Come down from your glory, and sit down in a damp place. Be utterly destroyed, O Dibon, because Moab is ruined. One has gone up against you to ravage your stronghold.[†] [19]You that sit in Aroer, stand by the road and look. Ask him who flees and the one who escapes, and say, 'What happened?' [20]Moab is put to shame, for he is broken. Wail and cry! Proclaim in Arnon that Moab is ruined. [21]Judgment comes upon the land of

Misor, and upon Holon, Jahzah and Mephaath, [22]and upon Dibon, Nebo and the house of Diblathaim, [23]and upon Kirjathaim and the houses of Gamul and Meon, [24]and upon Kerioth and Bozrah, and the houses of Moab, those far and near.

[25]"The horn of Moab is crushed, and his arm is broken. [26]Make him drunk, for he exalted himself against the Lord. Moab shall clap with his hand, but he himself will be a laughingstock. [27]For surely, was not Israel a laughingstock to you? Was he not found to be one of your stolen things, because you fought against him? [28]The inhabitants of Moab have abandoned their cities and now dwell in the rocks. They have become like doves nestling in the rocks at the mouth of a cave. [29]I heard about the insolence of Moab, how he greatly increased his insolence and arrogance, and exalted his heart. [30]But I know his works, how they are not yet sufficient for him, to satisfy his haughtiness.

[31]"Therefore, cry aloud on all sides against Moab. Cry out against the men of Kirheres, a dried-up place. [32]I mourn deeply for you, O vine of Sibmah, as with the weeping of Jazer. Your branches reached across the sea and touched Jazer. Destruction came upon your fruit and upon those who gather your grapes. [33]Joyfulness and gladness are swept away from the land of Moab, for there is no wine in your winepresses. In the morning, there are none to trample the grapes, neither in the evening any to shout at the joy of harvest.[†] [34]From the crying of Heshbon even to Elealeh, and from Zogor as far as Horonaim and Aglath-Salisia, their cities uttered their voice, for the water of Nimrim shall be dried up.

[35]"I will destroy Moab," says the Lord, "as he comes up to the altar and burns incense to his gods. [36]Therefore, the heart of Moab shall make a humming noise like flutes. My heart will hum like a flute for the men of Kirheres, for whatever each man has gained has perished from him. [37]They will shave every head in every place, and every beard will be shaved. All hands will beat their chests, and sackcloth shall be over every back. [38]There will be mourning in all the houses of Moab and on his streets, for I have broken Moab in pieces," says the Lord, "like a useless vessel. [39]How did Moab change? How did he turn about? Moab is put to shame, and he became a laughingstock and an object of anger to all round about him."

[40]For thus says the Lord: [41]"Kerioth is taken, and the strongholds are seized. [42]Moab shall perish from being a multitude, because he exalted himself against the Lord. [43]A snare, fear, and a pit are upon you, O inhabitant of Moab. [44]He who flees before the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who gets out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For I will bring these things upon Moab in the year of his visitation."

32 What Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations.[†]

[2]Thus says the Lord God of Israel: "Take a cup of the unmixed wine from My hand, and you shall cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. [3]They will drink, vomit, and be insane because of the presence of the sword I send among them."

[4]So I took the cup from the hand of the Lord and caused the nations to whom the Lord sent me to drink it: [5]Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, the

kings of Judah and its rulers, to put them into desolation, to make them an untrodden place and a hissing; [6]and Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his nobles, and all his people; [7]all the mixed multitude and all the kings of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod; [8]and Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon; [9]and all the kings of Tyre, the kings of Sidon, and the kings in the seas beyond; [10]and Dedan, Teman, and Buz, and everyone who shaves round about his face; [11]and all the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert; [12]and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Persians; [13]and all the kings from the faraway East, each one with his brother; and all the kingdoms on the face of the earth.

[14]“You shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Drink and become drunk, and you shall vomit, fall, and not rise because of the presence of the sword I send among you.’ ” [15]It shall come to pass, when they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink it, you shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “You shall surely drink it. [16]For I will begin to afflict the city upon which My name is called, and you will not be guiltless; because I will call a sword upon all who dwell upon the earth.’ ”

[17]“You shall prophesy against them these words, and say, ‘The Lord shall speak from on high, to instruct from His sanctuary. He will utter His voice, and declare a word against His place.’ They will answer like men who gather grapes and shout in harvest; [18]and destruction is coming upon those who dwell on earth—to the ends of the earth. For the Lord has a controversy with the nations. He is pleading with all flesh, and the ungodly are given to the sword.”

[19]Thus says the Lord: “Behold, evils go from nation to nation, and a great storm proceeds from the ends of the earth. [20]In the day of the Lord, the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be buried, but will be as manure on the face of the earth.[†] [21]Wail loudly, you shepherds, and cry aloud. Strike yourselves, you rams of the sheep, for your days are filled for slaughter, and you shall fall like choice rams. [22]Flight shall vanish from the shepherds and safety from the rams of the flock. [23]There shall be a voice of outcry from the shepherds, and the loud wailing of sheep and rams shall be heard, for the Lord destroyed their pasture. [24]The remnants of the peace will end because of the fierceness of My wrath. [25]Like a lion, he forsook his lair, for their land became impassable because of the presence of the great sword.”

Jeremiah Spared from Death

33 In the beginning of the reign of King Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, this word came from the Lord.[†] [2]Thus says the Lord: “Stand in the court of the house of the Lord, and you shall declare to all Judeans, and all who come to worship in the house of the Lord, all the words I command you to reveal to them. Do not omit a word. [3]Perhaps each will hear and turn away from his evil ways. Then I will cease from the calamities I consider doing to them because of their evil practices. [4]You shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “If you will not hear Me, to walk in My laws I set before you, [5]to heed the words of My servants the prophets, whom I send to you early in the morning—yes, I sent them, but you did not heed Me— [6]then I will make this house like Shiloh, and the city into a curse to all the nations of all the earth.” ’ ”

[7]So the priests, the false prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. [8]Then it came to pass, when Jeremiah finished speaking to all the people the things the Lord commanded him, the priests, the false prophets, and all the people seized him, saying, “You will surely die, [9]for you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate of inhabitants.’ ” So all the people summoned an assembly against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord.

[10]The rulers of Judah also heard this word. So they went up from the house of the king to the house of the Lord and sat in the entrance of the new gate of the Lord. [11]Then the priests and the false prophets said to the rulers and all the people, “The judgment of death is due this man because he prophesied against this city, as you heard with your ears.”

[12]Then Jeremiah replied to the rulers and all the people, saying, “The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you heard. [13]Now then, amend your ways and your works. Hear the voice of the Lord, and the Lord will cease from the calamities He spoke against you. [14]Behold, I am in your hand. Do with me as seems useful and best for you.[†] [15]But know for certain, if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, on this city, and on those living there. For in truth, the Lord sent me to you, to speak all these words in your ears.”

[16]Then the rulers and all the people said to the priests and the false prophets, “The judgment of death is not due this man, for he spoke to us in the name of the Lord our God.”[†] [17]After this, men from the elders of the

land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people: [18]“Micah the Morasthite lived in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah and said to all the people of Judah, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall be impassable, and the mountain of the house shall be a thicket of trees.’ ”[†] [19]Now did Hezekiah and all Judah by any means put him to death? Instead, did they not fear the Lord and make supplication before the Lord; and the Lord ceased from the calamities He spoke against them? But we have done great evils against our souls.”

[20]After this, there was a man who prophesied in the Lord's name, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, and he prophesied concerning this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.[†] [21]Jehoiakim the king with all the rulers heard all his words, and they sought to put him to death; but Urijah heard this and went to Egypt. [22]So the king sent men to Egypt, [23]and they brought him from there to the king. Then he killed him with the sword and cast him into the grave of the children of his people. [24]Nevertheless, the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah to prevent his being delivered into the hands of the people to be put to death.

Bonds and Yokes

34 Thus says the Lord: “Make bonds and wooden yokes and put them on your neck, [2]and you shall send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the sons of Ammon, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon by the hand of the same messengers who met them in Jerusalem with Zedekiah king of Judah. [3]You shall instruct them with regard to their masters to speak thus: ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel to your masters:

[4]“I made the earth by My great strength and with My high arm, and I will give it to whomsoever it may seem good in My eyes. [5]I gave the earth to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon to serve him; and I gave the wild beasts of the field to him to work for him. [6]But the nation and kingdom, whoever will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will visit them with the sword and the famine,” says the Lord, “until they come to an end by his hand. [7]So do not give heed to your false prophets, diviners, dreamers, soothsayers, or sorcerers, who say, ‘You shall not work for the king of Babylon.’[†] [8]For they prophesy lies to you to remove you far from your land. [9]But the nation that brings its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon to work for him, I shall leave it on its own land; and he shall work it for him and dwell in it.” ’ ”

[10]I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, “The Lord says, ‘Place your neck under the yoke and work for the king of Babylon, for they prophesy wrongdoings to you, but I did not send them. [11]Yet they prophesy wrongfully in My name, that I might destroy you, and you should perish, and these prophets of yours, who wrongfully prophesy lies to you.’ ”

[12]Again I spoke to him, to all this people and to the priests, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Do not heed the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, saying, “Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house will return from Babylon,” for they prophesy wrongfully to you; but I did not send them.’ ”

[13]Thus if they are prophets, and the word of the Lord is in them, let them meet me, for thus the Lord said. [14]Now concerning the remainder of the

vessels the king of Babylon did not take when he carried away captive Jeconiah from Jerusalem, the Lord says, “They will go to Babylon.”[†]

The False Prophet Hananiah

35 Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month, that Hananiah, the false prophet from Gibeon, and the son of Azur spoke to me in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying,[†] [2]“Thus says the Lord: ‘I broke into pieces the yoke of the king of Babylon. [3]Yet two full years, and I will return the vessels of the Lord's house to this place,[†] [4]along with Jeconiah and all the captives of Judah, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.’ ”

[5]Then Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah in the presence of all the people, and in the presence of the priests who stood in the house of the Lord. [6]Thus Jeremiah said, “Truly, may the Lord do so indeed, and establish the word you prophesy, to return the vessels of the Lord's house and all those carried away captive from Babylon to this place. [7]Nevertheless, hear the word of the Lord I speak in your ears and the ears of all the people. [8]The prophets who were before me and before you of old, they prophesied concerning war against many countries and great kingdoms. [9]As for this prophet who prophesied regarding peace to come, when his word comes to pass, they shall know the prophet the Lord sent to them in good faith.”

[10]Then in the sight of all the people, Hananiah took the yokes from the neck of Jeremiah and broke them to pieces.[†] [11]Hananiah then spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Thus I will break

the yoke of the king of Babylon from the necks of all nations.' " After this, Jeremiah went his way.

[12]Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah after Hananiah broke the yokes from his neck, saying, [13]"Go and tell Hananiah, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "You have broken the yokes of wood, but I will make yokes of iron in their place." [14]For thus says the Lord: "I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all the nations, so they may serve the king of Babylon." ' " [15]Jeremiah also said to Hananiah, "The Lord has not sent you, but you have caused this people to be persuaded wrongfully. [16]Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth, and you shall die this year.' " [17]So he died in the seventh month.

Jeremiah's Letter to the Captives

36 These are the words of the letter Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the elders of the captivity, and to the priests and false prophets.[†] [2](He sent it to Babylon for the captivity and for all the people, after the departure from Jerusalem of Jeconiah the king, the queen mother, the eunuchs, and every freeman, bondman, and craftsman.) [3]Jeremiah sent the letter to Babylon by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to the king of Babylon), saying,[†]

[4]Thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the captivity which I caused to be carried away from Jerusalem: [5]Build houses and dwell in them. Plant gardens and eat their fruit.[†] [6]Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to

husbands; and be multiplied and not diminished. [7]Seek the peace of the land into which I carried you captive. Pray to the Lord for them, for in its peace you shall have peace. [8]For thus says the Lord: Do not let the false prophets in your midst deceive you; and do not let your diviners persuade you, nor heed the dreams you dream. [9]For they prophesy wrongfully to you in My name, but I did not send them.

[10]For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are about to be fulfilled in Babylon, I will visit you and confirm My words to you, to return your people to this place.[†] [11]For I shall consider a plan of peace for you, to give you good things and not calamities. [12]Therefore, pray to Me, and I will hear you. [13]Seek Me, and you will find Me, because you seek Me with all your heart. [14]I will appear to you,[†] [15]for you said, “The Lord established prophets for us in Babylon.”

[16]Thus says the Lord against Achiab and Zedekiah: Behold, I will deliver them into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he shall smite them in your sight. [17]They shall make of them a curse among all the captivity of Judah in Babylon, saying, “May the Lord do to you as He did to Zedekiah and as He did to Achiab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire,” [18]because they committed lawlessness in Israel, committed adultery with the wives of their fellow-citizens, and spoke a word in My name which I did not command them; and I am a witness, says the Lord.

[19]To Shemaiah the Nehelamite, you shall say, [20]“I did not send you in My name,” and to Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, saying,

[21]“The Lord made you priest in the place of Jehoiada the priest, to be an overseer in the house of the Lord over every prophet and every man who is insane, and you shall put them in prison or into the dungeon. [22]Now therefore, why have you joined in mocking Jeremiah of Anathoth, who prophesied to you? [23]Did he not send you into Babylon for this purpose, saying, ‘It is far off. Build a house and dwell in it, and plant a garden and eat its fruit.’ ” [24]Thus Zephaniah read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah.[†] [25]Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, [26]“Send to the captivity, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah prophesied to you, although I did not send him, and causes you to trust in wrongdoings; [27]therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, I will visit Shemaiah and his family. There shall not be a man of them in your midst to see the good things I will do for you. They shall not see it.’ ”

Israel and Judah Will Be Reduced

37 The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, [2]“Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you. [3]For behold, the days will come,’ says the Lord, ‘when I will return the captives of My people Israel and Judah,’ says the Lord, ‘and I shall return them to the land I gave to their fathers, and they shall have dominion over it.’ ”

[4]Now these are the words the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah, saying, [5]“Thus says the Lord: ‘You shall hear a sound of fear. There is fear, and there is not peace. [6]Ask and see if a male gives birth, and ask concerning fear in which they shall hold fast their loins and look for safety;

for I see every man, and his hands are on his loins. Their faces have turned to paleness. [7]For that day is great, and there is no other like it. There is little time for Jacob, and because of this, he will be saved. [8]In that day,' says the Lord, 'I will break the yoke from their neck and break their chains; and they shall no longer work for foreigners.[†] [9]But they shall work for the Lord their God, and I will raise up for them David their king.'[†]

[10]"Thus says the Lord: 'I brought about your destruction. Your blow was painful. [11]There was no one to judge your cause. You were painfully treated for healing, but this was no benefit to you. [12]All your friends forgot you. They do not ask about you, for I struck you with the blow of your enemy, even firm correction. Your sins have multiplied because of all your wrongdoing. [13]Therefore, all who devour you shall be consumed, for all your enemies shall devour themselves. Your sins multiplied because of the abundance of your wrongdoings, thus they did these things to you. But those who tore you to pieces shall be as prey, and I will give all who plundered you as plunder. [14]For I will bring about your healing from a painful wound. I will heal you,' says the Lord. 'For you were called Dispersed, for they said, "She is your prey, because no one seeks her.' "

[15]"Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will turn back the captivity of Jacob and have mercy upon his captives. The city shall be built upon her summit, and the temple shall remain according to His judgment.[†] [16]Singers shall go forth from them. I will multiply them, and they shall not be diminished. [17]Their children shall enter as before, and their testimonies shall be established before Me. I will visit those who afflict them. [18]His mighty ones shall be over them, and his ruler shall go forth of himself, and I will

gather them. They shall return to Me, for who is this who sets his heart to return to Me?’ says the Lord. [19]‘For the wrath of the Lord goes out; a whirlwind of anger goes forth. It shall come against the ungodly. [20]The fierce wrath of the Lord will not turn away until He executes it, and until He establishes the undertaking of His heart. In the last days, you will come to know these things.’ ”

A Father for Israel

38 “At that time,” says the Lord, “I will be as God to the family of Israel, and they shall be as My people.”[†]

[2]Thus says the Lord: “I found him alive in the desert with those slain by the sword. Go and do not destroy Israel.” [3]The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I drew you in compassion. [4]O virgin of Israel, I shall build you, and you will be restored. You shall again take your tambourine and go forth with the assembly of those who rejoice.[†] [5]Moreover, plant a vineyard on the mountains of Samaria. Plant and praise,[†] [6]for it is a day of calling, when those who defend you on the mountains of Ephraim will say, ‘Arise and go up to Zion to the Lord our God.’ ”

[7]For thus says the Lord to Jacob: “Rejoice and exult in the Head of the nations. Make a proclamation and praise Him. Say, ‘The Lord saved His people, the remnant of Israel.’ [8]Behold, I will bring them from the north, and gather them from the ends of the earth to the feast of Passover. You shall beget a great multitude, and they shall return here.[†] [9]They went forth with weeping, but I will gather them with consolation. I will cause them to

lodge by the channels of waters in an upright way, and they will not be led astray; for I have become as a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.

[10]“Hear the word of the Lord, you nations. Proclaim it to the islands far distant and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will also gather and protect him, as one who feeds his flock.’ [11]For the Lord redeemed Jacob. He redeemed him from the hand of those stronger than he. [12]They shall come and be glad in the mountain of Zion, and they shall come to the goodness of the Lord; to the land of wheat, wine, and fruit, and of cattle and sheep. Their soul shall be like a fruitful tree, and they shall hunger no more.[†] [13]Then shall the virgins rejoice in the assembly of young men, and the old men shall rejoice. I will turn their mourning into joy, and I will make them glad. [14]I will magnify and cheer with wine the soul of these priests, the sons of Levi, and My people shall be satisfied with My good things.”

Mercy for Ephraim

[15]Thus says the Lord: “A voice of lamentation, weeping, and mourning was heard in Ramah. Rachel does not wish to cease mourning deeply over her children, because they are no more.”[†] [16]Thus says the Lord: “Let your voice cease from its bitter weeping and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your works, and they shall return from the land of their enemies. [17]There shall be an abiding home for your children.

[18]“I heard the news of Ephraim, lamenting, ‘You chastised me, and I was chastised. Like a calf, I was not taught, but turn me back, and I shall return; for You are the Lord my God. [19]For after my captivity I repented, and after I knew, I groaned because of the day of shame, and showed You that I bore

the reproach of my youth.’ [20]Ephraim is a beloved son and a child who is a delight to Me, because My words are in him. I will surely remember him; therefore I hastened to help him. I will surely have mercy upon him,” says the Lord.

[21]“Rouse yourself, O Zion, and bring about vengeance. Be strong in your heart and return by the way you went, O virgin of Israel. Return to your cities and mourn. [22]How long, O dishonored daughter, will you turn away? For the Lord has created safety by a new planting. Men will travel about in security.”[†]

[23]Thus says the Lord: “They will say this word in the land of Judah and its cities when I bring back the host of captives: ‘Blessed is the Lord on His righteous and holy mountain.’ [24]There shall be those who dwell in the cities of Judah and in all its land, together with the farmer, and the shepherd shall go forth with his flock. [25]For I have satiated every thirsty soul and filled every hungry soul.” [26]Therefore, I awoke and beheld, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

[27]“Therefore, behold, days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will sow Israel and Judah with the seed of man and the seed of cattle. [28]It shall come to pass, as I watched over them to overthrow and afflict, so too, I will watch over them to build and plant,” says the Lord. [29]“In those days, they shall not say, ‘The fathers ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge.’ [30]But rather, each shall die in his own sin, and the teeth of him who eats the sour grapes shall be set on edge.[†]

The New Covenant

[31]“Behold, days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, [32]not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day I took hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not abide in My covenant, and I disregarded them,” says the Lord. [33]“For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says the Lord. “I will surely put My laws into their mind and write them on their hearts. I will be as God to them, and they shall be as My people.[†] [34]Each shall not teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their wrongdoings, and I will no longer remember their sins.[†]

[35]“Though the sky should be raised to a greater height,” says the Lord, “and though the ground of the earth should be sunk lower beneath, yet I would not reject the family of Israel,” says the Lord, “for all they have done.” [36]Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun as a light by day, and the moon and the stars as a light by night; and who makes the sea roar so its waves make a crashing sound. The Lord Almighty is His name. [37]“If these laws cease from before Me,” says the Lord, “the family of Israel shall also cease to be a nation before Me forever.

[38]“Behold, days are coming,” says the Lord, “when the city shall be built for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. [39]The measure of the city shall proceed in front of them as far as the hills of Gareb, and it shall be encircled round about by choice stones. [40]All Hasaremoth as far as

the Kidron River, to the corner of the Horse Gate eastward, shall be a sanctuary to the Lord. It shall not fail or be destroyed anymore forever.”

Jeremiah Buys a Field

39 The word came from the Lord to Jeremiah in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah. This was the eighteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.[†] [2]The forces of the king of Babylon's army made a fortification against Jerusalem, and Jeremiah was kept in the court of the prison which was in the king's house, [3]in which King Zedekiah shut him up, saying, “Why do you prophesy, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it. [4]Zedekiah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, for he shall surely be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon. He shall speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye. [5]Then Zedekiah shall go to Babylon and dwell there.” ’ ”

[6]Again the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying,[†] [7]“Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum, your father's brother, will come to you, saying, ‘Buy yourself my field in Anathoth, for you have the right to receive it as a possession.’ ” [8]So Hanamel the son of Shallum, my father's brother, came to me in the court of the prison and said to me, “Buy my field in Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin. The right to buy it is yours and you are the elder.” So I knew this was the word of the Lord. [9]Thus I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my father's brother, and weighed him seventeen shekels of silver. [10]I wrote it in a book, sealed it, took the testimony of witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. [11]Then I

took the book of the purchase that was sealed [12]and gave it to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the sight of Hanamel, the son of my father's brother, and in the sight of the men who stood by and who signed the purchase deed, and in the sight of those Jews in the court of the prison.

[13]Then I charged Baruch in their sight, saying, [14]“Thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘Take this purchase deed and the deed that was read aloud and put it in an earthen vessel, that it may remain many days.’ [15]For thus says the Lord: ‘Even fields, houses, and vineyards shall be possessed in this land.’ ”

Jeremiah's Prayer Acknowledges God's Faithfulness

[16]After I gave the book of the purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord, saying, [17]“O Lord, You made heaven and earth by Your great strength and by Your high and uplifted arm. There is nothing hidden from You. [18]You grant mercy to thousands, and repay the sins of the fathers into the bosoms of their children after them, the Great and Mighty God, [19]the Lord of great counsel and powerful in deeds, the Great God, the Almighty and the Lord of great name. Your eyes are upon the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his way. [20]You did signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even to this day, and in Israel and among the inhabitants of the earth. You made Yourself a name, as it is this day. [21]You brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and a high arm, and with great visions. [22]You gave them this land, which You swore to their fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey. [23]They went in and took it; but they did not listen to Your voice or

walk in Your commandments. They did none of the things You commanded them to do, and it caused all of these calamities to happen to them. [24]Behold, a multitude comes against this city, and the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who wage war against it, with the power of sword and famine. As You have spoken, thus it has happened. [25]You did say to me, 'Buy for yourself the field for silver.' So I wrote the book, sealed it, and took the testimony of witnesses. Yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans."

Jerusalem Will Fall

[26]The word of the Lord came to me, saying, [27]"I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Shall anything be hidden from Me? [28]Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'This city shall certainly be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it. [29]For the Chaldeans shall come and wage war against this city. They shall burn this city with fire, and burn up the houses in which they burnt incense to Baal on their housetops, and poured drink offerings to other gods to provoke Me. [30]For the children of Israel and the children of Judah alone did evil in My sight from their youth. [31]For this city provoked My wrath and anger from the day they built it even to this day, so I removed it from My presence, [32]because of all the evils of the children of Israel and Judah which they did to provoke Me—they and their kings, and their rulers, priests and prophets, and the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem. [33]They turned their back to Me and not their face. I taught them early in the morning, yes I taught them, but they did not listen to take hold of the instruction. [34]Instead, they put their unclean defilements in the house in which My name is called. [35]They built

altars to Baal in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to offer their sons and daughters to King Molech, which things I did not command; nor did such things come into My heart, for them to do this abomination to cause Judah to sin.'[†]

God Reaffirms His Covenant

[36]"Now thus says the Lord God of Israel against this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon by sword, famine, and banishment': [37]'Behold, I will gather them out of every land where I scattered them in My wrath and anger and in great provocation. I will bring them back to this place and will cause them to dwell in confidence. [38]They shall be to Me as a people, and I shall be as God to them. [39]I will give them another way and a different heart, to fear Me all their days, for their good and for the good of their children after them.[†] [40]I will make an everlasting covenant with them, by which I will not turn away from them. I will put My fear into their heart so they may not depart from Me.[†] [41]I will visit them to do good to them, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, and with all My heart and soul.'[†]

[42]"For thus says the Lord: 'As I have brought all these great calamities upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good things I have spoken. [43]Fields will yet be bought in the land of which you say, "It is impassable for men and cattle, for they were delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans." [44]But they shall buy fields with money, and you will write a book, seal it, and take the testimony of witnesses in the land of Benjamin and round about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah and the mountains,

and in the cities of the lowland, and the south; for I will turn back their captivity.' "

The Nation Will Be Restored

40 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time when he was yet bound in the court of the prison, saying, [2]"Thus says the Lord, He who made the earth and formed it to establish it—the Lord is His name: [3]'Cry out to Me, and I will answer you. I will proclaim to you great and mighty things which you do not know.'

[4]"For thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the king of Judah, which were pulled down and made into entrenchments and outer fortifications, [5]to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill the city with dead men, whom I struck in My wrath and anger, and I turned away My face from them because of all their evils: [6]'Behold, I bring her health and healing for her wounds, and I will show them how to obey. Yes, I will heal this city and bring about peace and faithfulness.[†] [7]I shall return the captives of Judah and Israel and will restore them, even as before. [8]I will cleanse them from all their wrongdoings by which they sinned against Me. I will not remember their sins by which they sinned against Me and withdrew from Me. [9]This shall be for the gladness, praise, and majesty of all the people of the earth, who shall hear all the good things I will do. They shall fear and be provoked concerning all the good things and the peace I shall bring upon them.'

[10]"Thus says the Lord: 'There shall yet be heard in this place, in which you say, "It is destitute of people and cattle," in the cities of Judah and

outside of Jerusalem, in the places made desolate, without man and cattle, [11]the voice of gladness and joyfulness, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, the voice of those saying, “Give thanks to the Lord Almighty, for the Lord is good, for His mercy endures forever.” They will bring gifts into the house of the Lord, for I shall bring back all the captives of that land as it was before,’ says the Lord.

[12]“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘There shall yet be in this place of desolation without man and cattle, and in all its cities, resting places for the shepherds to bed down their sheep. [13]In the cities of the hill country and the valley, and in the cities of the south and the land of Benjamin, and in the cities around Jerusalem and Judah, sheep shall again pass under the hand of him who counts them,’ says the Lord.”

God Warns Zedekiah

41 The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and every land of his dominion warred against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah, saying, [2]“Thus says the Lord: ‘Go to Zedekiah king of Judah, and you shall tell him, “Thus says the Lord: ‘This city shall certainly be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon; and he shall take it and burn it with fire. [3]You shall not escape from his hand, but shall certainly be taken and delivered into his hands. Your eyes shall see his eyes, and you will speak with him face to face. You shall enter Babylon.’ [4]But hear the word of the Lord, O Zedekiah king of Judah. Thus says the Lord: [5]‘You shall die in peace, and as they wept for your fathers who reigned before you, they shall also weep for you, saying, “Alas, lord!” They shall mourn for you, for I spoke the word,’ says the Lord.” ’ ”[†]

[6]So Jeremiah spoke all these words to King Zedekiah in Jerusalem. [7]Then the army of the king of Babylon waged war against Jerusalem and against the cities of Judah, and against Lachish and Azekah, for these strong cities were left among the cities of Judah.

Failure to Free the Slaves

[8]The word came from the Lord to Jeremiah, after King Zedekiah concluded a covenant with all the people, to proclaim a remission:[†] [9]that every man should set his servant free—each male and female servant of his, the Hebrew man and the Hebrew woman—that no man of Judah should be a servant.[†] [10]Then all the princes and all the people who entered into the covenant to set free each male and female servant of his, [11]again forced them to be male and female servants.

[12]Therefore the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, [13]“Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘I made a covenant with your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, [14]“When six years are complete, you shall set free your Hebrew brother who will be sold to you, for he shall serve you six years, then you will send him forth a free man.” But they did not listen to Me, nor inclined their ear. [15]Even today, they turned to do what is right in My sight, to proclaim remission to each neighbor of his. So they concluded a covenant before Me in the house called by My name. [16]But you turned away and profaned My name to bring back each male and female servant of his,

whom you set free in their soul, to be once again your male and female servants.’

[17]“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘You did not listen to Me to proclaim remission to each neighbor of his. Behold, I proclaim a remission to you for the sword, and for death and famine. I will deliver you as a dispersion among all the kingdoms of the land. [18]I will deliver the men who transgressed My covenant, who did not keep My covenant they made before Me, with the young bull they offered as a sacrifice: [19]the rulers of Judah and the mighty men, and the priests and the people, [20]I will deliver them to their enemies, and their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth. [21]I will deliver Zedekiah the king of Judah and their rulers into the hands of their enemies, and the army of the king of Babylon shall chase those who run away from them. [22]Behold, I shall command them,’ says the Lord, ‘and I will turn them to this land, and they will fight against it. They shall take it and burn it with fire, even the cities of Judah, which I will cause to be desolate and without inhabitant.’ ”

The Obedient Rechabites

42 The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim king of Judah, saying, [2]“Go to the house of the Rechabites; and you shall bring them to the house of the Lord, into one of the courts, and give them wine to drink.”[†] [3]So I brought out Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and his sons, and all the house of the Rechabites,[†] [4]and I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was near the house of the ruler who was over the house of Maaseiah the son of

Shallum, who kept the court. [5]I set before them a pitcher of wine and cups, and said, “Drink wine.”

[6]But they said, “We will drink no wine, for our father, Jonadab the son of Rechab, commanded us, saying, ‘Drink no wine, neither you nor your sons forever; [7]nor shall you build a house, nor sow any seed, nor shall you have a vineyard; for you shall dwell in tents all your days, so you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.’ [8]So we obeyed the voice of Jonadab our father so as to drink no wine all our days, we and our wives, and our sons and daughters, [9]and so as to build no houses to dwell in. Thus, we have no vineyard, field, or seed, [10]for we dwell in tents; because we obeyed everything Jonadab our father commanded us. [11]Then it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar came up against the land, we said, ‘Let us go and enter Jerusalem because of the presence of the army of the Chaldeans and the army of the Assyrians.’ So we dwelt there.”

[12]Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [13]“Thus says the Lord: ‘Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, “Will you not receive correction to obey My words? [14]The sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab kept the word he commanded his children so as to drink no wine, and they did not drink it. But I spoke to you early. I spoke, but you did not obey. [15]I also sent to you My servants the prophets, saying, ‘Let each of you turn from his evil way, and amend your doings. Do not go after other gods to serve them, and you will dwell in the land I gave you and your fathers.’ But you did not incline your ear, nor did you obey. [16]Yet the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab kept the commandment of their father, but this people did not obey Me.’ ” [17]Therefore, thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I

will bring on Judah and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evils I pronounced against them.’

[18]“Therefore, thus says the Lord: ‘Since the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab obeyed the commandment of their father to do as their father commanded them,[†] [19]there shall never be wanting a man of the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab to stand before My face while the earth remains.’ ”

The Scroll Is Read in the Temple

43 Now in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Take for yourself the scroll of a book, and write on it all the words I instructed you against Jerusalem, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah king of Judah even to this day.[†] [3]Perhaps the house of Judah will hear all the calamities I purpose to bring upon them, so as to turn them from their evil way; and I shall be merciful to their wrongdoings and sins.”

[4]So Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and he wrote on a scroll all the words of the Lord from the mouth of Jeremiah, which he spoke to him.[†] [5]Thus Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, “I am under guard and unable to go into the house of the Lord,[†] [6]so you shall read from this scroll in the ears of the people in the house of the Lord on the day of fasting, and in the hearing of Judah, who come from their city. You shall read to them. [7]Perhaps their supplication will come before the face of the Lord, and they will turn from their evil way; for great is the anger and wrath of the Lord

which He pronounced against this people.” [8]So Baruch did according to all Jeremiah commanded him, to read from the book the words of the Lord in the house of the Lord.

[9]Then it came to pass in the eighth year of King Jehoiakim, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and in the house of Judah proclaimed a fast before the Lord. [10]Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord, in the house of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, and in the upper court at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house, in the hearing of all the people.

The Scroll Is Read to the Rulers and People

[11]Now Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the Lord from the book. [12]He then went down to the house of the king, into the home of the scribe, and behold, there were sitting all the rulers: Elishama the scribe, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the rulers. [13]So Michaiah declared to them all the words he heard Baruch read in the ears of the people. [14]Then all the rulers sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch the son of Neriah, saying, “Take in your hand the scroll to read in the hearing of the people and come.” So Baruch took the scroll and went down to them.[†] [15]Then they said to him, “Read it again in our ears.” So Baruch read it. [16]Now it came to pass, when they heard all the words, they took counsel each with his neighbor, and said, “Let us report all these words to the king.”[†] [17]So they asked Baruch, saying, “How did you come to write all

these words?” [18]Baruch replied, “Jeremiah proclaimed all these words to me from his mouth, and I wrote them in the book.” [19]Then they said to Baruch, “Go and hide, you and the man Jeremiah. Let no one know where you are.”

The King Burns the Scroll

[20]So they went to the king, into the court, but gave the scroll for safekeeping in the house of Elishama; and they reported to the king all these words. [21]The king then sent Jehudi to fetch the scroll, and he took it from the house of Elishama. Jehudi then read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the rulers who stood around the king. [22]Now the king was sitting in the winter house, and a hearth with a burning fire was before him. [23]Then it came to pass, as Jehudi was reading the third or fourth page, he cut them off with the scribe's knife and cast them into the fire of the hearth, until all of the scroll was consumed by the fire of the hearth.[†] [24]But the king and his servants who heard all these words did not seek the Lord, neither did they tear their garments. [25]But Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah pointed out to the king that he should not burn up the scroll. [26]The king then commanded Jerahmeel the king's son and Seraiah the son of Azriel to seize Baruch and Jeremiah, but they were hidden.

Jeremiah Rewrites the Scroll

[27]The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah after the king burned the scroll containing all the words Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,[†] [28]“Take again another scroll, and write on the scroll all the words which King Jehoiakim burned. [29]Then you shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord:

“You burned this scroll, saying, ‘Why did you write in it, saying, “The king of Babylon will certainly come in and utterly destroy this land; and man and cattle will cease from it”?’ ” [30]Therefore thus says the Lord against Jehoiakim king of Judah: “He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out into the heat of the day and the frost of the night. [31]So I will visit him, his family, and his servants. I will bring upon them and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the land of Judah, all the calamities I spoke regarding them, for they did not heed them.” ’ ” [32]Then Baruch took another scroll, and he wrote on it all the words of the book from the mouth of Jeremiah which Jehoiakim burned. There were yet more words added to it like the former.

Zedekiah Becomes King

44 Then Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar appointed to reign over Judah.[†] [2]But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the Lord which He spoke by the hand of Jeremiah. [3]Then Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the priest, son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah, saying, “Indeed, pray to the Lord for us.” [4]Now Jeremiah came and passed through the midst of the city, and they did not put him in the prison. [5]Then the army of Pharaoh came up from Egypt; and the Chaldeans heard the report concerning them, and they departed from Jerusalem.

[6]The word of the Lord then came to Jeremiah, saying, [7]“Thus says the Lord: ‘In this way you shall speak to the king of Judah who sent you to seek Me: “Behold, the army of Pharaoh which came up to help you, they shall return to the land of Egypt,[†] [8]and the Chaldeans shall return again to fight

against this city. They shall take it and burn it with fire.’ ” [9]Thus says the Lord: ‘Do not suppose in your souls, saying, “The Chaldeans will surely depart from us,” yet they will not depart. [10]For though you should smite the whole army of the Chaldeans who wage war against you, and they left certain wounded men, these men would rise up and burn this city with fire.’ ”

Jeremiah Is Imprisoned

[11]Then it came to pass, when the army of the Chaldeans left Jerusalem because of the presence of Pharaoh's army, [12]Jeremiah left Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to buy goods from among the people.[†] [13]He came to the Gate of Benjamin, and there was a man in that place with whom he lodged, Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah, saying, “You are fleeing to the Chaldeans!” [14]But he said, “That is a lie! I am not fleeing to the Chaldeans.” Yet he did not listen to him. So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the rulers. [15]The rulers were embittered against Jeremiah; and they struck him and sent him to the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they made this into a prison.[†] [16]So Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells and sat there many days.

[17]Then Zedekiah sent and called for him. The king secretly asked him, saying, “Is there a word from the Lord?” He replied, “There is. You shall be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon.” [18]Then Jeremiah said to the king, “What offense have I committed against you, your servants, or this people, that you have put me in the prison? [19]Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against the

land’? [20]Now, O lord the king, let my supplication come before your face. For why do you return me to the house of Jonathan the scribe? Do not let me die there.” [21]Then the king gave the command, and they cast him into the prison. They gave him one loaf of bread daily from their bakery until the bread in the city failed. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Jeremiah in the Muddy Pit

45 Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah heard the words Jeremiah spoke to the people, saying, [2]“Thus says the Lord: ‘He who dwells in this city shall die by the sword and famine, but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live. His life shall be as finding a treasure, for he shall live.’ [3]For thus says the Lord: ‘This city shall most assuredly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, and they shall take it.’ ” [4]Therefore they said to the king, “Indeed, let that man be put to death, for by speaking to them such words, he weakens the hands of the fighting men left in the city and the hands of all the people. This man does not prophesy peace for this people, but evil.” [5]Then the king replied, “Behold, he is in your hands,” for the king could not resist them. [6]So they cast him into the pit of Malchiah the king's son, who was in the court of the prison. They let Jeremiah down into the pit where there was no water, except for mud; thus he was in the mud.

[7]Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian was in the household of the king; and he heard they put Jeremiah into the pit, and that the king was at the Gate of Benjamin.[†] [8]So he went out to the king and spoke to him, saying, [9]“You did evil in what you did, to kill this man by hunger, for there is no more

bread in the city.” [10]Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech, saying, “Take with you thirty men from here and lift him out of the pit, lest he die.” [11]So Ebed-Melech took the men and entered into the underground area of the king's house. From there, they took old rags and old ropes and threw them down into the pit to Jeremiah. [12]Then he said, “Put these under the ropes,” and Jeremiah did so. [13]So they pulled Jeremiah up with the ropes and lifted him out of the pit. But Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Zedekiah Converses with Jeremiah

[14]Then the king sent and summoned Jeremiah to himself at the third entrance of the Lord's house. The king said to him, “I will ask you a question, and indeed do not hide anything from me.”[†] [15]Jeremiah replied to the king, “If I tell you, will you not surely put me to death? But if I advise you, you will not heed me.” [16]So the king swore to him, saying, “As the Lord lives who made this soul in us, surely I will not put you to death, nor will I give you into the hands of these men.”

[17]Jeremiah then said to him, “Thus says the Lord: ‘If you will indeed go out to the leaders of the king of Babylon, your soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and you and your house will live. [18]But if you do not go out, this city shall be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans. They shall burn it with fire, and you will not escape.’ ” [19]The king said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Judeans who fled to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hands, and they mock me.” [20]But Jeremiah said, “They will not deliver you. Hear the word of the Lord I speak to you, and it

will be good for you; and your soul will live. [21]But if you refuse to go out, this is the word the Lord showed me: [22]‘Behold, all the women who were left behind in the house of the king of Judah and were led out to the rulers of the king of Babylon said, “Your peace-loving men deceived you and will prevail against you. They will cause your feet to slide and fail, and will turn away from you.” [23]They will also lead out your wives and children to the Chaldeans, and you shall not escape; for you will be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon, and this city shall be burned.’ ”

[24]Then the king said to him, “Let no man know of these words, and you shall not die. [25]But if the rulers hear that I talked with you, and they come to you and say, ‘Tell us, what did the king say to you? Do not hide it from us, and we will not put you to death. So what did the king say to you?’ [26]Then you shall say to them, ‘I brought my supplications before the presence of the king, that he would not send me back to the house of Jonathan to die there.’ ” [27]Then all the rulers came to Jeremiah and asked him, and he told them all these words the king commanded him. So they were silent, for the word of the Lord was not to be heard. [28]Jeremiah then remained in the court of the prison until the time Jerusalem was taken.

The Fall of Jerusalem

46 Now it came to pass in the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it.[†] [2]Then in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was broken apart. [3]All the leaders of the king of Babylon went in and sat in the middle gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Sam-gar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sarezer, and Rabmag, with the rest of the rulers of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah Is Released to Gedaliah

[4]They sent and took Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan; then they brought him out and sat him in the midst of the people.[†]

[5]The word of the Lord then came to Jeremiah in the court of the prison, saying,[†] [6]“Go and say to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for calamities and not for good. [7]But I shall deliver you in that day, and I shall not give you into the hands of the men before whose presence you are afraid. [8]For I shall surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword. Instead, your life shall be as finding a treasure, because you trusted in Me,” says the Lord.’ ”

Jeremiah with the Governor of Judah

47 The word came from the Lord to Jeremiah after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard released him from Ramah, when he took him in manacles in the midst of the captivity of Judah, those being led into Babylon.[†] [2]The captain of the guard took him and said to him, “The Lord your God pronounced all these calamities upon this place, [3]and the Lord did this because you did not heed His voice. [4]Behold, I have freed you from the manacles placed on your hands. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. [5]But if not, run hard and return to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon appointed over the land of Judah, and dwell with him among the people in the land of Judah. Go wherever in your eyes it seems best to go." Then the chief of the guard gave him rations and a gift and sent him away. [6]So Jeremiah came to Gedaliah at Mizpah and remained among the people who were left in the land.

[7]Now all the leaders of the army in the field, they and their men, heard the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah to govern over the land, and that he entrusted to him their men and women whom he had not carried away captive to Babylon. [8]Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, along with Johanan the son of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of Mechati, they and their men. [9]Gedaliah swore an oath to them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid in the presence of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and work for the king of Babylon; for it shall be beneficial for you. [10]Behold, I sit in your presence at Mizpah to stand before the Chaldeans who come against us. Gather together wine and fruit, together with olive oil, and put them in your containers. Dwell in the cities you possess." [11]Then all the Jews in Moab, and those among the children of Ammon, and those in Edom, and those in all the land heard the king of Babylon had granted a remnant in Judah and set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. [12]So they came to Gedaliah in the land of Judah at Mizpah, and gathered together a great abundance of wine, fruit, and olive oil.

[13]Then Johanan the son of Kareah and all the field leaders of the army came to Gedaliah at Mizpah.[†] [14]They said to him, "Do you indeed know

that king Baalis of the sons of Ammon has sent Ishmael to slay you?” But Gedaliah did not believe them. [15]Then Johanan spoke secretly to Gedaliah at Mizpah, “Indeed, I shall go and smite Ishmael, but let no one know it, lest he take your life, and all Judah gathered to you be scattered by him, and the remnant in Judah perish.” [16]But Gedaliah said to Johanan, “Do not do this deed, for you speak lies concerning Ishmael.”

Uprising against Gedaliah

48 Now it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men to Gedaliah at Mizpah. There they ate bread together.[†] [2]Then Ishmael and the ten men with him arose and struck Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon appointed over the land,[†] [3]and all the Jews with him at Mizpah, and all the Chaldeans found there.

[4]It came to pass on the second day after he struck Gedaliah, while no one yet knew, [5]that eighty men came from Shechem, Salem, and Samaria with beards shaved, tearing their clothes and beating their breasts. In their hands were manna and frankincense to bring into the house of the Lord.[†] [6]Now Ishmael went out to meet with them, and they walked and wept. He said to them, “Come to Gedaliah.” [7]Then it came to pass that when they entered into the midst of the city, he killed them at the well. [8]But ten men were found there among them, and they said to Ishmael, “Do not kill us, for we have treasures of wheat, barley, honey, and oil in the field.” So he passed by and did not kill them in the midst of their brethren. [†] [9]Now the well into which Ishmael cast all whom he killed is the great well King Asa made for

fear of Baasha king of Israel. Thus Ishmael filled this with the slain. [10]After this, Ishmael brought back all the people left in Mizpah, including the daughter of the king whom the captain of the guard committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; then he went away beyond the sons of Ammon.

[11]But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the leaders of the army with him heard of all the evil things Ishmael did, [12]and they brought their entire army to wage war against him. They found him near the great pool in Gibeon. [13]So it came to pass, when all the people with Ishmael saw Johanan and the leaders of the army with him, [14]they returned to Johanan. [15]But Ishmael escaped with eight men and went to the sons of Ammon. [16]Then Johanan and all the leaders of the army with him brought back all of the remaining people whom he took from Ishmael: the mighty men of war, all the women and the rest, and the eunuchs, whom they brought back from Gibeon. [17]They departed and encamped in Gaberoth-Chimham towards Bethlehem to go into Egypt, [18]away from the people of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them because Ishmael killed Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon appointed over the land.

Do Not Go to Egypt

49 All the leaders of the army, Johanan and Azariah the son of Mahseiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest,[†] [2]came to Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, “Let our supplication now come before your face, and pray to the Lord your God concerning those who remain, for we few are left out of the many, as your eyes see. [3]Let the Lord your God proclaim to us the way wherein we should walk and the thing we should do.” [4]Then Jeremiah said to them, “I hear you. Behold, I will pray to the Lord our God according to your words, and it shall come to pass, whatever word the Lord shall answer I will declare to you. I will not conceal any word from you.” [5]They said to Jeremiah, “Let the Lord be between us as a righteous and faithful witness, if we will do every word the Lord sends us, [6]and whether it be good or evil, we will heed the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send you, that it may be beneficial for us; for we will heed the voice of the Lord our God.”

[7]So it came to pass that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah after ten days.[†] [8]Thus he called Johanan, and all the leaders of the army, and all the people, from the least even to the greatest, [9]and said to them, “Thus says the Lord: [10]‘If you will indeed stay in this land, I will build you up and not pull you down. I will plant you and not pluck you up; for I will put an end to the calamities I did to you. [11]Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you fear. Do not be afraid of him,’ says the Lord, ‘because I am with you to deliver you, and to save you from his hand. [12]I will show you compassion and have mercy on you. I will return you to your land.’

[13]“But if you say, ‘We will not stay in this land, so as not to heed the voice of the Lord; [14]for we shall go into the land of Egypt, where we will not see war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell’; [15]then hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord: ‘If you have set your face to Egypt to enter and dwell there, [16]then it shall be that the sword you feared shall find you in the land of Egypt, and the famine of which you have regard shall overtake you in Egypt; and there you

shall die. [17]So all the men and all the foreigners who set their faces to the land of Egypt to dwell there, they shall die by the sword and famine. Not one of them shall escape from the evils I will bring upon them.’

[18]“For thus says the Lord: ‘As My anger fell upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so shall My anger fall upon you when you enter Egypt. You shall be as an impassable land and under the authority of others. You shall be as a curse and a disgrace, and you shall see this place no more.’ [19]These are the words the Lord said concerning you, O remnant of Judah: ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ So now, know this as a certainty, [20]that you did evil in your souls when you sent to me, saying, ‘Pray for us to the Lord, and according to all the Lord speaks to you we will do.’ [21]But you did not heed the voice of the Lord which He sent me for you. [22]So now you shall die by the sword and by famine in the place you desire to go and dwell.”

Jeremiah Brought to Egypt

50 Then it came to pass, as Jeremiah ceased speaking to the people all the words of the Lord for which the Lord sent him to them, even all these words,[†] [2]that Azariah the son of Mahseiah, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the men who spoke to Jeremiah said, “That is a lie. The Lord did not send you to us, saying, ‘Do not enter Egypt to dwell there.’ [3]But Baruch the son of Neriah set you against us that you might deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, to kill us or to send us as captives to Babylon.” [4]So Johanan, all the leaders of the army, and all the people refused to heed the voice of the Lord, to dwell in the land of Judah. [5]Thus Johanan and all the leaders of the army took the entire remnant of Judah

who returned to dwell in the land: [6]the mighty men, the women and
children, the daughters of the king, and the souls Nebuzaradan left with
Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, together with Jeremiah the prophet and
Baruch the son of Neriah. [7]They entered Egypt; for they did not heed the
voice of the Lord, but entered Tahpanhes.[†]

[8]Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,
[9]“Take for yourself large stones and hide them in the entrance, at the gate to
the house of Pharaoh in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah.
[10]Then you shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will send and bring
Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. He will set his throne upon these
stones you hid and spread his weapons upon them.[†] [11]He shall enter in and
strike the land of Egypt. He shall deliver some for death, and those for
captivity to captivity, and those for the sword to the sword. [12]He shall
kindle a fire in the houses of their gods and shall burn them. He will carry
them away captive, and search the land of Egypt as a shepherd searches his
garment for lice; then he shall go from there in peace. [13]He shall break into
pieces the pillars of the sun in On, and he shall burn their houses with fire.”
’ ”

The Disobedient Jews Are Judged in Egypt

51 The word came to Jeremiah for all the Jews dwelling in the land of
Egypt and staying in Migdol, and in Tahpanhes, and in the land of
Pathros, saying, [2]“Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘You saw all the
calamities I brought upon Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. Behold, they
are desolate without inhabitants because of their evils [3]which they

committed to provoke Me, by burning incense to other gods they did not know. [4]Yet early in the morning, I sent you My servants the prophets. I sent them, saying, “Do not do this deed of defilement which I hate.” [5]But they did not listen to Me, nor did they incline their ear to turn from their evils of burning incense to other gods. [6]So My wrath and anger fell upon them and was kindled in the cities of Judah and outside Jerusalem. They became as a desolation and impassable, as it is this day.’

[7]“So now, thus says the Lord Almighty: ‘Why do you commit great evils against your souls, to cut off your man and woman, and your child and infant, from the midst of Judah? Your evils did not leave one of you as a remnant, [8]because you provoked Me with the works of your hands by burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt, in which you entered to dwell. You cut yourself off so as to become a curse and a disgrace among all the nations of the earth.[†] [9]Have you forgotten the evils of your fathers, the evils of the kings of Judah, the evils of your rulers, and the evils of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and outside Jerusalem? [10]They have not ceased even to this day, nor have they cleaved to My statutes, which I gave in the presence of their fathers.’

[11]“Therefore, thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I set My face against you [12]to destroy all the remnant in Egypt. They shall fall by the sword and by famine; and they shall die, from the least to the greatest. They shall be as a disgrace, a destruction, and a curse. [13]I shall visit those who dwell in the land of Egypt as I visited Jerusalem with the sword, famine, and death. [14]Of those left in Judah and who dwell in the land of Egypt, there shall not

be any of them who shall return to the land of Judah, to which they hope in their hearts to return; but only those who escape shall return.' "

[15]Then all the men who knew their wives burned incense to other gods, and all the great assembly of women, and all the people who stayed in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, [16]"As for the word you spoke to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you.[†] [17]For we will certainly do every word which proceeds from our mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink-offerings to her, as we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, have done in the cities of Judah and outside Jerusalem. For we were full of bread; and we were well-off and saw no calamities.[†] [18]But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven, we are all diminished and have died by sword and famine. [19]But while we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes to her and pour out drink-offerings to her without our husbands?"

[20]Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people: the mighty men, the women, and all the people conversing with him, saying, [21]"Did not the Lord remember the incense you burned in the cities of Judah and outside Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and rulers, and the people of the land, and did it not come into His heart? [22]The Lord could no longer bear with your evil deeds and with the abominations you committed. Thus your land became as a desolation, as impassable, and as a curse, as it is this day. [23]Because you burned incense and sinned against the Lord, and did not heed the voice of the Lord, nor walked in His ordinances, His law, and His testimonies—therefore, these calamities came upon you."

[24]Jeremiah also said to the people and to the women, “Hear the word of the Lord.[†] [25]Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘You wives spoke with your mouth and fulfilled with your hands, saying, “We will surely keep the confessions we made, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings to her.” You certainly stood fast and performed your confessions.’ [26]Therefore hear the word of the Lord, all Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt: ‘Behold, I swore by My great name,’ says the Lord, ‘that My name shall no more be in the mouth of everyone of Judah, to say, “The Lord and Master lives in all the land of Egypt.” [27]For behold, I have watched over them to harm them, and not to do them good. For all the men of Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt shall die by sword and famine, until they cease to be. [28]Yet those few in number who escape the sword shall return to the land of Judah. But the remnant of Judah who stayed in the land of Egypt to dwell there shall know whose word will remain steadfast. [29]This shall be a sign for you that I will visit you for evil.’ [30]Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will give Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemy and into the hands of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.’ ”[†]

A Promise to Baruch

[31]The word Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah when he wrote these words in the book from the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying,[†] [32]“Thus the Lord spoke to you, O Baruch: [33]‘Because you said, “Alas! alas! for the Lord added pain upon pain to me. I laid down in groaning, but found no

rest.' " [34]Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I pull down those whom I built up, and I pluck up those whom I planted. [35]So will you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them, for behold, I will bring calamities upon all flesh," says the Lord. "But I will give you life, as finding a treasure in every place, wherever you go." ' "

The Death of Zedekiah

52 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.[†] [2]Then it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem. They surrounded it with a fortress and encircled it with stones.[†] [3]The city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah, [4]on the ninth day of the month. The famine became severe in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

[5]Then the city was broken through, and all the men of war went out at night by way of the gate, between the wall and the outwork, next to the garden of the king; for at the time the Chaldeans surrounded the entire city. They went by the road to Arabah. [6]But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the country beyond Jericho; and all his servants were scattered from him. [7]They took the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah; and he pronounced judgment against him. [8]In Riblah, the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah and all the rulers of Judah before his eyes. [9]He blinded the eyes of Zedekiah and

bound him in shackles; and the king of Babylon brought him to Babylon, and placed him in the mill house until he died.

Destruction of Jerusalem Reviewed

[10]Now in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, who served before the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. [11]He burned the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all the houses of the city. Every great house he burned with fire. [12]Then the army of the Chaldeans, with the captain of the guard, pulled down every wall round about Jerusalem. [13]But the captain of the guard left the remnant of the people to be vinedressers and farmers.

[14]The Chaldeans also broke in pieces the bronze pillars of the house of the Lord, and the pedestals and the bronze Sea in the house of the Lord, and they carried all their bronze to Babylon. [15]The captain of the guard also took away the rim, the bowl, the meat-hooks, and all the brazen vessels in which they ministered, [16]and the basins, the snuffers, the oil-funnels, the candlesticks, the censers, the golden cups, and the silver cups, [17]and two pillars, the one Sea, and the twelve bronzed calves under the Sea, which King Solomon made for the house of the Lord, and the bronze artifacts which were beyond measure.

[18]As for the pillars, the height of one pillar was thirty-five cubits, and a line of twelve cubits measured the circumference. It was four fingers in thickness. [19]And a bronze border was upon them, and the length was five cubits, the height of one border. Around the capital was a network and pomegranates, all made of bronze. Similarly, the second pillar had eight

pomegranates for each of the twelve cubits. [20]There were ninety-six pomegranates on each side, and all the pomegranates all around on the network were one hundred.

The Captives Are Brought to Babylon

[21]The captain of the guard took the chief priest, the second priest, and the three who kept the door,[†] [22]and one eunuch who was over the men of war, and seven men found in the city who were renowned before the presence of the king, the scribe of the armies who communicated to the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land found in the midst of the city. [23]So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. [24]Then the king of Babylon put them to death at Riblah, in the land of Hamath.

Jehoiachin Freed from Prison

[25]Now it came to pass that in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fourth day of the month, Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year which he reigned, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out from the house where he was imprisoned.[†] [26]He spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon.[†] [27]He also changed his prison garment, and Jehoiachin ate his food in the presence of the king all the days of his life. [28]His appointed portion was always given to him by the king of Babylon, from day to day until his death.

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The Book of Baruch

Author—Baruch, secretary to the prophet Jeremiah, wrote the second part of this book, from 3:9 to the end. The beginning records the words of a Jewish community in exile in Babylon. The Book of Baruch was compiled sometime after the exile took place.

Date—Written sometime after the siege of Jerusalem in 586 BC. The initial message was given in 581.

Theme—*Baruch is the story of a Jewish community that repents.* Throughout Jeremiah's prophetic ministry as recounted in his book, the Jews hardened their hearts to his words. Here we see a community in exile that responds from the heart to the call to repentance. In eschatological terms, the community represents the Church, those who hear the call of God, confess their sins, and come to Him. The book is best read as a story of the relationship between God and His people.

Background—After Jerusalem was sacked and the leaders of Judah were deported, the Jews established communities in territory occupied by Babylon. In this new situation of exile, the Jewish community, now without the temple and a political home, established connections with other Jews across Babylon. Here we meet Baruch coming from Egypt to a community, calling on them to soften their hearts and return in obedience to the Lord. They do so and send an offering to the Jews who remain near Jerusalem.

Outline

I. Historical Information (1:1–12)

II. Corporate Confession and Prayer for Deliverance for Jews in Jerusalem (1:13–3:8)

III. God's Gift of Wisdom to Israel (3:9–4:3)

IV. Poem of Comfort and Restoration (4:4–5:9)

1 Now these are the words of the book written by Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, the son of Zedekiah, the son of Hasadiah, the son of Hilkiah, while in Babylon, [2]in the fifth year, on the seventh day of the month, at the time the Chaldeans took Jerusalem and burned it with fire.[†]

A Gathering of the Exiles in Babylon

[3]And Baruch read the words of this book to Jechoniah the son of Joachim, king of Judah, and to all the people who came to hear the book:[†] [4]to the nobles and the sons of the kings, to the elders and all the people from small to great, and to everyone dwelling in Babylon by the river Sud. [5]Then they wept and fasted and prayed before the Lord. [6]They took up a collection of silver, as each was able to give, [7]and sent it to Jerusalem to Joachim the high priest, son of Hilkiah, son of Salom, and to the priests and to all the people found with him in Jerusalem. [8]At the same time, on the tenth day of the month Sivan, Baruch took the silver vessels of the house of the Lord fashioned by Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in order to return them to the land of Judah, those vessels previously taken away from the temple [9]when Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away Jechoniah and the princes, along with the captives, the powerful men, and

the people of the land, and had brought them from Jerusalem into exile in Babylon.[†]

Gifts for Worship in Jerusalem

[10]And they said, “Behold, we send you silver. With it, buy whole burnt offerings and sin offerings and incense, and prepare bread, and offer them upon the altar of the Lord our God.[†] [11]And pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his son Belshazzar, that their days on earth may be like the days of heaven.[†] [12]And the Lord will give us strength and enlighten our eyes, and we will live under the shelter of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and under the shelter of Belshazzar his son, and we will serve them for many days and find mercy in their sight.

Israel's Confession

[13]“Pray for us to the Lord our God, because we have sinned against the Lord our God. Even to this day the wrath of the Lord and His anger is not turned away from us. [14]And you shall read this book which we are sending to you, in order to make confession in the house of the Lord on the feast days and on the solemn days.

[15]“And you shall say, ‘To the Lord our God belongs righteousness, but for us shame is on our faces, as it is this day for the people of Judah and to those inhabiting Jerusalem,[†] [16]and for our kings, for our rulers, for our priests, for our prophets, and for our fathers, [17]who have sinned before the Lord. [18]We have disobeyed Him and have refused to heed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the ordinances of the Lord, which He gave to us

openly. [19]Since the day the Lord led our fathers out of the land of Egypt until this day, we have been disobedient toward Him and neglected to heed His voice.[†]

The Consequences of Israel's Sin

[20]‘So to this day evils cling to us, even the curse which the Lord set forth through His servant Moses in the day He led our fathers out of the land of Egypt to give us the land flowing with milk and honey. [21]We did not heed the voice of the Lord our God in all the words of the prophets whom He sent to us. [22]Instead, each one has followed the imaginations of his own wicked heart, to serve strange gods and to do evil deeds in the sight of the Lord our God.[†]

2 ‘So the Lord confirmed His word which He proclaimed against us, and against our judges who judged Israel, and our kings and rulers, and against every man of Israel and Judah. [2]As can be seen in what was written in the law of Moses, there has been nothing comparable anywhere, under all the heavens, as to that which has been done in Jerusalem: [3]that a man eat the flesh of his son and the flesh of his daughter.[†][†] [4]He put them under subjection to all the kingdoms around us, to be a reproach and a desolation among all the nations around about us where the Lord scattered them. [5]And because we sinned against the Lord our God and did not obey His voice, we have been brought low and have not been exalted.[†]

[6]‘To the Lord our God belongs righteousness, but to us and our fathers shame on our faces, as at this day. [7]All these calamities that the Lord

proclaimed against us have come upon us. [8]But we did not pray before the presence of the Lord, to turn each one away from the purposes of his wicked heart. [9]And the Lord has watched over the evils, and the Lord brings these upon us, for the Lord is righteous in all His works which He commands us.[†] [10]But we have not obeyed His voice, to conduct our lives in those commandments of the Lord that He set before us.

A Plea for Mercy and Deliverance

[11]‘And now, O Lord God of Israel, who with a mighty hand led Your people out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with great power and with outstretched arm, and made a name for Yourself then, as it continues to this day, [12]we have sinned and acted ungodly, we have acted unrighteously, O Lord our God, against all Your commandments. [13]Let Your wrath turn away from us, for only a few of us remain within the nations where You scattered us. [14]O Lord, hear our prayer and our petition, and for Your own sake deliver us, and grant us mercy before those who have carried us into exile,[†] [15]in order that the whole earth may come to know that You are the Lord our God, for Israel and his descendants are called by Your name.

[16]‘O Lord, look down from Your holy house and consider us. O Lord, incline Your ear and hear us. [17]O Lord, open Your eyes and behold, for the dead who are in Hades, whose spirit is taken from their bodies, will not ascribe glory and righteousness to the Lord; [18]but the person who is greatly distressed, who walks bent over, who is ailing and going blind, and the person who hungers—these will give glory and righteousness to You, O

Lord. [19]It is not because of the righteous acts of our fathers or our kings that we lay before You our humble plea, O Lord our God, [20]for You sent down Your anger and wrath upon us, as You have said through the hand of Your servants the prophets, saying, [21]“Thus says the Lord: ‘Bend your shoulder and serve the king of Babylon, and remain in the land I gave to your fathers. [22]But if you do not heed the voice of the Lord, to serve the king of Babylon, [23]I shall cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from outside Jerusalem the sound of gladness, the voice of joyfulness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The whole land will become desolate of inhabitants.’ ”

[24]‘But we did not obey Your voice, to serve the king of Babylon, and You carried out Your words which you spoke by Your servants the prophets, that the bones of our kings and the bones of our fathers would be carried out from their place.[†] [25]And behold, they have been cast forth in the heat of the day and the frost of the night, and they died in grievous pains by famine and by the sword and by pestilence. [26]And You laid to waste the house called by Your name, as it is this day, because of the wickedness of the house of Israel and the house of Judah.[†]

Recalling the Promises of God

[27]‘Even so, O Lord our God, You have dealt with us according to all Your goodness and great mercy, [28]just as You spoke through Your servant Moses on the day You commanded him to write Your law in the presence of the sons of Israel, saying, [29]“If you do not obey My voice, truly this very great multitude of people will become a small number amidst all the nations

where I shall scatter them. [30]For I knew they would not obey Me, because they are a stiff-necked people. But in the land of their exile their hearts will turn back, [31]and they will know that I am the Lord their God, and I will give them a heart and ears that obey; [32]and they will praise Me in the land of their exile and will remember My name. [33]They will turn from their stubbornness and their evil deeds; for they shall remember the way of their fathers, who sinned against the Lord. [34]And I shall bring them again to the land I swore to their fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and they will rule over it, and I will multiply their numbers, and they will not be diminished. [35]And I shall establish an everlasting covenant with them to be their God, and they will be My people; I shall never again remove My people Israel from the land I give to them.”[†]

3 ‘O Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, a soul in straits and a spirit of weariness cries out to You. [2]Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned against You. [3]You endure forever, but we are perishing forever. [4]O Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, hear the prayer of the dead of Israel and of the sons who have sinned against You, who have not obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, so calamities have clung to us.[†] [5]Do not remember the wrongdoings of our fathers, but remember Your hand and Your name in this time. [6]For You are the Lord our God, and You we will praise, O Lord. [7]On account of this You granted in our hearts the fear of You, to call upon Your name, and we shall praise You in our exile, because we will turn away from our hearts all the iniquities of our fathers who sinned against You. [8]Behold, today we are in our exile, where You have scattered us to be a reproach and a curse and a punishment for all the iniquities of our fathers, who fell away from the Lord our God.’ ”

The Way of Wisdom

[9]Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life; give ear to know wisdom. [10]Why is it, O Israel, that you are in the land of your enemies, that you have grown old in a foreign land, [11]that you are defiled with the dead and counted among those in Hades? [12]You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom.[†] [13]If you had walked in the way of God, you would have dwelt in peace forever. [14]Learn where wisdom is, where strength is, where understanding is, so at the same time you may know where length of days and life are, where peace is and the light of the eyes. [15]Who has found her place? Who has entered into her treasures?

[16]Where are the rulers of the nations and those who ruled over the wild animals of the earth; [17]those who sport with the birds of the air and those hoarding silver and gold, in which men trust (and there is no end to the acquisition of these),[†] [18]those who scheme to obtain silver and are anxious, whose works are unsearchable? [19]They vanish and descend into Hades, and others have risen up to take their place.

[20]Young men have seen the light and dwelt in the land, but they have not known the way of knowledge,[†] [21]nor practiced it, nor understood her paths; their sons are far from her path. [22]It has not been heard in Canaan, nor seen in Tamar; [23]the sons of Hagar, who seek understanding on the earth, the merchants of Merra and of Tamar, the storytellers and those who search out understanding—none of these have learned the way of wisdom nor remember her paths. They do not know.

[24]O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how far-reaching the place He possesses![†] [25]It is great and has no end; it is high and immeasurable. [26]The giants born there, those renowned from the beginning, being very large in size and skilled in war,[†] [27]God did not choose them nor grant them the way of knowledge. [28]Instead, they perished because they failed to attain to wisdom; they perished through their thoughtless counsel.

The Author of Wisdom

[29]Who has gone up into heaven and taken hold of her, and brought her down from the clouds?[†] [30]Who has crossed the sea and found her, and brought her back for pure gold? [31]No one knows her way, nor does anyone ponder her path. [32]But the One who knows all things knows her; He has found her by His understanding—He who formed the earth for all time, who filled it with four-footed creatures; [33]the One who sends forth the light and it goes out; the One who calls to it, and it obeys with fear. [34]The stars shone in their watches and rejoiced. [35]He called them and they said, “Here we are!” They shone with gladness for Him who made them. [36]This is our God; no other shall be compared to Him.[ω] [37]He found the whole way of knowledge and gave it to Jacob His servant and to Israel His beloved.[†] [38]Afterwards, He was seen upon the earth and lived among men.

Wisdom and the Law of God

4 She is the book of the commandments of God and the law that endures forever. All those who keep her will live, but those forsaking her will die. [2]Return, O Jacob, and take hold of her. Walk toward the radiance of the presence of her light. [3]Do not give your glory to another or the things that are of advantage to you to a foreign nation.

Jerusalem Speaks to Her Children

[4]O Israel, we are blessed, for what is pleasing to our God is known to us. [5]Be of good courage, my people, O memorial of Israel. [6]You were sold to the nations, not for destruction, but you were handed over to the enemies because you provoked God. [7]You provoked Him who created you by sacrificing to demons and not to God. [8]You forgot the eternal God, who nursed you, and you grieved Jerusalem, which nourished you. [9]For she saw the wrath coming upon you from God, and she said, “Give heed, neighbors of Zion, God has brought upon me great sorrow,[†] [10]for I see the exile of my sons and my daughters which the Eternal One brought upon them. [11]With joy I raised them, but with weeping and sorrow I sent them away. [12]Let no one rejoice over me, a widow and forsaken of many. I was made desolate on account of the sins of my children, because they turned away from the Law of God. [13]And they did not know His ordinances, nor walk in the ways of the commandments of God, nor did they walk on the paths of discipline in His righteousness.

[14]“Let the neighbors of Zion come, and let them remember the exile of my sons and my daughters, which the Eternal One brought upon them. [15]He brought a nation from afar against them, a shameless nation speaking a strange language, which does not respect the elderly nor pity the young child. [16]They led away the widow's beloved sons and left her who was

alone destitute without daughters. [17]But how can I be of help to you? [18]For He who brought these calamities upon you will deliver you from the hand of your enemies. [19]Go, my children, go; for I am left desolate. [20]I have taken off the robe of peace and clothed myself in the sackcloth of my prayer. I will cry out to the Eternal One in my days.

[21]“O my children, take courage, cry out to God, and He will deliver you from the power and the hand of the enemies. [22]For I hope upon the Eternal One to save you, and the joy from the Holy One comes to me, because mercy will soon come to you from the Eternal One, your Savior. [23]For I sent you out with sorrow and weeping, but with joy and gladness God will restore you to me forever. [24]For just as the neighbors of Zion have now seen your exile, so too they will soon see your salvation from your God, which will come upon you with great glory and the radiance of the Eternal One.[†]

[25]“My children, endure in patience the wrath that has come upon you from God. Your enemy has pursued you diligently, but soon you will see his destruction, and you will tread upon their necks. [26]My pampered ones have been made to walk rough roads; they were carried off like a flock seized by enemies. [27]Take courage, my children, and cry out to God, for you will be remembered by Him who brought this upon you. [28]For just as you purposed to go astray from God, now having returned, seek Him with tenfold zeal. [29]For the One who brought these calamities upon you will bring you everlasting joy with your salvation.”

Jerusalem Is Comforted

[30]Take courage, O Jerusalem, for He who named you will comfort you.[†] [31]Wretched are those who mistreated you and rejoiced at your fall. [32]Wretched are the cities in which your children served as slaves. Wretched is she who took your sons. [33]For just as she took pleasure in your ruin and rejoiced over your fall, so shall she be grieved at her own desolation. [34]I shall take away from her the rejoicing of her great multitude, and her arrogance will become sorrow. [35]For fire will come upon her from the Eternal One for many days, and she will be inhabited by demons for a long time.[†]

[36]O Jerusalem, look eastward, and see the joy that is coming to you from God.[†] [37]Behold, your sons whom you sent away are coming, gathered together from the east to the west by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God.

5 O Jerusalem, take off the garment of your sorrow and your oppression, and put on the beauty from the God of glory forever.[†] [2]Put around you the double robe of righteousness from God; set upon your head the diadem of the glory of the Eternal One.[†] [3]For God will show your brightness to every nation under heaven, [4]for your name will forever be called by God the Peace of Righteousness and the Glory of Godliness.

[5]Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the heights and look eastward, and behold your children being gathered together by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the remembrance of God. [6]For they went out from you on foot, being led away by their enemies. But God will return them being carried back with glory, as on the throne of a kingdom. [7]For God commanded

every high mountain and the everlasting hills to be made low, and all the valleys to be filled until made level, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God;[†] [8]and at the command of God, the woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel. [9]For God will lead Israel with joy in the light of His glory, with mercy and righteousness that come from Him.

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The Lamentations of Jeremiah

Author—Jeremiah the prophet

Date—Written during the three months following the destruction of Jerusalem (October, 587 BC) and before Jeremiah was taken captive to Egypt in December of the same year.

Major Themes—*God's judgment of the people's sins and His unfathomable love and sorrow for Israel.* This is Jeremiah's personal testimonial and lament over the devastation of Jerusalem and the temple. The prophet maintains there is still hope for repentance and restoration. Consistent with his previous and later messages, here he instructs the suffering Jews not to despise God's punishment but to repent, confessing their sins and seeking forgiveness and deliverance.

Background—The destruction of Jerusalem has just occurred, and the people have been taken away as captives to Babylon. God continually forewarned them about these specific events through Jeremiah and His other prophets. The Lord had sent many prophecies about His punishment of those who would not keep His commandments. Jeremiah witnessed the destruction and laments over the loss of the people, the temple, and the city. The book contains five psalms.

Outline

I. The Psalmist and the Daughter of Zion Lament the Destruction of Jerusalem amid Ruin and Misery (1:1–22)

II. The Psalmist and the Daughter of Zion Describe the Day of the Lord (2:1–22)

III. Individual Lament: Affliction and Hope (3:1–62)

IV. Communal Lament: Meditations in a Ruined City (4:1–22)

V. Communal Prayer for Deliverance (5:1–22)

1

Now it came to pass that after Israel was taken captive and Jerusalem became desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping; and he lamented this song of grief over Jerusalem and said:[†]

[1] “How does the city now sit alone,

She who was full of people?

She has become like a widow,

She who was multiplied among the nations,

She who was ruling among the countries.

She has become subject to tribute.

[2] “She weeps bitterly in the night;

She sheds tears on her cheeks.

Yet among all her lovers there is no one who comforts her.

All who love her have dealt treacherously with her.

They have become her enemies.

[3] “Judea has gone into captivity

Because of her humiliation and harsh servitude.

She dwells among the Gentiles;

She finds no rest.

All who pursue her overtake her in the midst of her distress.

[4] “The roads of Zion mourn,

Because no one comes to the feast.

All her gates are destroyed,

Her priests groan,

Her virgins are led away,

And she is embittered in herself.

5 “Her oppressors have become the master,

And her enemies prosper;

For the Lord humbled her

Because of the greatness of her ungodliness.

Her infants have gone into captivity in the presence of the oppressor.[†]

6 “From the daughter of Zion

All her beauty has departed.

Her princes have become like rams

That find no pasture,

And they journey in weakness

Before the face of the pursuer.

7 “Jerusalem remembers her days of humiliation and rejection.

She remembers all her objects of desire,

What she had in days of old,

When her people fell into the hand of the oppressor,

When there was no one to help her.

When her enemies saw this, they laughed at her deportation.[†]

8 “Jerusalem sinned grievously;

Therefore, she became a storm-tossed sea.

All who glorified her have humiliated her,

For they saw her shameful acts,

And indeed, she groans and turns away.[†]

9 “Her uncleanness is at her feet.

She did not remember her last things,

And she lowered her boasting tone.

There is no one who comforts her.

‘O Lord, behold my humiliation,

For the enemy has been exalted.’

10 “The oppressor has spread his hand

Over all the objects of her desire,

For she sees the Gentiles entering her sanctuary,

Those whom You commanded not to enter Your church.

11 “All her people groan

And seek for bread.

They gave the objects of their desire for food

To stay alive.

‘O Lord, behold, and have regard for me,

For I am treated shamefully.[†]

12 ‘All you who pass by, do not turn away,

And see if there is any pain like my pain

Which has happened to me.

The Lord who spoke by me

Humiliated me in the day of His fierce anger.

13 ‘From His lofty place He sent fire

And brought it into my bones.

He spread a net for my feet

And turned me back.

He caused me to perish

And to be in great pain all the day.

14 ‘He kept watch on my profane acts;

They are entangled together with my hands;

They come up about my neck.

My strength weakens,

For the Lord has caused my hands to be in pain.

I shall be unable to stand.

15 ‘The Lord drove off all my mighty ones from my midst.

He summoned an appointed time against me

To crush my chosen men.

The Lord trod a winepress for the virgin daughter of Judah,

And for these I weep.

16 ‘My eyes pour down tears,

For He who comforts me

And restores my soul

Is gone far from me.

My children have perished

Because the enemy has prevailed.’

17 “Zion has spread out her hands,

But there is no one who comforts her.

The Lord commanded concerning Jacob;

His oppressors are around him,

And Jerusalem has become as an unclean woman in their midst.

18 ‘The Lord is righteous,

For I provoked His mouth.

Hear now, all peoples,

And behold my pain;

For My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity.[†]

19 ‘I called my lovers,

But they deceived me.

My priests and my elders

Ended their life in the city,

For they sought food for themselves

To revive their lives;

But they found none.

20 ‘Behold, O Lord, for I am afflicted.

My stomach is troubled,

And my heart is upset within me;

For I have rebelled exceedingly.

From without, the sword has deprived me of my children,

As death has here at home.

21 ‘Hear now, because I groan;

There is no one who comforts me.

All my enemies heard of my calamities,

And they rejoiced,

Because You brought it about.

You brought on the day;

You set the appointed time,

For they have become like me.

22 ‘So let all their evil come before Your face,

And do to them as they did to me

Concerning all my sins.

My groaning is great,

And my heart is grieved.’

2 “How did the Lord darken The daughter of Zion in His wrath?

He cast down the glory of Israel

From heaven to earth,

And did not remember His footstool

In the day of His wrath.

[2] “The Lord has swallowed up and not spared

All the beauty of Jacob.

In His anger, He brought down the strongholds

Of the daughter of Judah.

He brought them down to the ground;

He desecrated her king and its princes.[†]

[3] “In fierce anger, He broke off every horn of Israel

And drew back His right hand

From the face of the enemy.

He blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire,

And it devoured everything all around.

[4] “He bent His bow like an enemy

And strengthened His right hand like an adversary.

He put to death all the objects of my desire,

And poured out His anger like a fire

On the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion.

[5] “The Lord became like an enemy

And swallowed up Israel.

He brought down all his palaces,

Destroyed his strongholds,

And multiplied shame and humiliation

In the daughter of Judah.[†]

[6] “He opened and spread out His tabernacle like a vine

And destroyed His feast.

The Lord forgot His festivals and the Sabbath

Which He appointed in Zion,

And in the fury of His wrath

He provoked king, priest, and prince.

[7] “The Lord rejected His altar

And abandoned His sanctuary.

By the hand of the enemy,

He broke in pieces the wall of her palaces.

They uttered their voice in the house of the Lord

As on a feast day.

[8] “The Lord turned to destroy

The wall of the daughter of Zion.

He stretched out a measuring line

And has not turned back His hand from trampling her.

Therefore the bulwark mourned,

And the wall weakened with it.

[9] “Her gates sank into the ground,

And He destroyed and broke her bars.

Her king and her princes are among the Gentiles,

And the Law is no more;

And indeed, her prophets see no vision from the Lord.[†]

[10] “The elders of the daughter of Zion

Sit on the ground and keep silence.

They throw dust on their heads

And gird themselves with sackcloth.

They have brought down to the ground

The leading virgins in Jerusalem.

[11] “My eyes fail with tears,

And my heart is troubled.

My glory is poured out upon the ground

At the destruction of the daughter of my people,

While the child and the nursing infants

Faint in streets of the city.

12 “They say to their mothers,

‘Where is the wheat and wine?’

While they faint like the wounded

In the streets of the city,

While their lives are being poured out

In their mothers’ bosom.[†]

13 “What shall I testify to you,

Or what shall I compare to you,

O daughter of Jerusalem?

Who will save and comfort you,

O virgin daughter of Zion?

For the cup of your destruction is great;

Who shall heal you?

14 “Your prophets have seen foolishness

And worthless things for you,

But they did not reveal your wrongdoing

So as to turn back your captivity.

Instead, they saw worthless burdens

And banishment for you.

15 “All who pass by clap their hands at you,

And they hiss and shake their head

At the daughter of Jerusalem.

‘Is this the city they call

The crown of glory,

The joy of all the earth?’[†]

16 “All your enemies have opened their mouths against you;

They hiss and gnash their teeth.

They say, ‘We have swallowed her up!

Besides, this is the day we have looked for;

We have found it; we have seen it.’

17 “The Lord has done what He purposed;

He has carried out His words

Which He commanded in days of old.

He pulled down, and has not spared,

And has caused the enemy to rejoice over you.

He has exalted the horn of those who oppress you.

18 Their heart cried out to the Lord,

‘O wall of Zion,

Pour down tears like torrents, day and night;

Give yourself no relief;

May your eyes have no rest, O daughter.

19 ‘Arise, rejoice in the night,

At the beginning of your watch.

Pour out your heart like water

Before the face of the Lord,

And lift your hands up to Him

For the life of your infants,

Who grow weak in hunger

On the corner of every street.’

20 ‘Behold, O Lord, and look

For whom You have gathered thus.

Shall the women eat the fruit of their womb?

The cook has made a gleaning;

Shall the infants who nurse the breasts be put to death?

Will you kill priest and prophet

In the sanctuary of the Lord?

[21] ‘The child and the old man

Sleep in the street.

My virgins and my young men

Have gone into captivity.

You killed them with sword and famine

In the day of Your wrath;

You massacred and have not spared.

[22] ‘He called my sojourner round about me to a feast day.

There was no one who escaped, or were left

In the day of the Lord's wrath,

As I strengthened and multiplied

All my enemies.’[†]

3 “I am the man who sees poverty By the rod of His anger upon me.

[2] He took me and led me away

Into darkness, and not into light.[†]

[3] Surely He has turned His hand against me

Throughout the day.

[4] “He has aged my flesh and my skin

And has broken my bones.

[5] He has besieged me

And surrounded my head;

He has worn me down with hardships.

6 He set me in dark places
As those long dead.
7 “He hedged me in,
And I cannot come forth;
He made my brazen chain heavy.
8 Though I will call and cry out,
He shuts out my prayer.
9 He has blocked my ways
And obstructed my paths;
He has troubled me.
10 “He is a bear lying in wait for me
Like a lion in a hidden place.
11 After I departed, He eagerly pursued and caught me;
He has utterly ruined me.
12 He bent his bow
And set me up as a target for the arrow.
13 “He caused the arrows of His quiver
To pierce my loins.
14 I became a laughingstock to all my people,
And their song all the day.
15 He has filled me with bitterness
And drenched me with gall.
16 “He also broke my teeth with gravel
And fed me with ashes.
17 He took away peace from my soul,
And I have forgotten the good things.
18 Therefore I said, ‘My victory and my hope

Have perished from the Lord.’

19 “I remembered by reason of my poverty,

And because of my persecution, I remembered my bitterness and gall.

20 My soul shall remember

And meditate within me.

21 I will fix this in my heart;

Therefore, I will endure.

22 “The Lord is good to those who wait for Him,

To the soul who will seek Him, the Good One.[†]

23 He will wait for and quietly expect

The salvation of the Lord.

24 It is good for a man when he takes up

A yoke in his youth.

25 “He will sit alone and be silent,

Because he bears it on himself.

26 He will give his cheek to the one who strikes him,

And he will be filled with insults.

27 Yet the Lord shall not reject him forever.

28 “For He who humbles will have compassion

According to the abundance of His mercy.

29 For He does not afflict willingly,

Though He humbles the children of men.

30 “To humble all the prisoners of the earth

Under His feet,

31 “To turn aside the judgment of a man

Before the face of the Most High,

32 And to condemn a man

Before he is judged,

The Lord does not command.

33 Who thus speaks,

And it comes to pass?

The Lord has not commanded it,

34 “For evil and good shall not proceed

From the mouth of the Most High.

35 Why should a living man complain,

A man concerning his sin?

36 Our way has been searched out and examined;

Therefore we shall turn to the Lord.

37 “Let us lift our hearts and our hands

To the Most High in heaven.

38 We have sinned and acted in an ungodly way;

Thus You have not shown us mercy.

39 But You visited us in anger

And drove us away.

You have put us to death

And not spared us.

40 “You veiled Yourself with a cloud

Because of our prayer.

41 To close my eyes and to reject me,

You have placed us in the midst of the peoples.

42 All our enemies have opened

Their mouth against us.

43 “Fear and anger have come upon us,

Yes, devastation and destruction.

44 My eyes will shed tears for forgiveness

Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.

45 My eyes are drowned with tears,

And I will not keep silent;

So there shall be no rest,

46 “Until the Lord bends down

And sees from heaven.

47 My eyes will bring suffering in my soul

Because of all the daughters of the city.

48 My enemies hunted me down

Without cause, like a sparrow.

49 “They put my life to death in the pit

And threw a stone at me.

50 Water flowed over my head;

I said, ‘I am rejected.’

51 I called on Your name, O Lord,

From the lowest pit.

52 “You heard my voice;

Do not hide Your ears from my supplication.

53 You drew near at my call on the day I called upon You.

You said to me, ‘Do not fear.’

54 O Lord, You pleaded the case for my soul;

You redeemed my life.

55 “O Lord, You saw my troubles;

You judged my cause.

56 You saw all their vengeance

In all their reasoning against me.

57 You heard their taunts

And all their plots against me,

58 “And the lips of those who rose up against me,

And their meditations against me all the day.

59 Look at their eyes

As they sit down and rise up.

60 You shall render a recompense to them, O Lord,

According to the works of their hands.

61 “You shall repay them as a covering

Your hardship for them.

62 You shall pursue them in Your wrath and utterly destroy them

From under heaven, O Lord.

4 “How will gold lose its brightness

And fine silver become tarnished?

The stones of the sanctuary are scattered

At the head of every street.[†]

2 “The honored sons of Zion,

Valuable as gold,

How are they now regarded as clay pots,

The works of a potter's hands?

3 “Even the serpents uncover their breasts

To nurse their young;

But the daughters of my people are cruel,

Like an ostrich in the desert.[†]

4 “The tongue of the nursing child cleaves

To the roof of its mouth for thirst.

The young children beg for bread,

But no one breaks it for them.

[5] “Those who ate delicacies

Perish in the streets;

Those brought up on the best food

Are clothed with dung.

[6] “The lawlessness of the daughter of My people

Is greater than the lawlessness of Sodom,

Which was overthrown in a moment,

And there was no one to help her.[†]

[7] “Her Nazirites were purer than snow;

They shone more brightly than milk;

They were purified as with fire;

Their polishing was superior to sapphire stones.[†]

[8] “Now their appearance is blacker than soot;

They go unrecognized in the streets;

Their skin clings to their bones;

It is withered and has become as dry as wood.

[9] “Those slain by the sword are better off

Than those who die of hunger,

Deprived of the fruits of the field.

[10] “The hands of compassionate women

Cooked their children;

They became food for them

In the destruction of the daughter of my people.

[11] “The Lord has fulfilled His anger;

He has poured out His fierce wrath.

He has kindled a fire in Zion,

And it devoured her foundations.

12 “The kings of the earth

And all inhabitants in the world

Would not believe

That the enemy and oppressor

Could enter through the gates of Jerusalem.

13 “For the sins of her prophets

And the lawlessness of her priests,

Who shed righteous blood in her midst,[†]

14 “Her watchmen wandered in the streets.

They were defiled with blood in their weakness

And stained their garments with it.

15 “Depart from the unclean.

Call to them, ‘Depart! Depart!

Do not touch us!’

For they are set on fire and indeed wander.

Say among the Gentiles,

‘Let them not live here.’

16 “Their portion shall not continue

To enjoy the Lord's presence,

When He looked upon them with favor.

For they did not respect the person of the priests,

Nor did they show mercy to the elders.[†]

17 “While we yet lived,

Our eyes failed us

As we looked in vain for help.

We kept watching intently

For a nation that could not save us.

18 “We hunted for our little ones

So they would not walk in our streets.

Our appointed time is near,

Our days are fulfilled;

Our time is come.

19 “Our pursuers were swifter

Than the eagles of the sky.

They perched on the mountains

And lay in wait for us in the desert.

20 “The breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord,

Was seized in their corruption,

Of whom we said, ‘Under His shadow

We shall live among the nations.’[†]

21 “Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,

Who dwell in the land.

For indeed the cup of the Lord shall pass through to you,

And you shall become drunk and be poured out.[†]

22 “O daughter of Zion, your lawlessness has come to an end;

He will not continue your exile.

He has been concerned about your lawlessness,

O daughter of Edom;

He has revealed your profane acts.

5 “O Lord, remember what happened to us;

Look upon us with favor

And see our disgrace.[†]

2 Our inheritance has been turned over to foreigners,

And our homes to strangers.[†]

[3] We have become orphans and have no father;

Our mothers are as widows.

[4] “We pay for the water we drink,

And our wood comes at a price.

[5] We are pursued at our heels;

We have labored;

We have no rest.[†]

[6] Egypt gave us a hand,

Assyria to their satisfaction.

[7] “Our fathers sinned and are no more;

We suffered from their lawless actions.

[8] Servants rule over us;

There is no one to redeem us from their hand.

[9] We will bring in our bread

At the risk of our lives

From the presence of the sword in the desert.

[10] “Our skin has became blackened as an oven.

They are shriveled up from the stormy wind of famine.

[11] They humbled the women in Zion,

The virgins in the cities of Judah.

[12] Princes were hung up by their hands,

And elders were not honored.

[13] The chosen men took up weeping,

And the young men weakened under the loads of wood.

[14] Elders also ceased to gather at the gate;

The chosen men ceased to sing their psalms.

15 “The joy of our heart has ceased;

Our dance has turned into mourning.

16 The crown fell from our head;

Woe to us, because we sinned!

17 Because of this, our heart has become painful;

Because of this, our eyes have remained in darkness.

18 On Mount Zion, because it is desolate,

Foxes pass through it.

19 “But You, O Lord, shall dwell forever,

Your throne from generation to generation.[†]

20 Why will You utterly forget us?

Will You forsake us for so long a time?

21 Turn us back to You, O Lord,

And we shall be converted;

Renew our days as before.

22 For You have indeed rejected us,

And are exceedingly angry with us.”

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The Epistle of Jeremiah

Author—Jeremiah the prophet

Date—Written in the aftermath of the sack of Jerusalem (597 BC) and the exile to Babylon of her leaders, probably from Egypt.

Major Theme—*Beware of idols!*

Background—The epistle is a diatribe against the sin of idolatry as represented by the Baal cult. Jeremiah wrote to the Israelites to exhort and warn them to be free of a sin that must have been on the increase at this time. Because the epistle has very little historical information, it became timeless and was used by certain Church Fathers to combat pagan errors and superstitions practiced in their own day. The epistle conveys a message that heresy and false ideas about God are both ridiculous and untenable.

Outline

- I. Historical Information (vv. 1–6)
- II. Condemnation of Idolatry (vv. 7–73)
    - A. Idols adorned like people (vv. 7–14)
    - B. Uselessness and helplessness of idols (vv. 15–24)
    - C. Idols cannot move (vv. 25–28)
    - D. Idols cannot repay good or evil; they cannot give wealth, save, or heal (vv. 29–39)
    - E. The Chaldeans even bring shame upon their own idols (vv. 40–44)
    - F. Idols are the works of human hands (vv. 45–52)
    - G. Idols are powerless (vv. 53–57)

H. Idols cannot be compared to the sun, moon, stars, animals, etc. (vv. 58–69)

I. Idols compared to scarecrows, brambles, and a corpse (vv. 70–73)

The copy of an epistle Jeremiah sent to those being led away as captives to Babylon by the king of the Babylonians, to proclaim a message to them, as it was commanded him by God.

[1]Because of the sins you committed in the sight of God, you will be led away to Babylon as captives by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonians. [2]After you enter Babylon, you will remain there many years, even a long time, as many as seven generations. But after this, I shall lead you from that place with peace. [3]Now in Babylon you will see gods of silver, gold, and wood carried upon shoulders as displays of fear to the Gentiles.[†] [4]Therefore do not reverence them, lest you become like the foreigners, and fear also seizes you because of them[†] [5]when you see a multitude worshiping them, both in front of and behind them. But say in your mind, “One must worship You, O Lord.” [6]For My angel is with all of you, and he is searching your souls.[†]

Idols Dressed Like People

[7]Indeed their tongue is polished by a craftsman, and they are plated with silver and gold. But they are false and unable to speak. [8]As though for a virgin, they take gold and prepare crowns upon the heads of their gods. [9]But there are times when the priests will rob the silver and gold from their gods and spend them on themselves, and also give some of them to the prostitutes in their chamber. [10]So they adorn them—these gods of silver,

gold, and wood—with clothing like humans, but they cannot preserve themselves against scum and moth.

[11]After they clothe them with a purple garment, they wipe their face because of the dust from the temple, which is thick upon them. [12]One of them holds a scepter, like the judge of a country who does not put to death the one who sins against him. [13]Another holds a dagger in his right hand and a battleax itself, but he cannot defend himself from war and robbers. [14]From this, it is evident they are not gods; therefore, do not fear them.[†]

Useless, Lifeless

[15]For as the vessel of a man is shattered and becomes useless, such are their gods as they sit in their temples. [16]Their eyes are full of dust from the feet of those who enter. [17]As courtyards are fenced all around against someone who offends a king, and thus is awaiting the death penalty, so the priests also fortify the temples of their gods with doors, bars, and bolts, lest they be plundered by robbers. [18]Although their gods cannot see for themselves, they burn many lamps for them. [19]Indeed, as the saying goes, the gods are like a wooden beam in their temple, for their hearts are eaten out by the creeping things of the earth, which devour both them and their clothing; [20]and the face of their idols is blackened by the smoke from the temple; yet all this goes unnoticed. [21]Bats, swallows, and other birds also perch on their body and head, and even cats likewise sit there. [22]So know from this that they are not gods; therefore, do not fear them.

[23]As for the gold worn by the idols for beauty, unless someone wipes off the scum, it does not shine; neither did they notice this when they were

formed. [24]Although they are bought at a high price, there is no spirit in them. [25]Since they are without feet, they must be carried on the shoulders of others, which demonstrates the disgrace of these idols before mankind. Moreover, those who serve them are put to shame, because if the idol happens to fall to the ground, it must be lifted up by them. [26]Even if someone should stand it upright, it would not move by itself, nor if it were bent over, it would not straighten up; yet gifts are offered to it by them as to the dead. [27]But the priests sell their sacrifices to make full use of this money for themselves. Likewise even their wives preserve the meat offered them, though neither the poor nor the lame are given a share; and even a woman in her menstruation, or one just giving birth, touches them. [28]Since you know from this that they are not gods, therefore, do not fear them.

False Priests

[29]How then can these be called gods? For women serve offerings to these gods of silver, gold, and wood. [30]Even the priests sit in their temples, and their clothes are torn. Their heads and beards are also closely shaven and uncovered [31]as they roar and shout before their gods, as some do at a feast. [32]The priests take the garments of their idols to clothe their wives and children. [33]Whether these gods may suffer evil by someone or even good, they will not be able to repay either. Even more, they are not capable of raising up a king, nor do they have the power to remove one. [34]Likewise they are unable to give wealth or money to anyone. Moreover if someone makes a vow to them but does not pay it, they will not seek payment from him.[†] [35]They cannot deliver a man from death, nor rescue the weak from the strong. [36]They cannot restore the sight of a blind man, nor rescue

someone in distress, nor deliver anyone in trouble. [37]They cannot show mercy to a widow, nor do good to the orphan. [38]These wooden idols, plated with silver and gold, are likened to stones on a mountain, and those who serve them will be put to shame.[†] [39]How then can anyone suppose them to be gods, or call them such?

Undiscerning Chaldeans

[40]Besides, even the Chaldeans themselves dishonor them, for when they see someone without the power of speech, they bring him to Bel. They consider it worthy to call out to him, as though he could understand. [41]Yet they themselves do not understand so as to abandon their idols, for they have no discernment. [42]The women also put cords around themselves and sit in the streets, burning corn as incense. [43]When one of these women is led off by some passerby and sleeps with him, she insults her neighbor because she was not as desirable as herself, nor was her cord broken.[†] [44]Everything to do with these idols is a lie. How then can anyone suppose them to be gods, or call them such?

Idols Are a Disgrace

[45]They are fashioned by craftsmen and goldsmiths. They cannot be anything but what the craftsmen desire them to be.[†] [46]Even those who fashion them do not attain a long life; therefore, how can the things created by them be gods? [47]For they leave behind lies and a disgrace for those who come after. [48]Indeed, when war and calamities fall upon them, the priests counsel among themselves so they may hide themselves with them.[†]

[49]How then is it not perceived that they are not gods, who can neither save themselves from war nor calamities? [50]For they are wood, plated with silver and gold, [51]and it will become known and evident in due time to the Gentiles and their kings that they are false and not gods, but rather the works of men's hands. There is nothing of God's work in them. [52]Who then can fail to know that they are not gods?

[53]For they cannot raise up a king for a country, nor can they give mankind rain. [54]They cannot decide a case, nor can they help one who is wronged; for they are like crows tossed about in the air. [55]Indeed, when a fire breaks out in the temple of these wooden gods, plated with silver or gold, their priests will run and save themselves, but these beams of wood in the midst will be burned up.[†] [56]They offer no resistance against a king or in a war. [57]How then can one admit or suppose that they are gods?

[58]Neither can wooden gods save themselves from thieves or robbers, since they are plated with silver and gold. For those who are strong will take away their silver and gold and the clothing they wear. Nor can they help themselves. [59]So it is better to be a king able to demonstrate his own courage, or a household utensil that is useful to its owner, than to be false gods. It is better to be a wooden pillar in a palace than to be false gods.[†] [60]For indeed the sun, moon, and stars that shine brightly are sent for a useful purpose, and they obey. [61]Likewise, when lightning flashes it is seen far and wide, and the wind blows in every country. [62]So too, when God commands the clouds to travel across the whole earth, they fulfill what is commanded. So does fire when it is sent from above to consume the mountains and forests, and does what is ordered. [63]But idols cannot be

compared to any of this, either in power or appearance. [64]Therefore they are not to be considered as gods, nor as able to make judgments, nor to be good for mankind. [65]So then, since you know they are not gods, do not fear them.

[66]For they can neither curse nor bless kings. [67]They cannot show signs in heaven to the Gentiles, so as to shine like the sun or give light like the moon. [68]The wild animals are superior to them, for they are able to flee for shelter to profit themselves.[†] [69]Therefore, there is no evidence to prove that they are gods, so do not fear them.

[70]For like a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers, guarding nothing worthwhile, so are their wooden gods, plated with silver and gold. [71]They are like a thorn bush in a garden on which every bird perches, and they are like a dead man cast into darkness. Such are their wooden gods, plated with silver and gold.

[72]Because of the purple and fine linen rotting on them, you will know that they themselves are not gods. Afterwards, they will be consumed, and become a disgrace in the land.[†] [73]Better therefore is a man who is righteous and has no idols, for he shall be far from disgrace.[†]

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The Book of Ezekiel

Author—The prophet Ezekiel himself. No one else could be so intimately informed of his actions and intentions.

Date—The generally accepted time frame in which the book was written is 595–572 BC. This work contains more dates than any other Old Testament prophetic book, and the times of the prophecies are accurately described.

Major Theme—*God's direction of events in heaven and on earth.* His revelation of knowledge to all the nations is another predominant theme running throughout the book. He is the Judge, but He is equally desirous to be gracious and merciful.

Background—The holy prophet Ezekiel (commemorated on July 23), whose name means “God strengthens,” was of the tribe of Levi. He was therefore both priest and prophet, and he was married. He grew up during the reign of King Josiah of Judah (640–609 BC), but his prophetic ministry spanned the years 595 to 572 BC. More than any other prophet, Ezekiel was called by God to involve himself personally in the divine word by acting it out in prophetic symbolism. He was a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah and Daniel.

Outline

I. The Commission of Ezekiel (1:1–3:27)

  A. Ezekiel sees the glory of God (1:1–27)

  B. Ezekiel is called to prophesy (2:1–3:27)

- II. Judgment on Judah (4:1–24:27)
    - A. Signs of the coming judgment (4:1–5:17)
    - B. Messages of the coming judgment (6:1–7:27)
    - C. Vision of coming judgment (8:1–11:25)
    - D. Signs, parables, and messages of judgment (12:1–24:27)
- III. Judgment on the Gentiles (25:1–32:32)
    - A. Judgment on Ammon (25:1–7)
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    - F. Judgment on Sidon (28:20–26)
    - G. Judgment on Egypt (29:1–32:32)
- IV. Restoration of Israel (33:1–48:35)
    - A. Return of Israel to the land (33:1–39:29)
    - B. Restoration of Israel to temple worship (40:1–48:35)

Ezekiel's Vision of God and the Four Creatures

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was in the midst of the captivity by the River Chebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.[†] [2]On the fifth day of the month, in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, [3]the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was upon me.[†]

[4]I looked, and behold, a sweeping wind came from the north, and a great cloud was in it, with a surrounding brightness and fire flashing forth from it.

In its midst was something like the appearance of amber in the middle of the fire, and a brightness in it. [5]In the midst, there was as it were the likeness of four living creatures. This was their appearance, and the likeness of a man upon them.[†] [6]Each had four faces, and each had four wings. [7]Their legs were straight, and their feet were winged. There were sparks like gleaming brass, and their wings were light. [8]The hand of a man was underneath their wings on their four sides. [9]The faces of those four did not turn as they proceeded, and they went with each face opposite the other. [10]This was the likeness of their faces: the face of a man, the face of a lion on the right side of the foursome, the face of an ox on the left, and the face of an eagle.[†] [11]Their wings were spread out above them. Each had two wings joined together, and two wings covered up their bodies. [12]Each went straight forward wherever the spirit was going, and did not turn back. [13]In the midst of the living creatures there was an appearance as of burning coals of fire, as an appearance of lamps turning among the living creatures. There was the brightness of fire, and out of the fire lightning came forth.[†]

[14]I looked and behold, there was one wheel on the earth next to each living creature with its four faces.[†] [15]The appearance of the wheels was like the appearance of beryl, and each of the four had one likeness; and their work was as it were a wheel within a wheel. [16]They went on their four sides, and did not turn when they went. [17]Neither did their backs turn, and they were high. I saw them, and the backs of all four were full of eyes all around. [18]When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. [19]Wherever the cloud happened to be, there was the spirit ready

to go. The living creatures went, and the wheels went with them, for the spirit of life was in the wheels. [20]When the living creatures went, the wheels went; when the living creatures came to a stop, the wheels stopped; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up with them, for the spirit of life was in the wheels.

[21]The likeness above the heads of the living creatures was like a firmament, like the appearance of crystal, spread out over their wings above. [22]Their wings were outspread underneath the firmament, clapping their wings one to the other, two wings joined to each, and two wings covering up their bodies.[†] [23]I heard the sound of their wings when they went, like the sound of much water; and when they stood still, their wings rested.

[24]Then behold, a voice came from above the firmament, above their head. [25]There was as it were the appearance of a sapphire stone, and the likeness of a throne upon it. Upon the likeness of the throne there was as it were the appearance of a man above.[†] [26]Then I saw as it were the outward appearance of amber from the appearance of the waist and upward. From the appearance of the waist and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire with brightness round about. [27]Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the condition of the surrounding brightness.[†]

Ezekiel Called as a Prophet to Israel

This was the vision of the likeness of the Lord's glory. I saw it, and I fell down on my face, and heard the voice of One speaking.

2 Then He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.” [2]The Spirit then came upon me, took me up, raised me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me. [3]So He said to me, “Son of man, I am sending you to the house of Israel, to the ones provoking Me. They have provoked Me, they and their fathers, up to this very day. [4]Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord.’ [5]Now then, if they listen or are put off—for they are a rebellious house—still they will know you are a prophet in their midst.

[6]“But you, Son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be dismayed by their looks, for they will swarm and sting you, and crowd against you on every side. You will live in the midst of scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, for they are a house of provocation. [7]You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or are put off, because they are a house of provocation. [8]You, son of man, listen to the One who speaks to you. Do not be one who rebels like the house of provocation, but open your mouth wide, and eat what I give you.”

[9]Then I looked, and behold, there was a hand reaching out to me, and the roll of a book was in it.[†] [10]He unrolled it before me, and there written on the inside and the outside were words of lamentation and mourning and woe.

3 Then He said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll, and go and speak to the children of Israel.”[†] [2]So I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll. [3]Then He said to me, “Son of man, your mouth shall eat and your stomach will be filled with this scroll that is given you.” So I ate it, and it was in my

mouth as sweet as honey. [4]Then He said to me, “Son of man, go! Go to the house of Israel, and speak My words to them. [5]For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and obscure language, but to the house of Israel. [6]Neither are you sent to many peoples speaking a foreign language or using strange tongues, nor to a people of heavy speech, whose words you would not understand. Surely, had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you.[†] [7]But the house of Israel shall be unwilling to listen to you, because they are unwilling to listen to Me; for all the house of Israel is argumentative and hard-hearted. [8]Behold, I have made your face to be strong against their faces, and I will strengthen your case against their arguments. [9]Your argument shall be continually stronger than a rock. Do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their faces; for they are a house of provocation.”

[10]Again He said to me, “Son of man, receive into your heart all My words I have spoken to you, and listen with your ears. [11]Go! Go to the captives, to the children of your people, and you shall speak to them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord,’ whether they listen or whether they refuse.” [12]Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: “Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place.” [13]I also perceived the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they clapped one to the other, and the sound of the wheels nearby, and the sound of the earth quaking.[†] [14]Then the Spirit moved me and raised me up, and I went forth under the impulse of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me. [15]Thus lifted up, I then entered among the captivity and circulated

among those who were dwelling by the River Chebar. I sat there for seven days, holding conversation in their midst.[†]

Ezekiel Made a Watchman

[16]Again it came to pass, after seven days, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [17]“Son of man, I made you a watchman for the house of Israel, and you will hear a word from My mouth and shall threaten them from Me:[†] [18]When I say to the lawless, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you do not give him explicit warning, nor speak to warn the lawless to turn from his ways so he may live, that lawless man shall die in his unrighteousness; but his blood I will require at your hand. [19]However, if you warn the lawless, and he does not turn from his lawlessness, nor from his way, that lawless man shall die in his unrighteousness; but you delivered your soul. [20]Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits a transgression, and I put him to the test, he shall die, because you did not give him explicit warning. He shall die in his sins, and his righteous deeds which he did shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.[†] [21]But if you explicitly warn the righteous man not to sin, and he does not sin, the righteous man shall live, because you explicitly warned him; and you will deliver your own soul.”

[22]Again the hand of the Lord came upon me, and He said to me, “Arise and go out into the plain, and there you will be spoken to.”[†] [23]So I arose and went out into the plain, and behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, just like the vision and just like the glory I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. [24]Then the Spirit came upon me and set me on my feet,

and said to me, “Go inside and shut yourself within your house. [25]As for you, son of man, behold, chains are appointed for you, and they will put you in them so you cannot go out from their midst. [26]I shall bind your tongue, and you will become deaf. You will not be for them as a man to convict them, for they are a house of provocation. [27]But when I speak with you, I shall open your mouth, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord.’ He who hears, let him hear; and he who disobeys, let him disobey; for it is a house of provocation.

The Siege of Jerusalem Predicted

4 “As for you, son of man, take a brick for yourself and lay it before you. You shall put it before your face and outline the city of Jerusalem on it.[†] [2]On this outline you shall draw a wall, build a rampart round about it, put a barricade against it, place armies around it, and arrange it with engines of war all around. [3]Then take for yourself a frying-pan made of iron, and set it as an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face against the city, and it shall be in confinement; and you shall shut it up completely. This will be a sign to the children of Israel.

[4]“You shall sleep on your left side and lay the acts of unrighteousness of the house of Israel upon it. For one hundred and fifty days, for this number of days, you shall sleep on it; for you shall bear their acts of unrighteousness.[†] [5]For I have laid on you their two acts of unrighteousness according to the number of the days, one hundred and ninety days. You shall bear the acts of unrighteousness of the house of Israel. [6]When you accomplish all this, then you shall sleep on your right side; and you shall bear the acts of unrighteousness of the house of Judah for forty days. I have

appointed you a day for each year. [7]You shall set your face toward the confinement of Jerusalem; and you shall strengthen your arm and prophesy against it. [8]Behold, I have appointed chains for you, and you may turn from one side to the other until the days of your confinement are accomplished.

[9]“Also take for yourself wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel made of earth, and make loaves of bread for yourself. According to the number of days you sleep on your side, one hundred and ninety days, you shall eat them. [10]Your food which you eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day; from time to time you shall eat them. [11]You shall also drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin, and from time to time you shall drink. [12]You shall eat them as a barley cake baked in ashes. You shall bake them in their sight in the filth of human dung.[†] [13]Then you shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: So shall the children of Israel eat unclean things among the Gentiles.’ ”

[14]So I said, “Not so, O Lord God of Israel. Behold, my soul has not defiled itself with uncleanness, nor from my youth up until now have I eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has day-old meat entered my mouth.” [15]Then He said to me, “Behold, I give you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your loaves of bread upon it.” [16]Then He said to me, “Son of man, behold, I will break the support of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight and in want and drink water by measure and in a state of ruin, [17]so as to become in need of bread and water. A man shall destroy his brother, and they shall waste away in their wrongdoings.

Jerusalem's Desolation Prophesied

5 “As for you, son of man, take for yourself a sword sharper than a barber's razor. Acquire it for yourself, and shave your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the hair.† 2 One-fourth you shall burn in the midst of the city, at the completion of the days of the confinement. Then you shall take one-fourth and burn it up in its midst, and one-fourth you shall cut up around about all sides with the sword; and one-fourth you shall scatter to the wind. Thus I will unsheathe a sword after them. 3 You shall also take from there a small amount of hair and wrap it in the fold of your garment. 4 Then from this amount, again take some and throw it into the midst of the fire and burn it in the fire. Fire shall come forth from it, and you shall say to all the house of Israel, 5 ‘Thus says the Lord: “This is Jerusalem; I have put her in the midst of the surrounding countries, in the midst of the nations.† 6 So you shall speak of My ordinances to the lawless one among the nations, and my laws to the lawless one from the surrounding countries; because they rejected My ordinances, and have not walked in My laws.” 7 Therefore thus says the Lord: “Because your opportunity for lawlessness is taken from the nations around you, and you have not walked in my laws, nor kept My ordinances—indeed you have not even kept the ordinances of the nations around you—”† 8 therefore, thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will execute judgment in your midst in the sight of the nations. 9 I will do among you what I have not done, and the likes of which I will not do again, because of all your abominations. 10 Therefore fathers shall eat their children in your midst, and children shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain, I will scatter to every wind. 11 Therefore, as I

live," says the Lord, "surely, because you defiled My holy things with all your abominations, I also will reject you. My eye will not spare, nor will I have any mercy. [12]One-fourth of you shall be destroyed by death, and one-fourth shall be consumed in your midst by famine. One-fourth of you I will scatter to every wind, and one-fourth of you will fall by the sword all around you, for I will unsheathe a sword after them. [13]Thus shall My anger and My wrath be accomplished against them. You will come to know this because I, the Lord, have spoken in My zeal, when I accomplish My anger against them. [14]I will make you desolate, along with your daughters around you, in the sight of everyone who travels through. [15]You shall be mournful and miserable among the nations around you when I execute judgments among you, in the vengeance of my anger. I, the Lord, have spoken. [16]When I send forth against them My arrows of famine, and they are extinguished, I also shall break your supply of bread. [17]So I will send against you famine and evil beasts and shall punish you. Death and blood shall pass through upon you, and I will bring a sword against you, all about you. I, the Lord, have spoken." ' "

The Lord Condemns Idolatry

6 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]"Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them. [3]You shall say, 'You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord to the mountains and hills, and to the ravines and valleys: "Behold, I shall bring a sword against you and destroy your high places. [4]Your altars, along with your sacred precincts, shall be broken down. I shall cast down your wounded in the presence of your idols, [5]and scatter your bones all around your altars. [6]In all your dwelling places, the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be abolished, so as to destroy your altars and break your idols in pieces and remove your sacred precincts.

[7]“The wounded shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I am the Lord, [8]when some among you are escaping from the sword among the nations and when you are scattered among the countries. [9]Then those of you who escape among the nations where they were taken captive will remember Me. For I swore an oath against their heart, which went away from Me and committed fornication, and against their eyes, which committed fornication after their practices. They shall mourn over themselves amid all their abominations. [10]Then they shall come to know that I, the Lord, have spoken.”

[11]‘Thus says the Lord: “Clap your hands and stamp your feet, and say, ‘Good, well done! Good, well done!’ Because of all the abominations of the house of Israel, they shall fall by the sword, by death, and by famine. [12]He who is near shall fall by the sword, and he who is far off shall die an untimely death; and he who is in the confinement shall perish by famine. Thus will I accomplish My wrath upon them. [13]Then you shall come to know that I am the Lord, when your wounded are among your idols, all around your altars, on every high hill, and under every shady tree where they offered a sweet aroma to their idols. [14]So I will stretch out My hand against them, and appoint the land for destruction and ruin, from the desert of Diblah, in all their dwelling places. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

Judgment Is Near for Israel

7 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“You, son of man, speak and say, ‘Thus says the Lord to the land of Israel: “An end has come; the end has come upon the four corners of the land. [3]An end has come upon you who dwell in the land. [4]The time has come; the day is near, not with tumult nor with travail. [5]Now it is near. I shall pour out my wrath upon you and accomplish My anger among you. I shall judge you in your ways and cause all your abominations to come upon you. [6]My eye will not spare, neither will I show mercy; because I will cause your ways to come against you. Your abominations shall be in your midst, and you will know that I am the Lord who smites. [7]Now the end has come to you. I shall send judgment upon you, take vengeance on your ways, and recompense all your abominations upon you. [8]My eye will not spare against you, nor will I have mercy; because I will cause your way to come against you, and your abominations shall be in your midst. You shall know that I am the Lord.”

[9]‘For thus says the Lord: [10]“Behold, the end has come. Behold, the day of the Lord. Although the rod has blossomed, arrogance has risen forth. [11]The support of the lawless one shall be crushed, and without either tumult or haste. [12]The time has come, behold the day. Let not the buyer rejoice, and let not the seller mourn. [13]For the one who buys shall no longer turn to the one who sells, and a man shall no longer have control over his life. [14]Blow with the trumpet and judge all at once. [15]There shall be war by the sword from without and death and famine from within. He who is in the field will die by the sword, and famine and death shall destroy those in the city. [16]Those who are saved and survive will be on the mountains; I will slay all the rest—each one in his wrongdoings. [17]All

hands shall be feeble, and all legs will be stained with urine. [18]They will clothe themselves with sackcloth, and astonishment shall cover them. Shame will be on them—on every face, and baldness on every head. [19]They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be disregarded. Their souls will not be satisfied, nor their stomachs filled; because it became their stumbling block of wrongdoings.

[20]“As for their choice of adornment, they displayed these in arrogance and made their abominable images from them. For this reason I caused these things to be uncleanness to them. [21]I will hand over these things into the hands of foreigners, to plunder these things; and I will give these things to the troublemakers of the land as booty, and they shall desecrate them. [22]I will turn My face away from them, and they will defile My place of service. They will enter it unguardedly and desecrate it.

[23]“They will create disorder, because the land is full of peoples, and the city is full of lawlessness. [24]I will turn back the pride of their strength, and their holy things shall be defiled. [25]Though propitiation shall come and one shall seek peace, there shall be none.

[26]“There will be woe upon woe, and message upon message, and a vision will be sought from a prophet; but the law will perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. [27]The ruler shall clothe himself with destruction, and the hands of the people of the land will weaken. I will do to them according to their ways and reward them according to their judgments. Then they shall know that I am the Lord!” ’ ”

Abominations in Jerusalem

8 Again it came to pass in the sixth year, in the fifth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord came upon me.[†] [2]Then I looked, and behold, there was the likeness of a man, as of fire from His waist down, and from His waist up like the appearance of amber. [3]He extended what looked like a hand and raised me up by the crown of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the sky and brought me in a vision of God to Jerusalem, to the porches of the inner gate that looks to the north, where the pillar of idolatry was. [4]Behold, the glory of the Lord God of Israel was there, like the vision I saw in the plain.

[5]Then He said to me, “Son of man, lift your eyes toward the north.” So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and behold, I looked from the north toward the eastern gate. [6]Then He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing? They commit great acts of lawlessness here to keep Me from My sanctuary. Now you will see even greater acts of lawlessness.”[†]

[7]So He brought me to the porches of the court. [8]Then He said to me, “Son of man, dig a hole.” So I dug, and behold, a door. [9]He said to me, “Go in, and see the lawless deeds they are doing here.” [10]So I went in, and behold, I saw vain abominations—all the idols of the house of Israel were portrayed on the wall all around. [11]There were seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and the smoke of the incense rose up. [12]Then He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what the elders of the house of Israel are doing, each one of them in their private bedroom? For they said, ‘The Lord does not see; the Lord has forsaken the land.’ ”

[13]Then He said to me, “You will see even greater acts of lawlessness they are doing.” [14]So He brought me to the porches of the court of the Lord's house that faces north; and behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. [15]Then He said to me, “Do you see this, son of man? You will see worse practices than these.” [16]So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and behold, there, at the outer entrance of the Lord's temple, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty men. They stood with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, with their faces in the opposite direction; and they were worshiping the sun.

[17]Then He said to me, “Do you see this, son of man? This is not a trivial thing for the house of Judah to commit these lawless acts which they commit here, is it? For they have filled the land with lawlessness, and behold, they are as those who treat Me with contempt. [18]As for Me, I shall treat them in anger. My eye will not spare, nor will I have mercy.”

9 Then He cried out in my ears with a loud voice, saying, “The punishment of the city is near, and each had instruments of destruction in his hand.” [2]Behold, six men were coming from the way of the high gate that looks toward the north, and each one's ax was in his hand. One man among them was clothed with a full-length robe, with a belt of sapphire about his waist. They entered and stood near the bronze altar.[†]

[3]Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherubim, and the glory which was over them went into the inner court of the house. He called to the man clothed with the long robe with the belt on his waist, [4]and He said to him, “Go through the midst of Jerusalem and put a mark on the

foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the lawless deeds taking place within her.” [5]To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill. Let not your eyes spare, and have no mercy. [6]Utterly destroy old men and youth, and virgins, infants, and women, but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark. Begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were inside the house. [7]Then He said to them, “Defile the house, and go out and fill the roads with the dead, and smite.”

[8]So it was, as they were smiting, I fell on my face and cried out, and said, “Alas, O Lord, are You wiping out all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your anger on Jerusalem?” [9]Then He said to me, “The wrongdoing of the house of Israel and Judah has become exceedingly great, for the land is full of many peoples, and the city is full of wrongdoings and uncleanness. For they said, ‘The Lord forsook the land, and the Lord does not look upon it.’ [10]My eye will not spare, nor will I have mercy, but I will recompense their deeds on their own heads.” [11]Then behold, the man clothed with the long robe and girded with the belt on his waist reported back and said, “I have done as You commanded me.”

The Glory Leaves the Temple

10 Then I looked, and behold, over the firmament above the heads of the cherubim, there was the likeness of a throne over them, like a sapphire stone.[†] [2]He spoke to the man clothed with the long robe, “Go in between the wheels underneath the cherubim, and fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” So he went in as I watched.

[3]Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the house as the man was entering, and the cloud filled the inner court. [4]Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherubim into the inner court of the house. The cloud filled the house, and the court was filled with the brightness of the Lord's glory.[†] [5]The sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks.

[6]Then it came to pass, as He was commanding the man clothed in the sacred robe, saying, “Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubim,” that he went in and stood near the wheels. [7]A cherub stretched out his hand into the midst of the fire, between the cherubim, and took and put it into the hands of the man clothed with the sacred garment. The man took it and went out. [8]I saw the cherubim having the likeness of men's hands under their wings.[†]

[9]I looked, and behold, four wheels were standing near the cherubim, one wheel by each cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was like that of a precious stone. [10]As for their appearance, there was one likeness to the four, as when a wheel is in the midst of a wheel. [11]When they went, they went on their four sides. They did not turn when they went, for they followed in the direction the first head was looking, but they did not turn as they went. [12]Their backs and hands, and their wings and wheels, were all full of eyes all around their four wheels. [13]As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, “wheel.”[†]

[14]The cherubim were the same living creatures I saw by the River Chebar. [15]When the cherubim went, the wheels close to them went; and

when the cherubim lifted their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels did not turn. [16]When the cherubim stood, the wheels stood; and when the cherubim mounted up, the wheels mounted up with them, because the spirit of life was in them.

[17]Then the glory of the Lord departed from the house and went upon the cherubim.[†] [18]The cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels were beside them; and they stood by the porches of the door of the Lord's house opposite them. The glory of the God of Israel was over and above them.

[19]This is the living creature I saw under the God of Israel, by the River Chebar, and I knew they were cherubim. [20]Each had four faces and each had eight wings, and the likeness of a man's hand was under their wings. [21]As for the likeness of their faces, these are the same faces I saw under the glory of the God of Israel by the River Chebar; and they went straight forward.

Wicked Rulers Will Be Judges

11 Moreover the Spirit took me up and brought me to the front gate of the Lord's house, the gate which looks eastward; and behold, on the porches of the gate were about twenty-five men. I saw in the midst of them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, the princes of the people.[†] [2]Then the Lord said to me, “Son of man, these are the men who plan worthless things and give evil counsel in this city, [3]who say, ‘Have not the houses been constructed recently? This city is the cauldron, and we are the meat.’ [4]Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man!”

[5]Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me and said to me, “Say this, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the deliberations of your spirit. [6]You multiplied your dead in this city and filled its streets with the wounded. [7]Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Your dead, whom you trampled in its midst, they are the meat, and this city is the cauldron; but I shall bring you out of the midst of it. [8]You fear the sword; thus I will bring a sword upon you,’ says the Lord. [9]‘I will bring you out of its midst and deliver you into the hands of foreigners, and execute judgments on you. [10]You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the borders of Israel, and you shall know that I am the Lord. [11]This city shall not be your cauldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst. I will judge you at the borders of Israel. [12]You shall know that I am the Lord.’ ” ’ ”

[13]Then it came to pass while I was prophesying that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. So I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, “Alas, alas, O Lord! Will you make a complete end to the remnant of Israel?”

God Will Restore the Exiles

[14]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [15]“Son of man, your brethren, and the men of your captivity, and all the house of Israel are at their end, to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem said, ‘Keep far away from the Lord. This land was given to us as an inheritance.’ [16]Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I will reject them among the nations, and scatter them into every land; yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries

wherever they may go.’ ” [17]Therefore I said, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I shall also receive them from the nations, and gather them from the countries where I scattered them; and I will give them the land of Israel.’ ”[†] [18]They shall enter there and remove all its abominations and lawlessness from it. [19]Then I will give them another heart and put a new spirit within them. I shall remove the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, [20]so they may walk in My commandments, keep My ordinances, and do them. They will be My people, and I shall be their God. [21]But as for the heart set upon their abominations and lawlessness—as their heart went after these things—so I have recompensed their ways on their own heads,” says the Lord.

[22]Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. [23]Then the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain opposite the city. [24]The Spirit took me up—in a vision by the Spirit of God—and brought me to the land of the Chaldeans, to the captivity. Then I rose up from the vision I saw, [25]and spoke to the host of captives all the words the Lord made known to me.

Ezekiel Prepares for Exile

12 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, you dwell in the midst of wrongdoers who have eyes to see, but do not see, and ears to hear, but do not hear; for they are a house of provocation. [3]As for you, son of man, prepare belongings for captivity, for captivity by daylight and in their sight. You will be taken into captivity from your place to a different place, a place in their sight; so they may see they are a house of provocation. [4]You will carry out your belongings as baggage for captivity by day before their eyes; and you shall go out in the evening as a captive goes out. [5]Dig through the wall for yourself, and you shall go out through it in their sight. [6]You shall be carried on men's shoulders and go forth in secret. You shall cover your face and not see the ground, because I have made you a sign to the house of Israel.” [7]So I did this according to all He commanded me. I brought out my belongings as baggage for captivity by day, dug through the wall for myself in the evening, and went out in secret. I was borne upon men's shoulders before them.

[8]Then in the morning, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [9]“Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the house that provokes, said to you, ‘What are you doing?’ [10]Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord, the Master, the Ruler and the Leader in Jerusalem and over all the house of Israel in their midst. [11]Say, “I am performing signs in her midst. As I have done, so shall it be to them, and they shall go into deportation and captivity.” [12]The ruler in their midst will be carried on men's shoulders and will go out secretly through the wall. He shall dig through that he may pass through it. He shall cover his face so as to remain hidden from any eye; and he himself shall not see the ground.[†] [13]I will spread out My net over him, and he shall be caught in My enclosure. I will lead him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it, though he shall die there. [14]I will scatter to every wind all his assistants around him, and all his auxiliaries; and I will unsheathe a sword after them. [15]Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them in the countries. [16]But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, famine, and

pestilence so they may declare all their lawlessness among the nations where they go. They shall know that I am the Lord.’ ”

[17]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [18]“Son of man, you shall eat your bread in sorrow and drink your water with torment and affliction.[†] [19]You shall say to the people of the land, ‘Thus says the Lord to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the land of Israel: “They shall eat their bread in poverty and drink their water in desolation, that the land may be destroyed with its fullness; for all who dwell in it are ungodly. [20]Their inhabited cities shall be utterly wasted and their land destroyed. You shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

[21]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [22]“Son of man, what is your parable about the land of Israel which says, ‘The days are far off; the vision has perished’? [23]Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I shall remove this parable, and no longer shall the house of Israel repeat this parable.” For you shall say to them, “The days are at hand, and the word of every vision. [24]For there shall no longer be any false vision or favorable prophesying in the midst of the children of Israel. [25]For I, the Lord, shall speak my words; I will speak and perform them. I shall delay no longer, because in your days, O house which provokes, I will speak the word and perform it,” says the Lord.’ ”[†]

[26]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [27]“Son of man, behold, the house of Israel which provokes is surely saying, ‘The vision this man sees is many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.’

[28]Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “All My words I speak shall no longer be delayed. I will speak and do,” says the Lord.’ ”

Woe to False Prophets

13 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel. You shall prophesy and say to them, ‘Hear the word of the Lord.

[3]‘Thus says the Lord: “Woe to those who prophesy from their hearts, but who see nothing at all! [4]O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts.[†] [5]They do not stand in a firm place, and they gather flocks in the house of Israel. They will not stand up who say, ‘In the day of the Lord.’ [6]They see lies and prophesy vain things. They say, ‘The Lord says,’ but the Lord did not send them; yet they begin to establish the word. [7]Have you not seen a false vision, and spoken worthless prophecies?’ ”

[8]“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Because your words are lies and your prophecies are worthless, therefore I am against you,” says the Lord. [9]“I shall stretch out My hand against the prophets who see lies and utter worthless things. They will not exist for the instruction of My people, neither shall they be written down in the record of the house of Israel, nor enter the land of Israel. They shall know that I am the Lord. [10]Because they have deceived My people, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ and there is no peace; and one builds a wall, and they plaster it—it shall certainly fall.[†] [11]Say to those who plaster it, ‘It will fall,’ for there shall be flooding rain; and I will send hailstones against its joints, and it shall fall; and a wind will rise up and break it down. [12]Behold, the wall has fallen, and will not they say to you,

‘Where is the mortar you used to plaster it?’ ” [13]Therefore thus says the Lord: “I will also bring forth a driving and furious wind, and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger. They shall be swept away in anger, and there shall be a flooding rain in My wrath; and I shall bring down hailstones in My anger for complete destruction. [14]So I will break down the wall you plastered, and it shall fall. I shall lay it on the ground, and its foundations will be revealed; and you will be consumed with rebukes. You shall know that I am the Lord. [15]Thus will I accomplish My anger on the wall and on those who plastered it—it shall fall.” So I said to you, “The wall is no more, nor those who plastered it; [16]even so are the prophets of Israel who prophesy over Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,” says the Lord.’

[17]“As for you, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy from their own heart, and prophesy against them. [18]You shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Woe to the women who sew pillows under every elbow, and make coverings for every head of every age, to mislead souls! The souls of my people are turned aside, and they keep alive souls for themselves. [19]They desecrated My people for the sake of a handful of barley and for pieces of bread, so as to kill souls which should not die, and to keep souls alive which should not live, while you prophesy to a people who listen to worthless speeches.”

[20]‘Therefore, thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am against your pillows whereby you conspire against souls. I will tear them from your arms and free their souls, which you turned aside so as to scatter them. [21]I will tear away your coverings and deliver My people out of your hand. They shall no

longer be in your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord. [22]Because you have turned aside the heart of the righteous man unjustly—whom I did not turn aside—so as to strengthen the hands of the lawless man, that he should not completely turn from his evil way and live; [23]therefore, you shall no longer see false visions, nor utter prophecies; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

Woe to the Idolatrous Elders

14 Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. [2]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [3]“Son of man, these men devised inventions in their hearts, and placed before their face the stumbling block of their wrongdoings. Shall I indeed answer them? [4]Therefore speak to them, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Any man of the house of Israel who devises inventions in his heart, and places before his face the stumbling block of his wrongdoing, and then comes to the prophet, I, the Lord, will answer him according to the things in which his mind is entangled, [5]so as to lead astray the house of Israel according to their hearts, which are completely alienated from Me in their inventions.’ ”

[6]“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “Be converted and turn away from your practices and all your ungodliness; then turn your faces back again. [7]For any man from the house of Israel, or the resident aliens who sojourn in Israel, who alienates himself from Me, and devises inventions in his heart, and places before his face the stumbling block of his wrongdoing, and comes to the prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, then I, the Lord, will answer him according to the things that entangle his mind. [8]I shall set My face against that man, and make him

desolate and ruined, and remove him from the midst of My people. You shall know that I am the Lord. [9]If the prophet is led astray and speaks, I, the Lord, have led that prophet astray; and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from the midst of My people Israel. [10]So they shall bear their wrongdoing—the one who inquired shall bear his wrongdoing according to his wrong, and likewise it shall be for the prophet, [11]so the house of Israel may not stray from Me, nor be defiled any longer with all their transgressions, but be My people and I their God," says the Lord.' "

Four Punishments

[12]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [13]"Son of man, if a land sins against Me by committing a trespass, I shall stretch out My hand against it. I shall cut off its supply of bread, send famine upon it, and remove man and cattle from it. [14]Even though these three men: Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord.

[15]"If again I bring wild animals upon the land and punish it, and it becomes desolate because men fear the wild animals, [16]even though these three men were in the land, as I live," says the Lord, "neither sons nor daughters would be saved. Instead, only they themselves would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.

[17]"Or again, if I should bring a sword on that land and say, 'Let a sword go through the land,' and I removed man and cattle from it, [18]even though these three men were in it, as I live," says the Lord, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be delivered.

[19]“Or if I should send death upon the land and pour out My anger upon it in blood, to destroy both man and cattle from it, [20]and Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,” says the Lord, “neither sons nor daughters would be left. Only they by their righteousness would deliver their souls.”

[21]Thus says the Lord: “But even if I send upon Jerusalem My four evil punishments—sword, famine, wild animals, and death—to destroy from it both man and cattle, [22]yet behold, the remnant in it, those of it who are saved, who bring out sons and daughters from it, behold, these shall go forth to you. You will see their ways and inventions and be sorry over the evils I brought upon Jerusalem, even all the evils I brought upon it. [23]Then they will console you, because you will see their ways and their inventions; and you will know I have not done in vain whatever I did in it,” says the Lord.

The Worthless Vine

15 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, of all the wood of the branches in the forest, what would be made from the wood of the vine? [3]Would they take wood from it to make something for profit? Would they take a peg from it on which to hang some object? [4]It is only thrown into the fire to be consumed, for the fire consumes what is pruned from it each year; thus nothing is left. So will it be useful for profit? [5]Not even while it was whole would it be useful for profit. How much less useful would it be once the fire devoured it?

[6]“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I give to the fire to be consumed, so I give the

inhabitants of Jerusalem; [7]and I shall set My face against them. They will get away from the fire, yet fire will devour them. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I set My face against them. [8]Thus I shall give the land over to ruin, because they utterly transgressed,' says the Lord."

God's Love for Lawless Jerusalem

16 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [2]"Son of man, testify emphatically to Jerusalem concerning her lawlessness. [3]You shall say, 'Thus says the Lord to Jerusalem: "Your root and birth are from the land of Canaan. Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. [4]As for your birth, on the day you were born they did not bind your breasts, nor were you washed in water. Neither were you salted with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.[†] [5]Nor did My eye pity you to do any one of these things for you, to suffer anything for you; but you were cast out into the open field because of the perversity of your soul on the day you were born.

[6]"As I passed by, I saw you defiled in your blood. So I said to you, 'Let there be life out of your blood, and multiply.' [7]I made you as a field in full bloom, and you multiplied, became great, and entered into great cities. Your breasts were firm and your hair grew, but you were naked and behaved improperly. [8]As I passed by and saw you, behold, it was your time, a time for lodging people. So I spread My wings over you, covered your shame, and swore an oath to you. I entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord. [9]"Then I washed you in water, washed away your blood, and anointed you with oil. [10]I clothed you in embroidered garments with purple underneath. I dressed you with fine linen and covered

you with a veil of fine silk. [11]I adorned you with jewelry and put bracelets on your wrists and a necklace around your neck. [12]I put a ring in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a crown of boasting on your head. [13]Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey. You became very beautiful. [14]Your name went out among the nations for your beauty, because it was perfected with elegance and beauty which I put upon you," says the Lord.

Playing the Prostitute

[15]"But you put your trust in your beauty, played the prostitute because of your name, and poured out your fornication on everyone passing by. [16]You took cloth from your garments, made idols of needlework for yourself, and committed fornication with them. But you should never have entered into such a thing, nor should this have taken place. [17]You also took the fine jewelry of My gold and silver that I gave you and made male images for yourself, and committed fornication with them. [18]You took your embroidered garments and clothed them. Then you set before them My oil and incense, [19]and took My bread which I gave you—the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey I fed you—and set it before them as a fragrant offering; and so it was," says the Lord. [20]"You also took your sons and daughters whom you bore, and sacrificed these to them to be destroyed, and committed fornication as if that were a small matter. [21]Besides your fornication, you slaughtered your children and offered them as a sacrifice to ward off evil from yourselves. [22]Thus you no longer remember the days of

your youth, when you were naked and behaved improperly, and lived defiled in your blood.

[23]“So it came to pass, after all your evils,” says the Lord, [24]“that you also built for yourself a house of fornication, and made a public place for yourself in every street; [25]and at the beginning of every road, you built your brothel and ravaged your beauty. You spread your legs to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of prostitution. [26]You committed fornication with the children of Egypt, your fleshly neighbor, and committed fornication in many ways, to provoke Me to anger. [27]So when I stretch out My hand against you, then I will abolish your customs and will deliver you over to souls who hate you, even to the daughters of foreign lands, who will turn you aside from your way wherein you were ungodly. [28]You also committed fornication with the daughters of Assyria, and even then you were not satisfied; indeed you committed fornication with them and were not satisfied. [29]You multiplied your covenants with the Chaldeans, and not even with these were you satisfied. [30]Why should I make a covenant with your daughter,” says the Lord, “when you do all these things, the deeds of a prostitute? So you committed threefold fornication.

An Adulterous Wife

[31]“With your daughters, you built a house of prostitution at the beginning of every road, set up your high place in every street, and became as a prostitute gathering wages. [32]An adulterous wife is like you, who prefers a whore's wages to her own husband. [33]She even gives wages to those who commit fornication with her; and you give wages to all your

lovers, and load them with wages, so they should come to you from all around for your prostitution. [34]So there happened in you a perverseness in your prostitution beyond that of other women, and they committed fornication with you when you gave them wages; and no wages were received by you; thus perverseness happened in you.

[35]“Now then, prostitute, hear the word of the Lord! [36]Thus says the Lord: ‘Because you poured out your money, and your shamefulness was uncovered in your prostitution with your lovers, and because of your many inventions of lawlessness, and the blood of your children you gave to them; [37]therefore, behold, I will gather against you all your lovers with whom you consorted, and all those you loved, and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from all around and will uncover your evil deeds before them, so they may see all your shame. [38]Thus I will be avenged on you with the vengeance of an adulteress, and bring upon you the blood of fury and jealousy. [39]I shall deliver you into their hands, and they will demolish your house of prostitution and destroy your high place. They will strip you of your clothes, take your proud jewelry, and leave you naked and in disgrace. [40]They also shall bring up a multitude against you to stone you with stones, and to strike you down with their swords. [41]They will burn down your houses and execute punishments on you in the sight of many women. Then I shall turn you back from prostitution, and you will no longer give wages. [42]So I shall discharge My anger against you, then My jealousy will depart from you. I shall be at rest and no longer concerned for you. [43]Because you did not remember the day of your youth, but grieved Me with all these things, therefore behold, I recompensed your deeds on

your own head,’ says the Lord. For thus you committed ungodliness beyond all your other lawlessness.

[44]“These are all the things they spoke against you in a parable, saying, ‘Like mother, like daughter!’[†] [45]You are your mother's daughter, rejecting her husband and children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who reject their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. [46]Your elder sister who dwells with her daughters to the north of you is Samaria, and your younger sister who dwells to the south of you is Sodom and her daughters. [47]You not only walked in their ways and acted according to their lawlessness; but, as if that were too little, you excelled more than they in all your ways.

[48]“As I live,” says the Lord, “surely your sister Sodom and her daughters have carried on in the manner you and your daughters have done. [49]Surely this was the lawless action of your sister Sodom, namely, arrogance. For in fullness of bread and abundance of wine, she and her daughter lived in self-indulgence. This belonged to her and her daughters, but they did not give a helping hand to the poor and needy. [50]So they were haughty and committed acts of lawlessness before Me; therefore, I removed them as I saw fit. [51]But Samaria did not commit half your sins, for you multiplied your lawlessness beyond them, and declared your sisters righteous by all the lawless deeds you committed. [52]Therefore, bear your punishment, for you corrupted your sisters by your sins, sins more lawless than their own. You made them appear more righteous than yourself. Yes, be disgraced, and bear your dishonor in which you declared your sisters righteous.

[53]“I will turn away from their faithlessness, the faithlessness of Sodom and her daughters, and I will turn away from the faithlessness of Samaria and her daughters. I will also turn away from your faithlessness in the midst of them, [54]so you may bear your punishment and be dishonored by all you did to provoke My anger. [55]But your sister Sodom and her daughters shall be restored as they were from the beginning, and Samaria and her daughters shall be restored as they were from the beginning. Even you and your daughters shall be restored as you were from the beginning. [56]Surely your sister Sodom was not mentioned by your mouth in the days of your arrogance, before your evils were uncovered. [57]Even now you are a disgrace to the daughters of Syria and all those around her, and to the daughters of the foreigners around you on every side. [58]By your deeds of ungodliness and lawlessness, you received these things,” says the Lord.

The Covenant Remembered

[59]“For thus says the Lord: ‘I will deal with you as you have done, as you dishonored these things so as to break my covenant.[†] [60]Nevertheless I shall remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and raise up an everlasting covenant for you. [61]Then you will remember your way and be utterly dishonored when you receive your older and younger sisters. I shall give them to you for strengthening, but not because of your covenant. [62]But I shall raise up My covenant with you. Then you will know that I am the Lord, [63]that you may remember and be ashamed, and may never open your mouth again because of your dishonor, when I am reconciled to you for all you did,’ says the Lord.”

Two Eagles and a Vine

17 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] 2“Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel. 3You shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “A great eagle—with large wings, spreading them out very far, and full of talons, and with the design to enter Lebanon—took the choice branches of the cedar. 4He nipped off its topmost tender twig, carried it to the land of Canaan, and set it in the fortified city. 5Then he took some of the seed of the land, planted it in a fertile field by much water, and set it in a conspicuous place. 6So it grew and became a weak vine, small in size as to its appearance. Its branches were on it and its roots under it. So it became a vine, put forth shoots, and extended into a vine that grows up trees.

7“But there was another great eagle with large wings and many talons; and behold, this vine and her roots turned itself toward him, and stretched its branches toward him, that he might water it together with the soil where it was planted. 8She thrives in a good field by much water, so as to produce shoots and bear fruit, that she may be a large vine.’ ”

9“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Will it prosper? Will not the roots of her tender stem and fruit be blighted, and all its shoots be withered? Yes, no mighty arm or many people will be needed to pluck it up by its roots. 10Behold, it thrives, but will it prosper? Will it not utterly wither when the wind and burning heat touch it? It shall be dried up, its growth together with it soil.” ’ ”

[11]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [12]“Son of man, say now to the house that provokes, ‘Do you not understand what these things mean?’ Tell them, ‘When the king of Babylon comes to Jerusalem, he will take its king and rulers, and take them with himself to Babylon. [13]He will also take one from the royal seed, and make a covenant with him, and place him under oath. [14]Then he will take away the leaders of the land that it may become a weak kingdom, so as never to lift itself up, that he may preserve his covenant and establish it. [15]But this one shall revolt from him and send his messengers to Egypt, so they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who acts as an adversary escape? Can he break the covenant and be delivered? [16]As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘he shall certainly die in the midst of Babylon, in the place where the king dwells who made him king, who dishonored My oath and broke My covenant. [17]But with a small army and few people, Pharaoh shall wage war against him by throwing up a mound and building engines of war, so as to carry away souls. [18]So he will not escape when he does all these things to him, because he dishonored the oath by breaking the covenant, although he gave his hand in trust.’ [19]Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “As I live, surely My covenant which he broke and My oath which he dishonored—I will recompense these things on his head. [20]I will spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in its enclosure. [21]His whole line of battle will fall by the sword, and those who remain I will scatter to every wind. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken.’ ”

[22]“Therefore, thus says the Lord: ‘I shall take the choice branches of the cedar from its top and nip off their heart, and plant it on a high mountain.[†]

[23]I shall hang it on a lofty mountain of Israel, yes, I will plant it; and it will bring forth shoots, produce fruit, and be a great cedar. Under it, every kind of wild animal will take rest, every kind of bird will rest in its shade, and its branches will be restored. [24]So all the trees of the field will know that I, the Lord, am He who humbles the high tree and exalts the humble tree, who dries up the green tree and makes the dry tree flourish. I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it.' "

Personal Accountability

18 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]"Son of man, what is the meaning of this parable among the children of Israel which says, 'The fathers eat unripe grapes, and the children's teeth grind'? [3]As I live," says the Lord, "you shall no longer use this parable in Israel. [4]For all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine.

"The soul who sins, he shall die. [5]But the man who is righteous and does judgment and righteousness, [6]who will not eat on the mountains, or lift up his eyes to the inventions of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife, and who will not approach a woman during her menstruation, [7]or oppress any man, but who will restore to the debtor his pledge, and commit no robbery, but who will give his bread to the hungry and cover the naked, [8]and who will not lend his money with interest, but will turn his hand from wrongdoing, and do righteous judgment between a man and his neighbor, [9]and walk in My ordinances, and keep My requirements to do them—this man is righteous. He will surely live!" says the Lord.

[10]“But if he begets a troublesome son, who sheds blood, commits sins, [11]does not walk in the way of his righteous father, but eats on the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife, [12]oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore a pledge, sets his eyes on the idols, commits lawlessness, [13]exacts interest, and takes unjust gains—this son shall not live, because he did all this lawlessness. He will surely die, and his blood shall be upon himself.

[14]“If, however, he begets a son who sees all the sins his father commits, but fears and does not do according to these things— [15]does not eat on the mountains, nor sets his eyes on the inventions of the house of Israel, nor defiles his neighbor's wife, [16]nor oppresses anyone, nor withholds a pledge, nor commits robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry, covers the naked, [17]and turns his hand from wrongdoing, nor receives interest, nor takes unjust gains, but does righteousness and walks in My ordinances—this son shall not die for the wrongdoings of his father. He will surely live. [18]As for his father, if he cruelly oppresses and robs his brother, and does these contrary things in the midst of My people, he shall die in his wrongdoing.

Turn from Evil and Live

[19]“Yet you say, ‘Why does a son not bear the wrongdoing of his father?’ Because the son practiced righteousness, showed mercy, kept all My commandments and did them. Thus he will surely live. [20]But the soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the wrongdoing of his father, nor shall the father bear the wrongdoing of his son. The righteousness of a righteous man shall be upon himself, and the lawlessness of a lawless man shall be

upon himself. [21]But if a lawless man turns from all the lawless deeds he commits, keeps all My commandments, does righteousness and shows mercy, he will surely live and not die. [22]None of the transgressions he commits will be remembered. In the righteousness he does, he shall live. [23]Do I ever will the death of a lawless man," says the Lord, "since My will is for him to turn from the evil way and live? [24]But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits a wrongdoing, according to all the lawlessness a lawless man commits, then all the righteousness he does shall not be remembered. In the transgression he falls into and in his sins he commits, in these he shall die.

[25]"Yet you say, 'The Lord's way is not straight.' Hear now, all the house of Israel, is My way not straight? Is your way straight? [26]When the righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits a transgression, and dies in the transgression he commits, he should die because of it. [27]Again when a lawless man turns away from the lawlessness he commits and does judgment and righteousness, then he guards his life; [28]for he turned himself away from all the ungodliness he committed. He will surely live and not die. [29]Yet the house of Israel says, 'The Lord's way is not right.' Is not My way right, O house of Israel? Is not your way wrong? [30]I shall judge you, O house of Israel, each one according to his way," says the Lord. "Return and turn away from all your ungodliness, and it shall not be to you as a punishment for wrongdoing. [31]Cast away from yourself all your ungodliness you commit against Me, and make a new heart and a new spirit for yourselves. For why should you die, O house of Israel? [32]For I do not will the death of the one who dies," says the Lord.[†]

A Song of Lament

19 “As for you, son of man, take up a lamentation for the prince of Israel.[†] [2]You shall say, ‘Why did your mother became a young lion in the midst of lions? Among the lions she multiplied her young lions. [3]Then one of her young lions leaped off. He became a lion, and learned to catch prey—he devoured men. [4]The nations also heard of him. He was taken in their pit, and they brought him in a muzzle to the land of Egypt. [5]So she saw he was driven away from her, and her assurance perished.

‘Then she took another of her young lions and made him a lion. [6]He lived among the lions and became a lion. He learned to catch prey—he devoured men. [7]He prowled in his boldness, laid waste their cities, and destroyed the land with its fullness by the noise of his roaring. [8]Then the nations came against him from the countries all around, and spread their nets over him. He was taken in their pit. [9]They put him in a muzzle, and he came to the king of Babylon in a cage for wild animals. So they led him into a prison so his voice would not be heard on the mountains of Israel.

[10]‘Your mother was like a vine, like a blossom on a pomegranate tree, planted in water. Her fruit and branches grew because of much water. [11]She became a rod of strength for a tribe of leaders. She was exalted in her greatness in the midst of the stems, and saw her greatness in the multitude of her branches. [12]But she was broken to pieces in anger, for she was thrown down on the ground, and the wind and burning heat dried her chosen branches. She was punished, and the rod of her strength withered—fire consumed it. [13]So now they have planted her in the desert, in a

waterless land. [14]Fire went out from the rod of her chosen branches and devoured her. There was no rod of strength in her. Her tribe is a parable of lamentation, and it shall be for a lamentation.’ ”

The Will of the Lord, and Man's Rebellion

20 Again it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, that men from the elders of the house of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and they sat before me.[†] [2]Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [3]“Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Have you come to inquire of Me? As I live,” says the Lord, “I will not answer your inquiries.’ ” [4]Shall I utterly take vengeance on them, son of man? Testify to them concerning the lawlessness of their fathers.

[5]“You shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “From the day I chose Israel and made Myself known to the seed of the house of Jacob, and to those in the land of Egypt, and helped them with My hand, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God’— [6]in that day I helped them with My hand to lead them from the land of Egypt into the land I prepared for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land more abundant than all other lands. [7]I said to them, ‘Let each of you cast away the abominations before his eyes, and not defile yourselves with the practices of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.’ [8]But they fell away from Me and were unwilling to obey Me. They did not cast away the abominations before their eyes, nor abandon the practices of Egypt. Then I said I would pour out My anger and accomplish My wrath among them in the land of Egypt. [9]So I acted that My name would not at all be desecrated in the sight of the nations in the midst of whom they were,

and among whom I made Myself known in their sight, to lead them out of Egypt.

[10]"I brought them out of Egypt and led them into the desert. [11]I gave them My ordinances and made known My requirements to them, which if a man will do them, he shall live by them. [12]I also gave them My Sabbaths as a sign between Me and them, so they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. [13]I said to the house of Israel in the desert, 'You shall walk in my ordinances.' But they did not walk in them, and they rejected my requirements, which if a man will do them, he shall live by them; and they desecrated my Sabbaths exceedingly. Thus I said I would pour out My anger upon them in the wilderness, to utterly destroy them. [14]So I acted that My name might not be at all desecrated before the nations before whose eyes I brought them out. [15]I swore an oath against them in the desert that I would no longer bring them into the land I gave them, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land sweeter than all other lands, [16]because they rejected My requirements and did not walk in My ordinances; instead, they desecrated My Sabbaths and walked after the inventions of their hearts. [17]Nevertheless My eye spared them from utter destruction, and I did not make an end to them in the wilderness.

[18]"But I said to their children in the desert, 'Do not walk in the customs of your fathers, nor observe their requirements, nor have fellowship with their practices, nor defile yourself with them. [19]I am the Lord your God. Walk in My ordinances, keep My requirements and do them. [20]Sanctify My Sabbaths, and let them be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.' [21]But they rebelled against me, along with

their children. They did not walk in My ordinances or keep My requirements, which if a man will do them, he shall live by them; and they desecrated My Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out My wrath upon them in the desert, to accomplish My wrath against them. [22]But I did this so My name would not be desecrated in the sight of the nations before whose eyes I brought them out. [23]Thus I swore an oath against them in the desert, that I might scatter them among the nations and disperse them in the countries, [24]because they did not keep My requirements and rejected My ordinances. They desecrated My Sabbaths, and their eyes went after the inventions of their fathers. [25]Therefore I gave them ordinances that were not good, and requirements in which they should not live. [26]I will defile them by their gifts, when I pass through upon everyone that opens the womb, that I may destroy them.' "

[27]"Therefore speak to the house of Israel, son of man, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord: "Up to this point, your fathers provoked Me by the transgressions they committed against Me. [28]But I led them into the land I swore with an oath to give them, and they saw every high hill and every shade tree. There they sacrificed to their gods; and there they appointed fragrant offerings and poured out their drink offerings. [29]Then I said to them, 'What is this high place you go to?' So they call its name Bamah, to this day.' "[†] [30]Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord: "Do you defile yourselves with the lawlessness of your fathers, and commit fornication after their abominations? [31]You defile yourselves in the first fruits of your gifts with all your inventions to this very day. Shall I answer you, O house of Israel? As I live," says the Lord, "I will not answer you, nor will an answer occur to your spirit; [32]for it will not be as

you say, ‘We will be like the nations and like the tribes of the earth, to worship trees and stones.’

[33]“Therefore, as I live,” says the Lord, “I will reign over you with a mighty hand, with a high arm, and with anger poured out.[†] [34]I shall lead you out from the peoples and will receive you from the countries where you were scattered, with a mighty hand, with a high arm, and with anger poured out. [35]I shall bring you into the desert of the peoples and will judge you face to face. [36]As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I shall judge you,” says the Lord. [37]“I will make you pass under my scepter and bring you in by number. [38]I will select the ungodly from among you, and those who revolted; for I shall lead them out of their sojourning, and they will not enter the land of Israel. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

[39]“As for you, O house of Israel,” thus says the Lord and Master: “Each of you put away your practices, and after this, if you listen to Me, you will no longer desecrate My holy name with your gifts and practices. [40]For upon My holy mountain, the high mountain,” says the Lord and Master, “there all the house of Israel will serve Me to the end; and there I shall receive you, and look upon the first fruits of your offerings, together with all your holy objects. [41]I shall receive you as a fragrant aroma when I lead you out from the peoples, and receive you from the countries where you were scattered; and I shall be sanctified among you before the eyes of the peoples. [42]Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I lead you into the land of Israel, into the land I swore by an oath to give your fathers. [43]There you will remember all your ways and practices which defiled you; and you

shall bewail yourselves for all your evil. [44]Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I deal with you in the way, that My name be not desecrated according to your evil ways and corrupt practices,” says the Lord.’ ”

Fire in the Woods

21 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [2]“Son of man, set your face against Teman, and look against Darom, and prophesy against the forest which leads to Nageb. [3]You will say to the forest of Nageb, ‘Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord and Master: “Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green wood and every dry wood in you. The blazing flame shall not be quenched, and every face from north to south shall be burned up by it. [4]All flesh shall know that I, the Lord, kindled it, and it shall not be quenched.” ’ ” [5]Then I said, “By no means, O Lord and Master. They say to me, ‘This is a parable, is it not?’ ”

The Sword of the Lord

[6]So the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [7]“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and set your face against Jerusalem, and look against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel. [8]You shall say to the land of Israel, ‘Behold, I am against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and destroy both the unrighteous man and the lawless man from among you.[†] [9]Because I will destroy both the unrighteous man and the lawless man from among you, thus My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from north to south, [10]and all flesh will know that I, the Lord, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; and it shall not return

anymore.’ [11]As for you, son of man, groan with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. [12]It will be, if they say to you, ‘Why are you groaning?’ that you shall say, ‘Because of the news, for it is coming. Every heart will be oppressed, all hands will be feeble, all flesh and every spirit will faint, and every thigh will be stained with urine. Behold, it is coming and will be,’ says the Lord and Master.”

[13]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [14]“Son of man, prophesy and you will say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Say, ‘O sword, sword, be sharpened and furious, [15]that you may slay victims. Be sharpened, that you may be glistening and ready for destruction. Despise and reject every tree.’ [16]So he made it ready for his hand to hold. The sword is sharpened and ready to put in the hand of the slayer.’ ”

[17]“Cry out and wail, son of man, for this sword is come among My people; this sword is come among all the leaders of Israel. They shall be as strangers because of the sword that is come among My people; therefore, clap your hands, [18]because it is justified; and what if even the tribe is rejected? It shall not be,” says the Lord and Master.

[19]“So you, son of man, prophesy, and clap your hands, and take a second sword. The third is the sword of the slain, the great sword of the slain. It will amaze them, [20]that the heart may be oppressed, and the weak multiplied at every gate of theirs. They are handed over for slaughter by the sword, a sword well suited for slaughter, a sword well suited for glistening. [21]Pass through and strike from the right and from the left, wherever your

face may set itself. [22]I also will clap My hands together and let go My anger. I, the Lord, have spoken.”

The Sword of the King of Babylon

[23]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying:[†] [24]“So you, son of man, order two roads for yourself, for the sword of the king of Babylon to enter. The two roads will go forth from one region. There shall be a force at the top of the way leading to the city. [25]You shall order for a sword to enter against Rabbath of the children of Ammon, against Judah and against Jerusalem in its midst. [26]For the king of Babylon will stand at the ancient road, at the fork of the two roads, to practice divination by casting a stick, consulting the graven images, and inspecting the liver for soothsaying. [27]The divination against Jerusalem has come to pass—to set up barricades, to open the mouth with shouting, to lift up the voice with great shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, and to build engines of war. [28]He will be to them as one who practices divination before them, and he will bring their wrongdoings to remembrance.

[29]“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Because you caused your wrongdoings to be remembered in the revelation of your ungodliness, that your sins should be seen in all your ungodliness and ways of living—because you caused remembrance of them—you shall be taken captive. [30]Now you, O godless and lawless leader of Israel, whose day has come, whose end of wrongdoing has come at the proper time, [31]thus says the Lord: “You removed the turban and put on the crown; another will not follow. You humbled what was high and exalted what was low. [32]I will reckon it as

wrongdoing, wrongdoing! Another shall not follow it until He comes whose right it is, and I will deliver it to Him.’ ”

A Sword for Ammon

[33]“As for you, son of man, prophesy, and you shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord to the sons of Ammon and to their shame,’ and you shall say, ‘O sword, sword, drawn for slaughter and for an end; arise, that you may glisten. [34]While you are seeing a worthless vision, and while you are prophesying falsehood, and while you are handing over the necks of wounded and lawless men whose day has come, whose end of wrongdoing has come at the proper time, [35]turn back, and do not lodge in this place in which you were born, for I will judge you in your own land. [36]I will pour out My wrath upon you; I will breathe upon you with the fire of My wrath, and deliver you into the hands of barbarians, skilled in working destruction. [37]You will be fuel for the fire; your blood will be in the midst of your land. There will be no remembrance of you; for I the Lord have spoken.’ ”

The Sins of Jerusalem

22 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“As for you, son of man, will you judge the city of blood? Show her all her lawlessness. [3]You will say, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “O city that sheds blood in her midst—her time has come—and that makes inventions against herself, [4]so as to defile herself with their blood you shed, you fell away, and in the inventions you made you defiled yourself, and caused your days to draw near; and you have come to the end of your years; [5]therefore, I made you a disgrace to the nations and a mockery to all countries near you and those far

away from you. They will mock at you, saying, ‘She is abominable and unclean, and great is her lawlessness!’ [6]Behold, the leaders of the house conspired together within you, each with his relatives, to shed blood. [7]Within you they speak evil of father and mother, and behave unjustly toward the resident alien. Within you they oppress the orphan, and within you, the widow.[†] [8]Within you they despise My holy things, and within you they desecrate My Sabbaths. [9]Within you men are robbers that shed blood within you, and eat on the mountains within you. They do unholy things in your midst. [10]Within you they uncover the father's shame, and within you violate women set apart during their impurity. [11]One man acts lawlessly with his neighbor's wife; another defiles his daughter-in-law in ungodliness; and within you another violates his sister, his father's daughter. [12]Within you they accept gifts so as to shed blood. Within you they receive interest and unjust gains, and by oppression you bring your evil to the full. But you forgot Me,” says the Lord.

[13]“Therefore, if I strike My hands against the evils you bring to the full—against the things you are doing—and against the bloodshed occurring in your midst, [14]will your heart endure, will your hands remain strong in the days I deal with you? I, the Lord, have spoken, and will do it. [15]I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you in the countries; and your uncleanness will cease among you. [16]I shall make the Gentiles the owners of your inheritance. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

[17]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [18]“Son of man, behold, the house of Israel is mixed before Me—they are altogether mixed—the house is mixed together in the midst of the silver, with bronze, iron,

tin, and lead. [19]Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Because all of you are one mixture, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem, [20]as men gather silver, bronze, iron, tin, and lead into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to cast it like metal into a mold. Thus I shall gather you in My wrath, and bring you together and cast you. [21]I shall blow on you with the fire of My wrath and cast you in her midst. [22]As silver is cast into a mold in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be cast in her midst. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out My anger upon you.’ ”

[23]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [24]“Son of man, say to her, ‘You are the land not rained on, neither has rain come upon you in the day of wrath.’ [25]Her leaders are like roaring lions seizing prey, who devour souls by domination and receive honors in wrongdoing; and your widows multiply in your midst. [26]Her priests reject My law and desecrate My holy things. They no longer distinguish between the holy and the profane, nor between the unclean and the clean. They have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am desecrated in their midst. [27]Her rulers in her midst are like wolves seizing their prey, so as to shed blood and exploit others for greed. [28]Her prophets who anoint them will fall because they see worthless and false prophecies, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord,’ but the Lord has not spoken, [29]and because they oppress the people of the land in wrongdoing, commit robbery, oppress the poor and needy, and do not treat the resident alien with upright judgment. [30]So I sought for a man among them who would conduct himself rightly and stand before Me perfectly at all times in the land, so as not to wipe her out completely; but I did not find him. [31]Therefore I poured out My anger in the fire of my wrath to finish them, and I recompensed their ways on their heads,” says the Lord and Master.

Two Immoral Sisters

23 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother, [3]and they committed fornication in Egypt while still young. Their breasts fell while there, and their virginity was lost. [4]Their names were Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister; they were Mine, and they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, Samaria is Oholah and Jerusalem is Oholibah.

The Older Sister, Samaria

[5]“Oholah departed from Me and committed fornication. She gave herself to her lovers, the Assyrians, who drew near to her, [6]who were dressed in purple, leaders and commanders, all chosen young men, horsemen riding on horses. [7]Thus she committed fornication with them, all of them chosen sons of the Assyrians; and upon whomever she offered herself, with all their inventions, she defiled herself. [8]She did not abandon her fornication with Egyptians, for they slept with her in her youth. These men violated her virginity and poured out their fornication upon her. [9]Therefore I delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hands of the sons of the Assyrians to whom she offered herself. [10]They uncovered her shame, took her sons and daughters, and killed her with the sword. She became a byword among women, and they exacted retribution on her through her daughters.

The Younger Sister, Jerusalem

[11]“Her sister Oholibah saw this, and she indulged in her lusts more corruptly than she, and her fornication more than the fornication of her

sister. [12]She offered herself to the sons of the Assyrians, the leaders and commanders near her, men clothed in purple, horsemen riding on horses, all of them chosen young men. [13]I saw both defiled in the same way, [14]but Oholibah added to her fornication; for she looked at men portrayed on the wall, images of Chaldeans portrayed in color, [15]girded with embroidered belts around their waists and brightly colored turbans on their heads, the appearance of high rank to all of them, the likeness of the sons of the Chaldeans, their native land. [16]As soon as her eyes saw them, she offered herself to them and sent messengers to them in the land of the Chaldeans. [17]Then the sons of Babylon came to her, into the bed of love, and defiled her in her fornication. So she was defiled with them, and her soul fell away because of them. [18]She revealed her fornication and exposed her shame. So My soul withdrew from her, as My soul withdrew from her sister. [19]Yes, you multiplied your fornication, so as to call to remembrance the days of your youth, in which you committed fornication in Egypt. [20]For you offered yourself to the Chaldeans, whose flesh is like the flesh of donkeys, and their members as the members of horses. [21]But you did look upon the lawlessness of your youth, the things you did in Egypt in your lodgings, where were the breasts of your youth.

Judgment of the Younger

[22]"Therefore, Oholibah, thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I shall raise up your lovers against you, because of whom your soul fell away, and I shall bring them against you all around— [23]the sons of Babylon, all the Chaldeans, Pekod, Shoa, Koa, all the sons of the Assyrians with them, chosen young men, all leaders and commanders, men of high rank and

famous men riding on horses. [24]All will come against you from the north—chariots and wheels with a multitude of peoples, with shields and spears—and they will set up a guard against you all around. I shall give judgment to them, and they will judge you according to their judgments. [25]I shall put My jealousy on you, and they will deal with you in great wrath. They will take away your nose and ears, and strike down your remnant with the sword. They will take your sons and daughters, and fire will consume your remnant. [26]They will also strip you of your clothes and take the objects of your boasting. [27]Thus I shall turn back your ungodliness and your fornication from the land of Egypt; and you shall not lift your eyes to them, nor remember Egypt any longer.'

[28]"For thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will deliver you into the hands of those you hate, because of whom you withdrew your souls. [29]They will deal hatefully with you and take all the fruits of your labor and toil. You will be naked and disgraced, and the shame of your fornication and ungodliness will be revealed. [30]Your fornication caused this to happen to you, in that you acted as a prostitute with the nations and defiled yourself with their inventions. [31]You walked in the way of your sister; therefore, I shall put her cup into your hands.'

[32]"Thus says the Lord: 'You shall drink from the deep and large cup of your sister, a cup filled to the brim. [33]You shall be filled with drunkenness and feebleness, and you shall drink from the cup of destruction, the cup of your sister Samaria; [34]and I will take away her feasts and her new moons. For I have spoken,' says the Lord. [35]Therefore thus says the Lord:

‘Because you forgot Me and cast Me behind your back, therefore, bear the penalty of your ungodliness and prostitution.’ ”

Judgment of Both Sisters

[36]Again the Lord said to me, “Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? You shall declare their lawlessness to them. [37]For they committed adultery, and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their inventions, and passed through the fire the children whom they bore to Me. [38]So long as they did these things to Me, they defiled My sanctuary and desecrated My Sabbaths. [39]For as they were slaughtering their children for their idols, they also entered My sanctuary to desecrate it; for so they did in the midst of My house. [40]They also sent for men from afar by way of messengers; and as they were traveling, you washed yourself for them, made up your eyes, and adorned yourself with jewelry. [41]You sat on a furnished bed, with a decorated table before it, and they rejoiced over My incense and oil. [42]They played harmonious music, and put bracelets on their wrists and a crown of boasting on their heads, to attract the multitude of men coming from the desert. [43]Therefore I asked, ‘Are they not committing adultery and doing the deeds of a prostitute with these? Is she not indulging in prostitution?’ [44]Yes, they went in to her as men go in to a prostitute; thus they went in to Oholah and Oholibah, to commit lawlessness. [45]But righteous men will take revenge on them after the manner of an adulteress, and after the manner of women who shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is on their hands.

[46]“Thus says the Lord: ‘Bring up a multitude against them and give them up to trouble and plunder. [47]They will stone them with the stones of a crowd and stab them with their swords. They will kill their sons and daughters and set their houses on fire. [48]Thus I shall turn away ungodliness from the land, and all women will be taught not to imitate their ungodliness. [49]Your ungodliness will be recompensed upon you, and you will bear the sins of your inventions. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.’ ”

Parable of the Cooking Pot

24 Again the word of the Lord came to me in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, record for yourself daily, from this day, the day on which the king of Babylon laid siege against Jerusalem. [3]Speak a parable to the house which provokes, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Stand over a basin and pour water into it. [4]Put pieces of meat in it, every good piece, the thigh and shoulder full of meat, [5]taken from the choice cattle. Also pile fuel-bones under it, make it boil well, and let the cuts simmer.”

[6]‘Therefore thus says the Lord: “O bloody city, the basin in which there is scum, and the scum has not gone out of it. She brought forth the cuts, piece by piece, but no portion was selected. [7]For her blood is in her midst; I set it upon a smooth rock; I did not pour it on the ground, that the dirt may cover it, [8]that My wrath may come forth and take vengeance. I set her blood upon a smooth rock, so as not to cover it.”

[9]‘Therefore thus says the Lord: “I will also make a great display of fire. [10]I shall heap the wood on and kindle the fire, to consume the meat and

boil away the sauce. [11]I will set the basin on the coals, so its copper may become thoroughly heated and melted in the midst of her uncleanness, so her scum may be consumed, [12]and her abundant scum may not come forth from her. [13]Her scum shall be shameful, because you defiled yourself, and what if you will not be cleansed any more, until I have satisfied my wrath? [14]I, the Lord, have spoken it, and it will come to pass; and I shall do it. I will not hold back nor show mercy. According to your ways and your inventions, I shall judge you," says the Lord. "Therefore I shall judge you according to your bloodshed and inventions, you unclean, notorious, and provoking one." ' "

Death of Ezekiel's Wife

[15]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [16]"Son of man, behold, I will take away your inventions before your eyes in the line of battle, but you shall neither mourn nor weep. [17]There shall be groaning over bloodshed and mourning on bended knee. There shall be no braided hair on your head or sandals on your feet. You shall not be comforted by their lips, nor shall you eat the bread of men." [18]So I spoke to the people in the morning in the manner He commanded me, and that evening my wife died. The next morning I did as He commanded me.

[19]Then the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things mean that you are doing?" [20]So I answered them, "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, [21]'Speak to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I shall desecrate My sanctuary, the boast of your strength, the object of your desire, over which your souls spare nothing; and your sons

and daughters whom you left will fall by the sword. [22]You will do as I have done. You will not be comforted by their mouth, nor eat the bread of men. [23]Your hair will be on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will neither mourn nor weep. You will sink deep in your wrongdoings, and each of you will comfort one another. [24]Thus Ezekiel shall be a sign to you; according to all he does, you will do. When these things come, you will know that I am the Lord.' "

[25]'As for you, son of man, it shall not be as in the day when I take their strength from them, the arrogance of their boasting, the objects of their desire, and the arrogance of their souls, their sons and their daughters. [26]In that day, he who is rescued will come to you, so you will hear of it with your own ears. [27]In that day, your mouth will open before him who is rescued. You will speak and no longer be silent. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they shall know that I am the Lord.' "

Judgment on the Gentile Nations: Ammon

25 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]"Son of man, set your face against the children of Ammon and prophesy against them. [3]You shall say to the children of Ammon, 'Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: "Because you rejoiced against My sanctuary when it was desecrated, and against the land of Israel when it was destroyed, and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity; [4]therefore, behold, I shall deliver you over to the children of Kedem as an inheritance. They will dwell among you with their goods and pitch their tents among you. They will eat your fruit and drink your drinks. [5]I shall make the city of Ammon a pasturage for camels, and Rabbah a resting place for sheep. Then you will know that I am the Lord." [6]For thus says the Lord: "Because you clapped your hands, and applauded with your feet, and rejoiced in your soul against the land of Israel; [7]therefore, I shall stretch out My hand against you and give you as plunder to the nations. I shall utterly destroy you from among the peoples and cause you to perish from the countries. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

Moab

[8]'Thus says the Lord: "Because Moab said, 'Behold, the house of Israel and Judah is like all the nations,' [9]therefore, behold, I shall weaken the shoulder of Moab from its prominent cities—its choice land—as is the house of Beth Jeshimoth, above the spring of the seaside city. [10]I have given these cities, as well as the children of Ammon, as an inheritance to the sons of Kedem, so there may be no memory of the sons of Ammon. [11]Thus I shall take vengeance upon Moab, and they will know that I am the Lord."

Edom

[12]‘Thus says the Lord: “Because of what Edom did when it took revenge on the house of Judah, and because they remembered wrongs and exacted punishment,” [13]therefore, thus says the Lord: “I shall also stretch out My hand against Edom, and destroy man and cattle from it, and make it a desert. They will be pursued from Teman and fall by the sword. [14]I shall execute My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel, and they will do in Edom according to My wrath and anger. Then they will know My vengeance,” says the Lord.

Cretans

[15]‘Therefore thus says the Lord: “Because the foreigners exacted vengeance and raised up vengeance, rejoicing in their souls to destroy My people forever,” [16]therefore, thus says the Lord: “Behold, I shall stretch out My hand against the foreigners, and I shall utterly destroy the Cretans. I shall also destroy those who dwell on the seacoast. [17]I shall execute great vengeance, and they will know that I am the Lord, when I bring My vengeance upon them.” ’ ”

Judgment on Tyre

26 Again it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [2]“Son of man, because Tyre spoke against Jerusalem, saying, ‘Good, well done!’ she is crushed; the nations destroyed her; she is turned to Me; she who was full is made desolate! [3]Therefore, thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to crash the shore. [4]They will knock down your walls, O Tyre, and break down your towers. I shall scrape her dust from her and make her like a smooth rock. [5]It will be a drying-place for fishing nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,’ says the Lord. ‘It shall be as a place of plunder for the nations. [6]Also her daughters which are on the plain will be killed by the sword. Then they will know that I am the Lord.’

[7]“For thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, from the north I will bring Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon against you, O Tyre. He is king of kings, with horses, chariots, horsemen, and an army of very many nations.[†] [8]He will kill your daughters with the sword in the plain; he will establish outposts and build forts around you. He will establish a barricade and warlike works against you all around, and array his spears against you. [9]Your walls and towers will be struck down with his swords. [10]Because of the great number of his horses, their dust clouds will cover you, and because of the sound of his horsemen and the wheels of his chariots, your walls will shake when he enters your gates, like one who enters a city from the plain. [11]With the hooves of his horses, they will trample all your streets. He will kill your people with the sword, and bring down to the ground the substance of your strength. [12]He will plunder your army and strip your possessions. He will break down your walls and pull down your desirable houses. He will throw your stones, your timber, and your soil into the sea. [13]He will destroy the multitude of your musicians, and the sound of your harps will be heard no more. [14]I shall make you bare like the top of a rock, a place for spreading nets; you will never be rebuilt, for I have spoken,’ says the Lord.

[15]“For thus says the Lord and Master to Tyre: ‘Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when the sword is unsheathed in your midst? [16]Then all the rulers of the nations along the seacoast will step down from their thrones, lay aside their crowns, and take off their embroidered garments. They will be beside themselves as they sit on the

ground. They will tremble with fear at their destruction and groan over you. [17]They will take up a lamentation for you and say to you, “How were you destroyed from out of the sea, O renowned city that caused her fear to be on all her inhabitants?” [18]From the day of your fall, the coastlands will also be afraid.’

[19]“For thus says the Lord and Master: ‘When I make you a wasted city, like cities not to be inhabited, and when I bring the abyss upon you, and much water covers you, [20]then I shall bring you down to those who descend into the pit, to the people of old, and I shall make you dwell in the depths of the earth, like an eternal desert, with those who go down into the pit, that you may never be inhabited, nor raised up to the land of the living. [21]I shall give you over to destruction, and you will never exist again,’ says the Lord and Master.”

Lament for Tyre

27 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyre, [3]and you shall say to Tyre, situated at the entrance of the sea and market of the peoples on many coastlands, ‘Thus says the Lord to Tyre: “You say, ‘I clothed myself with beauty.’ [4]In the heart of the sea, your sons clothed you with beauty for Beelim. [5]Cedar from Senir was used by you in building. Boards of cypress timber were obtained from Lebanon to make masts of pinewood, [6]and they made your oars out of wood from Bashan. They made your sacred objects from ivory, and your groves of houses out of wood from the coastlands of Cyprus. [7]Your couch was made of fine embroidered linen from Egypt, to cover you with splendor, and to clothe you with blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah. They were your coverings. [8]Your rulers were the inhabitants of Sidon, and the Aradians were your oarsmen. Your skilled men, O Tyre, were your pilots. [9]The elders of Byblos and their wise men were in you. These men strengthened your counsel. All the ships of the sea and their oarsmen were yours, even to the far west.

[10]“Persians, Lydians, and Libyans were in your army. Your warriors hung shields and helmets in you, and they gave you glory. [11]The sons of the Aradians and your army were upon your walls. There were guards in your towers, and they hung their quivers on the walls all around your harbors. These sons completed your beauty.

[12]“Those from Carthage were your merchants because of the abundance of all your strength. They furnished your marketplace with silver, gold, iron, tin, and lead. [13]Greece and all the extended regions, these busied themselves in the trade of human lives and of vessels of copper for your markets. [14]The house of Togarmah furnished your marketplace with horses and horsemen. [15]The sons of Rodians were your traders. From the coastlands they multiplied your trade in ivory. [16]To those who brought in the goods, you paid them wages in return from the abundant market of your mixed goods: myrrh and embroidered works from Tharsis, and even people as merchandise. Ramoth and Chorchor also traded with you. [17]Judah and the sons of Israel, these traded with you. They traded in your marketplace the sale of wheat, myrrh, cassia, fine honey, oil, and resin. [18]Damascus was a merchant in your marketplace because of the abundance of all your power: wine from Helbon and wool from Miletos. They also provided wine for your marketplace. [19]From Asel, there came wrought iron and wheels for your market of mixed goods. [20]Dedan was your merchant, with choice animals for chariots. [21]Arabia and all the rulers of Kedar, these were your traders, bringing camels, rams, and lambs in which they traded with you. [22]The merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with you. They traded for

your wares the choicest spices, all kinds of precious stones, and gold. [23]Harran and Canneh also traded with you. Assyria and Chilmad were merchants in your marketplace, [24]as they brought trade in blue cloth, in choice treasures bound with ropes, and in cypress wood. [25]The ships of Tarshish were your merchants in abundance, with your market of mixed goods, and you were filled and heavily loaded in the heart of the sea.

[26]“Your oarsmen brought you into many waters, but the south wind broke you to pieces in the heart of the sea. [27]Your armies and the profits from your markets of mixed goods, your oarsmen and pilots, your counselors and merchandisers from your market of mixed goods, all your men of war who are in you, and the entire company in your midst will fall in the heart of the sea in the day of your fall. [28]At the sound of your cry, your pilots will be greatly afraid. [29]All who handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea will disembark from their ships and stand on the shore. [30]They will cry out in pain over you. They will cry out bitterly, put dust on their heads, and spread ashes under themselves. [31]Their sons will take up a song of grief and a lamentation for you, saying, [32]‘How great a profit did you find from the sea? The nations were filled from your abundance and the kings of the earth were enriched from your market of mixed goods. [33]Now you are broken to pieces in the sea, in the depth of water. Your market of mixed goods and all your assembly fell in your midst, along with all your oarsmen. [34]All the inhabitants of the coastlands are shocked over you. Their kings are greatly astonished, and their faces are covered with tears. [35]The merchants from the nations hiss at you, for destruction has come about, and you will be no more forever.’ ” ’ ”

The King of Tyre Is Overthrown

28 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [2]“As for you, son of man, to the ruler of Tyre, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, ‘I am God, and I live in the dwelling of God, in the heart of the sea,’ yet you are a man and not God, though you set your heart as the heart of God. [3]Are you wiser than Daniel? Or have not your wise men instructed you with their understanding? [4]Have you gained wisdom by your own understanding? Have you gained power for yourself by your own knowledge or discernment, and obtained gold and silver by yourself for your treasuries? [5]By your abundant understanding and trade you increased your power, and your heart was lifted up in your power.” [6]Therefore thus says the Lord: “Since you set your heart as the heart of God, [7]instead of this, behold, I shall bring foreigners against you, the plague of the nations. They will unsheathe their swords against the beauty of your knowledge and bring down your beauty in destruction. [8]They will bring you down, and you will die the death of the slain in the heart of the sea. [9]Will you still say, ‘I am God,’ before those who slay you? But you are a man and not God. [10]You shall perish by the hands of foreigners among the multitude of the uncircumcised, for I have spoken,” says the Lord.’ ”

Lamentation for the Ruler of Tyre

[11]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [12]“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the ruler of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “You are a seal of resemblance and crown of beauty. [13]You were the luxury of the paradise of God, adorned with every good stone: sardius, topaz, emerald, and diamond, sapphire, jasper, silver, and gold, stone of Liguria, agate, and amethyst, chrysolite, beryl, and onyx. You filled your treasuries and your storehouses with gold from the very day you were created. [14]I appointed

you to be with the cherub. I set you on the holy mountain of God. You were in the midst of the stones of fire. [15]You were blameless in your days from the day you were created, until wrongs were found in you. [16]By the abundance of your trade, you filled your secret rooms with lawlessness; thus you sinned. So you were cast wounded from the mountain of God, and the cherub brought you out from the midst of the stones of fire. [17]Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. Your knowledge was corrupted with your beauty. Because of the multitude of your sins I cast you to the ground. Before kings I set you forth as an example. [18]Because of the multitude of your sins and the wrongdoings of your trade, you desecrated your sanctuaries; therefore, I will bring fire from your midst which will devour you, to turn you into ashes upon your land in the sight of all who see you. [19]All who know you among the nations shall groan over you. You destroyed yourself, and you shall be present no more forever." ' "

Judgment on Sidon

[20]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [21]"Son of man, set your face toward Sidon, and prophesy against her, [22]and say, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I shall be glorified in you. Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I execute judgments in you and am sanctified in you. [23]Blood and death shall be in your streets, and those wounded by the sword shall fall on every side. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

[24]"Thus there will no longer be in the house of Israel a thorn of bitterness or a painful thorn from all who are around them, who dishonor them. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Israel Will Have Hope

[25]‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “I shall bring Israel from the nations where they were scattered, and I shall be sanctified among them in the sight of the peoples and of the nations. Then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. [26]So they will dwell there in hope, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell in hope when I execute judgment on all those who dishonor them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, and the God of their fathers.” ’ ”

Judgment on Egypt

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, set your face toward Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. [3]Speak and say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great dragon who lies in the midst of his rivers and says, ‘The rivers are mine, for I made them.’ [4]But I shall put hooks in your jaws and join the fish of your rivers to your wings, and I shall bring you and all the fish of your river up from the midst of your river. [5]Then I will quickly cast down you and all the fish of your river. You will fall to the surface of the plain, and you will not be gathered and buried. I will give you as food to the wild animals of the field and to the birds of the heavens. [6]Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they were a staff made of reed to the house of Israel. [7]For when they took hold of you with their hand, you broke it, and when every hand conquered them and they rested their hand on you, you crushed it and broke all their backs.”

[8]‘Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will bring a sword against you, and destroy man and cattle from you. [9]Thus the land of Egypt shall be destroyed and become a desert. Then they will know that I am the Lord, because you say, ‘The rivers are mine, and I made them.’ [10]Therefore, behold, I am against you and against all your rivers, and I shall turn the land of Egypt into a desert, to the sword and to destruction, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the borders of Ethiopia. [11]Neither foot of man nor foot of cattle will pass through it, and it will be uninhabited for forty years. [12]I shall make the land of Egypt a destruction in the midst of a land laid waste, and her cities will be laid waste for forty years. I shall scatter Egypt among the nations and disperse them like chaff throughout the countries.”

[13]‘Yet, thus says the Lord: “At the end of forty years, I shall gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. [14]I shall bring back the captives of the Egyptians and cause them to dwell in the land of Pathros, in the land from which they were taken; but they will be a lowly dominion. [15]Alongside all the dominions, it will not be exalted any longer among the nations, for I shall make them to be very small, so as not to be great among the nations. [16]So they shall no longer be to the house of Israel as an expectation to remind them to follow after their lawlessness. Then they will know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

Babylon Will Plunder Egypt

[17]Again it came to pass in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [18]“Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor strenuously against Tyre. Every head was made bald, and every shoulder rubbed raw; yet there was no reward to him nor his army serving against Tyre, for the labor

they expended on it. [19]Therefore thus says the Lord and Master: ‘Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will plunder it and carry off her spoil. It will be the wages for his army. [20]As compensation for his service in which he served against Tyre, I will give him the land of Egypt,’ says the Lord and Master.

[21]“In that day a horn shall spring forth for all the house of Israel, and I will give you an open mouth in the midst of them. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

Woe to Egypt and Her Allies

30 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Woe, woe be the day! [3]For the day of the Lord is near. It shall be the end of the nations. [4]The sword will come upon the Egyptians, and there shall be trouble in Ethiopia. The wounded will fall in Egypt, and her foundations shall collapse. [5]Persians, Cretans, Lydians, Libyans, and all the mixed multitude, and all the children of the covenant shall fall by the sword therein.”

[6]‘Thus says the Lord: “The supports of Egypt will fall, and the insolence of her strength will come down. From Migdol to Syene, they shall fall by the sword therein,” says the Lord. [7]“So they shall be wasted in the midst of desolate countries, and their cities shall be wasted in the midst of desolate cities. [8]Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I set Egypt on fire and crush all those who help it. [9]In that day messengers shall go forth, hurrying to destroy Ethiopia, and there will be trouble among them in the day of Egypt; for behold, it is coming.”

[10]‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “I shall destroy a multitude of the Egyptians by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. [11]His hand and the hand of his people, they are the plague of the nations, sent to destroy the land. They will unsheathe all their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain. [12]I shall make their rivers deserts, and I will destroy the land and its fullness by the hands of foreigners. I, the Lord, have spoken.”

[13]‘For thus says the Lord and Master: “I shall also destroy the men of high status from Memphis, and the rulers of Memphis from the land of Egypt; and they shall be no more. [14]I shall destroy the land of Pathros, and set Tanis on fire, and exact vengeance on Diospolis. [15]I will pour out My anger on Sais, the strength of Egypt, and I will destroy the multitude of Memphis, [16]and set Egypt on fire. Syene will be greatly troubled, there shall be a rupture in Diospolis, and there will be flooding waters. [17]The youth of Heliopolis and Bubastum shall fall by the sword, and the women will go into captivity. [18]At Taphnae, the day will be darkened, when there I break to pieces the kingly powers of Egypt, and there the insolence of her strength shall perish. A cloud will cover her, and her daughters shall be taken prisoners. [19]Thus I shall execute judgment on Egypt, for they shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

Pharaoh Punished by Babylon

[20]Again it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [21]“Son of man, I have broken the arms of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and, behold, it has not been bound up to be healed, and no plaster applied to make it strong enough to hold a sword. [22]Therefore thus says the Lord and Master: ‘I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break his strong and outstretched arms,

and throw down his sword from his hand. [23]I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them as chaff throughout the countries. [24]I shall strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword into his hand. I shall bring it upon Egypt, and he shall plunder and take spoils from it. [25]Thus I shall strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. [26]So I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them as chaff throughout the countries. Then all will know that I am the Lord.’ ”

A Warning to Pharaoh

31 Again it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [2]“Son of man, say to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his multitude, ‘To whom do you liken yourself in your high position?[†] [3]Behold, Assyria was a cypress in Lebanon, and he was beautiful in offshoots and high in greatness. His rule came to be among the clouds. [4]Water nurtured him, and the depths made him grow tall. The depths led her rivers around his trees, and sent forth her system into all the trees of the plain. [5]For this reason his greatness was exalted above all the trees of the plain, and his branches were enlarged because of the abundance of water. [6]All the birds of the heavens made their nests in his offshoots, and under his branches all the wild animals of the plain brought forth their young; and all the multitude of nations dwelt under his shadow. [7]Thus he was beautiful in his high position because of the multitude of his branches, for his roots were in much water. [8]There were no such cypresses in the paradise of God, and there were no pine trees displaying offshoots like these. Silver firs did not have branches like these. No tree in the paradise of God was like him in beauty because of the multitude of his branches, [9]and all the trees of God's paradise of splendor were jealous of him.’

[10]“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Because you increased in greatness, and you established your rule among the clouds, and I saw him when he was exalted;[†] [11]therefore, I delivered him into the hands of the ruler of nations, and he carried out his destruction. [12]Thus foreigners, the plague of the nations, destroyed him and cast him down upon the mountains. His branches fell in all the valleys, and his stems were broken in every plain of the land. All the peoples of the nations went down from their shelter and dashed him to the ground. [13]All the birds of heaven rested on his fall, and all the wild animals of the field came upon his branches, [14]that no trees in the water may ever again exalt themselves in their greatness, nor establish their rule among the clouds, and that no trees which drink water may stand in their high position. For all were delivered to death, to the depths of the earth, among the sons of men who go down to the pit.’

[15]“Thus says the Lord and Master: ‘In the day he went down to Hades, the deep abyss mourned him; and I stood over her rivers and restrained her abundant water. Lebanon mourned over him, and all the trees of the field fainted over him. [16]From the sound of his fall, the nations were shaken when I cast him down to Hades, together with those who descend into the pit. All the trees of splendor and the chosen plants of Lebanon, all that drink water, comforted him in the earth. [17]Yet they also went down to Hades with him among those slain by the sword, along with their posterity. They that dwelt under his shadow perished in the midst of their life. [18]To whom are you likened? Go down and be humiliated with the trees of splendor to the depths of the earth. You will sleep in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those slain by

the sword. Thus shall it be for Pharaoh and the multitude of his strength,’ says the Lord and Master.”

Lamentation for Pharaoh and Egypt

32 Again it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, take up a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt, and you shall say to him, ‘You are like a lion among the nations, and you are like a dragon in the sea. You assaulted with your rivers, troubled water with your feet, and trampled your rivers.’

[3]“Thus says the Lord: ‘I shall therefore spread a net over you of many peoples, and bring you up with my fishhook. [4]I shall stretch you out upon the earth, and the plains will be filled with you. I shall cause the birds of the heavens to settle upon you, and all the beasts of the whole earth to fill up on you. [5]I shall offer your flesh on the open mountains and saturate them with your blood. [6]The land shall be drenched with your excrement because of your multitude upon the mountains. I will fill the valleys with you. [7]When I extinguish you, I shall cover up heaven and make its stars grow dark. I shall cover up the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give her light. [8]All the bodies that give light in heaven shall grow dark over you, and I shall bring darkness upon your land, says the Lord and Master. [9]I will provoke to anger the heart of many peoples, when I lead you captive among the nations into a land you have not known. [10]Many nations will become saddened over you, and their kings will be utterly amazed when My sword flies in their faces, as they await their own fall from the day of your fall.’

[11]“For thus says the Lord: ‘The sword of the king of Babylon will come upon you with the swords of his mighty men, and I will strike down your strength. [12]All these men are plagues from the nations. They will destroy the insolence of Egypt, and all her strength will be crushed. [13]I will also destroy all her cattle from beside her abundant water, which the foot of man will trouble no more, nor will the footstep of cattle trample it. [14]Thus at that time, their waters shall become still, and their rivers will flow like oil, says the Lord, [15]when I give Egypt over to destruction, and the land becomes desolate with all its fullness, and when I disperse all who dwell in it. Then they will know that I am the Lord. [16]There is a lamentation, and you shall mourn over Pharaoh. The daughters of the nations shall mourn over him and over Egypt, and they shall mourn for her over all her strength,’ says the Lord and Master.”

The Nations Go Down to Hades

[17]Again in the first month of the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [18]“Son of man, lament over the strength of Egypt, for the nations will cast down her daughters dead into the depth of the earth, to those who go down into the pit. [19]They shall fall with him among those slain by the sword, and all his strength will sleep in death. The mighty men will say to you, [20]‘Be in the depth of the pit, for to whom are you superior? Go down and sleep in death with the uncircumcised among those slain by the sword.’

[21]“Assyria is there and all its company, and all the slain were put there. Their burial- place is in the depth of the pit, and his company are set round about his grave. [22]All the slain who fell by the sword are those who caused their fear to be upon the land of the living.

[23]“There is Elam and all his army all around his grave, and all the slain who fell by the sword, and the uncircumcised who went down into the depth of the earth, and who caused their terror to be in the land of the living. Now they bear their torment with those who go down to the pit among the slain.

[24]“Meshech and Tubal and all their strength were put there around about his grave. All his slain men, all the uncircumcised slain by the sword, who spread their terror in the land of the living, are there. [25]They sleep in death with the mighty men who fell of old, who went down to Hades with their weapons of war. [26]Their swords were put under their heads, but their lawlessness was placed on their bones, because they terrified the mighty men in the land of the living. [27]As for you, you will sleep in death among the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword.

[28]“There are the rulers of Assyria who yielded his strength to a wound of the sword. [29]They sleep in death with the slain, with those who go down into the pit. [30]There are the rulers of the north, all the commanders of Assyria, who, with their terror and their strength, go down slain into the pit. They fell asleep uncircumcised with those slain by the sword, and they bear their torment with those who go down to the pit.

[31]“King Pharaoh will see them, and be comforted over all their strength,” says the Lord and Master. [32]“For I caused his fear to be in the land of the living; but he shall sleep in death among the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude,” says the Lord and Master.

Ezekiel Made the Watchman

33 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, speak to the sons of your people, and you will say to them, ‘On whatever land I bring the sword, take one man from among the people of the land and make him their watchman. [3]When he sees the sword coming upon the land, he shall blow the trumpet and warn the people. [4]Then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet but does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. [5]For he heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning. So his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. [6]But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his transgressions; but his blood I shall require at the watchman's hand.’

[7]“As for you, son of man, I made you a watchman for the house of Israel, and you shall hear a word from My mouth. [8]When I say to the sinner, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not speak to warn the ungodly man to change his way, that lawless man will die in his lawlessness; but his blood I shall require at your hand. [9]But if you warn the ungodly man to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his ungodliness; but you have delivered your own soul.

[10]“As for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus you spoke, saying, “Our errors and our lawlessness are upon us, and we waste away in them. So how can we then live?’ ”[†] [11]Say to them, ‘As I live, thus says the Lord: “I do not will the death of the ungodly man. So the ungodly man should turn from his way and live. Turn heartily from your way, for why should you die, O house of Israel?’ ”

[12]“Say to the sons of your people, ‘The righteousness of a righteous man will not deliver him in the day he goes astray. As for the lawlessness of the ungodly man, it will not harm him in the day he turns from his lawlessness, but a righteous man who goes astray cannot save himself.” [13]When I say regarding the righteous man, this man puts his trust in his righteousness but commits lawlessness, then none of his righteousness will be remembered, for he shall die in the wrongdoing he commits. [14]Again when I say to the ungodly man, “You will surely die,” and he turns from his sin, does judgment and righteousness, [15]restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the ordinances of life without committing wrongdoing, he will surely live. Thus he will not die. [16]None of his sins he committed will be remembered, for he does judgment and righteousness. By doing these things, he shall live.’

[17]“Yet the sons of your people will say, ‘The way of the Lord is not upright.’ But it is their way that is not upright. [18]When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits lawlessness, he will die because of it. [19]But when the sinner turns from his lawlessness and does judgment and righteousness, he shall live because of it. [20]Yet this is what you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not upright.’ O house of Israel, I shall judge every one of you according to his ways.”

The Capture of Jerusalem

[21]Again it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the twelfth month, on the fifth day of the month, that one who escaped from Jerusalem came to me, saying, “The city is taken.”[†] [22]Then the hand of the Lord came upon me the evening before the man came, and opened my mouth. So when He came to me in the morning, my mouth was opened, and it was no longer closed. [23]Thus the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [24]“Son of man, those

who inhabit the desolate places in the land of Israel say, ‘Abraham was one man, and he inherited the land. But we are many, and the land was given to us as a possession.’ [25]Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “As I live, truly those in the desolate places shall fall by the sword, and those in the open plain shall be given to the wild animals as food; and those in the strongholds and caves I will surely kill. [26]For I shall make the land a desert, and the insolence of her strength will perish; and the mountains of Israel will be desolate by reason of no one passing through. [27]Then they will know that I am the Lord. I shall make their land a desert, and it will be laid waste because of all the abominations they committed.’ ”

Hearing, but Not Heeding

[28]“As for you, son of man, the sons of your people are talking about you by the walls and at the gateways of the houses. They speak as a man speaks to his brother, saying, ‘Let us gather and hear the words that proceed from the Lord.’ [29]So they come together before you as people do, and they sit before you to hear your words, but they will not do them, because a lie is in their mouth, and their heart pursues their own defilements. [30]For you are to them as a sweet, well-tuned song, and they will hear your words, but will not do them. [31]So when it comes to pass, they will say, ‘Behold, it has come.’ Then they will know a prophet was among them.”

Prophecy against Israel's Shepherds

34 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to the shepherds, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “O shepherds of Israel who feed themselves, should not the shepherds feed the sheep? [3]Behold, you drink the milk and clothe yourselves with the wool. You slay the fatlings, but do not feed My sheep. [4]You have not strengthened the weak, and the sick you have not revived. The broken you have not bandaged, and the misled you have not brought back. The lost you have not sought, and the strong you have not prepared for labor. [5]So My sheep were scattered, because there were no shepherds. So they became food for all the wild animals of the field. [6]My sheep were scattered in all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the face of the earth, and there was no one to seek them or to bring them back.”

[7]‘Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. [8]“As I live,” says the Lord and Master, “because My sheep became as plunder, and as food for all the wild animals of the plain, because there were no shepherds with them, nor did My shepherds search for My sheep, but fed themselves and not My flock”—[9]because of this, O shepherds, [10]thus says the Lord and Master: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and shall require My sheep at their hands. I shall turn them away so they may not shepherd My sheep. The shepherds will not feed them anymore, for I shall deliver My sheep from their mouth; and they shall no longer be as food for them.”

The True Shepherd

[11]‘For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I shall search for My sheep and care for them.[†] [12]As a shepherd seeks his flock on a day when there is darkness, and when a cloud separates the sheep, thus I will drive them from every place where they were scattered in the day of cloud and darkness. [13]And I shall bring them out from the Gentiles, gather them from the countries, and bring them into their land. I shall feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys, and in all the inhabited places of the land. [14]I shall feed them in good pasture and

on the high mountain of Israel, and their folds will be there. They will lie down, and there they shall rest in good luxury, and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. [15]I shall feed My sheep and refresh them; and they will know that I am the Lord," thus says the Lord and Master. [16]"I shall seek the lost, bring back the misled, bind up the broken, strengthen the fallen, protect the strong, and feed them with judgment."

[17]'So as for you, My sheep, thus says the Lord and Master: "Behold, I will distinguish between sheep and sheep and between rams and goats.[†] [18]Is it not enough for you that you grazed on the good pasture, that you trampled down the rest of your pasture with your feet, that you drank the clear water, but muddied the rest with your feet? [19]Thus My sheep grazed on what you trampled with your feet, and drank what you muddied with your feet."

[20]'Therefore thus says the Lord and Master: "Behold, I shall distinguish between the strong sheep and the weak sheep. [21]Because you pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and greatly distressed the weak; [22]therefore, I will save My sheep, and they will not be as plunder anymore; and I shall judge between one ram and another. [23]I shall raise up one Shepherd over them, and He will tend them, even My Servant David. He shall be their Shepherd,[†] [24]and I, the Lord, will be their God; and David will be the Ruler in their midst. I, the Lord, have spoken.

[25]"I will also make a covenant of peace with David, and utterly destroy the evil wild animals from the land. They shall dwell in the desert and sleep in the forests. [26]I will settle them round about my mountain and will give you rain, the rain of blessing. [27]The trees of the plain will also produce their fruit, and the earth shall produce her strength. They shall dwell on their land in the hope

of peace, and know that I am the Lord, when I break their yoke and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. [28]They shall no longer be as plunder for the nations, nor will the wild animals devour them; but they will dwell in hope, and no one shall make them afraid. [29]I will raise up for them a garden of peace, and they shall no longer perish with hunger, nor bear the insults of the nations. [30]Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, and they are My people, O house of Israel," says the Lord. [31]"You are My sheep and the sheep of My pasture, and I am the Lord your God," says the Lord and Master.' "

Prophecy against Mount Seir

35 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]"Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it, [3]and say to it, 'Thus says the Lord and Master: "Behold, O Mount Seir, I am against you, and I will stretch out My hand against you. I will cause you to become a desert, and you will be wasted. [4]I will also cause desolation in your cities, and you shall be desolate. Then you will know that I am the Lord. [5]Because you have an eternal hatred for the house of Israel, and laid in wait deceitfully with sword in hand as enemies, in a time of wrongdoing to the extreme; [6]therefore, as I live," says the Lord and Master, "truly you sinned even to blood, thus blood shall pursue you. [7]I will cause Mount Seir to become a desert and a desolate place, and destroy man and cattle from it. [8]I will fill your hills and valleys with your slain, and in all your plains and among you the slain shall fall by the sword. [9]I will make you an eternal desolation, and your cities will be inhabited no more. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

[10]“Because you said, ‘The two nations and the two countries shall be mine, and I shall inherit them,’ though the Lord is there; [11]therefore, as I live,” says the Lord, “I will deal with you according to your enmity, and I will be made known to you when I judge you. [12]Then you will know that I am the Lord. I heard the voice of your blasphemies when you said, ‘The desert mountains of Israel are given to us as food.’ [13]You boasted against Me with your mouth, and I heard it.” [14]Thus says the Lord: “When all the earth is in gladness, I will make you a desert. [15]You will be a desert, O Mount Seir, and all of Edom will be utterly destroyed. Then you will know that I am the Lord their God.’ ”

God's Blessing on Israel

36 “As for you, son of man, prophesy over the mountains of Israel, and say to the mountains of Israel, ‘Hear the word of the Lord.[†] [2]Thus says the Lord and Master: “Because the enemy said against you, ‘Good, well done! The ancient deserts have become ours as a possession;’ ” ’ [3]therefore, prophesy, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “Because you were dishonored and hated by those all around you, so as to be a possession for the rest of the nations, and because you became a byword and were disgraced by the nations”— [4]therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord to the mountains, the hills, the valleys, the brooks, the desert places, the desolated regions, and the abandoned cities, plundered and trampled underfoot by the nations that were left all around them— [5]therefore, thus says the Lord and Master: “Certainly in the fire of My anger, I have spoken against the rest of the nations and against all of Edom, because they gave My land to themselves as a possession with gladness, when they treated souls shamefully, so as to destroy them by plunder.’ ” [6]Therefore prophesy over the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the valleys, and the wooded vales, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My anger, because you have borne the insults of the nations. [7]Therefore I shall raise My hand against the nations around you, and they will bear their disgrace.

[8]“But My people will eat your grapes and fruit, O mountains of Israel, for they are drawing near to this time to come.[†] [9]For behold, I am for you, and I will have regard for you, and you shall be tilled and sown. [10]I shall multiply people upon you, upon all the house of Israel to the end. The cities shall be inhabited, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. [11]I shall multiply people and cattle upon you, and they will increase and bear young. I shall make you inhabited as in your beginning, and treat you well as in your former times. Then you will know that I am the Lord. [12]Thus I will beget people upon you, My people Israel, and they shall inherit you. You shall be as a possession for them, and you will not be deprived of children anymore.” [13]Thus says the Lord and Master: “Because they say to you, ‘You devour people, O land, and thus you are bereaved of your nation’; [14]therefore, you shall no longer devour people, nor be bereaved of your nation anymore,” says the Lord and Master. [15]“No longer will the disgrace of the nations be heard among you, nor shall you bear the insults of the peoples anymore,” says the Lord and Master.’ ”

The Cleansing of Israel

[16]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [17]“Son of man, the house of Israel dwelt upon their land, but they defiled it by their conduct and by their idols and uncleanness. Their conduct before me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. [18]Therefore I poured out My anger on them. [19]I scattered them among the nations and dispersed them as chaff into the countries. I judged them according to their conduct and their sins.

[20]So when they came to the nations, wherever they went, they desecrated My holy name when they said, ‘These are the people of the Lord, and they have come out of His land.’ [21]But I spared them for the sake of My holy name, which the house of Israel desecrated among the nations wherever they went.

[22]“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I will not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for the sake of My holy name, which you desecrated among the nations wherever you went. [23]Thus I will sanctify My great name, desecrated among the nations, which you desecrated in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, when I am sanctified among you before their eyes. [24]For I will take you from among the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your land. [25]I shall sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be cleansed from all your uncleanness, and I will also cleanse you from all your idols. [26]I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I shall take the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27]I shall put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My requirements, and you will keep My judgments and do them. [28]You will dwell in the land I gave to your fathers. You will be My people, and I shall be your God. [29]I shall save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. [30]I shall multiply the fruit of your trees and the produce of your fields, that you need never again bear the disgrace of famine among the nations. [31]Then you will remember your evil ways and your practices which were not good, and you shall be angry in your own sight for your lawlessness and your abominations. [32]Not for your sake will I do this,” says the Lord and Master. “As it shall become known to you, be ashamed and embarrassed of your ways, O house of Israel.”

[33]‘Thus says the Lord: “On the day in which I shall cleanse you from all your lawlessness, I shall also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the uninhabited regions will be rebuilt. [34]The land which was destroyed will be cultivated, because it will no longer be desolate in the sight of all who pass by. [35]Thus they will say, ‘That desolate land has become like a garden of luxury; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ [36]Then the nations yet remaining around you will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined cities and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it and shall do it.”

[37]‘Thus says the Lord: “For this I shall be sought by the house of Israel, that I might establish and multiply their people like sheep. [38]As holy sheep, as the sheep of Jerusalem in her feasts, thus shall the desert cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

Vision of the Dry Bones

37 Again the hand of the Lord came upon me, and brought me by the Spirit of the Lord, and set me in the midst of the plain, which was full of human bones.[†] [2]So He led me round about them, and behold, there was a great multitude of bones on the face of the plain. They were very dry. [3]Then He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” So I answered, “O Lord, You know this.” [4]Then He said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. [5]Thus says the Lord to these bones: “Behold, I will bring the Spirit of life upon you. [6]I will put muscles on you and bring flesh upon you. I will cover you with skin and put my Spirit into you. Then you shall live and know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

[7]So I prophesied as He commanded me, and it came to pass while I prophesied that, behold, there was a shaking, and the bones came together, each one to its joint. [8]So I looked, and behold, muscle and flesh grew upon them, and skin covered them over; but no breath was in them. [9]Then He said to me, “Prophesy to the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Come from the four winds and breathe upon these dead men; and let them live.” ’ ” [10]So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the Spirit entered into them; and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great assembly.

[11]Again the Lord spoke to me, saying, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope has perished, and we are lost.’ [12]Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will open your tombs, bring you up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. [13]Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your tombs to lead you, My people, up from their graves. [14]I will put My Spirit in you, and you will live; and I will place you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I have spoken, and I will do it,” says the Lord.’ ”

One Nation and One King

[15]Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [16]“As for you, son of man, take a rod for yourself and write on it, ‘Judah and the sons of Israel devoted to him.’ Then take a second rod for yourself and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the rod of Ephraim, and all the sons of Israel added to him.’ [17]Then you shall join them to one another for yourself so as to form one rod, and they shall be in your hand.

[18]“So it shall be, when the sons of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not tell us what you mean by these?’— [19]then you will say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will take the tribe of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, who are added to him, and I will give them to the tribe of Judah. They shall be one rod in the hand of Judah.’ ” [20]The rods on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. [21]Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “Behold, I will take the whole house of Israel from the midst of the nations where they went, and will gather them from every side, to bring them into the land of Israel. [22]I shall make them one nation in My land, even on the mountains of Israel, and there will be one Ruler over them. There will no longer be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms anymore, [23]so as to defile themselves with their idols. For I will deliver them from all their lawlessness whereby they sinned, and will cleanse them. They will be to Me as a people, and I shall be to them as their God.

[24]“My Servant David shall be the Ruler among them, and there will be one Shepherd of them all; for they will walk in My ordinances and observe My judgments, and do them. [25]Then they will dwell in their land which I gave Jacob My servant, where their fathers dwelt; and they will dwell upon it, and My servant David shall be their Ruler forever. [26]I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant, and I will establish My sanctuary in their midst forever. [27]My tabernacle shall be among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. [28]Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them, when My sanctuary is among them forever.” ’ ”

Gog Will Invade Israel

38

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,[†] [2]“Son of man, set your face against Gog and the land of Magog, the ruler of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, [3]and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the ruler of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. [4]I shall gather you and all your army—horses and horsemen, all armed with breastplates, and a large assembly with shields, helmets, and swords— [5]along with Persians, Ethiopians, and Libyans with shields and helmets, [6]and also Gomer and all belonging to him, and the house of Togarmah from the far north and all belonging to him, and many nations with you.

[7]“Be prepared; prepare yourself and all your gathering assembled with you; and you will be as an advance guard for Me. [8]He will be prepared after many days, and will come in the last years. He will come into the land turned away from the sword, when many are gathered together from the nations against the land of Israel, which was entirely a desert, and he will come forth from the nations against all who dwell in peace. [9]You shall arrive like rain, like a cloud to cover the land, you and all your army and the many nations with you.”

[10]‘Thus says the Lord and Master: “In that day it shall also come to pass that words will arise in your heart, and you will think evil thoughts. [11]For you will say, ‘I will go up to the rejected land. I will come against those who live in peace and quiet, and who dwell in a land that has no wall, and neither bars nor gates, [12]to plunder them and take spoils.’ I will turn your hand against a nation gathered from many nations, which acquired possessions and inhabitants in the midst of the land. [13]Sheba, Dedan, and Carthaginian merchants and all their villages shall say to you, ‘You come for plunder, to capture a prey and take spoils. You gather your assembly to take silver and gold, and to carry off possessions and take spoils.’ ” ’

[14]“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Will you not arise in that day, the day My people Israel dwell in peace? [15]Yes, you will come from your place out of the far north, you and the many nations with you, all riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army. [16]You will come upon My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come to pass in the last days that I will bring you against My land, that all the nations may know Me when I am sanctified in you before them.” [17]Thus says the Lord and Master to Gog, “You are he of whom I spoke in former days by the hand of My servants the prophets of Israel, in those days and years, that I would bring you up against them.

Gog Is Judged

[18]“Thus it shall come to pass in that day, the day Gog comes against the land of Israel,” says the Lord and Master, [19]“that My anger and jealousy shall arise in the fire of My wrath. I have spoken, ‘Certainly in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. [20]Even the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the wild animals of the plain, all the reptiles that creep on the ground, and all the people on the face of the land will shake because of the Lord's presence. Also, the mountains will break apart, the valleys will be done away with, and every wall will fall to the ground.’ [21]I will also summon every fear against Gog,” says the Lord, “for the sword of every man shall be against his brother. [22]I will judge him with death and bloodshed, and I will send a flooding rain and hailstones, and fire and brimstone against him and everyone with him, and also against the many nations with him. [23]For I shall be magnified, sanctified, and glorified, and known in the sight of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.’ ”

The Defeat of Gog

39 “As for you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the ruler of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. [2]I will gather and guide you, and raise you up from the far north, and bring you upon the mountains of Israel. [3]Then I will destroy the bow in your left hand and the arrows in your right hand; and I will cast you down upon the mountains of Israel. [4]For you and all with you shall fall, and I shall give the nations with you to the multitude of birds, to every fowl. But I will give you to all the wild animals of the field to be devoured, [5]for you will fall on the face of the open plain, because I have spoken,” says the Lord. [6]“I will also send fire upon Gog, and the coastal peoples shall dwell in peace. Then they will know that I am the Lord, [7]and My holy name will be known in the midst of My people Israel; and My holy name will no longer be desecrated. The nations will also know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. [8]Behold, it is coming, and you will know it shall be,” says the Lord and Master.

“This is the day of which I have spoken. [9]Those who dwell in the cities of Israel will also go out and make a fire with the weapons: the shields and spears, the bows and arrows, and the javelins and lances; and they shall keep the fire burning for seven years. [10]So they will not take any wood from the field, nor cut down any of the forests; rather, they will burn the weapons, and plunder those who plundered them, and despoil those who took spoils from them,” says the Lord.

A Burial for Gog

[11]“In that day it shall come to pass that I will give Gog a place of renown, a monument in Israel, a common burial place of those who come to the sea. There they shall bury Gog and all his multitude round about the edge of the

valley, and it will be called the Burial Place of Gog. [12]The house of Israel shall bury them, that the land may be cleansed in the space of seven months. [13]Yes, all the people of the land will bury them, and it shall be a place of renown for them in the day I was magnified," says the Lord. [14]"So they will appoint men continually to pass through the land to bury those bodies yet on the ground, to cleanse it by the end of seven months; and they will seek them out. [15]Everyone who passes through the land and sees a man's bone will also set a marker by it, until the grave diggers shall bury it in the Burial Place of Gog. [16]Indeed, the name of the city shall be Burial Place. Thus the land will be cleansed.' "

An Assembly of Triumph

[17]"As for you, son of man, say, 'Thus says the Lord: "Speak to every sort of bird and every wild animal of the field: 'Assemble yourselves and come; gather together from all sides to My sacrifice which I offered up for you, a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, and you will eat meat and drink blood. [18]You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the rulers of the earth: the rams, the young bulls, and the male goats; for they are all fatted animals. [19]You will eat fat until you are full, and drink wine until you are drunken from My sacrifice which I slaughtered for you. [20]You will be filled at My table, eating horse and rider, and the mighty man, and every warrior,' says the Lord.

[21]"I will set My glory in your midst, and all the nations will see My judgment which I executed, and My hand which I laid on them. [22]Then the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God from this day forward. [23]All the nations will also know that the house of Israel was led into captivity on account of their sins, because they rejected Me. So I turned My face away from them and delivered them into the hands of their enemies; and they all fell

by the sword. [24]According to their uncleanness and according to their lawless actions I dealt with them, and turned My face away from them.”

[25]‘Therefore thus says the Lord and Master: “Now I will turn back the captivity of Jacob and have mercy on the house of Israel; and I will be jealous for the sake of My holy name. [26]They shall bear their dishonor and the wrongdoing they committed when they dwelt upon the land in peace; and there shall be no one to frighten them. [27]Thus when I bring them back from the nations and gather them from the countries of the nations, I will be sanctified among them in the sight of the nations. [28]Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, when I reveal Myself to them among the nations. [29]But I will not turn away My face from them anymore, because I poured out My anger on the house of Israel,” says the Lord and Master.’ ”

Ezekiel's Vision: New City, New Temple

40 Again in the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, in the first month, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day, the hand of the Lord was upon me. [2]He took me in a vision of God into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain. On it, but opposite from me, was something like the structure of a city.[†] [3]He took me there, and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of gleaming bronze. He had a builder's cord and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood at the gate. [4]Then the man said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this? Look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your heart on everything I show you; for you were brought here that I might show them to you. For you shall reveal to the house of Israel everything you see.”

The East Gate of the Temple

[5]Now there was a wall around the entire outside of the house. In the man's hand was a measuring stick, six cubits long, each consisting of a cubit and a handbreadth, and he measured the width of the wall structure, one measuring stick, and the height, one measuring stick.[†] [6]Then he went to the gate which faced east, up seven stairs, and measured across the entrance of the gate, one measuring stick wide.[†] [7]Each gate chamber was one measuring stick long and one measuring stick wide. Between the gate chambers was a space of six cubits, and the second gate chamber was one measuring stick wide, one measuring stick long; and the entrance was five cubits. [8]The third gate chamber was one measuring stick wide and one measuring stick long. [9]The neighboring entrance was eight cubits, and the gatepost was two cubits, also the outer entrance of the gate.

[10]The gate chambers were three on one side and three on the other. There was one measurement to all three and one measurement to the entrances on this side and the other.[†] [11]He measured the width of the entrance to the gate, ten cubits, and the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. [12]The dimensions of the front of the gate chambers were equal, and the gate chambers were six cubits on this side and six cubits on that side. [13]Then he measured the gate from the roof of one gate chamber to the roof of the other, and the width was twenty-five cubits, from one gate to the other. [14]He measured the open inner court of the gate chamber, sixty cubits high, and there were twenty gate chambers all around. [15]From the open court of the gate outside into the open inner court of the gate chamber within was fifty cubits.[†] [16]There were hidden windows in the gate chambers and in their entrances on the inside of the gate all around, and likewise the entrances had hidden windows all around. There were windows all around on the inside, and on each entrance chamber were ornamental palm trees, equally displayed on one side and the other.[†]

[17]Then he brought me into the inner court; and behold, there were temple chambers and pillars all around the court; thirty chambers among the pillars. [18]The porches were behind the gates; corresponding to the same length of the gates was the underlying pillar. [19]Then he measured the width of the court, from the open air court of the gate which was to the outside to the open air court of the gate which faces out, a hundred cubits to the court which faces east.

The North Gate

Then he led me to the north side, [20]and behold, there was the gate facing north to the outer court, and he measured its length and its width.[†] [21]Its gate chambers, three on this side and three on that side, its gateposts and its porches, and palm trees, and they were the same measurement of the gate which faces to the east: its length was fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. [22]Its windows, its doorposts, and also its palm trees were just like the gate facing east, and it was ascended by seven steps, and the doorpost within. [23]A gate of the inner court was opposite the northern gate, in the same manner as the eastern gate, and he measured from gate to gate, one hundred cubits.

The South Gate

[24]Then he brought me toward the south, and behold, a gate was facing south; and he measured its gate chambers, gateposts, and archways according to these same measurements. [25]There were windows in it and in its archways all around like those windows. Its length was fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. [26]Seven steps led up to it, and its gateposts were within; and it had palm trees on its gateposts, one on this side and one on that side. [27]There was

also a gate on the inner court, facing south, and he measured from gate to gate toward the south, one hundred cubits, in the southerly direction.[†]

The Inner Court

[28]Then he brought me to the inner court through the southern gate, and he measured the southern gate according to these same measurements. [29]Also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways were according to these same measurements, and there were windows in it and in its archways all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. [30]There was the porch into the outer court, and palm trees were on its gatepost, and going up to it were eight steps.

[31]Then he brought me to the gate facing east, and he measured it according to these same measurements.[†] [32]Its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways were according to these same measurements. There were windows in it and in its archways all around, and it was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. [33]There were porches opening into the inner court, and palm trees were on its gateposts, on this side and on that side; and going up to it were eight steps.

[34]Then he brought me to the north gate and measured it according to these same measurements— [35]also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways. It had windows all around, and its length was fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. [36]Its porches were toward the outer court, and there were palm trees on its gateposts, on this side and on that side, and going up to it were eight steps.

A Place for the Sacrifices and the Priests

[37]There were its chambers and its gateposts at its gate, [38]and a drain for the second gate, so they might slay in it the sin offerings and trespass offerings. [39]Behind the drain line for the whole burnt offerings of the gate which faces north, there were two tables placed toward the east, and behind the second gate and its gate chamber, there were two tables toward the east.[†] [40]Four tables were on this side and four tables on that side, and behind the gate, there were eight tables on which they slaughtered the sacrifices. [41]There were also four tables of hewn stone for the whole burnt offerings, two cubits long, one cubit and a half wide, and one cubit high. On these they laid the instruments with which they slaughtered the whole burnt offerings and the sacrifices. [42]Inside were projections hewn out, a handbreadth wide, all around, and over the tables above, there were little roofs to cover from the rain and the drying wind.

[43]Then he led me into the inner court, and behold, there were two halls in the inner court, one behind the gate which faces north and bearing to the south, and the other behind the gate which faces to the south and bearing to the north. [44]So he said to me, “This hall which faces south is for the priests who have charge of the temple. [45]The hall which faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, from the sons of Levi, who come near the Lord to minister liturgically to Him.” [46]Then he measured the court, one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits wide, foursquare. The altar of sacrifice was in front of the house.

[47]Then he brought me to the entrance chamber of the house and measured the doorpost of the entrance chamber, five cubits on this side and five cubits on that side; and the width of the doorway was fourteen cubits; and the sills of the door to the entrance chamber were three by three on each side. [48]The length of the entrance chamber was twenty cubits, and the width twelve cubits, and one

would ascend it by ten steps; and there were pillars by the entrance chamber, one on this side and another on that side.

The Temple Interior

41 Then he brought me into the temple and measured its entrance, six cubits wide on one side and six cubits wide on the other side.[†] [2]The width of the entryway was ten cubits, and the sills of the gate were five cubits on this side and five cubits on the other side; and he measured its length, forty cubits, and its width, twenty cubits. [3]He also went into the inner court and measured the posts of the doorway, two cubits; and the doorway itself, six cubits high; and the width of the sills, seven cubits. [4]He measured the length of the doors, forty cubits, and the width, twenty cubits, in front of the sanctuary; and he said to me, “This is the holy of holies.”

The Wall and Its Chambers

[5]Next he measured the wall of the house, six cubits. The width of each side all around was four cubits on every side. [6]The side chambers were thirty-two in number, each next to the other, and the layout along the wall of the house all around was so one could see that all of them went together, and that nowhere did they touch the walls of the house. [7]As one went up from story to story, the side chambers became wider all around, because their supporting ledges in the wall of the temple ascended like steps; therefore, the width of the structure increased as one went up from the lowest story to the highest, by way of the middle one.[†] [8]The side chambers of the house all around were of a high layout of sides, equal in measurement to one measuring stick. The layout was six cubits. [9]The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was five cubits, and the open spaces between the sides of the house [10]and the halls measured

twenty cubits in width, all around the sides of the house. [11]The doors of the halls led to the open space: the one door led north, and the other door led south; and the width of the light of the open space was five cubits in width all around.[†] [12]That which made a boundary before the open space, like the edge of the sea, was seventy cubits wide; and the width of the wall which bordered was five cubits all around, and its length ninety cubits.

[13]Then he measured in front of the house, one hundred cubits long, and the open spaces and their boundaries and walls were one hundred cubits long. [14]Also the width of the face of the house, along with the open spaces before it, was one hundred cubits. [15]Then he measured the length of the boundary in front separating the open space, with its galleries on the one side and on the other side, one hundred cubits. The temple, its corners and the outer entrance area, [16]their thresholds and the latticed doors, were set so the narrow openings would give light through narrow openings to all three stories, like that of a fishnet. The house and all the neighboring structures all around were paneled with wood, the floor and from the floor up to the doorways, and the doorways opened up all three stories into the shaded light.[†]

The Holy Images

[17]As far as the nearby wall of the inner and outer courts and along upon the wall all around within and without[†] [18]were depicted cherubim and palm trees, between cherub and cherub. Each cherub had two faces, [19]the face of a man toward a palm tree on one side, and the face of a lion toward a palm tree on the other side. Thus it was depicted throughout the house all around. [20]From the floor to the threshold, the cherubim and the palm trees were interspersed upon the walls.

[21]The holy place and the temple were laid out square, and along the face of the sanctuary was what looked like a wooden altar.[†] [22]Its height was three cubits, and its length and breadth, two cubits. It had horns, and its ascent and walls were wooden. Then he said to me, "This is the table that is before the presence of the Lord." [23]The temple and the holy place had two doors. [24]The doors had two panels apiece, two folding panels on hinges: two panels for one door and two panels for the other door. [25]Depictions were upon them, cherubim and palm trees upon the doorways of the temple, like the depiction of the sanctuary, and excellent kinds of wood, as in front of the entrance without, along with hidden windows. [26]He measured from one side to the other along the canopies of the entrance chamber, and the sides of the house were joined together.

The Outer Court

42 Then he brought me out into the outer court, to the east, in front of the gate which faces north; and he brought me, and behold, there were five halls adjoining the open space and five halls adjoining the boundary facing north,[†] [2]up to a hundred cubits long toward the north, and the width was fifty cubits, [3]laid out in a pattern the same way as the gates leading into the inner court and the pillars of the outer court, and broken up into galleries of three stories in height. [4]In front of the halls there was a walk ten cubits wide and up to a hundred cubits in length. Their doorways faced north. [5]Now the upper walkways were just the same, because the pillars projected out from them, namely, the pillar which was below; thus was the pillar and the layout for the porches. [6]For they were in three stories and did not have pillars like the pillars of the outer courts; therefore, the upper level was projected out more than the lower and middle levels from the ground up. [7]There was light from without, as in the halls of the outer court which were facing the halls toward the north; they were fifty cubits in length. [8]Because the length of the halls which face the outer court was fifty cubits, and these were standing over against them, thus the whole was one hundred cubits. [9]Now there were doors of these halls at the entrance way for an outlet to the east, so one might enter through them from the outer court,[†] [10]by the light which strikes at the head of the entrance.

Halls for the Priest

Along to the south, along the open space and the boundary, there were halls, [11]and there was a walk in front of them also, according to the measurement of the halls facing north. They were as long and as wide as the others, and so were all their exits and entrances and all their lights and doorways. [12]So were the measures of the entrances toward the south, according to the doorways at the head of the walkway, as it were, the distance of a reed for light, and eastward as one went in by them.

[13]Then he said to me, “The halls toward the north and the halls toward the south, according to the pattern of the layout, are the halls of the holy place, where the priests who approach the Lord will eat the most holy offerings. There they will place the most holy offerings, the sacrifices—the sin offering and the trespass offering—for the place is holy.[†] [14]They shall not enter there, except for the priests. They shall not go out of there into the outer court, so those who draw near may be holy continually, and that nothing might touch their vestments in which they serve, because it is the holy place. They shall put on other garments when they touch the people.”

The Temple Exterior

[15]Now the measurement of the whole house was completed within. Then he led me along the way of the gate which faces east, and measured the whole pattern of the house all around in its plan.[†] [16]He stood behind the gate which faces east and measured five hundred measuring stick units of measurement. [17]Then he turned to the north side and measured five hundred measuring stick units of measurement. [18]Then he turned toward the west and measured five hundred measuring stick units of measurement. [19]Then he turned toward the south and measured five hundred measuring stick units of measurement. [20]The four directions were the same measurement, and he planned it out, and the enclosing wall all around was five hundred units to the east and five hundred units in width for setting out the boundary wall between the holy precinct and the remaining layout of the house.

The Glory of the Lord Fills the Temple

43 Then he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east, and led me out.[†] [2]Behold, the glory of the God of Israel was approaching from the way of the gate which faces east. The sound of His camp was like the sound of many voices redoubled upon each other, and the earth shone forth His glory with a brightness all around. [3]The vision I saw was like the vision I saw when I entered to anoint the city, and the vision of the chariot I saw was like the vision I saw by the River Chebar; so I fell on my face. [4]Then the glory of the Lord entered into the house by way of the gate which faces toward the east. [5]The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and behold, the house was full of the Lord's glory.

[6]Then I stood, and behold, there was a voice from the house, and a Man was standing with me. [7]He said to me, “Son of man, you have seen the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of

the house of Israel forever. No more will the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their leaders, by their fornication or murders of the leaders in their midst. [8]When they set My threshold by their thresholds, and My doorpost by their doorposts, with a wall between them and Me, they desecrated My holy name by their lawlessness, and I destroyed them in My anger and with slaughter. [9]Now let them remove their fornication from My presence, and the murders of their leaders, and I will dwell in their midst forever.

[10]"As for you, son of man, explain this house to the house of Israel, and they will cease from the shame of their sins; and describe to them its vision and its plan. [11]They shall take the chastisements for all the things they did, and you shall describe the house, its design, its exits, and its substance, and all its ordinances. You shall make known its laws to them and write them out in their sight. Then they will keep all My requirements and all My ordinances and perform them. [12]You will also show them the diagram of the house to be on the mountaintop and all its boundaries roundabout. It shall all be most holy.

TYPES OF MARY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Types of both Christ and Mary, His Mother, fill the Old Testament. Indeed, most of the Old Testament types of Mary—a natural consequence of her essential role in the Incarnation of her Son, Jesus Christ—reveal the awesome marvel of her womb which contained the almighty God. Referring to Genesis 2:9, the hymnography of the Church sees the garden of Eden as a type of Mary: "Rejoice, . . . O living Paradise, having the Lord, the Tree of Life, in your midst" (Akathist Hymn). The burning bush beheld by Moses in the wilderness (Ex 3:1–6) is one of the most often mentioned types of Mary. For example, "She is the Bush springing from barren ground [her mother, St. Anna, had been barren] and burning with the immaterial fire that cleanses and enlightens our souls” (Small Vespers, Nativity of the Theotokos). St. John of Damascus observes, “The burning bush is an image of God’s Mother . . . If, therefore, the ground where the image of the Theotokos was seen by Moses is holy ground [Ex 3:5], how much more holy is the image itself?”

The tabernacle in the wilderness, where God dwelt among the wandering Israelites (Ex 25:1—27:19), also prefigures Mary: “The tabernacle that is to hold God, the sanctuary of the glory, has chosen to dwell in the holy temple” (Matins, Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple). Another hymn from this service addresses her as “O Holy of Holies,” identifying her with the most holy inner place of the tabernacle and the temple (Ex 26:33; 3Kg 8:6).

Other Old Testament types of Mary relating to the Lord dwelling in her womb include the jar of manna (Ex 16:33, 34); Aaron’s rod that budded (Nm 17:16–23); the tablet of the Law “written with the finger of God” (Ex 31:18); the ladder reaching from earth to heaven (Gn 28:10–17); the fleece that received the dew (Jdg 6:36–38; see Ps 71:1–6); the tongs bearing the live coal (Is 6:6); and the fiery furnace in Babylon (Dan 3:19–50). Concerning this last image, the hymnographer St. Cosmas of Maiuma writes, “The furnace moist with dew was the image and figure of a wonder past nature. For it burned not the Children whom it had received, even as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin’s womb into which it had descended” (Matins, Nativity of Christ).

The miracle of the Virgin Birth is another prominent theme among the Old Testament types of Mary. One of the most striking of these is found in Ezekiel 43:27—44:4, the only Old Testament passage read at all four of the major Feasts of the Theotokos. This reading tells about the east gate of the heavenly temple remaining shut even as the Lord God of Israel, and He alone, goes in and out through it. This is prophetic of the Lord entering Mary's womb and being born nine months later with her virginity remaining intact. Hence in various hymns the Church proclaims her as "the Gate that looks towards the East," "the Gate through which none may pass," and "the East Gate . . . [who] awaits the entrance of the Great Priest."

Another such image occurs in Daniel 2:45, where the Theotokos is the mountain out of whom a stone (that is, Christ; 1Co 10:4) is cut "without hands." This refers to Christ's birth from the Virgin, untouched by a man.

Mary is the culmination of the whole history of the ancient Hebrews. She is the perfection to which all of faithful Israel aspired through the long centuries of preparation for the coming of the Messiah, beginning with the promise given to Abraham: "God promised to our forefather Abraham that in his seed the Gentiles would be blessed [Gn 22:18], O pure Lady; and through thee today, the promise receives its fulfillment" (Matins, Annunciation).

Measurements of the Altar

13 "These are the measurements of the altar in cubits (where a cubit equals one cubit and a handbreadth): from the drain up one cubit high and one cubit wide, with a projection all around its edge of one span. This is the height of the altar:† 14 the depth of the hollow which is toward the great mercy seat, below this, two cubits; and its width, one cubit; and from the little mercy seat to the great mercy seat, four cubits; and the width, one cubit. 15 The altar shall be four cubits, and from the altar and above the four horns, one cubit. 16 The altar shall be twelve cubits long, up to fourteen wide, in its four directions, 17 and its projection which goes all around it on all sides is a half of a cubit, so the outcropping all around is a cubit. Its stairs face to the east."

[18]Then He said to me, “Son of man, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘These are the ordinances for the altar on the day of its construction, for offering up whole burnt offerings and pouring out blood on it.[†] [19]You shall offer a young bull for a sin offering to the priests, the Levites, who are of the seed of Zadok, who approach Me to minister liturgically to Me,’ says the Lord God. [20]‘They shall take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar, on the four corners of the mercy seat, and on the step around it; and they shall make atonement for it. [21]Then they shall take the calf of the sin offering and consume it by fire in the appointed place, set apart from the house, outside the sanctuary. [22]On the second day they shall take two kids of goats without blemish for a sin offering, and they shall make atonement for the altar, as they made atonement with the calf. [23]After they finish the atonement, they shall offer a calf from the herd without blemish, and a ram from the flock without blemish. [24]They shall offer them before the Lord; and the priests shall throw salt on them and offer them up as whole burnt offerings to the Lord. [25]Every day for seven days, you shall prepare a goat for a sin offering; and you shall prepare a calf and a ram from the flock, and they shall offer them without blemish for seven days. [26]So they shall make atonement for the altar, and purify it, and fill their hands. [27]It will be when these days are over, on the eighth day, the priests shall offer your whole burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar, and I shall accept you,’ says the Lord.”

The East Gate Is for the Lord

44 Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary that faces toward the east, but it was shut.[†] [2]So the Lord said to me, “This gate shall be shut. It shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord God of Israel will enter by it; therefore, it shall be shut. [3]As for the prince, he will sit in it to eat bread before the Lord. He will go in by way of the gate chamber and go out the same way.”

[4]Then He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple, and I looked, and behold, the house of the Lord was full of glory; and I fell on my face. [5]The Lord said to me, “Son of man, note well with your heart, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all I say to you concerning all the ordinances of the Lord's house and all its laws. Mark well with your heart the entering of the house according to all its exits in all its holy places. [6]Then you will say to the house which provokes, to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “O house of Israel, enough of your lawlessness,[†] [7]when you brought in foreign sons, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it, as when you offered breads, meat, and blood. You broke My covenant because of all your lawless deeds. [8]You have not kept charge of My holy things, but sought out others.”

[9]‘Therefore, thus says the Lord God: “No foreign son, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner among the children of Israel.

Law for the Levites

[10]“But for the Levites who departed far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me to seek their inventions, they will bear their wrongdoing. [11]Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary as gatekeepers at the gates of the house and ministers in the house. They shall slay the whole burnt offerings and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before the people to minister liturgically to them. [12]Because they used to minister to them before their idols and became a punishment of wrongdoing to the house of

Israel, for this reason I lifted up My hand against them," says the Lord God. [13]"They will not draw near to Me to act as priests for Me, nor approach the sanctuary of the sons of Israel, nor My holy place; and they shall bear their shame and dishonor for the error wherein they erred. [14]Nevertheless they shall keep charge of the house, for all the service of it and all that needs to be done.

[15]"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the house of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister liturgically to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me sacrifice, the fat and the blood," says the Lord God. [16]"They shall enter My sanctuary and come near My table to minister liturgically to Me; and they shall keep My charge. [17]So it will be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall put on linen vestments, but no wool shall come upon them while they minister liturgically within the gates of the inner court. [18]They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies, and they shall not tightly gird themselves. [19]When they go out to the outer court to the people, they shall take off their vestments in which they ministered liturgically, leave them in their halls, and put on other garments; and in these garments they shall not sanctify the people. [20]They shall neither shave their heads nor pluck out their hairs; but they shall surely keep their head covered. [21]No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. [22]They shall not take as wife a widow or a divorced woman, but rather a virgin of the descendants of Israel, or a widow of a priest. [23]They shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. [24]They shall stand at a judgment of blood, and judge in righteousness and according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My ordinances in all My appointed feasts, and they shall sanctify My Sabbaths. [25]They shall not defile themselves by coming near a dead person. However, a priest may

defile himself for a father or mother, for a son or daughter, or for a brother or for an unmarried sister. [26]After he is cleansed, he shall number seven days for himself. [27]Then on the day they go into the inner court to minister liturgically in the sanctuary, they shall bring a propitiation offering," says the Lord God.

[28]"It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, that I am their inheritance. You shall give them no possession among the sons of Israel, for I am their possession. [29]They shall eat the sacrifices—the sin offering and the trespass offering—and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. [30]The best of all firstfruits of any kind, and every sacrifice of any kind from all your sacrifices, shall be for the priests. You shall also give to the priest the first of your produce, to cause your blessings to rest on your houses. [31]But the priests shall not eat anything, bird or beast, that died naturally or was torn by wild animals.

A Holy Section of Land

45 "When you divide the land by lot into inheritance, you shall set apart the firstfruit for the Lord, a holy section of the land. Its length shall be twenty-five thousand cubits and its width twenty thousand. It shall be holy throughout its territory all around.[†] [2]Of this there shall be a square plot for the sanctuary, five hundred by five hundred rods, with fifty cubits around it for an open space. [3]From this measurement, you shall measure twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide; in it shall be the sanctuary, the holy of holies. [4]From the land, there shall be a portion for the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to the Lord. It shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for their sanctuary. [5]An area twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide shall belong to the Levites, the ministers of the house. They shall have it as a possession with cities to dwell in.

Property for the Prince

[6]“You shall appoint as the property of the city an area five thousand cubits wide and twenty-five thousand long; in this manner the whole house of Israel shall have the firstfruit of the holy things. [7]The prince shall have a portion from this, and from this there shall be a portion for the firstfruits of the sanctuary and for the possession of the city, in front of the firstfruits of the sanctuary, extending westward on the west side and eastward on the east side. The length shall be equal to one of the parts of the western borders, and the length shall be to the eastern borders of the land. [8]The land shall be his possession in Israel, and the princes of Israel shall not oppress My people anymore; but the house of Israel will inherit the land according to their tribes.”

[9]‘Thus says the Lord God: “Enough, O princes of Israel. Remove wrongdoing and trouble, and execute judgment and righteousness, and take away oppression from My people,” says the Lord God. [10]“You shall have an honest scale, an honest unit, and an honest dry measure. [11]The unit and the dry measure shall be uniform for receiving goods, so the dry measure may contain one-tenth of a homer, and the unit one-tenth of a homer. The standard shall be according to the homer, equal in size. [12]The standard weight shall be twenty obols. Five shekels shall indeed be five, ten shekels shall be ten, and fifty shekels shall be for you one mina.

[13]“This is the firstfruit you shall offer: you shall give one-sixth of a unit from a homer of wheat, and one-sixth of an ephah from a kor of barley. [14]The ordinance concerning oil, the liquid measure of oil, is one-tenth of such a measure. There are ten measures in a homer. [15]One sheep shall be given from a flock of ten, from all the rich pastures of Israel, for sacrifices and whole burnt offerings, and for peace offerings to make atonement for you,” says the Lord

God. [16]“All the people shall give this firstfruit to the prince of Israel. [17]Then it shall be the prince's part to offer whole burnt offerings, sacrifices, and drink offerings at the feasts, the new moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed festivals of the house of Israel. He shall offer the sin offerings, the sacrifice, the whole burnt offerings, and the peace offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel.”

Observing the Feasts

[18]‘Thus says the Lord God: “In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and make atonement for the sanctuary. [19]The priest shall take some of the blood of the atonement and put it on the doorposts of the house, on the four corners of the temple, on the altar, and on the gateposts of the gate of the inner court. [20]Thus you shall do this in the seventh month, on the first of the month. You shall take a rate from each one and make atonement for the house.

[21]“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Paschal Feast; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. [22]And on that day the leader shall prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bull for a sin offering. [23]During the seven days of the feast he shall make whole burnt offerings to the Lord, seven bulls and seven rams without blemish, daily for seven days, and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering. [24]He shall also prepare a cake for each bull and a cake for each ram, using a hin of oil for each cake. [25]In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month, in the feast, he shall do likewise for seven days, according to the sin offerings, the whole burnt offerings, the grain offering, and the oil.”

The Way of Worship

46 ‘Thus says the Lord God: “The gate of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days, but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened.[†] [2]The prince shall enter by way of the entrance chamber of the gate from the outside, and stand by the gatepost. The priest shall prepare his whole burnt offerings and his peace offerings. He shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. [3]Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gate before the Lord on the Sabbaths and the New Moons. [4]The prince shall offer the whole burnt offerings to the Lord on the Sabbath day: six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish, [5]and the grain offering for a ram, and the grain offering for the lambs, as much as he wants to give, as well as a hin of oil with every cake. [6]On the day of the New Moon it shall be a young bull without blemish, six lambs, and a ram without blemish. [7]The cake with the bull and the cake with the ram shall be a grain offering, and for the lambs, whatever he wishes, along with a hin of oil with the cake. [8]When the prince enters, he shall go in by way of the entrance of the gate, and go out the same way. [9]But whenever the people of the land come before the Lord on the appointed feast days, whoever enters by way of the north gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate; and whoever enters by way of the south gate shall go out by way of the north gate. He shall not return by way of the gate through which he came, but rather he shall go out right away. [10]The prince shall then be in their midst. When they go in, he shall go in, and when they go out, he shall go out. [11]At the festivals and the ceremonial days the grain offering shall be a cake of cereal for a bull, cereal for a ram, as much as he wants to give for the lambs, and a hin of oil with every cake.

[12]“Now when the prince offers whole burnt offerings as a thanksgiving to the Lord, he shall open the gate which faces east and offer his whole burnt offerings and his peace offerings, as he did on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he goes out he shall shut the gate. [13]You shall offer daily as a whole burnt offering to the Lord a lamb of the first year without blemish, and you shall offer it every morning. [14]You shall also offer a grain offering with it every morning, a sixth of a unit, and a third of a hin of oil to moisten the fine flour of the grain offering. This is a perpetual ordinance. [15]You shall offer the lamb, the grain offering, and the oil, and you shall offer them as a whole burnt offering every morning continually.”

The Prince's Possessions

[16]‘Thus says the Lord God: “If the leader gives a gift of some of his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons, and it is their possession by inheritance. [17]But if he gives a gift of some of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until the Year of Remission, after which it shall return to the prince. But his inheritance shall belong to his sons, and it shall become theirs. [18]Moreover the prince shall not take any of the people's inheritance so as to oppress them. He shall provide an inheritance for his sons from his own property, so none of My people may be scattered from his property.” ’ ”

The Temple Kitchens

[19]Now he brought me through the entrance which was behind the gate into the hall of the holy priests, which faces toward the north; and there was a place set apart there. [20]Then he said to me, “This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offerings and the sin offerings, and where they shall bake the

grain offering, all of it together, so as not to bring them out into the outer court to sanctify the people.” [21]Then he brought me out into the outer court and took me around to the four sides of the court; and behold, on every side there was also a side court. [22]Each side court of the four sides was small, forty cubits long and thirty wide; the same measure for all four. [23]There were also halls all around in them, all around the four of them, and cooking hearths were made under the halls all around. [24]Then he said to me, “These are the houses of the kitchens where the ministers of the house boil the sacrifices of the people.”

The Stream from the Temple

47 Then he brought me back to the outer door of the house, and there was water, flowing from under the open air of the chamber toward the east; and the water was flowing from under the right side court, from the south to the altar.[†] [2]Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces east; and there was water coming down, running out on the right side, [3]in the direction in which a man went forth opposite. There was a measure in his hands, and he measured a thousand cubits with the measure; and he passed through the water. It was the water of remission. [4]Again he measured a thousand, and he passed through the water, and the water was up to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and the water came up to the waist. [5]Again he measured a thousand, and it could not be crossed; for it broke into a rushing torrent which man cannot pass through.

[6]He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?” Then he led me to the bank of the river. [7]As I returned, behold, along the bank of the river there were very many trees on this side and the other. [8]Then he said to me, “This is the water that flows into Galilee, which is to the east. Then it goes down upon Arabia and reaches as far as the sea to the outlet of the water; and it will heal

the waters. [9]So it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the river goes, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. [10]Fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim, and they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. [11]But in its outlets and turns and overflows, they will not be healed, for they will be given over to salt. [12]Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”[†]

Boundaries of the Land

[13]Thus says the Lord God: “These are the borders by which you shall divide the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. It is a setting forth of allotments. [14]You shall inherit it equally with one another; for I raised My hand in an oath to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance. [15]This shall be the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea which goes down and the entrance which divides Emath Seddatha, [16]Berothah, Sebraim, Eliam (which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), and the court of Saunan; these are above the borders of Auranitis. [17]These are the boundaries from the Sea, from the court of Enan, the borders of Damascus and those to the north. [18]On the east side you shall mark out the border from between Auran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, which divides over along the eastern side of the sea which is to the east of Phoenicia. This is the east side. [19]The southern and southwestern coasts are from Teman and Phoenicia to the waters of Meribah by

Kadesh to the Great Sea. This part is the south and southwest. [20]The west side shall be the Great Sea, from the southern boundary until one comes to a point opposite Hamath. This is the west side.

[21]“Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. [22]It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the resident aliens who dwell among you, and who bear sons in the midst of you. They shall be to you as native-born among the sons of Israel, and they shall eat with you in the inheritance among the tribes of Israel. [23]It shall be that in whatever tribe the resident alien dwells, there you shall give him his inheritance,” says the Lord God.

Dividing the Land for the Tribes

48 “Now these are the names of the tribes: From the northern border of the descent which divides at the entrance of Hamath, the court of Enan, the border of Damascus northward, in the direction of Hamath, of the court, from its east to its west side, there shall be one section for Dan;[†] [2]by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one section for Asher; [3]by the border of Asher, from the east side to the west, one section for Naphtali; [4]by the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, one section for Manasseh; [5]by the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, one section for Ephraim; [6]by the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, one section for Reuben; [7]by the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west, one section for Judah; [8]by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the district which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits in width, and in length the same as one of the other portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the center.

A District for the Lord

[9]“The firstfruits, the district that you shall set apart for the Lord, shall be twenty-five thousand cubits in length and twenty-five thousand in width. [10]To these—to the priests—the holy district shall belong: on the north twenty-five thousand cubits in length, on the west ten thousand in width, on the east ten thousand in width, and on the south twenty-five thousand in length. The holy mountain shall be in the center. [11]It shall be for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who keep My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. [12]The firstfruit shall be given to them from the firstfruits of the land, even a most holy portion from the borders of the Levites.

[13]“Next to the territory of the priests, the Levites shall have an area twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in width. Its entire length shall be twenty-five thousand and its width ten thousand. [14]They shall not sell or exchange any of it; neither shall they take away or remove the first produce of the land, for it is holy to the Lord.

[15]“But the five thousand cubits in width that remain, along the edge of the twenty-five thousand, shall be for general use by the city, for habitation and common land; and the city shall be in the center. [16]These shall be its measurements: the north side, four thousand five hundred cubits; the south side, four thousand five hundred; the east side, four thousand five hundred; and the west side, four thousand five hundred. [17]There shall be common land for the city: to the north two hundred and fifty cubits, to the south two hundred and fifty, to the east two hundred and fifty, and to the west two hundred and fifty. [18]The rest of the length, alongside the district of the holy section, shall be ten thousand cubits to the east and ten thousand to the west. It shall be the

firstfruits of the holy section, and its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. [19]The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. [20]The entire firstfruits district shall be twenty-five thousand cubits by twenty-five thousand cubits, foursquare. You shall set apart the holy district from the property of the city.

[21]“The rest shall belong to the prince, on one side and on the other of the holy district and of the city's property, next to the twenty-five thousand cubits of the holy district as far as the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand as far as the western border, adjacent to the tribal portions. It shall be the firstfruits of the holy district, and the sanctuary of the temple shall be in the midst of it. [22]Moreover, apart from the possession of the Levites and the possession of the city which are in the midst of what belongs to the leaders, the area between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall belong to the leaders.

[23]“As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west, Benjamin shall have one section; [24]by the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon shall have one section; [25]by the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar shall have one section; [26]by the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun shall have one section; [27]by the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad shall have one section; [28]by the borders of Gad, from the eastern parts to the southwestern parts, the borders shall be from Teman to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. [29]This is the land you shall divide by lot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their divisions,” says the Lord God.

Exit Gates of the City

[30]“These are the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred cubits [31](the gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; [32]on the east side, four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; [33]on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; [34]on the west side, four thousand five hundred cubits with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. [35]The circumference shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from the day on which it takes place shall be its name.”[†]

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The Book of Daniel

Author—Daniel, whose name means, “God is my Judge” or “God is judging,” wrote the book that carries his name.

Date—Traditionally thought to have been written during the Babylonian captivity (605–530 BC).

Major Theme—*The sovereignty of God over all nations* is set forth and illustrated by the truth that God directs history for the fulfillment of His purposes and plans. The blessings of God are granted to those who refrain from idol worship and turn to Him. Finally, throughout the book, we see the vanity of idol worship shown by its effect on the lives of those who pursue it.

Background—Daniel was born in the tribe of Judah. He was taken to Babylon in the captivity as an infant. Among his contemporaries were the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

Outline

I. Susanna (Preamble, vv. 1–64)

II. Daniel's History (1:1–6:29)

    A. Daniel's life in Nebuchadnezzar's service (1:1–21)

    B. Four world empires, the eternal kingdom (2:1–49)

    C. Worship of the golden idol, including the Prayer of Azariah and the Hymn of the Three Children (3:1–97)

    D. Nebuchadnezzar's madness (4:1–37)

    E. The handwriting on the wall (5:1–30)

    F. Daniel in the lion's den (6:1–29)

III. Daniel's Prophetic Visions: The Nations of the World Judged (7:1–12:13)

IV. Bel and the Serpent (Postscript, vv. 1–42)

Susanna

[1]There was a man living in Babylon, and his name was Jehoiakim.[†] [2]He took a wife whose name was Susanna, the daughter of Hilkiah, a very beautiful woman and one who feared the Lord. [3]Her parents were righteous and taught their daughter according to the Law of Moses. [4]Jehoiakim was exceedingly wealthy, with a spacious garden adjoining his house, and the Jews came to him because he was the most honored of them all. [5]In that year, two elders from the people were appointed as judges, concerning whom the Lord said, “Lawlessness came forth out of Babylon from the elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern the people.” [6]These men were frequently at Jehoiakim's house, and all who had judgments came to them.

[7]Now when the people departed at midday, Susanna would go into her husband's garden to walk.[†] [8]So the two elders would see her going in and walking about every day, and they desired her. [9]They turned away their heart and averted their eyes from looking to heaven, and from remembering righteous judgments. [†][10]Both were pierced to the heart for her, but they did not tell each other their pain. [11]They were ashamed to inform one another of their desire, because they wished to have relations with her. [12]So every day they eagerly watched to see her. [13]Finally they said to one another, “Let us go home, for it is time for the midday meal,” and going out, they parted from each other. [14]But turning back, they met again, and when they

pressured each other for the reason, they confessed their desire. Together they arranged for a time they could find her alone.

[15]Then it came to pass, while they were waiting for an opportune day, she went in as before with only two maids. She also wished to bathe in the garden, for it was hot. [16]For no one was there except the two elders, who hid themselves and were watching her. [17]She said to her maids, “Bring me oil and ointments, and shut the doors of the garden, that I may bathe.” [18]They did as she said and closed the garden doors. They went out by the side doors to bring the things commanded, but did not see the elders, because they were hidden.

[19]When the maids left, the two elders arose and ran to her, [20]and said, “Look, the doors of the garden are closed, and no one will see us, and we desire you. Therefore give us your consent and lie with us. [21]If you do not, we will testify that a young man was with you, and because of this you sent your maids away from you.” [22]Then Susanna sighed deeply and said, “I am hemmed in on all sides, for if I do this thing, it is death for me; yet if I do not, I will not escape your hands. [23]But it is better for me not to do it and to fall into your hands, than to sin against the Lord.” [24]Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and the two elders cried out against her. [25]One of them ran and opened the garden doors. [26]When the household servants heard the cry in the garden, they rushed in by the side doors to see what had happened to her. [27]So when the elders told their tale, the servants were deeply ashamed, for such a report had never been made about Susanna.

[28]Then it came to pass the next day, when the people assembled at the house of Jehoiakim, her husband, the two elders also came full of their lawless purpose against Susanna, to have her put to death. They said before all the people, [29]“Send for Susanna the daughter of Hilkiah, who is the wife of Jehoiakim.” [30]So they sent for her, and she came with her parents, her children, and all her kindred. [31]Now Susanna was very desirable and beautiful to behold. [32]However, she was veiled; thus the lawless men commanded she be unveiled, so as to enjoy her beauty. [33]But her friends and all who saw her wept. [34]Then the two elders arose in the midst of the people and laid their hands upon her head.[†] [35]She wept and looked up to heaven; for her heart trusted in the Lord. [36]The two elders said, “As we were walking in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, closed the doors of the garden, and dismissed the maids. [37]Then a young man who was hidden came to her and lay with her. [38]Now we were in a corner of the garden and saw this lawlessness. So we ran to them and saw them having relations. [39]But we could not hold the man, for he was stronger than we. He then opened the doors and rushed out. [40]So we seized this woman and asked her who the young man was, [41]but she was unwilling to tell us.” Thus the assembly believed them, as they were elders and judges among the people. So they condemned her to death.

[42]But Susanna cried out with a loud voice and said, “O eternal God, who know both what is secret and all things before they come to be, [43]You know these men testified against me falsely, and behold, I shall die, though I did none of the things they wickedly invented against me.” [44]The Lord heard her voice, [45]and as she was being led away to be put to death, God

aroused the holy spirit of a young boy, whose name was Daniel.[†] [46]He cried out with a loud voice, “I am innocent of the blood of this woman.” [47]So all the people turned to him and said, “What is this thing you said?” [48]Then he stood in their midst and said, “Are you such fools, O sons of Israel? Without examination or knowledge of the evidence, have you condemned a daughter of Israel? [49]Return to the place of judgment, for these men testified against her falsely.”

[50]So all the people returned with haste. The elders said to him, “Come, sit in our midst and inform us, for God gives you that privilege.” [51]Daniel then said to them, “Separate them far from each other, and I will examine them.” [52]When they were separated from each other, he summoned one of them and said to him, “You old man of evil days, now the sins you committed in earlier days have come home; [53]for you pronounce unjust judgments, condemn the innocent, and set the guilty free. Yet the Lord said, ‘You shall not kill the innocent and the righteous.’ [54]Now then, if indeed you saw her, tell me, under which tree did you see them being intimate with each other?” He replied, “Under a mastic tree.” [55]Daniel then said, “Plainly, you lied against your own head, for even now the angel of God receives the sentence from God, and he shall cut you in two.”

[56]Then he removed him, and commanded them to bring the other. He said to him, “You seed of Canaan and not of Judah, beauty deceived you, and desire turned away your heart. [57]This is how both of you deal with the daughters of Israel, and they have been intimate with you through fear; but a daughter of Judah would not endure your lawlessness. [58]Now then, tell me, under what tree did you catch them being intimate with each other?”

He replied, “Under the evergreen oak.” [59]Daniel said to him, “Plainly, you also lied against your own head, for the angel of God is waiting with his sword to cut you in two, that he may destroy both of you.”

[60]Then the whole assembly cried out with a loud voice and blessed God, who saves those who hope in Him. [61]So they rose up against the two elders, for Daniel convicted them out of their own mouth of bearing false witness; and they did to them the thing they maliciously intended to do against their neighbor. [62]For acting in accordance with the Law of Moses, they put them to death. Therefore innocent blood was saved on that day.

[63]Hilkiah and his wife praised God for their daughter, with Jehoiakim her husband and all her kindred, because nothing shameful was found in her. [64]Thus Daniel had a great reputation among the people from that day onward.

Daniel

Daniel and His Companions Obey God

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.[†] [2]The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. Then he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god. He carried them into the treasure house of his god. [3]Then the king spoke to Ashpenaz, the chief of his eunuchs, to bring him some of the captives of Israel, and some of the royal family and some of the nobles— [4]young men in whom there was no blemish, but handsome, skilled in all wisdom, well grounded in letters, intelligent, and prudent, and who had the ability to serve in the king's house, and whom they might teach the letters and language of the Chaldeans.[†] [5]The king also appointed a daily provision for them from the king's table and from the wine he drank, and gave orders to educate them for three years. At the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

[6]Now among them there were Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, sons of the tribe of Judah. [7]So the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: to Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. [8]But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's food, nor with the wine he drank; therefore, he entreated the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.[†] [9]Now the Lord gave Daniel mercy and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs. [10]So the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my Lord the king, who ordered your food and drink, lest he see your countenances gloomy in comparison to the young men your equals. Then you would endanger my head before the king.” [11]So Daniel said to Melzar, whom the chief of the eunuchs appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: [12]“Test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. [13]After this let our countenance be observed by you and the countenance of the young men who eat at the king's table. Then deal with your servants as you see fit.” [14]So he agreed with their proposal and tested them ten days. [15]At the end of the ten days, their countenance was observed, and they were more fit and stronger in body than the young men who ate at the king's table. [16]Thus Melzar took away their food and wine, and gave them vegetables instead.

[17]As for these four young men, God gave them understanding and insight in all letters and wisdom, and He gave Daniel understanding in all visions and dreams.

[18]Now when their education was completed, the king ordered all the young men to be brought in. Thus the chief of the eunuchs brought them before Nebuchadnezzar. [19]So the king spoke with them, and among all of them, none were found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they stood before the king. [20]In every saying of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the enchanters and wise men in all his kingdom. [21]Thus Daniel continued until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.[†]

King Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he had a dream. His spirit was deeply troubled, and his sleep departed from him.[†] [2]So the king gave orders to summon the enchanters, the magicians, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. Thus they came and stood before the king.

[3]Then the king said to them, “The king had a dream, and my spirit is deeply troubled to know the meaning of the dream.” [4]Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in the Syrian language, “O king, live forever. Tell your servants the dream, and we will tell you its interpretation.” [5]The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “The dream has departed from me. If you do not make the dream and its interpretation known to me, you shall be destroyed, and your houses will be plundered. [6]But if you do make the

dream and its interpretation known to me, you will receive all kinds of gifts from me and be honored by me. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”

[7]But they answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will tell you its interpretation.” [8]The king answered them, “Truly, I know you are trying to gain time, because you see that the thing has departed from me. [9]Therefore if you do not tell me the dream, I will know that you have agreed beforehand to give my dream a false and corrupt interpretation. So before any more time passes by, tell me my dream, then I will know that you can tell me its interpretation.” [10]The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is no man on earth who can make known the king's dream, and there is no great king or ruler who asks such a thing as this of any enchanter, magician, or Chaldean. [11]The question you ask, O king, is difficult and above expectation, for there is no man who can tell the king his dream except the gods, whose dwelling is not with any flesh.” [12]Then the king, angry and furious, commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. [13]He decreed that the wise men be put to death, and he sought for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

God Reveals the Dream

[14]Then with counsel and intelligence, Daniel spoke to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who went out to kill the wise men of Babylon. [15]He asked him for what reason the bitter decree had come from the king. Then Arioch, the king's official, made the reason known to Daniel. [16]So Daniel went in and entreated the king to give him time, and he would tell

the king his dream and its interpretation. [17]Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. [18]They sought mercies from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, that Daniel and his friends might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19]Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision during the night. After that, Daniel blessed the God of heaven, [20]saying, “May God's name be blessed from now on and forever, for wisdom and understanding belong to Him. [21]He changes times and seasons; He appoints kings and removes them; He gives wisdom to the wise and insight to those who have skill. [22]He reveals deep and hidden things, and He knows what is in the darkness, and the light is with Him. [23]I give thanks and praise to You, O God of my fathers, for You have given me wisdom and power. Now You have made known to me what I asked from You, for You made known the king's vision to me.”

Daniel Interprets the Dream

[24]Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king appointed to put to death the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon. Take me before the king, and I will tell the interpretation to the king.” [25]Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king and said to him, “I found a man among the children of the captivity of Judah who will tell the interpretation to the king.”[†] [26]The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Can you tell me the dream I saw and its interpretation?” [27]Daniel answered before the king and said, “The

mystery which the king demanded to be told to the king cannot be revealed by wise men, magicians, enchanters, and diviners. [28]But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to king Nebuchadnezzar what must come to pass in the last days. Your dream and the visions in your head upon your bed was this: [29]As for you, O king, thoughts came to you while on your bed as to what must happen after this, and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what must take place. [30]But as for me, this mystery was not made known to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for the sake of making known the interpretation to the king, that you might know the thoughts of your heart.

[31]“As for you, O king, you saw and beheld one great image. That image was very large and its appearance excellent. It stood before you, and its vision was fearful.[†ω] [32]The image had a head made of fine gold, and its hands, chest, and arms were made of silver, and its stomach and thighs, of copper. [33]Its legs were iron, and its feet were partly iron and partly clay. [34]You saw while a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and ground them to powder. [35]Then at once the clay, the iron, the copper, the silver, and the gold were like dust from the summer threshing floor, and a great force of wind blew them away; and their place was not to be found. Then the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled all the earth.[†]

[36]“This is the dream, and we will tell its interpretation before the king. [37]You, O king, are a king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given a strong, mighty, and highly regarded kingdom. [38]In every place where the

children of men live, as well as the wild animals of the field and the birds of heaven—He put them all in your hand, and made you the lord of them all. You are the head made of gold. [39]But after you another kingdom shall arise, inferior to yours; then a third kingdom of copper, which shall rule over all the earth. [40]Then a fourth kingdom as strong as iron shall arise, and inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues everything, so also it shall break in pieces and subdue all things. [41]Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly clay and partly iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, in the manner you saw the iron mixed with the clay. [42]Whereas the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so part of the kingdom shall be strong and part of it shall be broken. [43]Whereas you saw iron mixed with clay, they shall mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

[44]“Then in the times of those kings, the God of heaven will raise up a kingdom, and it shall never be destroyed. This kingdom shall not be left to another people, but it will break in pieces and crush all these kingdoms; and it will stand forever. [45]Whereas you saw the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, it ground to powder the clay, the iron, the copper, the silver, and the gold. Thus the great God has made known to the king what must come to pass after this. The dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

Daniel and Companions Rule Babylon

[46]Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and worshiped Daniel, and commanded sacrifices and drink offerings be made to him.[†] [47]The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God, He is the God of gods and

the Lord of kings, who reveals mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.” [48]Then King Nebuchadnezzar exalted Daniel and gave him many great gifts. He set him over the whole province of Babylon and over all the wise men of Babylon.[†] [49]Daniel also petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel was in the king's palace.

The Golden Image

3 In his eighteenth year, King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image. Its height was sixty cubits and its width, six cubits, and he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.[†ω] [2]Then Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather together the high officials, the commanders, the governors, the rulers, and all those in authority, along with all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image King Nebuchadnezzar set up. [3]So the governors, the high officials, the leaders, the great rulers—all those in authority who ruled the provinces came to the dedication of the image King Nebuchadnezzar set up, and they stood before the image Nebuchadnezzar made.

THEOPHANIES OF CHRIST

The word “theophany” derives from the Greek words *theos* (“God”), and *phainesthai* (“to show forth, appear”). Hence, a theophany is an appearance or manifestation of God. While types of Christ in the Old Testament prefigure His coming in the flesh, theophanies are recognized by the Church as being actual appearances of the pre-incarnate Son and Word of

God. How this happens remains a mystery. But because the Son of God took on human nature in the fullness of time, each theophany directly prefigures Christ's Incarnation. St. John of Damascus wrote, "No one saw the divine nature, but rather the image and figure of what was yet to come. For the invisible Son and Word of God was to become truly Man."

THREE THEOPHANIES OF CHRIST

An often cited theophany of Christ occurs in the visit of the "three men" to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:1–16: "Then God appeared to him at the oak of Mamre" (v. 1). Though three men are there, Abraham addresses them in the singular, "Lord." He responds in the singular (vv. 9–15). As St. Ephraim the Syrian says, "Therefore the Lord . . . now appeared to Abraham clearly in one of the three." The three are generally considered to be Christ the Lord, along with two attending angels.

At Genesis 32:25–31, Christ is the "man" who wrestles with Jacob, after which Jacob says, "I saw God face to face" (v. 30). St. Cyril of Jerusalem asks the Jews concerning these theophanies to Abraham and Jacob, "What strange thing do we announce in saying that God was made Man, when you yourselves say that Abraham received the Lord as a guest? What strange thing do we announce, when Jacob says, 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved'? The Lord, who ate with Abraham, also ate with us."

In the Book of Daniel, a heathen king bears witness to another theophany of Christ. When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon peers into the fiery furnace, upon seeing a "fourth man" he exclaims, "The vision of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan 3:92).

OTHER APPEARANCES OF GOD

At times Christ appears as “the Angel of the Lord” or “the Angel of God.” At Exodus 3:1—4:17, “the Angel of the Lord” appears to Moses in the burning bush and identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5). He also says that His name is “I AM HE WHO IS” (Ex 3:14), which in Greek is represented by the three letters placed around Christ’s head in the holy icons. St. Ambrose of Milan observes, “Christ therefore is, and always is; for He who is, always is. And Christ always is, of whom Moses says, ‘He that is has sent me.’”

THE INCARNATION

When God the Son became incarnate, this can be called an everlasting theophany. For having assumed human nature, Christ not only manifests God to the world during His earthly life (Jn 1:14; see also 14:9; Col 2:9; 1Jn 1:1–3), but He ascends into heaven in the same glorified flesh in which He will return at His Second Coming (see Acts 1:9–11).

At the baptism of Christ (Mt 3:13–17), a further theophany occurs, as all three Persons of the Holy Trinity are made known: the Father in the voice from heaven, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the Incarnate Son. Hence, the feast day commemorating this event is known as Holy Theophany. On this day the Church sings, “When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.”

Additionally, at Christ’s Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (Mt 17:1–9), the Father again is heard, the Holy Spirit is present in the brightness of the cloud, and the Son shines with the gleaming radiance of His Divinity.

[4]Then the herald cried out in a loud voice, “To you it is commanded, O peoples and tribes and languages, [5]that in what hour you hear the sound of the trumpet, the pipe, the harp, the four-stringed instrument, the psaltery, the symphony, and every kind of music, you shall fall down and worship the golden image King Nebuchadnezzar set up. [6]But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the burning fiery furnace.” [7]So at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the trumpet, the pipe, the harp, the four-stringed instrument, the psaltery, the symphony, and every kind of music, all the peoples, tribes, and languages fell down and worshipped the golden image King Nebuchadnezzar set up.

Daniel's Companions Refuse Idol Worship

[8]Then Chaldean men came forward and brought charges against the Jews, [9]and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever. [10]You, O king, made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the trumpet, the pipe, the harp, the four-stringed instrument, the psaltery, the symphony, and every kind of music, [11]but does not fall down and worship the golden image shall be cast into the burning fiery furnace. [12]Now there are certain Jews you set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Those men did not obey your decree, O king; and they do not serve your gods, nor do they worship the golden image you set up.”

[13]Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So the men were brought before the

king. [14]Nebuchadnezzar then answered and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image I set up? [15]Now then, if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, the pipe, the harp, the four-stringed instrument, the psaltery, the symphony, and every kind of music, that you shall fall down and worship the golden image I made. But indeed, if you do not worship it at that time, you shall be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Then what god is there who will deliver you from my hands?”

[16]Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “We have no need to answer you in regard to this thing. [17]For there is a God in the heavens, whom we serve, and He is able to save us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us from your hands, O king. [18]But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image you set up.”

Saved as through Fire

[19]Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of anger, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So he commanded them to heat the furnace seven times more, until it burned to its fullest.[†] [20]Then he commanded certain very strong men to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. [21]Thereupon, those men were bound together with their sandals, caps, leg-coverings, and clothing, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. [22]Because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace was exceedingly hot, [23]these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell

bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. [24]But they walked about in the midst of the flame, singing to God and praising the Lord.

The Prayer of Azariah

[25]Then Azariah stood and prayed thus and opened his mouth in the midst of the fire and said:[†]

[26] “Blessed are You and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our fathers,

And praised and glorified is Your name unto the ages.[†]

[27] For You are righteous in all You did for us,

And all Your works are true.

Your ways are upright,

And all Your judgments are true.

[28] The judgments You made are true,

According to all You brought on us

And on the holy city of our fathers,

Because in truth and judgment

You did all these things on account of our sins.

[29] For we sinned and acted lawlessly

To depart from You.

We sinned in every way,

And did not obey Your commandments.

[30] Neither did we treasure or do as You commanded,

That it might go well with us.

[31] Everything You brought on us

And all You did to us, You did in true judgment.

[32] You delivered us into the hands of lawless and rebellious enemies

And to an unjust king—the most evil in any land.

33 Now it is not for us to open our mouth,

For this has become a shame and disgrace to Your servants

And to those who worship You.

34 For Your name's sake, do not hand us over to the end,

And do not reject Your covenant.

35 Do not withdraw Your mercy from us for the sake of Abraham,

Who is loved by You, and for the sake of Isaac, Your servant,

And of Israel, Your holy one,

36 As You spoke to them, saying

That You would multiply their seed as the stars of heaven,

And as the sand along the seashore.

37 Yet we have been diminished in number, O Master,

More than all the nations,

And we are humbled in all the earth today because of our sins.

38 “At this time, there is no prince, no prophet, and no leader;

There is no whole burnt offering, no sacrifice, no offering, and no incense;

There is no place to bear fruit before You and to find mercy.

39 Yet with a contrite soul and humbled spirit,

May we receive mercy, as with whole burnt offerings of rams and bulls,

And as with thousands of fatted lambs.

40 So let this be our sacrifice before You today,

And may it be accomplished for those who follow You;

For there is no shame for those who trust in You.

41 Now we are following You with all our heart,

And we fear You and seek Your face.

42 “Do not put us to shame,

But deal with us according to Your kindness
And according to the abundance of Your mercy.
[43] Deliver us by Your wondrous works
And give glory to Your name, O Lord.
[44] May all those who inflict evils upon Your servants
Be put to shame and humiliated in their power;
And let their strength be crushed.
[45] Let them know that You alone are the Lord God
And glorious over all the inhabited earth.”

[46]Now the king's servants who cast them in did not cease to stoke the furnace with naphtha, pitch, coarse fiber, and brushwood.[†] [47]The flame shot forty-nine cubits above the furnace, [48]and it broke out and burned those it found around the furnace of the Chaldeans. [49]But the Angel of the Lord went down into the furnace to join Azariah and his companions, and shook off the fiery flame of the furnace. [50]He made the inside of the furnace to be as though a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it, so the fire did not touch them at all, or cause them pain, or trouble them.

Hymn of the Three Young Men

[51]Then the three, as if with one mouth, sang, glorified, and blessed God in the furnace, saying:

[52] “Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers,
For You are praiseworthy
And exalted beyond measure unto the ages.
Blessed is Your name and the temple of your glory,
And You are praised exceedingly

And exalted beyond measure unto the ages.[†]

53 You are blessed in the holy temple of Your glory,

And are highly praised

And exceedingly glorious unto the ages.

54 Blessed are You on the throne of Your kingdom,

And You are praised

And exalted beyond measure unto the ages.

55 “Blessed are You who behold the depths

And sit upon the cherubim.

You are praiseworthy

And exalted beyond measure unto the ages.

56 Blessed are You in the firmament of heaven,

For You are praised and glorified unto the ages.

57 Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord,

And sing a hymn to the Lord,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

58 Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

59 Bless the Lord, you heavens,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

60 Bless the Lord, all you waters above heaven,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

61 Bless the Lord, all you powers of the Lord,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

62 “Bless the Lord, you sun and moon,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

63 Bless the Lord, you stars of heaven,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

64 Bless the Lord, every shower and dew,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

65 Bless the Lord, all you winds,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

66 Bless the Lord, you fire and heat,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

67 “Bless the Lord, you winter cold and summer heat,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

68 Bless the Lord, you dews and snows,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

69 Bless the Lord, you frost and cold,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

70 Bless the Lord, you hoarfrosts and snows,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[71] Bless the Lord, you night and day,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[72] Bless the Lord, you light and darkness,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[73] “Bless the Lord, you lightning and clouds,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[74] Let the earth bless the Lord,

And let it sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[75] Bless the Lord, you mountains and hills,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[76] Bless the Lord, all you things growing on the earth,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[77] Bless the Lord, you springs,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[78] Bless the Lord, you seas and rivers,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

[79] “Bless the Lord, you sea-monsters and everything that moves in the waters,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

80 Bless the Lord, all you birds of heaven,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

81 Bless the Lord, all you wild animals and cattle,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

82 Bless the Lord, O children of men,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

83 Bless the Lord, O Israel,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

84 Bless the Lord, O priests of the Lord,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

85 Bless the Lord, O servants of the Lord,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

86 Bless the Lord, O spirits and souls of the righteous,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.[†]

87 Bless the Lord, O holy ones and humble in heart,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages.

88 “Bless the Lord, O Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael,

And sing a hymn to Him,

And exalt Him beyond measure unto the ages;

For He delivered us from Hades

And saved us from the hand of death.

He rescued us from the midst of the burning fiery furnace

And saved us from the midst of the fire.

89 Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

Because His mercy endures forever.

90 Bless the Lord, the God of gods,

All you who worship Him,

And sing a hymn and give thanks to Him;

For His mercy endures forever.”

The King Praises God

91Now Nebuchadnezzar heard their singing, and he marveled and rose up in haste, and said to his nobles, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They replied to the king, “Truly, O king.”[†] 92Then the king said, “Behold, I see four men untied and walking in the midst of the fire, yet they are not destroyed; and the vision of the fourth is like the Son of God.” 93Then the king approached the door of the burning fiery furnace, and called out to them by name, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come forth and come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came forth from the midst of the fire. 94Then the governors, the commanders, the viceroys, and the court officials gathered together and beheld the men, that the fire had no power over their bodies; neither had it singed their hair, nor scorched their clothes, nor was the smell of fire on them.

[95]So King Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed is the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent His Angel and saved His servants who trusted in Him; for they altered the word of the king and handed over their bodies to be burned, so as not to serve and worship any god other than their God. [96]Therefore I make a decree: ‘Any people, tribe, or language that blasphemes the God of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego shall be destroyed, and their houses plundered, because there is no other God who can deliver in this way.’ ” [97]Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego authority over the province of Babylon, and considered them worthy to be the rulers of all the Jews in his kingdom.

The King's Second Dream

4 Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, tribes, and languages who live in all the earth: May peace be multiplied to you. [2]I am pleased to report to you the signs and wonders the Most High God did with me. [3]How great and mighty is His kingdom, an eternal kingdom! His authority is from generation to generation.

[4]I, Nebuchadnezzar, was prospering and flourishing in my house, [5]and I saw a dream that terrified me. Thus I was troubled on my bed, for the visions in my mind greatly disturbed me.[†] [6]Therefore I issued a decree to bring all the wise men of Babylon before me, to make the interpretation of the dream known to me. [7]So the enchanters, the magicians, and the diviners of the Chaldeans came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known its interpretation to me, [8]until at last Daniel came in (whose name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and who has the Spirit of the Holy God in him).

Then I told the dream before him, saying, [9]“Belteshazzar, chief of the enchanters, I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no mystery is impossible to you. Hear the vision of the dream I saw, and tell me its interpretation. [10]I was on my bed, and I looked and behold, in the midst of the earth there was a very tall tree.[†] [11]The tree was large and strong. Its height reached to heaven, and its extent to the ends of all the earth. [12]Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it there was food for all. The wild animals lived beneath it, and the birds of heaven dwelled in its branches. All flesh was fed from it.

[13]“I saw in a vision of the night on my bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. [14]He cried with a loud voice and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree, and cut off its branches. Shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the wild animals be driven from beneath it and the birds from its branches. [15]Nevertheless, leave its stump and roots in the ground, and he shall lie down outdoors in the tender grass, wet with the dew of heaven and bound with an iron and copper chain. His portion shall be with the wild animals, to graze on the vegetation of the earth. [16]His heart shall be changed from that of a man, and the heart of a wild animal will be given to him. Seven years shall bring this change upon him. [17]This saying is by the decree of the watchers, and this decision by the word of the holy ones, so the living might know that the Lord is the Most High over the kingdom of men, and will give it to whomever He will, and set over it even objects of contempt among men.’

[18]“This is the dream I, Nebuchadnezzar the king, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell the interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom

are unable to reveal its interpretation to me; but you, Daniel, are able, because the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.”

Daniel's Interpretation

[19]Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, became mute about one hour, and his thoughts disturbed him greatly. After this, the king spoke and said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream and its interpretation trouble you.” So Belteshazzar said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation be for your enemies! [20]The large and strong tree you saw, whose top reached to heaven and its extent to all the earth, [21]and its leaves were flourishing and its fruit abundant, and in it there was food for all, and the wild animals lived beneath it, and the birds of heaven dwelled in its branches— [22]this is you, O king, for you have become great and strong; and your greatness has extended and reached to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth.

[23]“Inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the ground, and he shall spend the night outdoors in the tender grass, wet with the dew of heaven and bound with an iron and copper chain, and his portion shall be with the wild animals, until seven years bring a change upon him’— [24]this is its interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: [25]They shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the wild animals. They shall make you eat grass like an ox, and you will spend the night there, wet with the dew of heaven. Seven years will bring this change upon

you, until you know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men, and will give it to whomever He will.

[26]"Inasmuch as they said, 'Leave the stump and the roots of the tree,' your kingdom will remain for you, after you come to know the heavenly authority. [27]Therefore, O king, let my counsel be pleasing to you, to atone for your sins with alms and your wrongdoings with compassion on the poor. Perhaps God will be longsuffering regarding your trespasses."[†]

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

[28]All these things came upon Nebuchadnezzar the king. [29]After a period of twelve months he was walking about the royal palace in Babylon. [30]The king spoke, saying, "Is not this the great Babylon which I built as a home for my kingdom, by my mighty power for the honor of my glory?"

[31]While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar, your kingdom has passed from you, [32]and they shall drive you from men. Your dwelling shall be with the wild animals, and they shall make you eat grass like an ox. Seven years shall bring this change upon you, until you know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men, and will give it to whomever He will." [33]That very hour the word was accomplished upon Nebuchadnezzar, for he was driven from men, ate grass like an ox, and his body was covered with the dew of heaven, until his hair was like that of lions and his nails like birds' claws.

The King Is Restored

[34]At the end of the time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me. Then I blessed the Most High and praised and glorified Him who lives forever; for His authority is an eternal authority, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.[†] [35]All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and He does according to His will with the army of heaven and with the habitation of earth. No one can resist His hand or say to Him, “What are You doing?”

[36]At that time, my understanding returned to me, and I came again into the honor of my kingdom. My appearance was also restored, and my rulers and nobles asked for me. I became strong again in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. [37]Now therefore, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt beyond measure, and glorify the King of heaven; because all His works are true, His paths are just, and He is able to humble those who walk in arrogance.

Belshazzar's Banquet

5 Belshazzar the king made a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. [2]While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar commanded to bring in the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had brought from the temple in Jerusalem, so the king, his nobles, his concubines, and his wives might drink from them.[†] [3]Thus the gold and silver vessels which he had brought from the temple of God in Jerusalem were brought in, and the king, his nobles, his concubines, and his wives drank from them. [4]They drank wine and praised the gods made of gold, silver, copper, iron, wood, and stones.

Handwriting on the Wall

[5]In the same hour, the fingers of a man's hand came forth and wrote opposite the lamp on the plaster of the wall in the king's house; and the king saw the knuckles of the hand that wrote. [6]Then the appearance of the king changed, and his thoughts troubled him greatly. The joints of his hips were loosened, and his knees knocked against each other. [7]So the king cried aloud to bring in the magicians, the Chaldeans and the diviners. He spoke to the wise men of Babylon, saying, “Whoever reads this writing and makes known its interpretation to me, he shall be clothed with purple and wear a gold chain around his neck. He shall also be the third ruler in my kingdom.” [8]Now all the king's wise men entered, but they could not read the writing or make known the interpretation to the king. [9]So Belshazzar the king was greatly troubled, and his appearance changed in him; thus his nobles were very distressed.

[10]Then the queen entered the banquet hall and spoke, saying, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. [11]There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of God. In the days of your father, vigilance and understanding were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar your father made him the chief of the enchanters, the magicians, the Chaldeans, and the diviners. [12]Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, discernment, understanding, interpreting dreams, revealing things to be grasped, and explaining difficult sayings were found in Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now therefore, let him be summoned and he will tell you its interpretation.”

The Writing Interpreted

[13]Then Daniel was led in before the king, and the king said to Daniel, “Are you the Daniel from the children of the captives of Judea, whom my father the king brought here? [14]I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and vigilance, understanding, and an excellent wisdom are found in you. [15]Now the wise men, the magicians, the diviners came before me to read this writing and make known its interpretation; but they could not reveal it to me. [16]Then I heard about you, that you are able to interpret matters requiring a judgment. Now therefore, if you can read the writing and make known its interpretation to me, you will be clothed in purple and wear a gold chain around your neck. You shall also be the third ruler in my kingdom.”

[17]Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give the privilege of your house to another. But I will read the writing for the king and make known its interpretation to you. [18]O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom, majesty, honor, and glory. [19]So because of the majesty He gave him, all peoples, tribes, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished he put to death; whomever he wished he afflicted; whomever he wished he exalted; and whomever he wished he humbled. [20]But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened with arrogance, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and his honor was taken from him. [21]Then he was driven from men, his heart was made like that of wild animals, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him grass like an ox, and his body was covered with the dew of heaven, until he came to know that the Most High God rules over the kingdom of men and will give it to whomever He will.

[22]“But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. [23]Nevertheless you lifted yourself up against the Lord God of heaven and brought the vessels of His house before you. You, your nobles, your concubines, and your wives drank wine from them and praised the gods of gold, silver, copper, iron, wood, and stones, which do not see or hear or know. But you have not glorified the God who holds your breath in His hand and knows all your ways.

[24]“Therefore the finger of the hand was sent by Him, and He ordered this writing. [25]So this is the writing He ordered: Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. [26]Now this is the interpretation of each word. Mene: God has measured your kingdom and finished it. [27]Tekel: He weighed you on the scales, but you were found lacking. [28]Upharsin: Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

[29]Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel in purple, put a gold chain around his neck, and proclaimed him to be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Belshazzar Removed from Power

[30]That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was put to death.

A Plot against Daniel

6 Now Darius the Mede received the kingdom. He was sixty-two years old. [2]It pleased Darius to set one hundred and twenty governors over the kingdom, so they might be throughout his entire kingdom.[†] [3]He also set three administrators above these, one of whom was Daniel, so the governors might give account to them, that the king might not be troubled. [4]But Daniel excelled beyond them, because there was an excellent spirit in him, and the king set him over his entire kingdom. [5]The administrators and governors sought to find some charge against Daniel, but they could find no charge or wrongdoing or fault against him because he was faithful.[†] [6]Then the administrators said, “We will find nothing against Daniel unless we find it in the laws of his God.”

[7]So the administrators and the governors stood before the king and said to him, “King Darius, live forever! [8]All the commanders, governors, the highest officials, and the regional officers have consulted together to establish a royal statute and a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except from you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. [9]Now therefore, O king, establish the decree and exhibit the writing publicly, so the decree of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed.” [10]Then King Darius gave orders to write the decree.

[11]Now when Daniel learned that the decree was posted, he entered his house, where the windows facing Jerusalem were open to him in the upper rooms, and he knelt down on his knees three times that day and prayed and gave thanks to his God, as he was doing before. [12]Then those men watched Daniel closely and found him praying and making supplication before his God. [13]So they approached the king and said, “O king, did you not give orders that any man who petitioned anything from any god or man, except from you, he would be cast into the den of lions?” The king replied, saying,

“The word is true, and the decree of the Medes and Persians shall not pass away.”

[14]Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is from the captives of Judea, does not obey your order concerning the decree you commanded, for he prays and petitions his God three times a day.” [15]Then when the king heard this word, he was very sad in himself, and he struggled hard to deliver Daniel, and did his best to deliver him until evening. [16]Then those men said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute the king establishes can be altered.”

[17]After that, the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king said to Daniel, “Your God whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”[†] [18]Then they brought a stone and placed it over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his ring and with the ring of his nobles, so the matter concerning Daniel might not be changed. [19]The king then went to his house and spent the night without his evening meal; for they brought no meats to him, and his sleep departed from him. Now God shut the mouths of the lions, and they did not trouble Daniel.[†]

Daniel Is Spared

[20]Then the king arose early in the morning at daybreak and went in haste to the den of lions.[†] [21]As he approached the den, he cried with a loud voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the mouth of the lions?” [22]Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! [23]My God sent His angel

and shut the mouths of the lions so they did not destroy me, because uprightness was found in me before Him, and I did no wrongdoing in His sight.”

[24]Then the king rejoiced greatly over him and gave orders to bring Daniel out of the den; and no corruption was found in him, because he believed in his God. [25]The king then gave orders, and they brought the men who brought charges against Daniel; and they cast them, their children, and their wives into the den of lions. They did not reach the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Darius's New Decree

[26]Now Darius the king wrote to all peoples, tribes, and languages who dwell in all the earth:

“May peace be multiplied to you.

[27]“A decree was made in my presence, that in every dominion of my kingdom, men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, because He is the living God; He endures unto the ages. His kingdom shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall continue to the end. [28]He helps and rescues, and works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for He delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”

[29]So Daniel prospered in the kingdom of Darius and in the kingdom of Cyrus the Persian.

Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, Daniel saw a dream and visions in his head upon his bed. Then he wrote down the dream:[†] [2]I, Daniel, looked on in my vision in the night, and behold, the four winds of heaven blew violently upon the great sea. [3]Then four large beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. [4]The first was like a lioness, and it had wings like an eagle. I looked on until its wings were plucked out, and it was driven from the earth and made to stand on human feet; and a human heart was given to it. [5]After this, behold, there was a second beast like a bear. It rose up on one side and had three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth. Thus they said to it, “Arise, devour much flesh!” [6]After this, I kept looking and behold, there was another beast like a leopard, and it had the four wings of a bird on its back. There were also four heads on the beast, and authority was given to it. [7]After this, I looked and behold, a fourth beast, fearful, terrifying, and exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth, and it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling underfoot whatever was left. It was exceedingly different from all the beasts before it, and it had ten horns. [8]I was especially noticing its horns, and behold, there was another horn, a little one. It came up among them, and the three horns of those before it were uprooted because of its presence; and behold, there were eyes like the eyes of a man in this horn, and it had a mouth speaking arrogant things.[†]

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Within Holy Scripture there are certain visionary, prophetic writings that are specifically seen as *revelations* because they *reveal* something about the last days, or end times. These writings within Holy Scripture are part of a larger group of works known as *apocalyptic* literature (from a Greek word meaning "to uncover" or "unveil").

From about 250 BC to AD 200, there were some thirty to forty such works circulating within the Jewish and early Christian communities. Only one of all these writings, the Revelation of John (also called the Apocalypse), was accepted by the Church to be part of Holy Scripture. There are other sections in the Bible which also are written in an apocalyptic style, such as Isaiah 24—27, 60—66; Ezekiel 38—39; Daniel 7—12; Zechariah 1—6, 9—14; and Mark 13.

It is typical for apocalyptic writings to describe visions of angels, animals of various kinds, scrolls, lamps, stars, and dragons, as well as battles and various natural disasters. The Revelation of John includes much imagery found also in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah (see Ezk 40:1–5 and Rev 11:1; 21:9–17; Dan 7:1–8 and Rev 13:1–5; Zec 4:1–6, 11–14 and Rev 4:5; 11:3, 4). About three-fourths of the 404 verses in Revelation refer to something in the Old Testament.

How are we to understand this not easily understood literary form? How are we to apply these Scriptures to our lives? Christ taught it is impossible to know when He will come again (Mt 24:36, 44). It is impossible to determine the precise meaning of all the imagery in the apocalyptic writings. Rather, we are to look forward to the end of time with sober yet eager anticipation, as pilgrims seeking His eternal kingdom (Php 3:20; Col 3:1–4). A prayer by St. Basil the Great says, "Grant us to pass through all the night of this present life with vigilant heart and sober thought, in expectancy of the coming of the bright and manifest day of. . . our Lord.”

The apocalyptic texts are offered to Christians in every generation to encourage them in their struggles against sin, the principalities and powers of darkness in this world (Eph 6:12) and the fear of death. These writings assure us that even in the midst of the cosmic cataclysms and battles against evil powers occurring just before Christ returns—the time of “great tribulation” (Mt 24:21)—the Lord will strengthen and guide His people (Mt 28:20), bringing them to final victory over all forces of evil (Rev 20:7–10). Making references to Daniel 7 and 12 concerning the end times, St. Cyril of Jerusalem explains that as in the persecutions, God will again permit these things. Why? Not because He wants satanic power to hinder His people, but because He desires to crown His own champions for their patient endurance—just as He did His prophets and apostles—so that having toiled for a little while, they may inherit the eternal kingdom of Heaven.

So the essential purpose of the apocalyptic writings is to encourage the faithful to be full of hope and prepared to persevere to the end, no matter what happens (Mt 24:3–13; Lk 21:25–28). All are inspired to look through the darkness of the present age and to behold the ultimate victory of Christ and the joyful consummation that awaits His Bride—the Church—who, through Her sacraments, has prepared herself for the coming of the Lord (2Pt 3:7–14; Tts 2:11–14). The closing words of the New Testament express this very sense of expectation: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20).

The Ancient of Days

[9]I continued to watch until thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days enthroned Himself. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, and its wheels a burning fire.[†] [10]A river of fire flowed from before Him. Thousands and thousands ministered to Him, and countless thousands stood before Him. The court was in session, and the books were opened. [11]Then I kept watching because of the sound of the arrogant words the horn was speaking. I watched until the beast was put to death and destroyed, and its body given to the burning flame. [12]As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, yet length of life was given them for a season and a time.

[13]I continued to observe the vision in the night, and behold, One like the Son of Man was coming with the clouds of heaven, until He came to the Ancient of Days and approached Him.[†] [14]Then dominion, honor, and the kingdom were given to Him, and all peoples, tribes, and languages served Him. His authority is an everlasting authority which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed.

The Meaning of the Vision

[15]My spirit within me trembled with fear, and the visions in my head troubled me. [16]Then I approached one of those who stood by and sought the precise meaning of all this from him. So he told me the precise meaning and made known to me the interpretation of the words:

[17]“These four large beasts are four kingdoms. They shall arise on the earth, then be taken away. [18]After this, the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess it unto ages of ages.”

[19]Then I sought the precise meaning of the fourth beast, for it was different from all the others. It was exceedingly fearful, and its teeth were made of iron, and its nails of bronze. It was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling underfoot whatever was left. [20]The ten horns on its head and the other horn, which had eyes and a mouth that spoke arrogant things, and the vision of which I noticed more than the rest, came up and knocked down the three horns before it. [21]So I kept looking, and that horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, [22]until the Ancient of Days came and gave His judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High. Then the time arrived, and the saints possessed the kingdom.

[23]Thus he said: “The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which shall surpass all the kingdoms; and it shall devour all the earth, and trample and break it in pieces. [24]Its ten horns are ten kings. They shall arise, and after them another shall arise. He shall surpass all those before him in evils, and he shall humble three kings. [25]He will speak extremely arrogant words and wear down the saints of the Most High. He will devise a way to change times and law, and he shall be given authority for a time, times, and half a time.[†] [26]But the court shall go into session, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it forever. [27]Then the kingdom, the authority, and the greatness of the kingdoms under heaven shall be given to the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

[28]This is the end of my account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me. My countenance changed, but I kept the matter to myself.

The Ram and the Goat

8 In the third year of Belshazzar's reign, a vision was revealed to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time.[†] [2]I was in Shushan, in the palace, in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the Ulai River. [3]Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, one ram stood before the Ulai, and it had horns. The horns were high, but one was higher than the other; and the higher one came up last. [4]I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, and no animal could withstand him or deliver from his power; but he did according to his will and became great.

[5]As I was considering this, behold, a male goat came from the southwest, across the surface of all the earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between its eyes.[†] [6]Then he came to the ram that had the horns, which I saw standing before the Ulai, and he ran at him with furious power. [7]I saw him running at the ram, and attacking him savagely. He struck the ram and broke both his horns. There was no strength in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him to the ground and trampled him. There was no one that could deliver the ram from his power. [8]So the male goat became exceedingly great, and when he became strong, his large horn was broken, and four horns came up under him toward the four winds of heaven.

[9]Then from one of them one strong horn came forth, strong and exceedingly great, toward the south and the east and toward the host. [10]He exalted himself to the host of heaven, and some of the heavenly host and

stars fell to the earth; and he trampled them underfoot[†] [11]until the chief captain delivered the host of captives. For because of him the sacrifice was thrown down; and it came about that he prospered, but the sanctuary was to become desolate. [12]For the sin offering was offered as long as there was sacrifice, but he cast righteousness to the ground; and although he did this, he prospered. [13]Then I heard one of the saints speaking, and another saint said to that one speaking, “How long will the vision stand, and the sacrifice be taken away, and the sin offering which was offered be desolated, and the sanctuary and host be trampled underfoot?” [14]He replied to him, “Until two thousand and three hundred days of evening and morning, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

Gabriel Reveals the Vision

[15]So it came about that when I, Daniel, saw the vision and sought to understand it, then, behold, the vision of a man stood before me. [16]I heard the voice of this man in the midst of the Ulai, and he called and said, “Gabriel, cause that man to understand the vision.” [17]Thus he came and stood near where I was standing; and when he came, I was astonished and fell on my face. Then he said to me, “Understand, son of man, for the vision is yet for the end of time.” [18]Now when he spoke with me, I fell on my face to the ground, but he touched me and stood me on my feet. [19]Then he said, “Behold, I will make known to you what shall take place in the last time of wrath, for the vision is yet for the end of time. [20]The ram you saw with its horns is the king of the Medes and Persians. [21]The male goat is the king of the Greeks, and the great horn between its eyes is the first king. [22]When

that horn is broken and four horns stand under it, four kings from that nation shall arise, but not with its might.

[23]“Then in the latter time of their kingdom, when sins are fulfilled, a king shall arise, shameless in countenance; and he will understand riddles. [24]His strength will be mighty, and he shall destroy terribly. He shall prosper and take action, and destroy the mighty and the holy people. [25]The yoke of his chain shall prosper. There will be treachery in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart. He shall destroy many with deceit and stand for the destruction of many. He will crush them like an egg in his hand. [26]Now the vision of the evening and the morning that was told is true: therefore, seal the vision, because it refers to many days in the future.”[†]

[27]Then I, Daniel, fell asleep and was sick for days. After this, I arose and did the king's business, and I wondered about the vision; but no one understood it.

Daniel Prays for the People

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Xerxes, of the seed of the Medes, who reigned over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— [2]in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood in the books the number of years when the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet would be fulfilled for the desolation of Jerusalem, and it came to seventy years.

[3]Then I set my face toward the Lord God to seek Him in prayer and supplication, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.[†] [4]So I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession. I said, “O Lord God, great and marvelous,

who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and keep Your commandments— [5]we sinned and did wrong. We acted lawlessly, fell away, and turned away from Your commandments and judgments. [6]Neither did we obey Your servants the prophets who spoke in Your name to our kings, our rulers, our fathers, and to all the people in the land. [7]O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but shame of face belongs to us, as it is today, to the men of Judah, to those who dwell in Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those near and far in all the earth, wherever You scattered them in their faithlessness by which they rejected You. [8]O Lord, shame of face belongs to us, our kings, our rulers, and to our fathers who sinned against You.[†] [9]To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, whereas we fell away. [10]We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by the hands of His servants the prophets. [11]Yes, all Israel transgressed Your law and turned aside, so as not to obey Your voice. Therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God has come upon us, because we sinned against You. [12]So He confirmed His words which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us great calamities; for under the whole heaven such has not taken place, as the things that happened in Jerusalem. [13]As it is written in the Law of Moses, all these calamities came upon us, yet we have not entreated the Lord our God so as to turn from our wrongdoings, and to gain insight into all Your truth. [14]Therefore the Lord watched and brought all these things upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in every work He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. [15]So now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people from the land of Egypt with a strong hand, and who made Yourself a name as it is this day, we have sinned and acted lawlessly.

[16]“O Lord, in all Your mercy, let Your anger and Your wrath be turned away from Your city of Jerusalem, Your holy mountain, though we have sinned; for in our wrongdoings and those of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a disgrace among all those around us. [17]So now, O Lord our God, listen to the prayers of Your servant and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is deserted because of You, O Lord. [18]O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our destruction and that of Your city, in which Your name is called upon; for not on the basis of our righteous deeds do we bring our prayer for mercy before You, but on the basis of Your abundant mercy. [19]O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, give heed and act! Do not delay for Your sake, O my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Gabriel and the Seventy Weeks

[20]Now while I was still speaking, praying, and declaring my sins and the sins of my people Israel, and bringing my cry for mercy before the Lord my God concerning the holy mountain of my God, [21]yes, while I was speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I saw in my vision at the beginning, flew and touched me about the time of the evening sacrifice. [22]He caused me to understand, and spoke with me and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to guide you with insight. [23]At the beginning of your prayer, the word went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are a man of desires. Therefore, consider the matter and understand the vision:

[24]“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city to finish sin, to set an end to sin, to wipe out lawlessness, to atone for wrongdoings, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.[†] [25]You shall know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to be answered and to build Jerusalem, until Christ the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. Then the time shall return, and the streets and the wall shall be built; the times shall be left desolate.

[26]“After the sixty-two weeks, the Anointed One shall be put to death, yet there shall be no upright judgment for Him; and he shall destroy the city and the sanctuary with the prince who is coming, and they shall be cut off with a flood, and to the end of the war, which will be cut short, he shall appoint the city to desolations. [27]Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week, and in the middle of the week, My sacrifice and drink-offering will be taken away; and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolations, and to the end of the time, an end to the desolation shall be appointed.”[†]

The Man of Splendor

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of the Persians, a word was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The word was true, and great power and understanding were given to him in the vision.[†] [2]In those days, I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.[†] [3]I ate no desirable food, and no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself, until three whole weeks were fulfilled. [4]Then on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, I was beside the great river, that is, the Tigris. [5]I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man clothed in fine linen; and his waist was girded with gold of Uphaz.[†] [6]His body was like beryl, and his face like the appearance of lightning. His eyes were like lamps of fire, and his arms and legs like the appearance of shining brass. The sound of his words was like the voice of a multitude. [7]I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men with me did not see the vision; but a great astonishment fell upon them, and they fled in fear. [8]So I was left alone and saw this great vision, but no strength remained in me; for my splendor was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength. [9]Yet I heard the sound of his words; and when I heard him, I was deeply troubled with my face on the ground.

Prophecies of Persia and Greece

[10]Suddenly, a hand touched me and raised me up on my knees. [11]He said to me, “O Daniel, a man of desires, understand the words I speak to you and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” So when he spoke this word to me, I stood trembling. [12]Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day you set your heart to understand and to afflict yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I came because of your words.[†] [13]But the prince of the Persian kingdom withstood me twenty-one days, and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; for I was left there with the ruler of the Persian kingdom. [14]Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the last days, for the vision is for days yet to come.”

[15]When he had spoken these words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and was deeply troubled. [16]Again suddenly, one having the likeness

of a son of man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and spoke, and said to the one standing before me, “My lord, because of your vision, my insides churned within me so I have no strength.[†] [17]For how can your servant, my lord, speak with my lord of this? As for me, no strength now remains in me, nor is any breath left in me.”

[18]Then again, the one like the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. [19]He said to me, “O man of desires, peace be to you; be courageous and strong.” So when he spoke with me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” [20]Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to the war against the ruler of the Persians, and I will go forth, and the ruler of the Greeks will come. [21]But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth—and there is no one loyal to me concerning this, except Michael your prince.

11 “As for me, in the first year of Cyrus, I stood in power and strength.[†] [2]Now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three kings will yet arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than all of them; and after he possesses his wealth, he shall rise up against all the kingdoms of the Greeks. [†] [3]Then a mighty king shall arise, and he shall rule a great dominion and do according to his will.[†] [4]After his kingdom is established, it shall be crushed and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity, nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted and given to others besides these.

Warring Kings of North and South

[5]“Also the king of the south shall become strong; and one of his rulers shall prevail against him and have power over a great dominion under his authority.[†] [6]After his years, they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the south shall go to the king of the north to make an agreement with him. But she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither shall his seed stand; but she shall be betrayed along with those who brought her, the maiden and he who strengthened her in those times.[†] [7]But from the flower of her root, one shall arise in his readiness and shall come against the host, enter the strongholds of the king of the north, and deal with them and prevail.[†] [8]Then he shall also carry their gods to Egypt with their molten images, and all their precious vessels of silver and gold, along with a host of captives. Thus he shall stand above the king of the north. [9]Then he will come against the kingdom of the king of the south, but shall return to his own land. [10]But his sons shall assemble a multitude of great forces. Thus when he comes, he shall come and overwhelm and pass by, then he shall rest. Again he shall contend to the extent of his strength.[†]

[11]“Then the king of the south shall be angered and go out and fight with the king of the north, who shall muster a great multitude; but this multitude shall be given into his hand.[†] [12]For he will defeat the multitude, and his heart will be lifted up. Yes, he shall cast down tens of thousands, but will not prevail. [13]For the king of the north will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and at the end of some years his invading army shall come with a great force and much equipment.

[14]“Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the south. Even the sons of troublemakers among your people shall exalt themselves

in fulfillment of the vision, but they will be weak. [15]So the king of the north shall come and build a siege mound, and take fortified cities; and the arms of the king of the south shall not withstand him. His choice troops will rise up, but there shall be no strength to resist. [16]But he who comes against him shall do according to his will, and no one shall stand against him. He will stand in the Land of Beauty, and it shall be consumed by his hand.[†] [17]He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he will do whatever seems right to him. He shall give him the daughter of women to corrupt her; but she will not remain with him or be for him.[†] [18]After this he shall turn his face to the islands and shall take many, and cause rulers to cease from their disgrace. Nevertheless, his own disgrace shall turn back on him.[†] [19]Then he will turn his face toward the strength of his land, but he shall stumble and fall, and will not be found.

[20]“Now a plant of the kingdom shall arise from his root and pass over in his readiness. He will further the glory of the kingdom, but in those days he shall be crushed, but not openly or in battle.[†] [21]After this, one shall arise in his readiness, and be set at naught. Yet they did not give him the glory of the kingdom; nevertheless, he shall enter with prosperity and seize the kingdom by intrigue.[†] [22]Then the arms of him who overwhelms and the ruler of the covenant shall be overwhelmed and crushed by his presence. [23]Then after the leagues made with him, he shall work deceit, for he shall come up and overpower him with a small number of people. [24]He shall come into the prosperous and wealthy places of the provinces and do what neither his fathers or forefathers have done. He will disperse plunder, spoils, and wealth among them and devise his plans against Egypt, but only for a

time. [25]Then his strength and his heart shall be stirred up against the king of the south with a large army. The king of the south shall engage him in war with a very large and mighty army, but the king's forces shall not stand; for they will devise plans against him. [26]They shall eat his provisions and crush him. His army shall be overwhelmed, and many shall fall down slain.

[27]“Now both kings and their hearts will be set on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but the evil will not prosper, for the end is yet at the appointed time. [28]Then he shall return to his land with abundant possessions, but his heart shall be against the holy covenant; so he shall do evil, then return to his own land.

The Northern King's Deceit

[29]“At the appointed time he shall return and come into the south again; but this last coming will not be like the first. [30]For the Kitians shall go out and come against him, and he will be humbled. Then he will return and be enraged against the holy covenant. He shall do evil, and return and show regard for those who forsook the holy covenant.[†] [31]Then offspring shall arise from him, and they shall defile the sanctuary of power. They shall take away the daily sacrifice, and place there the abomination of desolation.[†] [32]Transgressors will bring about a covenant by deceitful means, but the people who know their God will be strong and do valiantly. [33]Those of the people who understand shall understand much, yet they shall be weakened by sword and flame, and by captivity and days of plundering. [34]When they are weak, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. [35]Some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine

them as by fire and to test them, so they may be revealed at the time of the end; because the matter is still for the appointed time.

[36]“Then the king shall do according to his will. He will be exalted and magnified above every god, and speak arrogant words. He shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished, for it is to be ended. [37]He shall not regard any gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor shall he regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all. [38]But in his locality he shall honor a god of fortresses, and a god his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, and with precious stones and desirable things. [39]Thus he shall do in the strong fortresses of refuge with a foreign god, and he shall increase his glory. He shall subject many to them and distribute gifts in the land.

The Northern King's Victories

[40]“At the time of the end, the king of the north will attack the king of the south and come against him with chariots, horsemen, and many ships. He shall enter his land, crush it, and move on. [41]He shall also enter the Land of Beauty, and many shall fall. But these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent among the children of Ammon. [42]He shall stretch out his hand upon the land, and the land of Egypt will not escape. [43]He shall gain control over the hidden stores of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt, and of the Libyans and Ethiopians in their strongholds. [44]But rumors and anxieties from the east and the north will trouble him; therefore, he shall come with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. [45]He shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas,

upon the holy mountain of beauty. Yet he will come to his portion, but there shall be no one to deliver him.

The Prophecy of Michael

12 “At that time Michael the great prince, who stands watch over the sons of your people, shall stand up; and there shall be a time of tribulation, such as never happened until that time, since there was a nation upon the earth. But at that time your people shall be saved, all found written in the book.[†] [2]Then many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to disgrace and everlasting shame. [3]Those who understand shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and some who are righteous, like the stars of heaven forever and ever. [4]As for you, Daniel, close up these words and seal the book until the time of the end, until many are taught and knowledge is increased.”

[5]Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on the other riverbank. [6]One said to the man clothed in fine linen who was above the water of the river, “How long will it be to the end of these wonders of which You have spoken?” [7]Then I heard from the man clothed in fine linen who was above the water of the river, as he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time. Thus when the dispersion is ended, they shall know all these things.[†]

[8]Although I heard, I did not understand. So I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?” [9]He replied, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. [10]Many shall choose

to be made white and refined through fire; but the lawless shall act lawlessly. None of the lawless shall understand, but the wise shall understand. [11]From the time the daily sacrifice is taken away and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.[†] [12]Blessed is he who waits and comes to one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. [13]But now, go your way and rest, for there are yet days to the fulfillment of the end; and you shall arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

Bel and the Serpent

[1]When King Astyages was gathered to his fathers, Cyrus of Persia received his kingdom.[†] [2]Daniel was a confidant of the king and was honored above all his friends.

[3]Now the Babylonians had an idol whose name was Bel, and every day they spent on it twelve bushels of fine flour, forty sheep, and six vessels of wine.[†] [4]The king adored it and went every day to worship it; but Daniel worshiped his own God. So the king asked him, “Why do you not worship Bel?” [5]Daniel answered, “Because I do not worship idols made with hands, but only the living God who created heaven and earth and has dominion over all flesh.”[†] [6]The king said to him, “Do you not think Bel is a living god? Do you not see how much he eats and drinks every day?” [7]Daniel smiled and said, “Do not be deceived, O king, for it is but clay inside and bronze outside, and it has never eaten or drunk anything.”[†]

Bel Is Deposed

[8]Very angry, the king summoned his priests and said to them, “If you do not tell me who it is that consumes these provisions, you shall die. [9]But if you can prove Bel consumes them, then Daniel shall die, because he blasphemed against Bel.” So Daniel said to the king, “Let it be according to your word.”

[10]Now there were seventy priests of Bel, besides their wives and children, and the king went with Daniel into the temple.[†] [11]Then the priests of Bel said, “Look, we will step outside. You, O king, set out the food and prepare the wine, then shut the door and seal it with your signet. [12]If you do not find Bel has eaten it all when you come tomorrow, we will suffer death—or else Daniel shall die, who speaks lies against us.” [13]They were unconcerned, for under the table they had made a secret entrance through which they always came in to consume the provisions.

[14]So when they had all gone, the king set out the food for Bel. And Daniel ordered his servants to bring in ashes, which they sprinkled throughout all the temple in the presence of the king alone. Then they went out, shut the door, sealed it with the king's signet, and departed. [15]During the night the priests came with their wives and children, as they usually did, and ate and drank everything.

[16]The king rose early the next morning, and Daniel with him. [17]Then the king said, “Are the seals intact, Daniel?” Daniel answered, “They are intact, O king.” [18]As soon as the doors were opened, the king looked at the table and cried out in a loud voice, “Great are you, O Bel, and with you there is no deceit at all.” [19]Then Daniel laughed and restrained the king

from going in. He said, “Look at the floor, and notice whose footprints these are.” [20]The king replied, “I see the footprints of men, women, and children.” [21]With great anger, the king seized the priests and their wives and children, and they showed him the hidden doors where they came in and consumed such things as were upon the table. [22]Therefore the king put them to death and handed Bel over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple.

The Serpent Is Destroyed

[23]There was also a large serpent the people of Babylon worshiped.[†] [24]So the king said to Daniel, “Will you also say this is made of bronze? Look, he lives, he eats, and he drinks—you cannot say he is no living god. Therefore worship him.” [25]Daniel replied, “I will worship the Lord my God; for He is the living God. [26]But with your permission, O king, I shall slay this serpent without sword or staff.” The king said, “I will give my permission.”[†] [27]Then Daniel took pitch, tar, and hair; these he boiled together and made cakes, and put them in the mouth of the serpent. The serpent ate them and burst open. Then Daniel said, “Behold the things you have been worshiping.”

Daniel Is Vindicated

[28]Now when the people of Babylon heard what had been done, they were indignant and conspired against the king, saying, “The king has become a Jew; he has destroyed Bel, slain the serpent, and put the priests to death.” [29]Going to the king, they said, “Deliver Daniel to us, or else we will destroy you and your house.” [30]Now when the king saw they were

pressing him hard, he handed Daniel over to them under compulsion. [31]They threw Daniel into the lions’ den, where he was left for six days. [32]Now there were seven lions in the den, and they had to give them two carcasses every day and two sheep. But these things were not given to them now, so they might devour Daniel.

[33]Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judea. He had made a stew and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going to the fields to take it to the reapers.[†] [34]But the angel of the Lord said unto Habakkuk, “Go, carry the dinner you have into Babylon to Daniel, who is in the lions’ den.” [35]Habakkuk said, “O Lord, I have never seen Babylon, nor do I know the den.” [36]Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown, and carried him by the hair of his head, and with the speed of the wind set him in Babylon over the den. [37]Habakkuk cried out, saying, “O Daniel, Daniel, take the meal God has sent you.” [38]Daniel said, “You have remembered me, O God, and You have not forsaken those who love You.” [39]So Daniel arose and ate; and the angel of the Lord immediately set Habakkuk down in his own place once more.

[40]After this, on the seventh day the king went to the lions’ den to mourn for Daniel, and he came to the pit and looked inside—and there sat Daniel.[†] [41]The king cried out with a loud voice, “Great are You, O Lord God of Daniel, and there is no other besides You.” [42]Then he drew him out of the den, and cast in those who had plotted Daniel's destruction; and they were devoured in a moment before his face.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Book of Matthew

Author—Though the gospel does not name Matthew as the author, all the early manuscripts attribute authorship to Matthew, one of the twelve disciples listed in the New Testament. His authorship is attested by the universal witness of the ancient Church.

Date—Matthew could have been written as early as AD 50, but it is more likely that it was written after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. It was probably written over a period of years while Matthew resided in Antioch, where the church was a strong, mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians. St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch AD 67–107, is one of the earliest witnesses to the existence of this gospel.

Major Theme—*Christ, the Incarnate God, Immanuel, has inaugurated the kingdom of God and the new covenant, which is realized in the true Israel, the Church.* Subthemes include:

1. *The fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.* Matthew shows conclusively that Christ, the incarnate Son of God, fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. He establishes the new covenant through His death and Resurrection and will continue to guide His Church, the true Israel of God, to the end of the age.
2. *The revelation of the kingdom of God.* Jesus proclaims that God's reign has come (4:17, 23), His power being manifested in His Son, but the fullness of the Kingdom will be consummated at Christ's Second Coming.
3. *A call to discipleship (4:18–22; 8:18–22)*, through mission (ch. 10; 28:18–20), and the beginning of the Gentile Church (8:11, 12; 21:43; 28:19).

Background—The Gospel of Matthew, though it has come down to us in Greek, has a Jewish/Hebraic flavor, evident in its Aramaic expressions and forms and in its use of numerous quotations and arguments from the Old Testament. Furthermore, Matthew gives details of Jewish religious observances and often uses Jewish style and techniques of argument. God's final judgment, pictured in apocalyptic images common in Jewish writings, is also emphasized. Papias, a second-century Christian author, preserves the tradition that Matthew wrote the sayings of Christ in Aramaic, the common language of the Jews at the time of Christ, and that others later freely translated this work into Greek.

Outline

I. The Identity of Jesus Christ (1:1–2:23)
   A. Who Christ is (1:1–25)
   B. Events surrounding His birth (2:1–23)
II. Jesus' Public Ministry: Revelation of the Kingdom (3:1–10:42)
   A. Beginning of the ministry: the kingdom proclaimed (3:1–4:25)
   B. Sermon on the Mount: righteousness of the kingdom (5:1–7:29)
   C. The mighty works of Christ: the power of the kingdom (8:1–9:38)
   D. Discourse on mission (10:1–42)
III. Responses to Christ: Belief and Unbelief (11:1–25:46)
   A. Responses in Galilee (11:1–18:35)
   B. Responses in Judea and Jerusalem (19:1–25:46)
IV. The Passion and Resurrection of Christ (26:1–28:20)
   A. Events prior to the arrest (26:1–46)
   B. Jesus' arrest (26:47–27:26)

C. Crucifixion, death, and burial (27:27–66)

D. The resurrection of Christ (28:1–15)

E. The Great Commission (28:16–20)

The Genealogy of Jesus

(Lk 3:23–38)

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:[†] [ω]

[2]Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.[†] [3]Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.[†] [4]Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. [5]Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, [6]and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife*[a] of Uriah.[†] [7]Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa.[a] [8]Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. [9]Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. [10]Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon,[a] and Amon begot Josiah. [11]Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

[12]And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. [13]Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. [14]Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot

Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. [15]Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. [16]And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.[†]

[17]So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.[†]

The Virgin Birth of Christ

(Lk 2:1–7)

[18]Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. [19]Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.[†] [20]But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.[†] [21]And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

[22]So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:[†] [23]“*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,”*[a] which is translated, “God with us.”[†]

[24]Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, [25]and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.[a] And he called His name JESUS.[†]

Gentiles Worship the Christ Child

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,[†] [ω] [2]saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”[†]

[3]When Herod the king heard *this,* he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. [4]And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.[†]

[5]So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

> [6]*‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,*
>
> *Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;*
>
> *For out of you shall come a Ruler*
>
> *Who will shepherd My people Israel.’* ”[a]

[7]Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. [8]And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him,* bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

[9]When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. [10]When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. [11]And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.[†]

[12]Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Refuge in Egypt

[13]Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”[ω]

[14]When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,[†] [15]and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, *“Out of Egypt I called My Son.”*[a] [†]

The Holy Innocents

[16]Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and

under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.[†] [17]Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:[†]

> [18]*“A voice was heard in Ramah,*
>
> *Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,*
>
> *Rachel weeping for her children,*
>
> *Refusing to be comforted,*
>
> *Because they are no more.”*[a]

Return from Exile

(Lk 2:39)

[19]Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,[†] [20]saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead.” [21]Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

[22]But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.[†] [23]And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”[†]

John the Baptist's Call to Repentance

(Mk 1:1–8; Lk 3:1–18; Jn 1:19–28)

3 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,[†] [2]and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” [3]For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

> *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*
> *‘Prepare the way of the Lord;*
> *Make His paths straight.’ ”*[a]

[4]Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.[†] [5]Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him [6]and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.[†]

[7]But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?[†] [8]Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,[†] [9]and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.[†] [10]And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.[†] [11]I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.[a] [†] [12]His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”[†]

The Baptism of Jesus

(Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21, 22; Jn 1:29–34)

[13]Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.[ω] [14]And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”

[15]But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.[†]

[16]When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He[a] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.[†] [17]And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”[†]

Jesus' Triumph over Satan

(Mk 1:12, 13; Lk 4:1–13)

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.[†] [2]And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.[†] [3]Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”[†]

[4]But He answered and said, “It is written, *‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’* ”[a] [†]

[5]Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,[†] [6]and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’

and,

‘In their hands they shall bear you up,

Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”[a] [†]

[7]Jesus said to him, “It is written again, *‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’* ”[a] [†]

[8]Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.[†] [9]And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

[10]Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you,[a] Satan! For it is written, *‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’* ”[b]

[11]Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Repentance and the Kingdom

(Mk 1:14, 15; Lk 4:14, 15; Jn 4:1–4)

[12]Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. [13]And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, [14]that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

[15]*“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,*

By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles:[†]

[16]*The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,*

And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death

Light has dawned.”[a] [†]

[17]From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”[†]

The First Disciples

(Mk 1:16–20; Lk 5:1–11)

[18]And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.[†] [19]Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” [20]They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

[21]Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, [22]and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Summary of Jesus' Ministry

(Lk 6:17–19)

[23]And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.[†] [24]Then His fame went throughout

all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. [25]Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

The Beatitudes: The Blessings of True Discipleship

(Lk 6:20–49)

5 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.[†] [2]Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

[3]“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.[†]
[4]Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.[†]
[5]Blessed *are* the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.[†]
[6]Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.[†]
[7]Blessed *are* the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.[†]
[8]Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.[†]
[9]Blessed *are* the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.[†]
[10]Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.[†]

[11]“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.[†]

[12]Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5—7), Jesus introduces the kind of life those who seek the Kingdom of God must lead. His homily could properly be called, “The Righteousness of the Kingdom.” It can be divided into several sections.

1 *The Beatitudes* (5:1–16). The sermon begins with the Beatitudes (the “blessings”), which describe the joys of true discipleship, the blessed way of life. The people of God await the rewards Jesus promises in this section.

2 *The new covenant* (5:17–48). Then, as the Son of God whose authority is greater than that of Moses, Christ proclaims the new law, the righteousness leading toward perfection, to which the Mosaic Law and the prophets pointed. Jesus reveals the deeper meaning of several Old Testament laws, broadening their implications.

(a) “You shall not murder” is expanded beyond the command against physically killing another (5:21–26). Murder now includes anger, calling someone a fool, and failure to be reconciled with a friend or adversary.

(b) “You shall not commit adultery” (5:27) no longer refers only to the unlawful act of sex outside marriage. It now includes lust.

(c) Divorce was allowable under the Old Testament law. But under the new covenant, divorce is permissible only because of sexual immorality, and remarriage to a divorced person is not permitted (5:31, 32).

(d) "Perform your oaths to the Lord" is the Old Testament law. Jesus instructs us to say "yes" or "no" without taking an oath, and to keep our word (5:33–37).

(e) "An eye for an eye"—a graphic way of seeing justice from a human perspective—becomes "turn the other [cheek]" and "love your enemies." Not only must we forsake vengeance, even when it is just retribution; we must treat others as God treats us, with mercy and grace (5:38–45).

3 *Spiritual disciplines* (6:1—7:12). Jesus assumes we will follow three disciplines that help us attain true righteousness (6:1–18) and true wisdom (6:19—7:12). These disciplines are a vital part of Christian tradition.

(a) *Giving alms*, or doing charitable deeds for the poor, should be done secretly, before God and not before men (6:1–4).

(b) *Prayer* should follow the model of the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus here reveals to His Church (6:5–15).

(c) *Fasting* should likewise be done to please God, not men (6:16–18).

These disciplines help us find true wisdom, which consists of (1) the love of God and pursuit of His righteousness by bringing our treasure (6:19–26) as alms to God, and our worries (6:22—7:34) in prayer and fasting to Him;

and (2) the love of human beings and pursuit of righteous reconciliation with them by submitting our judgments of them (7:1–6) to God’s severe mercy. For these difficult tasks we need divine discernment and guidance, which God provides to those who follow Jesus’ spiritual rule (7:7–12). Thus, our natural impulses are redirected toward their proper goal: the righteousness of God in His Kingdom (6:33).

4 *Exhortations to righteousness* (7:13–29). Jesus concludes with exhortations to true righteousness, warnings about hypocritical and deceitful professions of righteousness, and instructions to build on the rock of His teachings.

The Disciples in the World

(Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34, 35)

[13]“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.[†]

[14]“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.[ω] [15]Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. [16]Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.[†]

Righteousness: The Law Fulfilled

[17]“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.[†] [18]For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.[†] [19]Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.[†] [20]For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.[†]

Righteousness Illustrated

[21]“You have heard that it was said to those of old, *‘You shall not murder,*[a] *and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’*[†] [22]But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause[a] shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire. [23]Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,[†] [24]leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. [25]Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.[†] [26]Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

[27]“You have heard that it was said to those of old,[a] ‘*You shall not commit adultery.*’[b] [†] [28]But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29]If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.[†] [30]And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

[31]“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’[†] [32]But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality[a] causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

[33]“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ [34]But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;[†] [35]nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. [36]Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. [37]But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

[38]“You have heard that it was said, ‘*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*’[a] [39]But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.[†] [40]If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. [41]And whoever

compels you to go one mile, go with him two. [42]Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

[43]“You have heard that it was said, ‘*You shall love your neighbor*[a] *and hate your enemy.’* [44]But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,[a] [†] [45]that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. [46]For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? [47]And if you greet your brethren[a] only, what do you do more *than others?* Do not even the tax collectors[b] do so? [48]Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.[†]

How to Give Alms

6 “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.[†] [2]Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.[†] [3]But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,[†] [4]that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.[a]

How to Pray

(*Lk 11:1–4*)

[5]“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.[†] [6]But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;* and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.[a] [7]And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do.* For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

[8]“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. [9]In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.[†]

[10]Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

[11]Give us this day our daily bread.[†]

[12]And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.[†]

[13]And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.[a] [†]

[14]“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.[†] [ω] [15]But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

How to Fast

[16]“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad
countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to
be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.[†] [17]But you,
when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18]so that you do not
appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;*
and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.[a]

Trusting God Wholly

(Lk 16:13)

[19]“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust
destroy and where thieves break in and steal;[†] [20]but lay up for yourselves
treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves
do not break in and steal. [21]For where your treasure is, there your heart will
be also.

[22]“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your
whole body will be full of light.[†] [23]But if your eye is bad, your whole body
will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how
great *is* that darkness!

[24]“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.[†]

Trusting God for Basic Needs

(*Lk 12:22–31*)

[25]“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?† [26]Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [27]Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

[28]“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; [29]and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [30]Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

[31]“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ [32]For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.† [33]But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.† [34]Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

On Judging Others

(*Lk 6:37, 38, 41, 42*)

7 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.† 3And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? 5Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

6“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.†

Persevering in Prayer

(Lk 11:9–13)

7“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.† 8For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!† 12Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.† ω

The Narrow Gate

(Lk 13:24)

[13]“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.[†] [14]Because[a] narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Beware of False Prophets

(Lk 6:43, 44)

[15]“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.[†] [16]You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? [17]Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. [18]A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. [19]Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.[†] [20]Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

[21]“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.[†] [22]Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ [23]And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Hearing and Doing Jesus' Teachings

(Lk 6:47–49)

[24]“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:[†] [25]and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

[26]“But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: [27]and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

[28]And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, [29]for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

A Leper Cleansed

(Mk 1:40–45; Lk 5:12–16)

8 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.[†] [2]And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

[3]Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

[4]And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

A Paralyzed Servant Healed

(*Lk 7:1–10*)

[5]Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,[†] [6]saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”

[7]And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.”[†]

[8]The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.[†] [9]For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one*, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does *it*.”

[10]When Jesus heard *it*, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel![†] [11]And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.[†] [12]But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” [13]Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.

Power over All Infirmities

(*Mk 1:29–34*; *Lk 4:38–41*)

[14]Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.[†] [15]So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.[a]

[16]When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, [17]that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

> *"He Himself took our infirmities*
>
> *And bore our sicknesses."*[a]

Unconditional Loyalty

(Lk 9:57–62)

[18]And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. [19]Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

[20]And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."[†]

[21]Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."[†]

[22]But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

A Storm Calmed

(*Mk 4:35–41*; *Lk 8:22–25*)

[23]Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.[†] [24]And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. [25]Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”

[26]But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. [27]So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

The Gergesene Demoniacs

(*Mk 5:1–20*; *Lk 8:26–39*)

[28]When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes,[a] there met Him two demon-possessed *men,* coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.[†] [29]And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

[30]Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. [31]So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away[a] into the herd of swine.”

[32]And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

[33]Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men.* [34]And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged *Him* to depart from their region.

The Paralytic Restored

(*Mk 2:1–12*; *Lk 5:17–26*)

9 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.[†] [2]Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."[†]

[3]And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

[4]But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? [5]For which is easier, to say, '*Your* sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? [6]But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." [7]And he arose and departed to his house.

[8]Now when the multitudes saw *it,* they marveled[a] and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Sinners Received

(*Mk 2:13–17*; *Lk 5:27–32*)

[9]As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.[†] [ω]

[10]Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. [11]And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

[12]When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. [13]But go and learn what *this* means: *‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’*[a] For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”[b]

The New Wine of the Kingdom

(Mk 2:18–22; Lk 5:33–39)

[14]Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often,[a] but Your disciples do not fast?”[†]

[15]And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. [16]No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. [17]Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled,

and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

A Healing and a Resurrection

(Mk 5:21–43; Lk 8:40–56)

18While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.”† 19So Jesus arose and followed him, and so *did* His disciples.

20And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. 21For she said to herself, “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.” 22But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.

23When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, 24He said to them, “Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” And they ridiculed Him. 25But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. 26And the report of this went out into all that land.

Two Blind Men Healed

27When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!”†

[28]And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

[29]Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." [30]And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See *that* no one knows *it*." [31]But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

A Demoniac Healed

[32]As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. [33]And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

[34]But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."[†]

[35]Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.[a]

A Plentiful Harvest

[36]But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary[a] and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.[†] [ω] [37]Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is*

plentiful, but the laborers *are* few.[†] [38]Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

The Twelve Chosen

(Mk 3:13–19; Lk 6:12–16)

10 And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.[†] [ω] [2]Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; [3]Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was[a] Thaddaeus; [4]Simon the Cananite,[a] and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Mission and Instructions

(Mk 6:7–13; Lk 9:1–6)

[5]These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.[†] [6]But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. [7]And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ [8]Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,[a] cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. [9]Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, [10]nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

[11]“Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. [12]And when you go into a household, greet it.[†] [13]If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. [14]And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. [15]Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Persecution and Martyrdom

[16]“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.[†] [ω] [17]But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. [18]You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. [19]But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; [20]for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

[21]“Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. [22]And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. [23]When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.[†]

Encouragement to Fearless Witness

[24]“A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. [25]It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,[a] how much more *will they call* those of his household! [26]Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.[†]

[27]“Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. [28]And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.[†] [29]Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. [30]But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [31]Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

[32]“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.[ω] [33]But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

[34]“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.[†] [35]For I have come to ‘*set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*’;[†] [36]and ‘*a man's enemies will be those of his own household.*’[a] [37]He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. [38]And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not

worthy of Me. [39]He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

[40]“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.[†] [41]He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. [42]And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”

The Baptist's Question to Jesus

(Lk 7:18–23)

11 Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

[2]And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of[a] his disciples[ω] [3]and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”[†]

[4]Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: [5]*The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them.[†] [6]And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

John and Jesus Rejected

(Lk 7:24–35)

[7]As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? [8]But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. [9]But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. [10]For this is *he* of whom it is written:

‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,

Who will prepare Your way before You.’[a]

[11]“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.[†] [12]And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.[†] [13]For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.[†] [14]And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come. [15]He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

[16]“But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,[†] [17]and saying:

‘We played the flute for you,

And you did not dance;

We mourned to you,

And you did not lament.’

[18]For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ [19]The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look,

a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.”[a]

Woe to the Cities of Galilee

[20]Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:[†] [21]“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. [22]But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. [23]And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be[a] brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. [24]But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”

Rest in Christ

[25]At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.[†] [26]Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. [27]All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.[ω] [28]Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.[†] [29]Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30]For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

The Pharisees' Hostility

(Mk 2:23–3:6; Lk 6:1–11)

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.[†] [2]And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”

[3]But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:[†] [4]how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? [5]Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? [6]Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple.[†] [7]But if you had known what *this* means, ‘*I desire mercy and not sacrifice,*’[a] you would not have condemned the guiltless. [8]For the Son of Man is Lord even[a] of the Sabbath.”

[9]Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. [10]And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—that they might accuse Him.

[11]Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? [12]Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it

is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” [13]Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other. [14]Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Isaiah's Servant of God

(*Mk 3:7–12*; *Lk 6:17–19*)

[15]But when Jesus knew *it*, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes[a] followed Him, and He healed them all. [16]Yet He warned them not to make Him known,[†] [17]that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

[18]*“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,*

My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!

I will put My Spirit upon Him,

And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

[19]*He will not quarrel nor cry out,*

Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

[20]*A bruised reed He will not break,*

And smoking flax He will not quench,

Till He sends forth justice to victory;

[21]*And in His name Gentiles will trust.”*[a] [†]

Is Jesus from God?

(*Mk 3:20–30*; *Lk 11:14–23*)

[22]Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and[a] mute man both spoke and saw.[†] [23]And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

[24]Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, “This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub,[a] the ruler of the demons.”

[25]But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. [26]If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? [27]And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. [28]But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. [29]Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. [30]He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

[31]“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men. [32]Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.[†]

[33]“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. [34]Brood of vipers! How

can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.[†] [35]A good man out of the good treasure of his heart[a] brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.[†] [36]But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. [37]For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Can Jesus Perform a Sign?

(Lk 11:24–26, 29–32)

[38]Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”[†]

[39]But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.[†] [40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. [41]The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here. [42]The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here.

[43]“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.[†] [44]Then he says, ‘I will return to my house

from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. [45]Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

Jesus' Relatives Fail to Understand

(*Mk 3:31–35*; *Lk 8:19–21*)

[46]While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.[†] [47]Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.”

[48]But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” [49]And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [50]For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

The Parable of the Sower

(*Mk 4:1–9*; *Lk 8:4–8*)

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. [2]And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

[3]Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow.[†] [4]And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. [5]Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. [6]But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. [7]And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. [8]But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. [9]He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

The Mystery of Parables

(Mk 4:10–12; Lk 8:9, 10)

[10]And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

[11]He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.[†] [12]For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. [13]Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.[†] [14]And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

> *‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,*
>
> *And seeing you will see and not perceive;*
>
> [15]*For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*

Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should[a] *heal them.'*[b]

[16]But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; [17]for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it,* and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it.*

The Sower Explained

(*Mk 4:13–20*; *Lk 8:11–15*)

[18]"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: [19]When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it,* then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. [20]But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; [21]yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. [22]Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. [23]But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it,* who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

PARABLES

Parables are stories in word-pictures, revealing spiritual truth. The Hebrew and Aramaic words for *parable* also mean "allegory," "riddle," or “proverb.” The Scriptures, especially the Gospels, are filled with parables—images drawn from daily life in the world to represent and communicate the deep things of God. Parables give us glimpses of Him whose thoughts are not our thoughts and whose ways are not our ways (Is 55:8, 9).

The truth communicated by Jesus’ parables, however, is not evident to all who hear them. The listener must have spiritual ears to hear, and even then not all have the same degree of understanding.

Thus, Jesus’ statement that “to those who are outside, all things come in parables” (Mark 4:11) may be translated, “. . . all things come in riddles.” Jesus’ quotation of Isaiah 6:9, 10 (Mt 13:14, 15) does not mean He used parables to blind the people or to lead them to punishment. On the contrary, it demonstrates that the people are responsible for their own lack of receptivity: having grown dull and insensitive, they are unwilling to accept the message of the parables. As the mission of Isaiah in the Old Testament was to open the eyes of Israel to see the acts of God, so the parables of Jesus are intended to open the eyes of His hearers to the truth and lead them to produce the fruit of righteousness.

Parables challenge the hearer and call for faith to perceive the mysteries of the Kingdom. Insight into God’s Kingdom does not come simply through an intellectual understanding of the parables. Spiritual enlightenment is essentially a communication of faith in the Person, words, and deeds of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The use of parables was known in Jewish culture long before Jesus (2Kg 12:1–4; 3Kg 21:35–42; Is 5:1–7). Jesus, however, brought the art of parables to perfection, relating aspects of the Kingdom and speaking of God

Himself through vivid stories. His purpose was not only to reveal truth to those with hearts prepared. He wished to draw responsive hearts past the entrance and into the very reality of God’s Kingdom which He proclaimed and inaugurated.

Among the familiar parables read on Sundays throughout the church year are those of the Sower (Lk 8:5–15); the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37); the Rich Man and His Crops (Lk 12:16–21); the Great Supper (Lk 14:16–24); the Talents (Mt 25:14–30); the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk 18:10–14); and the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11–32).

In opening to us the door to the Kingdom of heaven, the parables help us to love God and to know Him, to understand and believe His grace, mercy, and forgiveness, and to order our lives according to His Holy Word.

The Wheat and the Tares

[24]Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;[†] [25]but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. [26]But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. [27]So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ [28]He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ [29]But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. [30]Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers,

“First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ”

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

(Mk 4:30–32; Lk 13:18–21)

[31]Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,[†] [32]which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

[33]Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures[a] of meal till it was all leavened.”

Parables Fulfill Prophecy

(Mk 4:33, 34)

[34]All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, [35]that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

> *“I will open My mouth in parables;*
>
> *I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”*[a]

The Wheat and Tares Explained

[36]Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”[†]

[37]He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. [38]The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. [39]The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. [40]Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. [41]The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, [42]and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. [43]Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price

[44]“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.[†]

[45]“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, [46]who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Dragnet

47“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,[†] 48which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Old and New Wisdom

51Jesus said to them,[a] “Have you understood all these things?”

They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”[b]

52Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning[a] the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.”[†]

53Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.

Rejection at Nazareth

(Mk 6:1–6; Lk 4:16–30)

54When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works?[†] 55Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses,[a] Simon, and

Judas?[†] [56]And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?” [57]So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” [58]Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Herod's Fears

(Mk 6:14–29; Lk 3:19, 20; 9:7–9)

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus[†] [2]and said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [3]For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. [4]Because John had said to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” [5]And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

[6]But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. [7]Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

[8]So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, “Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter.”

[9]And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her.* [10]So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. [11]And his head was brought on a

platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother. [12]Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

(Mk 6:30–44; Lk 9:10–17; Jn 6:1–14)

[13]When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.[†] [14]And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.[†] [15]When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.”

[16]But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

[17]And they said to Him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.”

[18]He said, “Bring them here to Me.” [19]Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.[†] [20]So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. [21]Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Walking on Water

(Mk 6:45–52; Jn 6:15–21)

[22]Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.[†] [23]And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. [24]But the boat was now in the middle of the sea,[a] tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

[25]Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. [26]And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear.

[27]But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”[†]

[28]And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”[†]

[29]So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. [30]But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous,[a] he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

[31]And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”[†] [32]And when they

got into the boat, the wind ceased.

[33]Then those who were in the boat came and[a] worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”[†]

Healing Continues

(*Mk 6:53–56*)

[34]When they had crossed over, they came to the land of[a] Gennesaret. [35]And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, [36]and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.[†]

Conflict over Cleanliness

(Mk 7:1–23)

15 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,[†] [2]“Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

[3]He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?[†] [4]For God commanded, saying, *‘Honor your father and your mother’*;[a] and, *‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’*[b] [5]But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* a gift *to God*”— [6]then he need not honor his father or mother.’[a] Thus you have made the commandment[b] of God of no effect by your tradition. [7]Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

[8]*‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth,*

And[a] *honor Me with their lips,*

But their heart is far from Me.

[9]*And in vain they worship Me,*

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”[a]

[10]When He had called the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, “Hear and understand: [11]Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

[12]Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

[13]But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. [14]Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

[15]Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.”

[16]So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding? [17]Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? [18]But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. [19]For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. [20]These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

A Gentile with Great Faith

(Mk 7:24–30)

[21]Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.[†] [ω] [22]And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.”[†]

[23]But He answered her not a word.

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.”[†]

[24]But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

[25]Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

[26]But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.”[†]

[27]And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.”

[28]Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Many More Healings

(Mk 7:31–37)

[29]Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there.[†] [30]Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them *the* lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. [31]So the multitude marveled when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

Feeding the Four Thousand

(Mk 8:1–9)

[32]Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”[†]

[33]Then His disciples said to Him, “Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?”

[34]Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?”

And they said, “Seven, and a few little fish.”

[35]So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. [36]And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude. [37]So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. [38]Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. [39]And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.[a]

Jewish Leaders Test Jesus

(Mk 8:10–13)

16 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.[†] [2]He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘*It will be* fair weather, for the sky is red’; [3]and in the morning, ‘*It will be* foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites![a] You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. [4]A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet[a] Jonah.” And He left them and departed.[†]

The Pharisees' False Doctrine

(Mk 8:14–21)

[5]Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.[†] [6]Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”

[7]And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “*It is* because we have taken no bread.”

[8]But Jesus, being aware of *it*, said to them, “O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?[a] [9]Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? [10]Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? [11]How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—*but* to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” [12]Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God

(Mk 8:27–30; Lk 9:18–21)

[13]When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”[†] [ω]

[14]So they said, “Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

[15]He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

[16]Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

[17]Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. [18]And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.[†] [19]And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed[a] in heaven.”[†]

[20]Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

Jesus' Work: His Passion and Resurrection

(Mk 8:31–9:1; Lk 9:22–27)

[21]From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.[†]

[22]Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

[23]But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

[24]Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.[†] [25]For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.[†] [26]For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?[†] [27]For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

[28]Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”[†]

The Transfiguration

(Mk 9:2–13; Lk 9:28–36)

17 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;[†] [ω] [2]and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.[†] [3]And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. [4]Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us[a] make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

THE TRANSFIGURATION

"**A**nd He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light" (17:2).

The Transfiguration is a *theophany*—a manifestation of God, especially of the divinity of Christ, through a display of His uncreated, divine energy. Therefore, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Transfiguration of the Lord as a major feast day.

Several elements of the Transfiguration show that Christ is Messiah and God.

1 Because God is light (1Jn 1:5), the bright cloud, the shining of Jesus' face like the sun, and the whiteness of His garment (Mt 17:2, 5) all demonstrate that Jesus is God. (In some icons this light is shown as *beyond* white, a blue-white, ineffable color, indicating its spiritual origin.)

2 The Father bears witness from heaven concerning His Son. He does not say, "This has become My beloved Son," but "This is My beloved Son" (17:5), indicating that this divine glory is Christ's by nature. From eternity past, infinitely before Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration, He is God's Son, fully sharing in the essence of the Father: Jesus Christ is God of God.

3 The Transfiguration not only proclaims Christ's divine sonship, but foreshadows His future glory when He as the Messiah will usher in the long-awaited Kingdom. The bright cloud recalls temple worship and the

cloud that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, the visible sign of God being extraordinarily present. Peter sees this as a sign that the Kingdom has come. Knowing that the Feast of Tabernacles is the feast of the coming Kingdom, he asks to build booths (17:4), as was done at that feast, to serve as symbols of God’s dwelling among the just in the Kingdom.

4 Moses represents the law and all those who have died. Elijah represents the prophets and—since he did not experience death—all those who are alive in Christ. Their presence shows that the law and the prophets, the living and the dead, all bear witness to Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfillment of the whole Old Testament.

The presence of Moses and Elijah also manifests the communion of the saints (Heb 12:1). Both men are immediately recognizable and talk with the Lord. The disciples are now able to understand Jesus’ words that “Elijah has come already” (17:12) referring to John the Baptist. Their eyes have been opened to the fact that Malachi’s prophecy (4:5, 6) refers to one coming “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Lk 1:17), rather than to Elijah himself.

5 Finally, the Holy Trinity is manifest here, for Christ is transfigured (Mt 17:2), the Father speaks from heaven testifying to Jesus’ divine sonship (17:5), and the Spirit is present in the form of a dazzling light surrounding Christ’s person, overshadowing the whole mountain (17:5).

[5]While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved

Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” [6]And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. [7]But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” [8]When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

[9]Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

[10]And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

[11]Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first[a] and will restore all things. [12]But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” [13]Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

The Disciples Lack Faith

(Mk 9:14–29; Lk 9:37–42)

[14]And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying,[†] [15]“Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic[a] and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. [16]So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.”

[17]Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” [18]And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

[19]Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”[†]

[20]So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief;[a] for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. [21]However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”[a]

Jesus' Suffering

(Mk 9:30–32; Lk 9:43–45)

[22]Now while they were staying[a] in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men,[†] [23]and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

Jesus Pays the Temple Tax

[24]When they had come to Capernaum,[a] those who received the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the *temple* tax?”[†]

[25]He said, “Yes.”

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”

[26]Peter said to Him, “From strangers.”

Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. [27]Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money;[a] take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

Who Is the Greatest?

(Mk 9:33–37; Lk 9:46–48)

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”[†]

[2]Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, [3]and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. [4]Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. [5]Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

Scandals and Temptations

(Mk 9:42–48)

[6]“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.[†] [7]Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

[8]“If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.[†] [9]And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

Finding the Lost Sheep

(Lk 15:3–7)

[10]“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.[†] [ω] [11]For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.[a]

[12]“What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?[†] [13]And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. [14]Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Discipline in the Church

[15]“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault
between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.[†]
[16]But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *‘by the mouth
of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’*[a] [17]And if he
refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the
church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.[†]

[18]“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in
heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.[†]

[19]“Again I say[a] to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning
anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.
[20]For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in
the midst of them.”

Forgiveness in the Church

[21]Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother
sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”[†]

[22]Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to
seventy times seven. [23]Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain
king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. [24]And when he had
begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten
thousand talents. [25]But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded
that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that
payment be made.[†] [26]The servant therefore fell down before him, saying,

‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ [27]Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

[28]“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ [29]So his fellow servant fell down at his feet[a] and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’[b] [30]And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. [31]So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. [32]Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. [33]Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ [34]And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

[35]“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”[a]

Divorce and Marriage

(Mk 10:1–12)

19 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, *that* He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. [2]And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

[3]The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?”[†]

[4]And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made[a] *them* at the beginning *‘made them male and female,’*[b] [5]and said, *‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’*?[a] [6]So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

[7]They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?”

[8]He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. [9]And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality,[a] and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”[†]

[10]His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry.”[†]

[11]But He said to them, “All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given: [12]For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it,* let him accept *it.”*

Receiving the Children

(*Mk 10:13–16*; *Lk 18:15–17*)

[13]Then little children were brought to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.[†] [14]But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” [15]And He laid *His* hands on them and departed from there.

Riches and the Kingdom

(*Mk 10:17–31*; *Lk 18:18–30*)

[16]Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good[a] Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”[†]

[17]So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good?[a] No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God.[b] But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

[18]He said to Him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “ *‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’* [19]*‘Honor your father and your mother,’*[a] and, *‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’* ”[b]

[20]The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth.[a] What do I still lack?”[†]

[21]Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”[†]

[22]But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

[23]Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.[†] [24]And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

[25]When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

[26]But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

[27]Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?”

[28]So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.[†] [29]And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[a] or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a

hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.[†] [30]But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

The First and the Last

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.[†] [2]Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3]And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, [4]and said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. [5]Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. [6]And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle,[a] and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’ [7]They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.’[a]

[8]“So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last to the first.’ [9]And when those came who *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. [10]But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. [11]And when they had received *it*, they complained against the landowner, [12]saying, ‘These last *men* have worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’ [13]But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? [14]Take *what is* yours and

go your way. I wish to give to this last man *the same* as to you. 15Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ 16So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”[a]

Jesus' Death and Resurrection

(*Mk 10:32–34*; *Lk 18:31–34*)

17Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them,[†] 18“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, 19and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.”

Leaders as Servants

(*Mk 10:35–45*)

20Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.[†]

21And He said to her, “What do you wish?”

She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”

22But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”[a]

They said to Him, “We are able.”

[23]So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;[a] but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father.”

[24]And when the ten heard *it,* they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.[†] [25]But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. [26]Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. [27]And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— [28]just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Two Blind Men Confess Jesus as Lord

[29]Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. [30]And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”[†]

[31]Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”

[32]So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

[33]They said to Him, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.” [34]So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

Palm Sunday: The Messianic King

(Mk 11:1–10; Lk 19:28–44; Jn 12:12–19)

21 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage,[a] at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,[†] [2]saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me.[†] [3]And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.”

[4]All[a] this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

[5]*“Tell the daughter of Zion,*
‘Behold, your King is coming to you,
Lowly, and sitting on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ”[a]

[6]So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. [7]They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set *Him*[a] on them. [8]And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.[†] [9]Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’[a]

Hosanna in the highest!”[†]

[10]And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, “Who is this?”

[11]So the multitudes said, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.”

Jesus Purifies the Temple

(Mk 11:11–18; Lk 19:45–48)

[12]Then Jesus went into the temple of God[a] and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.[†] [13]And He said to them, “It is written, *‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’*[a] but you have made it a *‘den of thieves.’* ”[b]

[14]Then *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. [15]But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant[†] [16]and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?”

And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read,

‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants

You have perfected praise’?”[a]

[17]Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

Israel: The Withered Fig Tree

(Mk 11:19–26)

[18]Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. [19]And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away.[†]

[20]And when the disciples saw *it,* they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither away so soon?”

[21]So Jesus answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done.[†] [22]And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Jewish Leaders Question Jesus

(Mk 11:27–33; Lk 20:1–8)

[23]Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?”[†]

[24]But Jesus answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: [25]The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?”

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ [26]But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.” [27]So they answered Jesus and said, “We do not know.”

And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Sinners Believe

[28]“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ [29]He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. [30]Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I *go,* sir,’ but he did not go. [31]Which of the two did the will of *his* father?”

They said to Him, “The first.”

Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.[†] [32]For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw *it,* you did not afterward relent and believe him.

Leaders Mistreat God's Messengers

(Mk 12:1–12; Lk 20:9–19)

33“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.[†] 34Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ 39So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*.

40“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

41They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”[†]

42Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

‘The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone.

This was the L*ORD*'s *doing,*

And it is marvelous in our eyes'?[a]

[43]"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. [44]And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."[†]

[45]Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. [46]But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Who Enters into the Kingdom?

(Lk 14:15–24)

22 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:[†] [2]"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, [3]and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. [4]Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding." '[†] [5]But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. [6]And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*. [7]But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.[†] [8]Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. [9]Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ [10]So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.

[11]“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.[†] [12]So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. [13]Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and[a] cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

[14]“For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”[†]

A Trap for Jesus

(Mk 12:13–17; Lk 20:20–26)

[15]Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in *His* talk.[†] [16]And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. [17]Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

[18]But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, *you* hypocrites? [19]Show Me the tax money.”

So they brought Him a denarius.

[20]And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription *is* this?”

[21]They said to Him, “Caesar's.”

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” [22]When they had heard *these words,* they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

Resurrection of the Dead

(Mk 12:18–27; Lk 20:27–40)

[23]The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,[†] [24]saying: “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. [25]Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. [26]Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. [27]Last of all the woman died also. [28]Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.”

[29]Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. [30]For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God[a] in heaven. [31]But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, [32]‘*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*’?[a] God is not the God of the dead, but of the

living.” [33]And when the multitudes heard *this*, they were astonished at His teaching.

The Greatest Commandment

(*Mk 12:28–34*)

[34]But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. [35]Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question,* testing Him, and saying,[†] [36]“Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?”

[37]Jesus said to him, “*‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’*[a] [38]This is *the* first and great commandment. [39]And *the* second *is* like it: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’[a][†] [40]On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

David's Son Is His Lord

(*Mk 12:35–37*; *Lk 20:41–44*)

[41]While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,[†] [42]saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”

They said to Him, “*The Son* of David.”

[43]He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘*Lord,*’ saying:

[44]*'The LORD said to my Lord,*

"Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'?[a]

[45]If David then calls Him *'Lord,'* how is He his Son?" [46]And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Abuses of Authority

(Mk 12:38, 39; Lk 20:45, 46)

23 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,[†] [2]saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.[†] [3]Therefore whatever they tell you to observe,[a] *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. [4]For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. [5]But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.[†] [6]They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, [7]greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' [8]But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ,[a] and you are all brethren.[†] [9]Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. [10]And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. [11]But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. [12]And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Pronouncement of Judgment

(Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47)

[13]“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.[†] [14]Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.[a]

[15]“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

[16]“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it*.’ [17]Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies[a] the gold? [18]And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it*.’ [19]Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? [20]Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. [21]He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells[a] in it. [22]And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

[23]“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without

leaving the others undone.[†] [24]Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel![†]

[25]“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.[a] [26]Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

[27]“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. [28]Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

[29]“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,[ω] [30]and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’

[31]“Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. [32]Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt.* [33]Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? [34]Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, [35]that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you

murdered between the temple and the altar.[†] [36]Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

The Fate of Jerusalem

(Lk 13:34, 35)

[37]“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing![†] [38]See! Your house is left to you desolate; [39]for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, *‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’* ”[a]

Destruction of the Temple

(Mk 13:1–4; Lk 21:5–7)

24 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.[†] [2]And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The Beginning of Birth Pangs

(Mk 13:5–13; Lk 21:8–19)

[3]Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”[†] [ω]

[4]And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you.[†] [5]For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. [6]And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all[a] *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.[†] [7]For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences,[a] and earthquakes in various places. [8]All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

[9]“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. [10]And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. [11]Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. [12]And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. [13]But he who endures to the end shall be saved. [14]And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.[†]

The Great Tribulation

(*Mk 13:14–23*; *Lk 21:20–24*)

[15]“Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation,*’[a] spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),[†] [16]“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17]Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. [18]And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. [19]But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies

in those days![†] [20]And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.[†] [21]For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. [22]And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

[23]“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it.* [24]For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [25]See, I have told you beforehand.

[26]“Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it.* [27]For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.[†] [28]For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.[†]

The End

(Mk 13:24–27; Lk 21:25–28)

[29]“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.[†] [30]Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.[†] [31]And He will send His angels with a

great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.[†]

No One Knows the Hour

(Mk 13:28–32; Lk 21:29–36)

[32]“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. [33]So you also, when you see all these things, know that it[a] is near—at the doors! [34]Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.[†] [35]Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

[36]“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven,[a] but My Father only.[†] [ω] [37]But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.[†] [38]For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, [39]and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. [40]Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. [41]Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. [42]Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour[a] your Lord is coming.[†] [43]But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. [44]Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

We Must Be Loyal

(Mk 13:33–37)

[45]“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? [46]Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. [47]Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. [48]But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’[a] [49]and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, [50]the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, [51]and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We Must Be Prepared

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.[†] [ω] [2]Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. [3]Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, [4]but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. [5]But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

[6]“And at midnight a cry was *heard:* ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming;[a] go out to meet him!’ [7]Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. [8]And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ [9]But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No,* lest there should not be

enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ [10]And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

[11]“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ [12]But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

[13]“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour[a] in which the Son of Man is coming.

We Must Be Good Stewards

[14]“For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.[†] [15]And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. [16]Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. [17]And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. [18]But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. [19]After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

[20]“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ [21]His lord said to him, ‘Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ [22]He also who had

received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ [23]His lord said to him, ‘Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

[24]“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. [25]And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.’

[26]“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. [27]So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. [28]So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

[29]‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. [30]And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The Judgment of Works

[31]“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy[a] angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.[†] [ω] [32]All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another,

as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.[†] [33]And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. [34]Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:[†] [35]for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; [36]I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

[37]“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? [38]When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You?* [39]Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ [40]And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’[†]

[41]“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:[†] [42]for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; [43]I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

[44]“Then they also will answer Him,[a] saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ [45]Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ [46]And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Wednesday: The Sanhedrin's Conspiracy

(Mk 14:1, 2; Lk 22:1, 2)

26 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples,[ω] [2]“You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”[†]

[3]Then the chief priests, the scribes,[a] and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, [4]and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him.* [5]But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Anointing for Burial

(Mk 14:3–9; Jn 12:1–8)

[6]And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,[††] [7]a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table.* [8]But when His disciples saw *it,* they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? [9]For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the* poor.”

[10]But when Jesus was aware of *it,* He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. [11]For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. [12]For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. [13]Assuredly, I say to you,

wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”[†]

Judas Betrays Jesus

(*Mk 14:10*, *11*; *Lk 23:3–5*)

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests[†]
15 and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. 16 So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Thursday: The Passover Meal

(*Mk 14:12–21*; *Lk 22:7–16*, *21–30*; *Jn 13:21–30*)

17 Now on the first *day of the Feast* of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”[†]

18 And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.” ’ ”

19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

20 When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. 21 Now as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

[22]And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?”

[23]He answered and said, “He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. [24]The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”[†]

[25]Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?”

He said to him, “You have said it.”

Institution of the Eucharist

(Mk 14:22–26; Lk 22:15–20)

[26]And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed[a] and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”[†]

[27]Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. [28]For this is My blood of the new[a] covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. [29]But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”[†]

[30]And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Prediction of Peter's Denial

(Mk 14:27–31; Lk 22:31–38; Jn 13:36–38)

31Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

‘I will strike the Shepherd,

And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’[a]

32But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

33Peter answered and said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.”

34Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.”

35Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!”

And so said all the disciples.

Gethsemane: Jesus' Prayers

(Mk 14:32–42; Lk 22:39–46; Jn 18:1)

36Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.” 37And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. [38]Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

[39]He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.”[†]

[40]Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? [41]Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”[†]

[42]Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless[a] I drink it, Your will be done.” [43]And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

[44]So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. [45]Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. [46]Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

Betrayed, Arrested, Forsaken

(Mk 14:43–52; Lk 22:47–53; Jn 18:2–12)

[47]And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests

and elders of the people.

[48]Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.” [49]Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

[50]But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?”

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. [51]And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

[52]But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish[a] by the sword.[†] [53]Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? [54]How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

[55]In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. [56]But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin

(Mk 14:53–65; Lk 22:54, 63–65; Jn 18:13–24)

[57]And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. [58]But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

[59]Now the chief priests, the elders,[a] and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, [60]but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.[a] But at last two false witnesses[b] came forward [61]and said, “This *fellow* said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ ”[†]

[62]And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?” [63]But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

[64]Jesus said to him, “*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”[†]

[65]Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! [66]What do you think?”

They answered and said, “He is deserving of death.”

[67]Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, [68]saying, “Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one

who struck You?”

Peter's Three Denials

(Mk 14:54, 66–72; Lk 22:54–62; Jn 18:15–18, 25–27)

[69]Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.”[†]

[70]But he denied it before *them* all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.”

[71]And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, “This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

[72]But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!”

[73]And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you.”

[74]Then he began to curse and swear, *saying,* “I do not know the Man!”

Immediately a rooster crowed. [75]And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.

Friday: The Sanhedrin Delivers Jesus to Pilate

(Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66–23:1)

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death.[ω] [2]And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius[a] Pilate the governor.[†]

The Death of Judas

[3]Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,[†] [4]saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”

And they said, “What *is that* to us? You see *to it!*”

[5]Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

[6]But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.” [7]And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. [8]Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

[9]Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, *“And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced,* whom they of the children of Israel priced, [10]*and gave them for the potter's field, as the* L*ORD* *directed me.”*[a]

“King of the Jews”

(*Mk 15:1–5*; *Lk 23:1–7*; *Jn 18:28–38*)

[11]Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Jesus said to him, “*It is as* you say.”[†] [12]And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.

[13]Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” [14]But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

Pilate Barters over Barabbas

(Mk 15:6–15; Lk 23:13–25; Jn 18:39, 40)

[15]Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. [16]And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.[a] [†] [17]Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?”[†] [18]For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

[19]While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.”

[20]But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. [21]The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

They said, “Barabbas!”

[22]Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!”

[23]Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?”

But they cried out all the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified!”

[24]When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.[a] You see *to it.*”

[25]And all the people answered and said, “His blood *be* on us and on our children.”[†]

[26]Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

Soldiers Mock Jesus as King

(*Mk 15:16–20*)

[27]Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.[†] [28]And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. [29]When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” [30]Then

they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. [31]And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

The Crucifixion

(Mk 15:20–32; Lk 23:26–43; Jn 19:16–27)

[32]Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.[†] [33]And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, [34]they gave Him sour[a] wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink.

[35]Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots,[a] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

"They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots."[b]

[36]Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. [37]And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[38]Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

[39]And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads [40]and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save

Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders,[a] said, 42"He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel,[a] let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.[b] 43He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

44Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

The Death of Jesus

(Mk 15:33–41; Lk 23:44–49; Jn 19:28–30)

45Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.[†] 46And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*[a] [†]

47Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that,* said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" 48Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

49The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

50And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.[†]

[51]Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,[†] [52]and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;[†] [53]and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

[54]So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”[†]

[55]And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, [56]among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses,[a] and the mother of Zebedee's sons.[†]

The Burial of Jesus

(Mk 15:42–46; Lk 23:50–56; Jn 19:38–42)

[57]Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.[†] [58]This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. [59]When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, [60]and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.[†] [61]And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

Saturday: Guards at the Tomb

[62]On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate,[ω] [63]saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ [64]Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night[a] and steal Him *away*, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.”

[65]Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how.” [66]So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

Sunday: Christ Is Risen

(Mk 16:1–8; Lk 24:1–12; Jn 20:1–10)

28 Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.[ω] [2]And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door,[a] and sat on it.[†] [3]His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. [4]And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men*.

[5]But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.[†] [6]He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. [7]And go quickly

and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.”

[8]So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

Jesus Appears to the Women

[9]And as they went to tell His disciples,[a] behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. [10]Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

Deceit of Jewish Authorities

[11]Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. [12]When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, [13]saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.’[†] [14]And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.” [15]So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Great Commission

(Mk 16:14–18; Lk 24:44–49)

[16]Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. [17]When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

[18]And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.[†] [19]Go therefore[a] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,[†] [20]teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.[a] [†]

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The Book of Mark

Author—Mark the Apostle, also known as John Mark, is widely attested by the ancient Church as the author of this gospel. He traveled with Paul and Barnabas and later aided Peter (1Pt 5:13). According to tradition, Mark subsequently used Peter's teaching as his primary source for this gospel, adding to it his personal experience and other church traditions.

Date—As with the other gospels, the exact date of writing is uncertain. Because of its connection with Rome and its lack of any clear reference to the destruction of Jerusalem (13:2), the Gospel of Mark may be dated shortly before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Many believe this was the first of the four gospels to be written.

Major Theme—*Jesus Christ as Servant and Sacrifice.* Subthemes include:

1. *The suffering Messiah.* Christ, who acts with power and authority, is nevertheless a suffering Messiah (8:27–33), One who has come to serve and give His life for many (10:45). Jesus is clearly the Son of God (1:1, 11; 9:7; 14:61, 62), who has power over demons, heals the sick, and forgives sins (1:23–25; 2:10, 11). But He also possesses a full humanity, expressed through the agony of Gethsemane and the suffering on the cross.
2. *The messianic secret.* Mark underscores the fact that Jesus veiled His messianic identity. He commanded demons, the people He healed, and even the disciples to keep silent about His messiahship (1:34, 44; 8:30) until He Himself revealed the mystery before the Sanhedrin (14:62). In this gospel Peter confesses Jesus only as “the Christ” (8:29; contrast Mt 16:16; Jn 6:69). Only after the Resurrection do His followers recognize Him as God (16:14).
3. *Discipleship.* Though the word “disciple” never occurs in Mark, Jesus calls His followers to uncompromising and heroic commitment. True disciples take up their crosses and suffer with Jesus (8:34–38).

Background—According to some Church Fathers, Mark is writing for the Christian community of Rome, which either was experiencing the great persecution by Nero (beginning in AD 64) or was caught up in the apocalyptic fervor occasioned by the Jewish war (Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70). Mark tells the story of Jesus so his readers may see their own suffering as a prelude to the glorious Second Coming of Jesus and may discern the reward of those who endure to the end. The suffering and the glory are equally real: this was true for Jesus and will be true for all believers.

The earliest manuscripts of Mark end abruptly at 16:8. Later manuscripts provide additional material (16:9–20), included in this and other versions, which the Church recognizes as inspired.

Outline

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II. The Galilean Ministry: The Kingdom Is at Hand (1:14–6:29)

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    B. Israel is divided over Jesus’ authority (2:1–5:43)

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III. Ministry Beyond Galilee: The Kingdom and the World (6:30–9:50)

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V. Ministry in Jerusalem: Rejection, Persecution (11:1–16:20)

- A. The Messiah made manifest (11:1–13:37)
- B. Betrayal and Passover meal (14:1–31)
- C. The Passion (14:32–15:47)
- D. The Resurrection (16:1–20)

John: Forerunner of Christ

(Mt 3:1–12; Lk 3:1–18; Jn 1:19–23)

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.[†] [2]As it is written in the Prophets:[a]

> *“Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,*
> *Who will prepare Your way before You.”*[b]
> [3]*“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*
> *‘Prepare the way of the* LORD;*
> *Make His paths straight.’ ”*[a]

[4]John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. [5]Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

[6]Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.[†] [7]And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. [8]I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus Baptized and Tempted

(Mt 3:13–4:11; Lk 3:21–4:13; Jn 1:29–34)

[9]It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.[†ω] [10]And immediately, coming up from[a] the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. [11]Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

[12]Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. [13]And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.[†]

JOHN THE BAPTIST

“**J**ohn came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mk 1:4).

John the Baptist plays a crucial role in the history of salvation. Chosen before his birth to be the herald and forerunner of the Messiah (Lk 1:13–17), he knew his Lord from the beginning. Luke writes of John’s miraculous conception (Lk 1:24). He then records that when the Virgin Mary visited Elizabeth, who was then six months pregnant with John the Baptist, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb leaped at the sound of Mary’s voice (Lk 1:41).

Jesus taught that John fulfilled the prophecy of the return of Elijah (Mt 11:14), who was to precede the Messiah as “the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD'" (Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4; Jn 1:23).

Shortly before Jesus began His public ministry, John went out to the wilderness of Jordan to prepare the way for the Messiah. He carried out his prophetic role with a brotherhood of disciples characterized by repentance in expectation of the Kingdom, baptism for forgiveness of sins, bearing the fruit of righteousness, and spiritual discipline. John himself lived by an ascetic rule of poverty and fasting; in fact, he may have been a lifelong Nazirite (see Lk 1:15; Nm 6). His eyes were set not on the body and its desires, but on Christ the Lord, and his influence was widespread (see Mk 11:32; Lk 7:29; Acts 18:25; Acts 19:1–7).

John prophesied Messiah was coming, One immeasurably greater than himself, "whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose" (Mk 1:7). This One would baptize not only with water but with the Holy Spirit (Mk 1:8). When Jesus appeared before him to be baptized, John was humbled, realizing he was in need of being baptized by Jesus (Mt 3:14). But Jesus knew what was fitting "to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt 3:15), and John obeyed. Thus, came about the event so familiar in Orthodox icons: Christ in the Jordan being baptized by John as the Holy Spirit descends on Him in the form of a dove. The Father's voice from heaven declares, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17).

John's work was crucial to Jesus' ministry. Jesus considered John's testimony important—not because Jesus, the Son of God, needed to be validated by any human witness, but because the people's acceptance of John as a godly man prepared them to accept Jesus as well (Jn 5:33–35).

Jesus’ first disciples came from John’s brotherhood (Jn 1:35–39), and the vacancy in the apostolic college left by Judas’ betrayal was filled by one who had been John’s follower (Acts 1:22).

John the Baptist died a martyr for Christ (Mk 6:24–29). The Orthodox Church commemorates him in special hymns every Tuesday, as well as on designated feast days throughout the year.

Jesus Preaches: Repent and Believe

(Mt 4:12–17; Lk 4:14, 15; Jn 4:1–3)

[14]Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom[a] of God,[†] [15]and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

The First Four Disciples

(Mt 4:18–22; Lk 5:1–11)

[16]And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.[†] [17]Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” [18]They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

[19]When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. [20]And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Healings in Capernaum

(Mt 8:14–17; Lk 4:31–41)

[21]Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught.[†] [22]And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

[23]Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, [24]saying, “Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

[25]But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” [26]And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. [27]Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine *is* this? For with authority[a] He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” [28]And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

[29]Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. [30]But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. [31]So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

[32]At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. [33]And the whole city was gathered together at the door. [34]Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.[†]

Tour of Galilee

(Mt 4:23–25; Lk 4:42–44)

[35]Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.[†] [36]And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. [37]When they found Him, they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.”

[38]But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”

[39]And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.[†]

Uncleanness Cleansed: A Leper

(Mt 8:1–4; Lk 5:12–16)

[40]Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”[†]

[41]Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” [42]As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. [43]And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, [44]and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

[45]However, he went out and began to proclaim *it* freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

Sins Are Forgiven: A Paralytic

(Mt 9:1–8; Lk 5:17–26)

2 And again He entered Capernaum after *some* days, and it was heard that He was in the house.[†] [ω] [2]Immediately[a] many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them*, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. [3]Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four *men*. [4]And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

[5]When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

[6]And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, [7]“Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

[8]But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? [9]Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘*Your* sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? [10]But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, [11]“I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” [12]Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw *anything* like this!”

Sinners Are Welcome: Levi

(Mt 9:9–13; Lk 5:27–32)

[13]Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them.[†] [14]As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

[15]Now it happened, as He was dining in *Levi's* house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. [16]And when the scribes and[a] Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to

His disciples, “How *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?”

17 When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”[a]

Jesus Transcends the Fast

(Mt 9:14–17; Lk 5:33–39)

18 The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?”[†]

19 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. 21 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.”

Jesus Transcends the Sabbath

(Mt 12:1–14; Lk 6:1–11)

[23]Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain.[†] [24]And the Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

[25]But He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: [26]how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?”

[27]And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. [28]Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.[†] [2]So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3]And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward.” [4]Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent. [5]And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.[a] [†] [6]Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

The People Follow Jesus

(Mt 12:15–21; Lk 6:17–19)

[7]But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea[†] [8]and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9]So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10]For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11]And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12]But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.[†]

The Twelve

(Mt 10:1–4; Lk 6:12–16)

[13]And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him.[†] [14]Then He appointed twelve,[a] that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, [15]and to have power to heal sicknesses and[a] to cast out demons: [16]Simon,[a] to whom He gave the name Peter; [17]James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; [18]Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; [19]and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

A House Divided

(Mt 12:22–37; Lk 11:14–23)

[20]Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.[†] [21]But when His own people heard *about this*, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, “He is out of His mind.”

[22]And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebub,” and, “By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.”

[23]So He called them to *Himself* and said to them in parables: “How can Satan cast out Satan? [24]If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. [25]And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. [26]And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. [27]No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

[28]“Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter;[†] [29]but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation”— [30]because they said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Jesus’ True Kinsmen

(Mt 12:46–50; Lk 8:19–21)

[31]Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him.[†] [32]And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers[a] are outside seeking You.”

[33]But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34]And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35]For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

The Parable of the Sower

(Mt 13:1–9; Lk 8:4–8)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2]Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:[†]

[3]“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4]And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air[a] came and devoured it. [5]Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6]But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7]And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8]But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9]And He said to them,[a] “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Why Parables?

(Mt 13:10–17; Lk 8:9, 10)

[10]But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.[†] [11]And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12]so that

‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,

And hearing they may hear and not understand;

Lest they should turn,

And their sins be forgiven them.’ ”[a]

The Parable of the Sower Explained

(Mt 13:18–23; Lk 8:11–15)

[13]And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?[†] [14]The sower sows the word. [15]And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16]These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17]and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18]Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19]and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20]But these are the ones sown on good ground, those

who hear the word, accept *it*, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

The Lamp Under a Basket

(Mt 5:14–16)

[21]Also He said to them, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22]For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23]If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

[24]Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.[†] [25]For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

The Parable of the Scattered Seed

[26]And He said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,[†] [27]and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28]For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29]But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

(Mt 13:31, 32; Lk 13:18, 19)

[30]Then He said, “To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?[†] [31]*It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32]but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.”

Jesus’ Use of Parables

(Mt 13:34, 35)

[33]And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it.*[†] [34]But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

A Storm Obeys Jesus

(Mt 8:23–27; Lk 8:22–25)

[35]On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side.”[†] [36]Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. [37]And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. [38]But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

[39]Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. [40]But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?”[a] [41]And

they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

The Gadarene Demoniac

(Mt 8:28–34; Lk 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.[a] [†] [2]And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, [3]who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him,[a] not even with chains, [4]because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. [5]And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

[6]When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. [7]And he cried out with a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.”

[8]For He said to him, “Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” [9]Then He asked him, “What *is* your name?”

And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” [10]Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

[11]Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12]So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may

enter them.” [13]And at once Jesus[a] gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14]So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15]Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16]And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17]Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

[18]And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19]However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20]And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus's Daughter

(Mt 9:18, 19; Lk 8:40–42)

[21]Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea.[†] [22]And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23]and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little

daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24]So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

The Woman with a Flow of Blood

(Mt 9:20–22; Lk 8:43–48)

[25]Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years,[†] [26]and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27]When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28]For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29]Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30]And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?”

[31]But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’ ”

[32]And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33]But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34]And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”

Jairus's Daughter Raised

(*Mt 9:23–26*; *Lk 8:49–56*)

[35]While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?”

[36]As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” [37]And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38]Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39]When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.”

[40]And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41]Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”[†] [42]Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43]But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

At Nazareth: No Honor

(*Mt 13:53–58*; *Lk 4:16–30*)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.[†] [2]And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3]Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4]But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5]Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*.[†] [6]And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

The Mission of the Twelve

(Mt 9:35–11:1; Lk 9:1–6)

[7]And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.[†] [8]He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts— [9]but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

[10]Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11]And whoever[a] will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as

a testimony against them.[b] Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”

[12]So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13]And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.[†]

The Baptist Beheaded

(Mt 14:1–12; Lk 9:7–9)

[14]Now King Herod heard *of Him*, for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.”[†] [ω]

[15]Others said, “It is Elijah.”

And others said, “It is the Prophet, or[a] like one of the prophets.”[†]

[16]But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17]For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.[†] [18]Because John had said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.”

[19]Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20]for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.[†]

[21]Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22]And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23]He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24]So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?"

And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

[25]Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

[26]And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet*, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27]Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28]brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29]When his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Feeding the Five Thousand

(Mt 14:13–21; Lk 9:10–17; Jn 6:1–14)

[30]Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.[†] [31]And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were

many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.[†] [32]So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

[33]But the multitudes[a] saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34]And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35]When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36]Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread;[a] for they have nothing to eat.”

[37]But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.”

And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?”[†]

[38]But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”

And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.”

[39]Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40]So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41]And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42]So they all ate and were filled. [43]And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of

the fish. [44]Now those who had eaten the loaves were about[a] five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water

(Mt 14:22–33; Jn 6:15–21)

[45]Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.[†] [46]And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47]Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48]Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49]And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50]for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51]Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52]For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.[†]

Many Made Whole

(Mt 14:34–36)

[53]When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. [54]And when they came out of the boat, immediately the

people recognized Him, [55]ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. [56]Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.[†]

The Traditions of the Pharisees

(Mt 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem.[†] [2]Now when[a] they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. [3]For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. [4]*When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

[5]Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”

[6]He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

[7]*And in vain they worship Me,*

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'[a]

[8]For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men[a] —the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

[9]He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. [10]For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*;[a] and, *'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'*[b] [11]But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), [12]then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, [13]making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14]When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15]There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.[†] [16]If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"[a]

[17]When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18]So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19]because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?"[a] [20]And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21]For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

[22]thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23]All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

A Gentile Woman Believes

(Mt 15:21–28)

[24]From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon.[a] And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it*, but He could not be hidden.[†] [25]For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26]The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27]But Jesus said to her, “Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.”

[28]And she answered and said to Him, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs.”

[29]Then He said to her, “For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”

[30]And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

The Healing of a Deaf Man

(Mt 15:29–31)

[31]Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. [32]Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. [33]And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. [34]Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”[†]

[35]Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. [36]Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.[†] [37]And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

Feeding the Four Thousand

(*Mt 15:32–39*)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples *to Him* and said to them,[†] [2]“I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. [3]And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.”

[4]Then His disciples answered Him, “How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?”

[5]He asked them, “How many loaves do you have?”

And they said, “Seven.”

[6]So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. [7]They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them.* [8]So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. [9]Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, [10]immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

Show Us a Sign

(Mt 16:1–4)

[11]Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him.[†] [12]But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.”

The Leaven of the Pharisees

(Mt 16:5–12)

[13]And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side. [14]Now the disciples[a] had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. [15]Then He charged them,

saying, “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”[†]

[16]And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “*It is* because we have no bread.”

[17]But Jesus, being aware of *it*, said to them, “Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still[a] hardened? [18]Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? [19]When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?”

They said to Him, “Twelve.”

[20]“Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?”

And they said, “Seven.”

[21]So He said to them, “How *is it* you do not understand?”

A Blind Man Healed

[22]Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him.[†] [23]So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

[24]And he looked up and said, “I see men like trees, walking.”

[25]Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. [26]Then He sent him away to his house, saying, “Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.”[a]

Peter's Confession

(Mt 16:13–20; Lk 9:18–21)

[27]Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?”[†]

[28]So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some *say*, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”

[29]He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.”

[30]Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

Jesus’ First Prophecy of His Passion

(Mt 16:21–28; Lk 9:22–27)

[31]And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.[†] [32]He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. [33]But when He had turned

around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

[34]When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.[†] [ω] [35]For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. [36]For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? [37]Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? [38]For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

9 And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”[†]

The Transfiguration

(Mt 17:1–8; Lk 9:28–36)

[2]Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.[†] [3]His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. [4]And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. [5]Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles:

one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”— [6]because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

[7]And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” [8]Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

Is Elijah Coming?

(Mt 17:9–13)

[9]Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. [10]So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

[11]And they asked Him, saying, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

[12]Then He answered and told them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? [13]But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.”[†]

O Faithless Generation

(Mt 17:14–21; Lk 9:37–42)

[14]And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.[†] [15]Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him*, greeted Him. [16]And He asked the scribes, “What are you discussing with them?”

[17]Then one of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.[ω] [18]And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”

[19]He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.” [20]Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

[21]So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood. [22]And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

[23]Jesus said to him, “If you can believe,[a] all things *are* possible to him who believes.”

[24]Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

[25]When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” [26]Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” [27]But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

[28]And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”

[29]So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”[a]

Jesus’ Second Prophecy of His Passion

(Mt 17:22, 23; Lk 9:43–45)

[30]Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it.*[†] [31]For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.” [32]But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

The Way of Discipleship

(Mt 18:1–35; Lk 9:46–50)

[33]Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?”[†]

[34]But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the* greatest. [35]And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” [36]Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, [37]“Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

[38]Now John answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.”[†]

[39]But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. [40]For he who is not against us is on our[a] side. [41]For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

[42]“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.[†] [ω] [43]If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—[†] [44]where

‘Their worm does not die

And the fire is not quenched.’[a]

[45]And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— [46]where

‘Their worm does not die

And the fire is not quenched.’[a]

[47]And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— [48]where

‘Their worm does not die

And the fire is not quenched.’[a]

[49]“For everyone will be seasoned with fire,[a] and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.[†] [50]Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”

What Is Marriage?

(*Mt 19:1–12*)

10 Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.

[2]The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?” testing Him.[†]

[3]And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

[4]They said, "Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her.*"

[5]And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. [6]But from the beginning of the creation, God '*made them male and female.*'[a] [7]'*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,* [8]*and the two shall become one flesh*';[a] so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. [9]Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

[10]In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter.* [11]So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. [12]And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Children Receive the Kingdom

(Mt 19:13–15; Lk 18:15–17)

[13]Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them.*[†] [14]But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. [15]Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." [16]And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

The Danger of Riches

(Mt 19:16–30; Lk 18:18–30)

[17]Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”[†]

[18]So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. [19]You know the commandments: *‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’* ‘Do not defraud,’ *‘Honor your father and your mother.’* ”[a]

[20]And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.”

[21]Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”

[22]But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

[23]Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” [24]And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches[a] to enter the kingdom of God! [25]It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

[26]And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?”

[27]But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men *it is* impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”

[28]Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.”[†]

[29]So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[a] or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, [30]who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. [31]But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.”

Jesus’ Third Prophecy of His Passion

(Mt 20:17–19; Lk 18:31–34)

[32]Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him:[†] [33]“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; [34]and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

True Greatness in Serving

(Mt 20:20–28)

[35]Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.”[†]

[36]And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

[37]They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”

[38]But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

[39]They said to Him, “We are able.”

So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; [40]but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared.”

[41]And when the ten heard *it,* they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. [42]But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [43]Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. [44]And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

[45]For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”[†]

The Blind Man Believes

(*Lk 18:35–43*)

[46]Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.[†] [47]And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

[48]Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

[49]So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.”

[50]And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

[51]So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”

[52]Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

The Triumphal Entry

(Mt 21:1–9; Lk 19:28–44; Jn 12:12–19)

11 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage[a] and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples;[†] [2]and He said to them, “Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it.* [3]And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it,’ and immediately he will send it here.”

[4]So they went their way, and found the[a] colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. [5]But some of those who stood there said to them, “What are you doing, loosing the colt?”

[6]And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. [7]Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. [8]And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. [9]Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’[a]

[10]Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David

That comes in the name of the Lord![a]

Hosanna in the highest!”

[11]And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to

Bethany with the twelve.

The Barren Fig Tree

(*Mt 21:18*, *19*)

12Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.[†] 14In response Jesus said to it, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.”

And His disciples heard *it.*

The Temple Cleansed

(*Mt 21:12–17*; *Lk 19:45–48*)

15So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.[†] 16And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations*’?[a] But you have made it a ‘*den of thieves.*’ ”[b]

18And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. 19When evening had come, He went out of the city.

The Fig Tree Withered

(Mt 21:20–22)

[20]Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.[†] [21]And Peter, remembering, said to Him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.”

[22]So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. [23]For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.[†] [24]Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them,* and you will have *them.*

[25]“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. [26]But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”[a] [†]

By Whose Authority?

(Mt 21:23–27; Lk 20:1–8)

[27]Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.[†] [28]And they said to Him, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?”

[29]But Jesus answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: [30]The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.”

[31]And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ [32]But if we say, ‘From men’ ”—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. [33]So they answered and said to Jesus, “We do not know.”

And Jesus answered and said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

The Wicked Vinedressers

(Mt 21:33–46; Lk 20:9–19)

12 Then He began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around *it*, dug *a place for* the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.[†] [2]Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. [3]And they took *him* and beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. [4]Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones,[a] wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully treated. [5]And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. [6]Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ [7]But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' [8]So they took him and killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

[9]"Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. [10]Have you not even read this Scripture:

'The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone.

[11]*This was the Lord's doing,*

And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"[a]

[12]And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.

Taxes to Caesar

(Mt 22:15–22; Lk 20:20–26)

[13]Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words.[†] [14]When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? [15]Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see *it*." [16]So they brought *it*.

And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription *is* this?” They said to Him, “Caesar's.”

[17]And Jesus answered and said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

And they marveled at Him.

Jesus Explains the Resurrection

(Mt 22:23–33; Lk 20:27–40)

[18]Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying:[†] [19]“Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. [20]Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. [21]And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. [22]So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. [23]Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.”

[24]Jesus answered and said to them, “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? [25]For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. [26]But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *burning* bush *passage*, how God spoke to him, saying, *‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the*

God of Jacob'?[a] 27He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

The Greatest Commandment

(*Mt 22:34–40*)

28Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving[a] that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"[†]

29Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments *is: 'Hear, O Israel, the* L*ORD* *our God, the* L*ORD* *is one.* 30*And you shall love the* L*ORD* *your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'*[a] This *is* the first commandment.[b] 31And the second, like *it, is* this: '*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*[a] There is no other commandment greater than these."

32So the scribe said to Him, "Well *said,* Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. 33And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul,[a] and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

But after that no one dared question Him.

David's Son and Lord

(Mt 22:41–46; Lk 20:41–44)

[35]Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, “How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?[†] [36]For David himself said by the Holy Spirit:

‘The LORD *said to my Lord,*

“Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” ’[a]

[37]Therefore David himself calls Him *‘Lord’*; how is He *then* his Son?”

And the common people heard Him gladly.

Beware of the Scribes

(Mt 23:1–13; Lk 20:45–47)

[38]Then He said to them in His teaching, “Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, *love* greetings in the marketplaces, [39]the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, [40]who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

A Poor Widow Gives All

(Lk 21:1–4)

[41]Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much.[†] [42]Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites,[a] which make a quadrans. [43]So He called His disciples to *Himself* and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; [44]for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”

The Destruction of the Temple

(Mt 24:1, 2; Lk 21:5, 6)

13 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*”[†]

[2]And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The Beginning of Sorrows

(Mt 24:3–14; Lk 21:7–19)

[3]Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, [4]“Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”

[5]And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you.[†] [6]For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He,*’ and

will deceive many. [7]But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. [8]For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles.[a] These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

[9]“But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought[a] before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. [10]And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. [11]But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate[a] what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. [12]Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. [13]And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Tribulation in Jerusalem

(Mt 24:15–28; Lk 21:20–24)

[14]“So when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation,’*[a] spoken of by Daniel the prophet,[b] standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [15]Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. [16]And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. [17]But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are

nursing babies in those days! [18]And pray that your flight may not be in winter. [19]For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. [20]And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

[21]“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, *He is* there!’ do not believe it. [22]For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [23]But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

The Coming of the Son of Man

(Mt 24:29–31; Lk 21:25–28)

[24]“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; [25]the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. [26]Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. [27]And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

When Will He Return?

(Mt 24:32–44; Lk 21:29–36)

[28]“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. [29]So

you also, when you see these things happening, know that it[a] is near—at the doors! [30]Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.[†] [31]Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

[32]“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.[†] [33]Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. [34]*It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. [35]Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— [36]lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. [37]And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

The Conspiracy to Kill Jesus

(Mt 26:1–5; Lk 22:1, 2)

14 After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast* of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death.[†] [2]But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.”

The Anointing at Bethany

(Mt 26:6–13; Jn 12:1–8)

[3]And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head.[†] [4]But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? [5]For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply.

[6]But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. [7]For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. [8]She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. [9]Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

Judas Betrays Jesus

(Mt 26:14–16; Lk 22:3–6)

[10]Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them.[†] [11]And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

Preparations for the Passover

(Mt 26:17–19; Lk 22:7–13)

[12]Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover *lamb,* His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?”[†]

[13]And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.[†] [14]Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?” ’ [15]Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished *and* prepared; there make ready for us.”

[16]So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

The Last Supper: The Eucharist Instituted

(Mt 26:20–35; Lk 22:14–38; Jn 13:1–38)

[17]In the evening He came with the twelve. [18]Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.”

[19]And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, “*Is* it I?” And another *said,* “*Is* it I?”[a]

[20]He answered and said to them, “*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.[†] [21]The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.”[†]

[22]And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it,* and gave *it* to them and said, “Take, eat;[a] this is My body.”[†]

[23]Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. [24]And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new[a] covenant, which is shed for many. [25]Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

[26]And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.[†]

[27]Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night,[a] for it is written:

‘I will strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered.’[b]

[28]“But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

[29]Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will* not *be.*”

[30]Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.”

[31]But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!”

And they all said likewise.

Gethsemane

(*Mt 26:36–46*; *Lk 22:39–46*; *Jn 18:1*)

32Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”† 33And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch.”

35He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36And He said, “Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*.”†

37Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? 38Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

39Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. 40And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

41Then He came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

Jesus Is Arrested

(Mt 26:47–56; Lk 22:47–53; Jn 18:2–12)

[43]And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.[†] [44]Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely.”

[45]As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, “Rabbi, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

[46]Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. [47]And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.[†]

[48]Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? [49]I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”

[50]Then they all forsook Him and fled.

[51]Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body.* And the young men laid hold of him,[†] [52]and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

Jesus Before the Sanhedrin

(Mt 26:57–68; Lk 22:54, 63–71; Jn 18:13–24)

[53]And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. [54]But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

[55]Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. [56]For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

[57]Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, [58]“We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’ ” [59]But not even then did their testimony agree.

[60]And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?” [61]But He kept silent and answered nothing.

Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”

[62]Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”[†]

[63]Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? [64]You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?”

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

[65]Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, “Prophesy!” And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.[a]

Peter's Denials

(*Mt 26:58*, *69–75*; *Lk 22:54–62*; *Jn 18:15–18*, *25–27*)

[66]Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came.[†] [67]And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.”

[68]But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.” And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

[69]And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, “This is *one* of them.” [70]But he denied it again.

And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, “Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*.”[a]

[71]Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!”

[72]A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And when he thought about it, he wept.

Jesus Before Pilate

(Mt 27:1, 2, 11–26; Lk 23:1–25; Jn 18:28–19:16)

15 Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate.[†] [2]Then Pilate asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

He answered and said to him, “*It is as* you say.”[†]

[3]And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.[†] [4]Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, “Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!”[a] [5]But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

[6]Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.[†] [7]And there was one named Barabbas, *who was* chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. [8]Then the multitude, crying aloud,[a] began to ask *him to do* just as he had always done for them. [9]But Pilate answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” [10]For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

[11]But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. [12]Pilate answered and said to them again, “What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?”

[13]So they cried out again, “Crucify Him!”

[14]Then Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has He done?”

But they cried out all the more, “Crucify Him!”

[15]So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him,* to be crucified.[†]

Mocked by Soldiers

(Mt 27:27–31)

[16]Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison.[†] [17]And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head,* [18]and began to salute Him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” [19]Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. [20]And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

The Crucifixion

(Mt 27:31–44; Lk 23:26–43; Jn 19:17–27)

[21]Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.[†] [22]And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. [23]Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it.* [24]And when they crucified Him, they

divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take.

[25]Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. [26]And the inscription of His accusation was written above:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.[†]

[27]With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left.[†] [28]So the Scripture was fulfilled[a] which says, *“And He was numbered with the transgressors.”*[b]

[29]And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! *You* who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, [30]save Yourself, and come down from the cross!”

[31]Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. [32]Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.”[a]

Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

Jesus Dies

(Mt 27:45–56; Lk 23:44–49; Jn 19:28–37)

[33]Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.[†] [34]And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a

loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*[a] [†]

[35]Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that,* said, “Look, He is calling for Elijah!” [36]Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.”

[37]And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.[†]

[38]Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.[†] [39]So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last,[a] he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”[†]

[40]There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome,[†] [41]who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

The Burial

(Mt 27:57–61; Lk 23:50–56; Jn 19:38–42)

[42]Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, [43]Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.[†] [ω] [44]Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. [45]So when he found out

from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. [46]Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. [47]And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid.

The Empty Tomb

(Mt 28:1–8; Lk 24:1–12; Jn 20:1–10)

16 Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.[†] [2]Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. [3]And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” [4]But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.[†] [5]And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

[6]But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. [7]But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”[†]

[8]So they went out quickly[a] and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.[†]

The Risen Christ Appears

(Mt 28:9, 10; Lk 24:13–43; Jn 20:11–21:25)

[9]Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.[†] [10]She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. [11]And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

[12]After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country.[†] [13]And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

The Great Commission

(Mt 28:16–20; Lk 24:44–49)

[14]Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. [15]And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.[†] [16]He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. [17]And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;[†] [18]they[a] will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”[†]

The Ascension

(Lk 24:50–53)

[19]So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.[†] [20]And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.[a]

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The Book of Luke

Author—All the early sources emphasize that the third gospel was written by Luke, who is mentioned in Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. By birth Luke was a Gentile from Antioch, and by profession a physician. He was a fellow worker of Paul's: the plural “we” (Acts 20:6ff.) indicates Luke was with Paul as he traveled the coast of Asia Minor on his way to Jerusalem.

Date—In his preface to the gospel (1:1), Luke indicates knowledge of other written sources. Most scholars believe he used Mark as a source. He probably wrote his gospel either from Greece or from Asia Minor in AD 70–80.

Major Theme—*The universality of the gospel message*. Luke has been called an “historian” because he dates biblical events by reference to secular history (2:1, 2; 3:1). Since this is a gospel written for Christians of Gentile background, it emphasizes more than the other gospels the challenge of mission and evangelization. Salvation is described as “a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles” (2:32). At the end of the gospel, the risen Lord instructs His disciples to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins “to all nations” (24:47). Subthemes include:

1. *Prayer.* The early chapters portray righteous men and women at prayer (1:10, 13, 46–55, 64; 2:20, 28–32). Jesus is portrayed frequently at prayer (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 11:1; 22:32, 41; 23:46). The gospel ends with the disciples “continually in the temple praising and blessing God” (24:53).

2. *The activity of the Holy Spirit.* The inspirational work of the Holy Spirit is evident everywhere in the gospel. Mary is “overshadowed” by the Spirit (1:35). Jesus conducts His ministry in the fullness of the Spirit (3:22; 4:1, 18; 10:21). The disciples were to embark upon their world mission after receiving “power from on high” (24:49), the gift of the Spirit.
3. *A deep concern for sinners.* Luke reports Jesus’ concern and love for sinners, with a confident hope of their repentance and forgiveness (5:1–11; 7:36–50; 9:51–56; 10:29–37; 19:1–10; 23:39–43).

Background—Luke's is the only gospel addressed to an individual. He wrote to reassure Theophilus, a Gentile and a new believer, that God was still at work in the Christian community founded by Jesus.

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–4)

II. Jesus’ Birth and Early Life (1:5–2:52)

  A. The two annunciations (1:5–38)

  B. Mary and Elizabeth wait together (1:39–56)

  C. John's birth and early life (1:57–80)

  D. Jesus’ birth and early life (2:1–52)

III. The Messiah Manifested (3:1–4:13)

  A. The Forerunner's message: repentance and expectation (3:1–20)

  B. Jesus’ anointing as Messiah (3:21–4:13)

IV. The Great Galilean Ministry (4:14–9:50)

  A. The contrast of law and grace (4:14–6:11)

  B. The separation of law from grace (6:12–7:50)

  C. The new kingdom is hidden from the old (8:1–56)

  D. A new Israel: new manna, new glory revealed (9:1–50)

V. Later Judean and Perean Ministries (9:51–18:30)

  A. The new rule for new Israel (9:51–11:13)

  B. The new critiques the old (Judean ministry) (11:14–13:21)

C. Striving for the kingdom (Perean ministry) (13:22–17:10)

D. Waiting for the coming kingdom (on to Jerusalem) (17:11–18:30)

VI. Holy Week: The New Covenant Made (18:31–24:53)

A. Public fulfillment and rejection (18:31–21:38)

B. Private preparation and faithfulness (22:1–38)

C. Christ's Passion: Passover fulfilled (22:39–23:56)

D. Resurrection (24:1–49)

E. Ascension (24:50–53)

Preface

1 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled[a] among us,[ω] [2]just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us,[†] [3]it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, [4]that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

John's Birth Announced to Zacharias

[5]There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth.[†] [ω] [6]And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.[†] [7]But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.[†]

[8]So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division,[†] [9]according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. [10]And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. [11]Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.[†] [12]And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

MARY

"For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."
(Lk 1:48)

For two thousand years the Church has preserved the memory of the Virgin Mary as the prototype of all Christians—the model of what we are to become in Christ. Mary was truly pure and unconditionally obedient to God. The tradition of the Church holds that Mary remained a virgin all her life (see note on Mt 12:46–50). While lifelong celibacy is not a model for all Christians to follow, Mary's spiritual purity, her wholehearted devotion to God, is certainly to be emulated.

Mary is also our model in that she was the first person to receive Jesus Christ. As Mary bore Christ in her womb physically, all Christians now have the privilege of bearing God within them spiritually. By God's grace and mercy we are purified and empowered to become like Him.

The honor we give to Mary also signifies our view of who Jesus is. From early times the church has called her Mother of God (Gr. *Theotokos*, lit. "God-Bearer"), a title which implies that her Son is both fully man and fully God. As His Mother, Mary was the source of Jesus' human nature; yet the One she bore in her womb was also the eternal God.

Therefore, because of her character and especially because of her role in God's plan of salvation, Christians appropriately honor Mary as the first among the saints. The archangel Gabriel initiated this honor in his address to her: "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!" (Lk 1:28). This salutation clearly indicates that God Himself had chosen to honor Mary. Her favored status was confirmed when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was then six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Elizabeth greeted Mary with these words: "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk 1:42, 43). And Mary herself, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, predicted the honor that would be paid her throughout history: "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48).

In obedience to God's clear intention, therefore, the Orthodox Church honors Mary in icons, hymns, and special feast days. We entreat her, as the human being who was most intimate with Christ on earth, to intercede with her Son on our behalf. We ask her, as the first believer and the Mother of the Church, for guidance and protection. We venerate her—but we do not worship her, for worship belongs to God alone.

In Matins, Vespers, and all the services of the hours of prayer, we sing this hymn, which expresses Mary's unique place in creation.

> It is truly right to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the

cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: True Theotokos, we magnify you.

[13]But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.† [14]And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. [15]For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.† [16]And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. [17]He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’*[a] and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”†

[18]And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.”

[19]And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. [20]But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”†

[21]And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. [22]But when he came out, he could not speak to them;

and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

[23]So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. [24]Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying,[†] [ω] [25]“Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among people.”

Christ's Birth Announced to Mary

[26]Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,[†] [27]to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary.[†] [28]And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!”[a] [†]

[29]But when she saw *him*,[a] she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. [30]Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31]And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.[†] [32]He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. [33]And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

[34]Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”[†]

[35]And the angel answered and said to her, “*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.[†] [36]Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. [37]For with God nothing will be impossible.”

[38]Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.[†]

Elizabeth Praises Mary, Mother of God

[39]Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, [40]and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. [41]And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.[†] [42]Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb![†] [43]But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?[†] [44]For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. [45]Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

Mary Exults in God: The Magnificat

[46]And Mary said:

“My soul magnifies the Lord,[†]

[47]And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

[48]For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

[49]For He who is mighty has done great things for me,

And holy *is* His name.

[50]And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him

From generation to generation.

[51]He has shown strength with His arm;

He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts.

[52]He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones,

And exalted *the* lowly.

[53]He has filled *the* hungry with good things,

And *the* rich He has sent away empty.

[54]He has helped His servant Israel,

In remembrance of *His* mercy,

[55]As He spoke to our fathers,

To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

[56]And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

John Born and Named

[57]Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. [58]When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

[59]So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias.[†]

[60]His mother answered and said, “No; he shall be called John.”[†]

[61]But they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.” [62]So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

[63]And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, “His name is John.” So they all marveled. [64]Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed*, and he spoke, praising God.[†] [65]Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. [66]And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, “What kind of child will this be?” And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Zacharias's Song: The Benedictus

[67]Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

[68]“Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel,

For He has visited and redeemed His people,

[69]And has raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of His servant David,

[70]As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,

Who *have been* since the world began,

[71]That we should be saved from our enemies

And from the hand of all who hate us,

[72]To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers

And to remember His holy covenant,
[73]The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
[74]To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
[75]In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.
[76]“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,
[77]To give knowledge of salvation to His people
By the remission of their sins,
[78]Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited[a] us;
[79]To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

John's Growth

[80]So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.[†]

Christ Born in the City of David

(Mt 1:18–25)

2 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.[†] [ω] [2]This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. [3]So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

[4]Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, [5]to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife,[a] who was with child. [6]So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. [7]And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.[†]

The Witness of the Shepherds

[8]Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.[†] [9]And behold,[a] an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. [10]Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. [11]For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12]And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

[13]And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:[†]

[14]“Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”[a]

[15]So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” [16]And

they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. [17]Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely[a] known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.[†] [18]And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. [19]But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. [20]Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.[ω]

The Naming of Jesus

[21]And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child,[a] His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.[†]

Jesus Dedicated in the Temple

[22]Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord[†] [ω] [23](as it is written in the law of the Lord, *"Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"),*[a] [24]and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, *"A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*[a]

Simeon's Song: The Nunc Dimittis

[25]And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.[†] [26]And it had been revealed to him by the

Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. [27]So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, [28]he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:[†]

[29]“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;[†]
[30]For my eyes have seen Your salvation
[31]Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
[32]A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.”

[33]And Joseph and His mother[a] marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. [34]Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against[†] [35](yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”[†]

Anna's Prophecy

[36]Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; [37]and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years,[a] who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. [38]And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord,[a] and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.[†]

Jesus’ Childhood in Nazareth

(*Mt 2:19–23*)

[39]So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. [40]And the Child grew and became strong in spirit,[a] filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.[†]

Jesus in His Father's House

[41]His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.[†] [42]And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. [43]When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother[a] did not know *it;* [44]but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. [45]So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. [46]Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.[†] [47]And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. [48]So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.”[†]

[49]And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?”[†] [50]But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Jesus’ Growth

[51]Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. [52]And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.[†]

The Baptist's Call for Repentance

(Mt 3:1–12; Mk 1:1–8; Jn 1:19–28)

3 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,[†] [ω] [2]while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests,[a] the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.[†] [3]And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,[†] [4]as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;

Make His paths straight.[†]

[5]*Every valley shall be filled*

And every mountain and hill brought low;

The crooked places shall be made straight

And the rough ways smooth;

[6]*And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”*[a]

[7]Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [8]Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.[†] [9]And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

[10]So the people asked him, saying, “What shall we do then?”

[11]He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.”

[12]Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”

[13]And he said to them, “Collect no more than what is appointed for you.”

[14]Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, “And what shall we do?”

So he said to them, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.”

[15]Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, [16]John answered, saying to all, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.[†] [17]His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will

thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”

18And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. 19But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,[a] and for all the evils which Herod had done,[†] 20also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

Jesus Is Baptized

(Mt 3:13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Jn 1:29–34)

21When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.[†] 22And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”[†]

Jesus: Son of David, the Son of God

(Mt 1:1–17)

23Now Jesus Himself began *His ministry at* about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) *the* son of Joseph, *the son* of Heli,[†] 24*the son* of Matthat,[a] *the son* of Levi, *the son* of Melchi, *the son* of Janna, *the son* of Joseph, 25*the son* of Mattathiah, *the son* of Amos, *the son* of Nahum, *the son* of Esli, *the son* of Naggai, 26*the son* of Maath, *the son* of Mattathiah, *the son* of Semei, *the son* of Joseph, *the son* of Judah, 27*the son* of Joannas, *the son* of Rhesa, *the son* of Zerubbabel, *the son* of Shealtiel, *the son* of

Neri, [28]*the son* of Melchi, *the son* of Addi, *the son* of Cosam, *the son* of Elmodam, *the son* of Er, [29]*the son* of Jose, *the son* of Eliezer, *the son* of Jorim, *the son* of Matthat, *the son* of Levi, [30]*the son* of Simeon, *the son* of Judah, *the son* of Joseph, *the son* of Jonan, *the son* of Eliakim, [31]*the son* of Melea, *the son* of Menan, *the son* of Mattathah, *the son* of Nathan, *the son* of David, [32]*the son* of Jesse, *the son* of Obed, *the son* of Boaz, *the son* of Salmon, *the son* of Nahshon, [33]*the son* of Amminadab, *the son* of Ram, *the son* of Hezron, *the son* of Perez, *the son* of Judah, [34]*the son* of Jacob, *the son* of Isaac, *the son* of Abraham, *the son* of Terah, *the son* of Nahor, [35]*the son* of Serug, *the son* of Reu, *the son* of Peleg, *the son* of Eber, *the son* of Shelah, [36]*the son* of Cainan, *the son* of Arphaxad, *the son* of Shem, *the son* of Noah, *the son* of Lamech, [37]*the son* of Methuselah, *the son* of Enoch, *the son* of Jared, *the son* of Mahalalel, *the son* of Cainan, [38]*the son* of Enosh, *the son* of Seth, *the son* of Adam, *the son* of God.[†]

The Temptation

(Mt 4:1–11; Mk 1:12, 13)

4 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into[a] the wilderness,[†] [2]being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.[†]

[3]And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

[4]But Jesus answered him, saying,[a] “It is written, *‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’* ”[b] [†]

[5]Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him[a] all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. [6]And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. [7]Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”

[8]And Jesus answered and said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan![a] For[b] it is written, *‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’* ”[c]

[9]Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. [10]For it is written:

> *‘He shall give His angels charge over you,*
>
> *To keep you,’*[†]

[11]and,

> *‘In their hands they shall bear you up,*
>
> *Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”*[a]

[12]And Jesus answered and said to him, “It has been said, *‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’* ”[a]

[13]Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.[†]

Jesus’ Galilean Ministry Begins

(Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14, 15; Jn 4:1–4, 43–45)

[14]Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. [15]And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Unbelief at Nazareth

[16]So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.[ω] [17]And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

[18]*“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,*
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,[a]
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;[†]
[19]*To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*[a] [†]

[20]Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. [21]And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” [22]So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words

which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph's son?”[†] [ω]

[23]He said to them, “You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum,[a] do also here in Your country.’ ” [24]Then He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. [25]But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; [26]but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath,[a] *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. [27]And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

[28]So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, [29]and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. [30]Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Power over a Demon

(*Mk 1:21–28*)

[31]Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths.[†] [32]And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.[†] [33]Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,

[34]saying, “Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

[35]But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him in *their* midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.[†] [36]Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, “What a word this *is!* For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.” [37]And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

Power over Diseases

(Mt 8:14–17; Mk 1:29–34)

[38]Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her.[†] [39]So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.[†]

[40]When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. [41]And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ,[a] the Son of God!”

And He, rebuking *them,* did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

Preaching Throughout Galilee

(*Mt 4:23*; *Mk 1:35–39*)

[42]Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; [43]but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”[†] [44]And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.[a]

Four Fishermen Called

(*Mt 4:18–22*; *Mk 1:16–20*)

5 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret,[†] [2]and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. [3]Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.[†]

[4]When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”[†]

[5]But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” [6]And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.[†] [7]So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they

began to sink. [8]When Simon Peter saw *it,* he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"[†]

[9]For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; [10]and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."[†] [11]So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

(Mt 8:1–4; Mk 1:40–45)

[12]And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on *his* face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."[†]

[13]Then He put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him. [14]And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded."[†]

[15]However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. [16]So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

Jesus Forgives Sins

(*Mt 9:1–8*; *Mk 2:1–12*)

[17]Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.[a] [†] [18]Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. [19]And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with *his* bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.

[20]When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”

[21]And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

[22]But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? [23]Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’? [24]But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

[25]Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. [26]And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!”

Jesus Invites Matthew, a Sinner

(Mt 9:9–13; Mk 2:13–17)

27 After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” † 28 So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

29 Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.† 30 And their scribes and the Pharisees[a] complained against His disciples, saying, “Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

31 Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

When Does Jesus Fast?

(Mt 9:14–17; Mk 2:18–22)

33 Then they said to Him, “Why do[a] the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?”†

34 And He said to them, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.”

[36]Then He spoke a parable to them: “No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one;[a] otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old. [37]And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. [38]But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.[a] [39]And no one, having drunk old *wine,* immediately[a] desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’ ”[b] [†]

The Lord of the Sabbath

([Mt 12:1–8]; [Mk 2:23–28])

6 Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first[a] that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them,* rubbing *them* in *their* hands.[†] [2]And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”

[3]But Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: [4]how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?” [5]And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

Healing on the Sabbath

([Mt 12:9–14]; [Mk 3:1–6])

[6]Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. [7]So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.[†] [8]But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, “Arise and stand here.” And he arose and stood. [9]Then Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?”[a] [10]And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man,[a] “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.[b] [11]But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

The Twelve Chosen

(Mt 10:1–4; Mk 3:13–19)

[12]Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.[†] [13]And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself;* and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: [14]Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew;[†] [15]Matthew and Thomas; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; [16]Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.

Crowds Follow Jesus

(Mt 4:24, 25; 12:15, 16; Mk 3:7–12)

[17]And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, [†] [ω] [18]as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. [19]And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed *them* all.

The Beatitudes, the Woes

(Mt 5:1–12)

[20]Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:

“Blessed *are you* poor,

For yours is the kingdom of God.

[21]Blessed *are you* who hunger now,

For you shall be filled.

Blessed *are you* who weep now,

For you shall laugh.

[22]Blessed are you when men hate you,

And when they exclude you,

And revile *you*, and cast out your name as evil,

For the Son of Man's sake.

[23]Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!

For indeed your reward *is* great in heaven,

For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

[24]“But woe to you who are rich,

For you have received your consolation.[†]

[25]Woe to you who are full,

For you shall hunger.

Woe to you who laugh now,

For you shall mourn and weep.

[26]Woe to you[a] when all[b] men speak well of you,

For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Love of Enemies

(*Mt 5:38–48*)

[27]“But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, [28]bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. [29]To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. [30]Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back. [31]And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.[†]

[32]“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. [33]And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. [34]And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. [35]But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. [36]Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Be Merciful

([Mt 7:1–5](#))

[37]“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.† [38]Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

[39]And He spoke a parable to them: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? [40]A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.† [41]And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? [42]Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the speck that *is* in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the plank that *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

Beware of Hypocrisy

(Mt 7:15–27)

[43]“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. [44]For every tree is known by its own fruit. For *men* do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. [45]A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out

of the evil treasure of his heart[a] brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

[46]“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?[†] [47]Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: [48]He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.[a] [49]But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell.[a] And the ruin of that house was great.”

A Gentile Soldier's Faith

(Mt 8:5–13)

7 Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. [2]And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die.[†] [3]So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. [4]And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, [5]“for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.”

[6]Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.

[7]Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. [8]For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does *it*.”

[9]When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!” [10]And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.[a]

A Widow's Son Is Raised

[11]Now it happened, the day after, *that* He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd.[†] [12]And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. [13]When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” [14]Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” [15]So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

[16]Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen up among us”; and, “God has visited His people.” [17]And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

John's Messengers Inquire of Jesus

(Mt 11:2–19)

[18]Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.[†] [19]And John, calling two of his disciples to *him*, sent *them* to Jesus,[a] saying, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

[20]When the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ ” [21]And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

[22]Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. [23]And blessed is *he* who is not offended because of Me.”

[24]When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? [25]But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings’ courts. [26]But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. [27]This is *he* of whom it is written:

‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,

Who will prepare Your way before You.’[a]

[28]For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist;[a] but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."[†]

[29]And when all the people heard *Him*, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. [30]But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.[†]

[31]And the Lord said,[a] "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like?[†] [32]They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying:

'We played the flute for you,

And you did not dance;

We mourned to you,

And you did not weep.'

[33]For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' [34]The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' [35]But wisdom is justified by all her children."[†]

Forgiveness of a Sinful Woman

[36]Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.[†] [ω] [37]And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, [38]and stood at

His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. [39]Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this,* he spoke to himself, saying, “This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.”

[40]And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.”

So he said, “Teacher, say it.”

[41]“There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. [42]And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?”

[43]Simon answered and said, “I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more.”

And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.” [44]Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. [45]You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. [46]You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. [47]Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.”

[48]Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

[49]And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”[†]

[50]Then He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Women Who Served Jesus

8 Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve *were* with Him, [2]and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,[†] [3]and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him[a] from their substance.

Parable of the Sower

(Mt 13:1–23; Mk 4:1–20)

[4]And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable:[†] [5]“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.[†] [6]Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. [7]And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. [8]But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

[9]Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?”

[10]And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that

‘Seeing they may not see,

And hearing they may not understand.’[a †]

[11]“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. [12]Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. [13]But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. [14]Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. [15]But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.

Take Care How You Hear

(Mk 4:21–25)

[16]“No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts *it* under a bed, but sets *it* on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. [17]For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light. [18]Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.”

Jesus’ True Kinsmen

(Mt 12:46–50; Mk 3:31–35)

[19]Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd.† [20]And it was told Him *by some,* who said, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.”

[21]But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

Jesus Calms a Storm

(Mt 8:23–27; Mk 4:35–41)

[22]Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.” And they launched out.† [23]But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling *with water,* and were in jeopardy. [24]And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!”

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. [25]But He said to them, “Where is your faith?”

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!”

The Gadarene Demoniac

(*Mt 8:28–34*; *Mk 5:1–20*)

[26]Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes,[a] which is opposite Galilee.[†] [27]And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes,[a] nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. [28]When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!” [29]For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

[30]Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?”

And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him. [31]And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

[32]Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. [33]Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.[†]

[34]When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country. [35]Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And

they were afraid. [36]They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. [37]Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes[a] asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

[38]Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, [39]"Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

Jairus' Daughter Raised, a Woman Healed

(Mt 9:18–26; Mk 5:21–43)

[40]So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him.[†] [41]And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, [42]for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. [43]Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any,[†] [44]came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

[45]And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?"

When all denied it, Peter and those with him[a] said, “Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’ ”[b] [†]

[46]But Jesus said, “Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.” [47]Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.[†]

[48]And He said to her, “Daughter, be of good cheer;[a] your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

[49]While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, “Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.”[a]

[50]But when Jesus heard *it*, He answered him, saying, “Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.” [51]When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in[a] except Peter, James, and John,[b] and the father and mother of the girl. [52]Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, “Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.” [53]And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead.

[54]But He put them all outside,[a] took her by the hand and called, saying, “Little girl, arise.”[†] [55]Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given *something* to eat. [56]And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

The Twelve Sent Out

(Mt 9:35–11:1; Mk 6:7–13)

9 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.[†] [2]He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. [3]And He said to them, “Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

[4]“Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. [5]And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.”

[6]So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

[7]Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead,[†] [8]and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. [9]Herod said, “John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?” So he sought to see Him.

Feeding the Five Thousand

(Mt 14:13–21; Mk 6:30–44; Jn 6:1–14)

[10]And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place

belonging to the city called Bethsaida. [11]But when the multitudes knew *it,* they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.[†] [12]When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, “Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here.”

[13]But He said to them, “You give them something to eat.”

And they said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people.”[†] [14]For there were about five thousand men.

Then He said to His disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of fifty.” [15]And they did so, and made them all sit down.

[16]Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke *them,* and gave *them* to the disciples to set before the multitude.[†] [17]So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

Peter's Confession: Jesus is the Christ

(Mt 16:13–20; Mk 8:27–30)

[18]And it happened, as He was alone praying, *that* His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”[†]

19So they answered and said, “John the Baptist, but some *say* Elijah; and others *say* that one of the old prophets has risen again.”

20He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered and said, “The Christ of God.”[†]

First Prediction of the Passion

(*Mt 16:21–28*; *Mk 8:31–9:1*)

21And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one,[†] 22saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”

23Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily,[a] and follow Me.[†] 24For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels.

27But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.”[†]

The Transfiguration

(*Mt 17:1–9*; *Mk 9:2–10*)

[28]Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.[†] [29]As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. [30]And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, [31]who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.[†] [32]But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. [33]Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

[34]While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. [35]And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son.[a] Hear Him!" [36]When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

The Unbelieving World

(Mt 17:14–21; Mk 9:14–29)

[37]Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. [38]Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. [39]And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth;* and it departs from him

with great difficulty, bruising him. [40]So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."[†]

[41]Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." [42]And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him*. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

Second Prediction of the Passion

(Mt 17:22, 23; Mk 9:30–32)

[43]And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, [44]"Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."[†] [45]But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

Who Is the Greatest?

(Mt 18:1–5; Mk 9:33–37)

[46]Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest.[†] [47]And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, [48]and said to them, "Whoever receives this little

child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.”

The Rights of Jesus’ Disciples

(*Mk 9:38–41*)

[49]Now John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.”

[50]But Jesus said to him, “Do not forbid *him*, for he who is not against us[a] is on our[b] side.”

Kindness Toward the Inhospitable

[51]Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, [52]and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. [53]But they did not receive Him, because His face was *set* for the journey to Jerusalem. [54]And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?”[a]

[55]But He turned and rebuked them,[a] and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. [56]For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save *them*.”[a] And they went to another village.

Undivided Commitment

(*Mt 8:18–22*)

[57]Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.”[†]

[58]And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.”

[59]Then He said to another, “Follow Me.”

But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

[60]Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

[61]And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house.”

[62]But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

The Seventy Sent Out

10 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also,[a] and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.[†] [ω] [2]Then He said to them, “The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.[†] [3]Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.[†] [4]Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals;

and greet no one along the road. [5]But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ [6]And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. [7]And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.[†] [8]Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. [9]And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’[†] [10]But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, [11]‘The very dust of your city which clings to us[a] we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’ [12]But[a] I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.

[13]“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.[†] [14]But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. [15]And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.[a] [16]He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”[ω]

[17]Then the seventy[a] returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”

[18]And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.[†] [19]Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt

you. [20]Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather[a] rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

THE SEVENTY

In Luke 10:1–17, the Lord appoints seventy men to go out as missionaries—as apostles. Though not so prominent as the Twelve, the Seventy carried out their missions with fervor and enthusiasm. The Tradition of the Church confirms that the Seventy remained true to the Lord and their calling, fulfilling a vital role in the spread of the gospel. These were not random choices or accidental volunteers but true disciples, true apostles, whose labors carried the message of their Lord throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Though lists of the Seventy vary somewhat, all these men are remembered in the calendar of the Church (see chart, “The Seventy,”). One day, January 4, is set aside to remember them all, and the record of their work is preserved in accounts handed down through the centuries from place to place, especially in those locations where they labored.

To tell all the stories passed down in the Church concerning the Seventy would fill a book of considerable size, but the stories of a few will convey the conviction and faith of this illustrious body.

Barnabas, a Jew of the tribe of Levi, was born in Cyprus of wealthy parents. He is said to have studied under Gamaliel with Saul of Tarsus, who was to become Paul the apostle. Originally named Joseph, he was called Barnabas (Son of Consolation) by the apostles (Acts 4:36) because he had a rare gift of comforting people’s hearts. He sought out Paul when everyone else was afraid of him, bringing him to the apostles. It was Barnabas whom the apostles first sent to Antioch with Paul. Their long association was broken only when Barnabas was determined to take his cousin Mark, whom Paul did not trust just then, on a missionary journey. The three were later reconciled (Col 4:10). Many ancient accounts say Barnabas was the first to preach in Rome and in Milan, but he was martyred in Cyprus, then buried by Mark at the western gate of the city of Salamis.

Also among the more prominent of the Seventy was the apostle Titus, whom Paul called his brother (2Co 12:18) and his son (Tts 1:4). Born in Crete, Titus was educated in Greek philosophy, but after reading the prophet Isaiah he began to doubt the value of all he had been taught. Hearing the news of the coming of Jesus Christ, he joined some others from Crete who were going to Jerusalem to see for themselves. After hearing Jesus speak and seeing His works, the young Titus joined those who followed Him. Baptized by the apostle Paul, he worked with and served the great apostle to the Gentiles, traveling with him until Paul sent him to Crete, making him bishop of that city. It is said that Titus was in Rome at the time of the beheading of St. Paul and that he buried the body of his spiritual father before returning home. Back in Crete, he converted and baptized many people, governing the Church on that island until he entered into rest at the age of ninety-four.

Many less prominent among the Seventy also labored for Christ unto death. Aristarchus, whom Paul mentions several times (Acts 19:29; Col 4:10; Phm 24), calling him a “fellow laborer,” became bishop of Apamea in Syria. Sosthenes (Acts 18:17; 1Co 1:1) became bishop of Caesarea, and Tychicus (Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2Ti 4:12; Tts 3:12) succeeded him in that city. Simeon (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3), son of Cleopas (who was the brother of Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin Mary), succeeded James as bishop of Jerusalem. Aristobulus (Rom 16:10), the brother of the apostle Barnabas, preached the gospel in Britain and died peacefully there.

The lives of these few are quite representative of the Seventy, who were instrumental in helping to plant the Church throughout the world. Many became bishops, but the names of all are numbered in heaven in the Book of Life as faithful servants of the Lord, apostles and foundations of the Church.

[21]In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.[†] [22]All[a] things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him.*"[ω]

[23]Then He turned to *His* disciples and said privately, "Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see; [24]for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen *it*, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard *it.*"

The Good Samaritan

[25]And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

[26]He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading *of it?*”

[27]So he answered and said, “*‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’*[a] and *‘your neighbor as yourself.’*”[b]

[28]And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”

[29]But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

[30]Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.[†] [31]Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.[†] [32]Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. [33]But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.[†] [34]So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.[†] [35]On the next day, when he departed,[a] he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ [36]So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”

[37]And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Mary and Martha

[38]Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.[†] [ω] [39]And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’[a] feet and heard His word. [40]But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

[41]And Jesus[a] answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. [42]But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

How to Pray

(*Mt 6:9–13*)

11 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”[†]

[2]So He said to them, “When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,[a]

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.[b]

Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
[3]Give us day by day our daily bread.
[4]And forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.”[a]

[5]And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves;[†] [6]for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; [7]and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? [8]I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

[9]“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.[†] [10]For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [11]If a son asks for bread[a] from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? [12]Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? [13]If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Jesus and the Devil

(Mt 12:22–24; Mk 3:22)

[14]And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. [15]But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebub,[a] the ruler of the demons.”[†]

Spiritual Power, Spiritual War

(Mt 12:24–32, 43–45; Mk 3:23–30)

[16]Others, testing *Him,* sought from Him a sign from heaven.[†] [17]But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house *divided* against a house falls. [18]If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. [19]And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they will be your judges. [20]But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.[†] [21]When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.[†] [22]But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. [23]He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.[†]

[24]“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’[†] [25]And when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put in order. [26]Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than

himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.”

[27]And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed *is* the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!”[†]

[28]But He said, “More than that, blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Spiritual Perception: A Sign

(Mt 12:38–42)

[29]And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, “This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.[a] [†] [30]For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. [31]The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here. [32]The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here.

Spiritual Perception: A Light to See By

[33]“No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light.[†]

[34]The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness.[†] [35]Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. [36]If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the* whole *body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.”

The Pride of the Pharisees

[37]And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. [38]When the Pharisee saw *it*, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.

[39]Then the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness.[†] [40]Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? [41]But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

[42]“But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. [43]Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. [44]Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites![a] For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over *them* are not aware *of them*.”

[45]Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, “Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also.”

[46]And He said, “Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. [47]Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.[ω] [48]In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. [49]Therefore the wisdom of God also said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and persecute,’ [50]that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, [51]from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.[†]

[52]“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.”

[53]And as He said these things to them,[a] the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail *Him* vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, [54]lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.[a]

Against Hypocrisy

12 In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first *of all,* “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.[ω] [2]For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. [3]Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

[4]“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. [5]But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him![†]

[6]“Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins?[a] And not one of them is forgotten before God. [7]But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

[8]“Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. [9]But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

[10]“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.[†]

[11]“Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. [12]For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

Against Greed and Anxiety

[13]Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”[†]

[14]But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” [15]And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness,[a] for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

[16]Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. [17]And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ [18]So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. [19]And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.” ’ [20]But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’[†]

[21]“So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

[22]Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.[†] [23]Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. [24]Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? [25]And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his

stature? [26]If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest? [27]Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [28]If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of little faith?

[29]“And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. [30]For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. [31]But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things[a] shall be added to you.

[32]“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.[†] [ω] [33]Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. [34]For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Against Laziness and Forgetfulness

[35]“Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning;[†] [36]and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. [37]Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve them.[†] [38]And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them*

so, blessed are those servants.[†] [39]But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and[a] not allowed his house to be broken into. [40]Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."[†]

[41]Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable *only* to us, or to all *people?*"[†]

[42]And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* master will make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of food in due season? [43]Blessed *is* that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. [44]Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. [45]But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, [46]the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him,* and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers. [47]And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes.*[†] [48]But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Against Lack of Discernment

[49]“I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled![†] [50]But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished![†] [51]Do *you* suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.[†] [52]For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. [53]Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”[†]

[54]Then He also said to the multitudes, “Whenever you *see* a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming’; and so it is. [55]And when you see the south wind blow, you say, ‘There will be hot weather’; and there is. [56]Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how *is it* you do not discern this time?[†]

[57]“Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? [58]When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.[†] [59]I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite.”

What Happens to the Unrepentant

13 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.[†] [2]And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? [3]I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. [4]Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? [5]I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

The Critical Time of Repentance

[6]He also spoke this parable: "A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.[†] [7]Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' [8]But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it*. [9]And if it bears fruit, *well*. But if not, after that[a] you can cut it down.' "

A Woman Healed on the Sabbath

[10]Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.[†] [ω] [11]And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. [12]But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." [13]And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

[14]But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six

days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day."

[15]The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite![a] Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it? [16]So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"[†] [17]And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

Parables of the Kingdom

(Mt 13:31, 32; Mk 4:30–32)

[18]Then He said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? [19]It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large[a] tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches."[†]

[20]And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? [21]It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures[a] of meal till it was all leavened."

Strive to Be Saved

[22]And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. [23]Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, [24]“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.[†] [25]When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’[†] [26]then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ [27]But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ [28]There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. [29]They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. [30]And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”[†]

Jesus Presses on Toward Jerusalem

[31]On that very day[a] some Pharisees came, saying to Him, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.”

[32]And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.’[†] [33]Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the *day* following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

[34]“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *her* wings, but you were not

willing! [35]See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly,[a] I say to you, you shall not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'* "[b]

A Man Healed on the Sabbath

14 Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely.[†] [2]And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. [3]And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"[a]

[4]But they kept silent. And He took *him* and healed him, and let him go. [5]Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey[a] or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" [6]And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

Be Lowly

[7]So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them:[†] [8]"When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; [9]and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. [10]But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence

of those who sit at the table with you. [11]For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Be Hospitable to the Lowly

[12]Then He also said to him who invited Him, “When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid.[†] [13]But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. [14]And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

Worldly Entanglements, Poor Excuses

(Mt 22:1–14)

[15]Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, “Blessed *is* he who shall eat bread[a] in the kingdom of God!”[†]

[16]Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many,[†] [ω] [17]and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ [18]But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’[†] [19]And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ [20]Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ [21]So that servant came and reported these

things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.’[†] [22]And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ [23]Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. [24]For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’ ”

The Cost of Discipleship

[25]Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,[ω] [26]“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.[†] [27]And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.[†] [28]For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*—[†] [29]lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, [30]saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? [31]Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? [32]Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. [33]So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

[34]“Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?[†] [35]It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

The Lost Sheep

(Mt 18:10–14)

15 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. [2]And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”[†] [3]So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

[4]“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?[†] [5]And when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. [6]And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ [7]I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

The Lost Coin

[8]“Or what woman, having ten silver coins,[a] if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds *it?*[†] [9]And when she has found *it*, she calls *her* friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ [10]Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The Prodigal Son

[11]Then He said: “A certain man had two sons.[ω] [12]And the younger of them said to *his* father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me.*’ So he divided to them *his* livelihood.[†] [13]And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. [14]But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. [15]Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.[†] [16]And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

[17]“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger![†] [18]I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, [19]and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’

[20]“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.[†] [21]And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

[22]“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring[a] out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet.[†] [23]And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it,* and let us eat and be merry;[†] [24]for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

[25]“Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.[†] [26]So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. [27]And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

[28]“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. [29]So he answered and said to *his* father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.[†] [30]But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’

[31]“And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. [32]It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”

The Unjust Steward

16 He also said to His disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.[†] [2]So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’

[3]“Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg.

[4]I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’

[5]“So he called every one of his master's debtors to *him*, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ [6]And he said, ‘A hundred measures[a] of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ [7]Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures[a] of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ [8]So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

[9]“And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail,[a] they may receive you into an everlasting home. [10]He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much.[†] [11]Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?* [12]And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

[13]“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Press for the Kingdom

[14]Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. [15]And He said to them, “You are those who

justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.[†]

[16]“The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. [17]And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.[†]

[18]“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery.[†]

The Rich Man and Lazarus

[19]“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. [20]But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, [21]desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell[a] from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. [22]So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.[†] [23]And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

[24]“Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’[†] [25]But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. [26]And

besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

27“Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,[†] 28for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ 29Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ 30And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”[†]

Leadership Is a Stewardship

(Mt 18:6, 7, 15; Mk 9:42)

17 Then He said to the disciples, “It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come! 2It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.[†] 3Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you,[a] rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you,[a] saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”[†]

5And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

[6]So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.[†] [7]And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’?[†] [8]But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’? [9]Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.[a] [10]So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”[†]

The Ten Cleansed Lepers

[11]Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. [12]Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.[†] [13]And they lifted up *their* voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

[14]So when He saw *them,* He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

[15]And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, [16]and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

[17]So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine?[†] [18]Were there not any found who returned to give glory to

God except this foreigner?” [19]And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

The Coming of the Kingdom

[20]Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; [21]nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’[a] For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”[†]

[22]Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*. [23]And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’[a] Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. [24]For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. [25]But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. [26]And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:[†] [27]They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. [28]Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; [29]but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. [30]Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

[31]“In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in

the field, let him not turn back. [32]Remember Lot's wife. [33]Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. [34]I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.[†] [35]Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. [36]Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”[a]

[37]And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?”

So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”[†]

The Tenacious Widow

18 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,[†] [2]saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. [3]Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ [4]And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, [5]yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ ”

[6]Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. [7]And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? [8]I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”[†]

The Pharisee and the Publican

[9]Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: [10]“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.[†] [ω] [11]The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.[†] [12]I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ [13]And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’[†] [14]I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”[†]

Receive the Kingdom as a Child

(*Mt 19:13–15*; *Mk 10:13–16*)

[15]Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.[†] [16]But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. [17]Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

The Rich Young Man

(*Mt 19:16–26*; *Mk 10:17–23*)

[18]Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”[†]

[19]So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. [20]You know the commandments: *‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’* ”[a]

[21]And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.”

[22]So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”[†]

[23]But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

[24]And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! [25]For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”[†]

[26]And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?”

[27]But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

The Reward of Renunciation

(Mt 19:27–30; Mk 10:28–31)

[28]Then Peter said, “See, we have left all[a] and followed You.”

[29]So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, [30]who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

The Third Prophecy of the Passion

(Mt 20:17–19; Mk 10:32–34)

[31]Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. [32]For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. [33]They will scourge *Him* and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

[34]But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.[†]

The Blind Man of Jericho Healed

(Mk 10:46–52)

[35]Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.[†] [36]And hearing a multitude passing by, he

asked what it meant. [37]So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. [38]And he cried out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

[39]Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

[40]So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, [41]saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

He said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.”

[42]Then Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” [43]And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.

Zacchaeus is Restored

19 Then *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho.[†] [ω] [2]Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.[†] [3]And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature.[†] [4]So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that *way*. [5]And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him,[a] and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” [6]So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. [7]But when they saw *it*, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”

[8]Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”[†]

[9]And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;[†] [10]for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The Parable of the Minas

(*Mt 25:14–30*)

[11]Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.[†] [12]Therefore He said: “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. [13]So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas,[a] and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’ [14]But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this *man* to reign over us.’

[15]“And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. [16]Then came the first, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned ten minas.’ [17]And he said to him, ‘Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.’ [18]And the second came, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned five minas.’ [19]Likewise he said to him, ‘You also be over five cities.’

[20]“Then another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. [21]For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ [22]And he said to him, ‘Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. [23]Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’

[24]“And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.’ [25](But they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas.’) [26]‘For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. [27]But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.’ ”

The Colt Borrowed

(Mt 21:1–7; Mk 11:1–7)

[28]When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.[†] [29]And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage[a] and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, *that* He sent two of His disciples, [30]saying, “Go into the village opposite *you*, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring *it here*. [31]And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you loosing *it?*’ thus you shall say to him, ‘Because the Lord has need of it.’ ”

[32]So those who were sent went their way and found *it* just as He had said to them. [33]But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, “Why are you loosing the colt?”

The Triumphal Entry

(Mt 21:8, 9; Mk 11:8–10; Jn 12:12–19)

[34]And they said, “The Lord has need of him.” [35]Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. [36]And as He went, *many* spread their clothes on the road.

[37]Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, [38]saying:

“*‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!’*[a]

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

[39]And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”

[40]But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”

Lament over Jerusalem

[41]Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, [42]saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.[†] [43]For days will

come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,[†] [44]and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Cleansing the Temple

(*Mt 21:10–17*; *Mk 11:11*, *15–17*)

[45]Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it,[a] [†] [46]saying to them, "It is written, '*My house is*[a] *a house of prayer,'*[b] but you have made it a '*den of thieves.'* "[c]

Jesus' Popularity

(*Mk 11:18*, *19*)

[47]And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, [48]and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

What Is Jesus' Authority?

(*Mt 21:23–27*; *Mk 11:27–33*)

20 Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, *that* the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted *Him* [2]and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"[†]

[3]But He answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: [4]The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?”

[5]And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then[a] did you not believe him?’ [6]But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.” [7]So they answered that they did not know where *it was* from.

[8]And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

The Wicked Vineyard Tenants

(Mt 21:33–46; Mk 12:1–12)

[9]Then He began to tell the people this parable: “A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time.[†] [10]Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. [11]Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty-handed. [12]And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast *him* out.

[13]“Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect *him* when they see him.’ [14]But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying,

‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.’ [15]So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed *him*. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? [16]He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.”

And when they heard *it* they said, “Certainly not!”

[17]Then He looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written:

‘The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone’?[a] [†]

[18]Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”

[19]And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people[a] —for they knew He had spoken this parable against them.

Do We Pay Taxes to Caesar?

(Mt 22:15–22; Mk 12:13–17)

[20]So they watched *Him*, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.[†]

[21]Then they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: [22]Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

[23]But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, “Why do you test Me?[a] [24]Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?”

They answered and said, “Caesar's.”

[25]And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

[26]But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.

The Mystery of Resurrection

(Mt 22:23–33; Mk 12:18–27)

[27]Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to *Him* and asked Him,[†] [28]saying: “Teacher, Moses wrote to us *that* if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. [29]Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. [30]And the second[a] took her as wife, and he died childless. [31]Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children,[a] and died. [32]Last of all the woman died also. [33]Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.”

[34]Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. [35]But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; [36]nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of

God, being sons of the resurrection. [37]But even Moses showed in the *burning* bush *passage* that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord *'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'*[a] [38]For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."

[39]Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." [40]But after that they dared not question Him anymore.

Son of David, Son of God

(Mt 22:41–46; Mk 12:35–37)

[41]And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David?[†] [42]Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:

'The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at My right hand,

[43]*Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." '*[a]

[44]Therefore David calls Him *'Lord'*; how is He then his Son?"

Beware of the Scribes

(Mt 23:1–36; Mk 12:38–40)

[45]Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples,[†] [46]"Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, [47]who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

Imitate the Poor Widow

(Mk 12:41–44)

21 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury,[†] [2]and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. [3]So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; [4]for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God,[a] but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

Signs of the End

(Mt 24:1–14; Mk 13:1–13)

[5]Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said,[†] [6]"These things which you see—the days will come in which not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

[7]So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?"

[8]And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore[a] do not go after them. [9]But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will* not *come* immediately."

[10]Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. [11]And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. [12]But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake.[ω] [13]But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. [14]Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; [15]for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. [16]You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. [17]And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. [18]But not a hair of your head shall be lost. [19]By your patience possess your souls.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

(Mt 24:15–28; Mk 13:14–20)

[20]“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. [21]Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. [22]For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. [23]But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. [24]And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Cosmic Signs

(Mt 24:29–31; Mk 13:24–27)

[25]“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; [26]men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [27]Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. [28]Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

The Time of His Coming

(Mt 24:32–36; Mk 13:28–32)

[29]Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. [30]When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. [31]So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. [32]Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. [33]Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Be Watchful and Pray

[34]“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. [35]For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the

face of the whole earth. [36]Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy[a] to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

[37]And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. [38]Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

The Chief Priests and Judas

(Mt 26:1–5, 14–16; Mk 14:1, 2, 10, 11)

22 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.[†] [2]And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.

[3]Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.[†] [4]So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. [5]And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. [6]So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

Preparation for the Passover

(Mt 26:17–19; Mk 14:12–26)

[7]Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.[†] [8]And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.”

[9]So they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?”

[10]And He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. [11]Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?” ’ [12]Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.”

[13]So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

The Eucharist Instituted

(Mt 26:20, 26–29; Mk 14:22–25; Jn 13:1–38)

[14]When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve[a] apostles with Him. [15]Then He said to them, “With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;[†] [16]for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

[17]Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide *it* among yourselves;[†] [18]for I say to you,[a] I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

[19]And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”[†]

Deception and Betrayal

(Mt 26:21–25; Mk 14:18–21; Jn 13:21–30)

[20]Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. [21]But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table.[†] [22]And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”

[23]Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

Greatness Is Service

(Mt 20:24–28; Mk 10:35–45)

[24]Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.[†] [25]And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ [26]But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. [27]For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

Christ Rewards His Servants

[28]“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. [29]And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me,

30that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”[†]

Peter's Denials Predicted

(Mt 26:30–35; Mk 14:26–31; Jn 13:36–38)

31And the Lord said,[a] “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat.[†] 32But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.”

33But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.”

34Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”

A Time of Crisis

35And He said to them, “When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?”

So they said, “Nothing.”[†]

36Then He said to them, “But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it*, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. 37For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: ‘*And He was numbered with the transgressors.*’[a] For the things concerning Me have an end.”

[38]So they said, “Lord, look, here *are* two swords.”

And He said to them, “It is enough.”

Jesus Watches in the Garden

(Mt 26:30, 36–46; Mk 14:26, 32–42; Jn 18:1)

[39]Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. [40]When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

[41]And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,[†] [42]saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” [43]Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.[ω] [44]And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.[a]

[45]When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. [46]Then He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

Arrest

(Mt 26:47–56; Mk 14:43–52; Jn 18:2–12)

[47]And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to

kiss Him. [48]But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

[49]When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” [50]And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

[51]But Jesus answered and said, “Permit even this.” And He touched his ear and healed him.[†]

[52]Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53]When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”[†]

Peter's Denials

(Mt 26:57, 58, 69–75; Mk 14:53, 54, 66–72; Jn 18:13–18, 25–27)

[54]Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. [55]Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. [56]And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, “This man was also with Him.”[†]

[57]But he denied Him,[a] saying, “Woman, I do not know Him.”

[58]And after a little while another saw him and said, “You also are of them.”

But Peter said, “Man, I am not!”

[59]Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.”

[60]But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!”

Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster[a] crowed. [61]And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows,[a] you will deny Me three times.”[†] [62]So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

[63]Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. [64]And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him,[a] saying, “Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?” [65]And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

Before the Sanhedrin

(Mt 26:57–68; Mk 14:55–65; Jn 18:19–24)

[66]As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, [67]“If You are the Christ, tell us.”

But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will by no means believe. [68]And if I also ask *you*, you will by no means answer Me or let *Me* go.[a] [†] [69]Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.”[†]

[70]Then they all said, “Are You then the Son of God?”

So He said to them, “You *rightly* say that I am.”

[71]And they said, “What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.”

Before Pilate

(Mt 27:1, 2, 11–14; Mk 15:1–5; Jn 18:28–38)

23 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. [2]And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this *fellow* perverting the[a] nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”[†]

[3]Then Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

He answered him and said, “*It is as* you say.”

[4]So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no fault in this Man.”

[5]But they were the more fierce, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.”

Before Herod

[6]When Pilate heard of Galilee,[a] he asked if the Man were a Galilean. [7]And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent

Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. [8]Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.[†] [9]Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. [10]And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. [11]Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. [12]That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

Jesus or Barabbas?

(Mt 27:15–26; Mk 15:6–15; Jn 18:39–19:16)

[13]Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people,[†] [14]said to them, “You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; [15]no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him;[a] and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. [16]I will therefore chastise Him and release *Him*” [17](for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).[a]

[18]And they all cried out at once, saying, “Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas”— [19]who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.

[20]Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. [21]But they shouted, saying, “Crucify *Him,* crucify Him!”

[22]Then he said to them the third time, “Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go.”

[23]But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.[a] [24]So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. [25]And he released to them[a] the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

The Procession to Golgotha

(Mt 27:31–33; Mk 15:20–22; Jn 19:17)

[26]Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus.[†]

[27]And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. [28]But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.[†] [29]For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’[†] [30]Then they will begin *‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on*

us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”’[a] 31For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”[†]

The Compassionate Christ

(Mt 27:33–43; Mk 15:22–32; Jn 19:17–29)

32There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.[†] 34Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”[a]

And they divided His garments and cast lots.[†] 35And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.”[†]

36The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”

38And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:[a]

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.[†]

Two Thieves, Two Ways

(Mt 27:44; Mk 15:32)

[39]Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ,[a] save Yourself and us.”[†] [ω]

[40]But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? [41]And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” [42]Then he said to Jesus, “Lord,[a] remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

[43]And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Darkness and Death

(Mt 27:45–56; Mk 15:33–41; Jn 19:28–30)

[44]Now it was[a] about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. [45]Then the sun was darkened,[a] and the veil of the temple was torn in two.[†] [46]And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, *‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’* ”[a] Having said this, He breathed His last.[†]

[47]So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was a righteous Man!”[†]

[48]And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. [49]But all His acquaintances, and

the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Burial

(Mt 27:57–61; Mk 15:42–47; Jn 19:38–42)

[50]Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man.[†] [51]He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting[a] for the kingdom of God. [52]This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. [53]Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. [54]That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

[55]And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.[†] [56]Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

The Women Find the Tomb Empty

(Mt 28:1–8; Mk 16:1–8; Jn 20:1–18)

24 Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them,[a] came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.[†] [2]But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.[†] [3]Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4]And it happened, as they were greatly[a] perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.[†] [5]Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?[†] [6]He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, [7]saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ ”

[8]And they remembered His words. [9]Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. [10]It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles.[†] [11]And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. [12]But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying[a] by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

Jesus Appears: The Road to Emmaus

(Mk 16:12, 13)

[13]Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles[a] from Jerusalem.[†] [14]And they talked together of all these things which had happened. [15]So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. [16]But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.[†]

[17]And He said to them, “What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”[a]

[18]Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

[19]And He said to them, “What things?”

So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20]and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. [21]But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.[†] [22]Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. [23]When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. [24]And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

[25]Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! [26]Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”[†] [27]And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

[28]Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. [29]But they constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them.

[30]Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them.[†] [31]Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

[32]And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”[†] [33]So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, [34]saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” [35]And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Jesus Appears to the Apostles

(Mk 16:14; Jn 20:19–23)

[36]Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.”[†] [ω] [37]But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. [38]And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?[†] [39]Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

[40]When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.[a] [41]But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” [42]So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.[a] [43]And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

Jesus Enlightens the Apostles

(*Mt 28:16–20*; *Mk 16:15–18*)

[44]Then He said to them, “These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.” [45]And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

[46]Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise[a] from the dead the third day,[†] [47]and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.[†] [48]And you are witnesses of these things. [49]Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem[a] until you are endued with power from on high.”[†]

The Ascension

(*Mk 16:19*, *20*)

[50]And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. [51]Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.[†] [52]And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, [53]and were continually in the temple praising and[a] blessing God. Amen.[b]

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The Book of John

Author—According to tradition, St. John the Apostle (also called the Theologian because of the profundity of his gospel) was assisted by St. Prochorus in writing this gospel. John, “the beloved disciple” of Christ (13:23; 21:7, 20), served as the leading authority of Ephesus for most of his ministry and wrote his gospel there. He was almost one hundred years old when he died, c. AD 96–100.

Date—This gospel, written about AD 96, is usually considered the last of the four gospels to be written, supplementing the other three.

Major Theme—*The eternal Son of God has come in the flesh.* The gospel was written “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (20:31).

The Gospel of John has many theological themes. They include the following:

1. *The Trinity.* In his gospel, John is quite explicit about the Persons of the Trinity and their relationships: They are three Persons in one nature. The Father is the Unbegotten, the Son is the Only Begotten (1:18; 3:16, 18), and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (15:26).
2. *Glory.* The glory of God is preeminently manifested in Christ's earthly ministry—His Person, words, and works—but is also experienced by the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Helper or Paraclete (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).
3. *The spiritual dimension.* The mystical, theological perspective dominates this gospel. The revelation of divine life and light is resisted by this age, resulting in great spiritual warfare: the kingdom of God versus “the world” as a fallen entity in rebellion against God.
4. *The sacramental dimension.* John stresses the mysterious and sacramental presence and activity of God in the world, linking the saving work of Christ to baptism (3:5) and the Eucharist (6:52–59).

5. *The Church.* The Gospel of John testifies to a strong sense of community among the disciples, expressed through the plural “we” (1:14, 16). True disciples are those who believe in Jesus as the incarnate Son of the Father, who are united with Him, and who here and now express the life of divine love given by Christ.
6. *The Paschal Theme.* Three Passovers are specifically mentioned in John, hence the tradition that the public ministry of Jesus encompassed a three-year period. During the final Passover, Jesus, the Lamb of God (1:29, 36), leads His followers to a new Passover through His Death and Resurrection.
7. *The Redemption of the World.* In John's perspective, the Divine Word, the Son of God, came into the world to save the world and, through the life of the Church, to offer the whole world up to God. Christ and His Church begin this transformation now.

Outline

I. The Witness, John the Baptist (1:1–51)
    A. Prologue (1:1–18)
    B. The mission of John the Baptist (1:19–51)
II. The Word Incarnate Transfigures Creation (2:1–10:42)
    A. The new creation prefigured (2:1–25)
    B. Baptism manifested (3:1–5:47)
    C. The Eucharist manifested: feeding of five thousand (6:1–71)
    D. The old creation transformed (7:1–10:42)
III. The Word Incarnate Transfigures All Humanity (11:1–17:26)
    A. Through death and resurrection: Lazarus (11:1–12:11)
    B. Through ascension into the kingdom: Palm Sunday (12:12–50)
    C. Through the messianic banquet of the kingdom (13:1–17:26)
IV. The Paschal Offering: Death and Resurrection (18:1–21:25)
    A. Death: the Passion of Christ (18:1–19:42)
    B. Resurrection of Christ (20:1–21:25)

The Word Is God

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.[†] [ω] [2]He was in the beginning with God. [3]All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.[†] [4]In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.[†] [5]And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend[a] it.[†]

CHRISTOLOGY

The center of Christianity is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In fact, He is the centerpiece of all history. But the world struggles with His identity. Who is He? Is He God? Is He man? Both? The Scriptures clearly answer these crucial questions.

In his Gospel, John gives a specific and definitive explanation of who Christ is. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ, revealed God the Word as “the Light” (1:7). “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (1:14). Who then is Jesus Christ?

1 He is God, for He was with God from before all time. Clearly, the One born Jesus of Nazareth did not have His beginning in His earthly birth. Rather, He is the eternal Son of God, without beginning. There never was a time when the Son of God did not exist.

2 He is also man, for He “became flesh.” He has become one of us, being like us in all things, but without sin.

3 He acts both as God and as man, doing what is appropriate for each nature in the unity provided by His one divine Person. Never does divine

nature and activity become changed into human nature and activity. The two are in union without confusion. Christ does, however, “energize” human nature with divine energy so that human nature is redeemed from sin and death and brought into union with God. He thus “deifies” humanity.

The miracle of these incomparable truths is known as the knowledge of Christ or “Christology.” Many documents have expounded on Christology, but the definitive text is the Nicene Creed, the outcome of the first and second Ecumenical Councils in the fourth century. The Creed of Chalcedon (issued by the Fourth Ecumenical Council, AD 451) embodies other truths concerning the Incarnation of the Word. These creeds set the doctrinal fences outside of which we do not wander in our knowledge of Christ.

The apostle John bears witness to Christ: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1Jn 1:1–3).

We, too, bear witness to Jesus Christ. For since God became man, and we are united with Him in baptism, we experience His Incarnation in our lives. The miracle of Christology for us is that, as the Son of God became man, we in turn may participate in God.

The Baptist's Witness to the Word

[6]There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.[†] [7]This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. [8]He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. [9]That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.[a] [†]

[10]He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. [11]He came to His own,[a] and His own[b] did not receive Him. [12]But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:[†] [13]who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.[†]

The Word Becomes Flesh to Reveal the Father

[14]And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.[†]

[15]John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ ”

[16]And[a] of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.[†] [17]For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. [18]No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son,[a] who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.[†]

Who Is John the Baptist?

(Mt 3:1–6; Mk 1:1–6; Lk 3:1–6)

[19]Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”[†]

[20]He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”

[21]And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?”

He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?”

And he answered, “No.”[†]

[22]Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”

[23]He said: “I *am*

> *‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*
>
> *“Make straight the way of the Lord,” ’*[a]

as the prophet Isaiah said.”

Why Does John Baptize?

(Lk 3:15–18)

[24]Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. [25]And they asked him, saying, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

[26]John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know.[†] [27]It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.”

[28]These things were done in Bethabara[a] beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Baptist's Testimony to Christ

(Mt 3:13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21, 22)

[29]The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world![†] [ω] [30]This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ [31]I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.”

[32]And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.[†] [33]I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ [34]And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

The Baptist's Disciples Follow Jesus

(*Mt 4:18–22*; *Mk 1:16–20*; *Lk 5:1–11*)

35Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.[†] [ω] 36And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

37The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?”

They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

39He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

40One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah.[a] You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

43The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.”[ω] 44Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

[46]And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

[47]Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!”[†]

[48]Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”[†]

[49]Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

[50]Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you
under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”
[51]And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter[a] you shall
see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the
Son of Man.”[†]

The First Sign at Cana

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother
of Jesus was there.[†] [2]Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to
the wedding. [3]And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to
Him, “They have no wine.”[†]

[4]Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”

[5]His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do *it*.”

[6]Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.[†] [7]Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. [8]And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast.” And they took *it*. [9]When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.[†] [10]And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”

[11]This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.[†]

[12]After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

Cleansing the Temple

(Mt 21:12, 13; Mk 11:15–17; Lk 19:45, 46)

[13]Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.[†] [14]And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. [15]When He had made a

whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. [16]And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!” [17]Then His disciples remembered that it was written, *“Zeal for Your house has eaten*[a] *Me up.”*[b]

[18]So the Jews answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?”[†]

[19]Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

[20]Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

[21]But He was speaking of the temple of His body. [22]Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them;[a] and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

[23]Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.[†] [24]But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, [25]and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

New Birth: Entering the Kingdom

3 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.[†] [ω] [2]This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

[3]Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[†]

THE NEW BIRTH

Early in His ministry, Jesus revealed the way to enter God's eternal Kingdom. We must be "born again" (3:3), a birth from above realized by water and the Spirit.

In His conversation with Nicodemus, Christ states, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5). From the beginning, the Church has recognized the "water" to be the water of baptism, "the Spirit" to be the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the new birth consists of being joined to Christ in the water of baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit through anointing or "chrismation."

Salvation, then, is more than forgiveness of sins, more than a mental acceptance of Christ and His teachings. For in salvation we are given union with God through Christ, a right and full relationship with the Holy Trinity, and the restoration of our full humanity. All these things are accomplished through the Incarnation, the union of God and man in the Person of Jesus Christ. Salvation, then, is founded on a substantial union of the believer with Christ in His full humanity, a flesh-to-flesh relationship. Paul likens it to the joining of husband and wife (Eph 5:23–32).

Throughout their epistles, the apostles remind us the new birth is necessary for salvation. We die to sin; then, buried with Christ and risen with Him, we are united to Christ and to His body, the Church. We are cleansed, justified, and sanctified—all in baptism, “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Tts 3:5). Without our repentance and faith, however, immersion in water would be of no effect.

Some Christians bypass baptism and stress only faith. Why is the mystery of the water necessary? Because just as Christ actually died on a cross, was buried, and rose again—all through His faith and God’s grace—so we must actually be immersed in the sacramental waters of baptism, made effectual through our faith and God’s grace.

The basic form of baptism is simple. The person to be born again, joined to Christ, is immersed in the water three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (see Mt 28:19). The first-century *Didache* teaches, “If you do not have running water, use whatever is available. And if you cannot do it in cold water, use warm. But if you have neither, pour water on the head three times—in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

In the new birth, a true mystery takes place. For in the sacrament of baptism, we die, going down into the water to be mystically united to Christ in His death, and we live again, rising up out of the water in His resurrected humanity. In short, we are born again.

[4]Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?”[†]

[5]Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.[†] [6]That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.[†] [7]Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ [8]The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”[†]

[9]Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

Life in the Kingdom

[10]Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? [11]Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. [12]If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?[†] [13]No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is,* the Son of Man who is in heaven.[a] [14]And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,[†] [15]that whoever believes in Him should not perish but[a] have eternal life. [16]For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.[†] [17]For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.[†]

[18]“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [19]And this is the condemnation, that the

light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. [20]For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. [21]But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

The Preaching of John the Baptist

[22]After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.[†] [23]Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. [24]For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

[25]Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. [26]And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!”[†]

[27]John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. [28]You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ [29]He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.[†] [30]He must increase, but I *must* decrease.[†] [31]He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. [32]And

what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. [33]He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. [34]For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. [35]The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. [36]He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”[†]

The Samaritan Woman

(Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14; Lk 4:14)

4 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John [2](though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), [3]He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. [4]But He needed to go through Samaria.[†]

[5]So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.[ω] [6]Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.[†]

[7]A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” [8]For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

[9]Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.[†]

[10]Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”[†]

[11]The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? [12]Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”

[13]Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, [14]but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

[15]The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

[16]Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”[†]

[17]The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ [18]for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”

[19]The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. [20]Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”[†]

[21]Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. [22]You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. [23]But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. [24]God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

[25]The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

[26]Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”[†]

The Harvest Is Ready

(Mt 4:13–17; Mk 1:14, 15; Lk 4:14, 15)

[27]And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”[†]

[28]The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,[†] [29]“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” [30]Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

[31]In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”[†]

[32]But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

[33]Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”

[34]Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. [35]Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest![†] [36]And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.[†] [37]For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ [38]I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

[39]And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I *ever* did.” [40]So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. [41]And many more believed because of His own word.

[42]Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ,[a] the Savior of the world.”[†]

[43]Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. [44]For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.[†] [45]So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.[†]

A Nobleman's Son Is Healed

[46]So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.[†] [47]When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. [48]Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.”[†]

[49]The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!”[†]

[50]Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. [51]And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, “Your son lives!”

[52]Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” [53]So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself believed, and his whole household.

[54]This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

A Paralytic Is Healed

5 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.[†] [ω] [2]Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep *Gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda,[a] having five porches.[†] [3]In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. [4]For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.[a] [5]Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.[†] [6]When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?”[†]

[7]The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

[8]Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” [9]And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

And that day was the Sabbath. [10]The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.”[†]

[11]He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’ ”

[12]Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” [13]But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place. [14]Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”[†]

[15]The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.[†]

Father and Son Work Together

[16]For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him,[a] because He had done these things on the Sabbath.[†] [17]But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”[ω]

[18]Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. [19]Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. [20]For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. [21]For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them,* even so the Son gives life to whom He will. [22]For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, [23]that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

[24]“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. [25]Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.[†] [26]For as the Father has life in Himself, so He

has granted the Son to have life in Himself, [27]and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. [28]Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice [29]and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. [30]I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.[†]

[31]“If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.[†] [32]There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. [33]You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. [34]Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. [35]He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. [36]But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. [37]And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. [38]But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. [39]You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. [40]But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

[41]“I do not receive honor from men. [42]But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. [43]I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

[44]How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God? [45]Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. [46]For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. [47]But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

Feeding of the Five Thousand

(Mt 14:13–21; Mk 6:30–44; Lk 9:10–17)

6 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea* of Tiberias.[†] [2]Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.[†] [3]And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

[4]Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. [5]Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”[†] [6]But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

[7]Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

[8]One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, [9]“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

[10]Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. [11]And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples[a] to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. [12]So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” [13]Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. [14]Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”[†]

Walking on Rough Seas

(Mt 14:22–33; Mk 6:45–52)

[15]Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

[16]Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,[†] [17]got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. [18]Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. [19]So when they had rowed about three or four miles,[a] they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. [20]But He said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” [21]Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

Work for Heavenly Bread

[22]On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered,[a] and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— [23]however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— [24]when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. [25]And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You come here?”

[26]Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.[†] [27]Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

[28]Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”

[29]Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Jesus, the Bread of Life

[30]Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? [31]Our fathers ate the

manna in the desert; as it is written, *‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’* ”[a]

[32]Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. [33]For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

[34]Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”

[35]And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. [36]But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. [37]All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. [38]For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.[†] [39]This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. [40]And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

[41]The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” [42]And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

Eat His Flesh, Drink His Blood

[43]Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. [44]No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. [45]It is written in the prophets, *‘And they shall all be taught by God.’*[a] Therefore everyone who has heard and learned[b] from the Father comes to Me. [46]Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. [47]Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me[a] has everlasting life. [48]I am the bread of life. [49]Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. [50]This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. [51]I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”[†]

[52]The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?”

[53]Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.[†] [54]Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [55]For My flesh is food indeed,[a] and My blood is drink indeed. [56]He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. [57]As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. [58]This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

[59]These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

The Words of Eternal Life

60Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this,* said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”[†]

61When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “Does this offend you? 62*What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. 64But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”

66From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”

68But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.[†] 69Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”[a]

70Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” 71He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles

7 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews[a] sought to kill Him.[†] [2]Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.[†] [3]His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing.[†] [4]For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” [5]For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

[6]Then Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. [7]The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. [8]You go up to this feast. I am not yet[a] going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.” [9]When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

[10]But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.[†] [11]Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, “Where is He?” [12]And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, “He is good”; others said, “No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.” [13]However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

Jesus Teaches at the Feast

[14]Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. [15]And the Jews marveled, saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

16Jesus[a] answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority.*[†] 18He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. 19Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?”

20The people answered and said, “You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?”

21Jesus answered and said to them, “I did one work, and you all marvel. 22Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?[†] 24Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

25Now some of them from Jerusalem said, “Is this not He whom they seek to kill? 26But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly[a] the Christ? 27However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.”[†]

28Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, “You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. [29]But[a] I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.”

[30]Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.[†] [31]And many of the people believed in Him, and said, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?”

[32]The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. [33]Then Jesus said to them,[a] “I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me.[†] [34]You will seek Me and not find *Me*, and where I am you cannot come.”

[35]Then the Jews said among themselves, “Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?[†] [36]What is this thing that He said, ‘You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come’?”

The Promise of Pentecost

[37]On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.[†] [ω] [38]He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” [39]But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing[a] in Him would receive; for the Holy[b] Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Reaction to Jesus' Teaching

[40]Therefore many[a] from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet."[†] [41]Others said, "This is the Christ."

But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee?[†] [42]Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" [43]So there was a division among the people because of Him. [44]Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

[45]Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"[†]

[46]The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

[47]Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? [48]Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? [49]But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

[50]Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night,[a] being one of them) said to them,[†] [51]"Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

[52]They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen[a] out of Galilee."

[53]And everyone went to his *own* house.[a] [†]

Jesus Restores the Adulterous Woman

8 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

[1] [2]Now early[a] in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. [3]Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, [4]they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught[a] in adultery, in the very act. [5]Now Moses, in the law, commanded[a] us that such should be stoned.[b] But what do You say?"[c] [†] [6]This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear.[a]

[7]So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up[a] and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."[†] [8]And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. [9]Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience,[a] went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. [10]When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her,[a] "Woman, where are those accusers of yours?[b] Has no one condemned you?"

[11]She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and[a] sin no more."

Jesus, Light of the World

[12]Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”[†]

[13]The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.”[†]

[14]Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. [15]You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. [16]And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. [17]It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. [18]I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”

[19]Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?”

Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.”[†]

[20]These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

[21]Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”[†]

[22]So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?”

[23]And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. [24]Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

[25]Then they said to Him, “Who are You?”

And Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. [26]I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.”

[27]They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

[28]Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He,* and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.[†] [29]And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” [30]As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

The Truth Shall Make You Free

[31]Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.[†] [32]And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”[†]

[33]They answered Him, “We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, ‘You will be made free’?”

[34]Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. [35]And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. [36]Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Sons of the Devil Reject the Son of God

[37]“I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.[†] [38]I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with[a] your father.”

[39]They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.”

Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. [40]But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. [41]You do the deeds of your father.”

Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

[42]Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.[†] [43]Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. [44]You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and

the father of it.[†] [45]But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. [46]Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? [47]He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

[48]Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”[†]

[49]Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. [50]And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. [51]Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

The Father Honors the Son

[52]Then the Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ [53]Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?”

[54]Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your[a] God.[†] [55]Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. [56]Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

[57]Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

[58]Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”[†]

[59]Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple,[a] going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

The Man Born Blind Sees

9 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.[†] [ω] [2]And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

[3]Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.[†] [4]I[a] must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work.[†] [5]As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”[†]

[6]When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.[†] [7]And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.[†]

[8]Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind[a] said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”

[9]Some said, “This is he.” Others *said,* “He is like him.”[a]

He said, “I am *he.*”

[10]Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

[11]He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of[a] Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”

[12]Then they said to him, “Where is He?”

He said, “I do not know.”

Those Who See, Those Who Do Not

[13]They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. [14]Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. [15]Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”

[16]Therefore some of the Pharisees said, “This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.”

Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.[†]

[17]They said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?”

He said, “He is a prophet.”

[18]But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. [19]And they asked them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”

[20]His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; [21]but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself.” [22]His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that* He *was* Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. [23]Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

[24]So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, “Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner.”[†]

[25]He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”[†]

[26]Then they said to him again, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”[†]

[27]He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?”

[28]Then they reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. [29]We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for* this *fellow,* we do not know where He is from.”

[30]The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! [31]Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. [32]Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.[†] [33]If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

[34]They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they cast him out.

[35]Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”[a]

[36]He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

[37]And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.”

[38]Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.

[39]And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”[†]

[40]Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?”

[41]Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

10 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.[†] [2]But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. [3]To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.[†] [4]And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. [5]Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” [6]Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

Jesus Gives His Life for the Sheep

[7]Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. [8]All who *ever* came before Me[a] are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.[†] [9]I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.[ω] [10]The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.[†]

[11]“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.[†] [12]But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. [13]The hireling flees because he is a

hireling and does not care about the sheep. [14]I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. [15]As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. [16]And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.[†]

[17]“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.[†] [18]No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

[19]Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. [20]And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?”

[21]Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”[†]

Jesus Gives Eternal Life to the Sheep

[22]Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.[†] [23]And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. [24]Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

I and My Father Are One

[25]Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.[†] [26]But you do not

believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.[a] [†] [27]My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. [28]And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. [29]My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. [30]I and *My* Father are one.”[†]

[31]Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. [32]Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”

[33]The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

[34]Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, *‘I said, “You are gods”’*?[a] [†] [35]If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), [36]do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? [37]If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; [38]but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe[a] that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him.” [39]Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.[†]

[40]And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. [41]Then many came to Him and

said, “John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.” [42]And many believed in Him there.

Lazarus Dies

11 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.[†] [ω] [2]It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. [3]Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

[4]When Jesus heard *that,* He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”[†]

[5]Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. [6]So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.[†] [7]Then after this He said to *the* disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

[8]*The* disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?”[†]

[9]Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. [10]But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” [11]These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”[†]

[12]Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” [13]However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

[14]Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. [15]And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

[16]Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”[†]

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

[17]So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.[†] [18]Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles[a] away. [19]And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.[†]

[20]Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.[†] [21]Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.[†] [22]But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

[23]Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”[†]

[24]Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

25Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

27She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

28And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.”† 29As soon as she heard *that,* she arose quickly and came to Him. 30Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was[a] in the place where Martha met Him. 31Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.”[a]

32Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”†

33Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

35Jesus wept.† 36Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

37And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

Lazarus Is Raised

[38]Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. [39]Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”[†]

[40]Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” [41]Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying.[a] And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.[†] [42]And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.” [43]Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”[†] [44]And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”[†]

The Sanhedrin Plots to Kill Jesus

[45]Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. [46]But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. [47]Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. [48]If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

[49]And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,[†] [50]nor do you consider that it is expedient for us[a] that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” [51]Now this he did not say on his own *authority;* but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, [52]and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

[53]Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. [54]Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

[55]And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.[†] [56]Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” [57]Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

Jesus Anointed for His Burial

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead,[a] whom He had raised from the dead.[†] [ω] [2]There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. [3]Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.[†]

[4]But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, [5]“Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii[a] and given to the poor?” [6]This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

[7]But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept[a] this for the day of My burial. [8]For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”

[9]Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. [10]But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, [11]because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

The Triumph of Palm Sunday

(Mt 21:1–9; Mk 11:1–11; Lk 19:28–40)

[12]The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,[†] [13]took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the L*ORD*!’[a]

The King of Israel!”

[14]Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

[15]*“Fear not, daughter of Zion;*
Behold, your King is coming,
Sitting on a donkey's colt.”[a]

[16]His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

Dying to This World

[17]Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. [18]For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. [19]The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

[20]Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.[†] [21]Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

[22]Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

[23]But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. [24]Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it

produces much grain.[†] [25]He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. [26]If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor.

[27]“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.[†] [28]Father, glorify Your name.”

Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, “I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.”[†]

Judgment of This World: The Cross

[29]Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.”[†]

[30]Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. [31]Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.[†] [32]And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” [33]This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

[34]The people answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”

Become Sons of Light

[35]Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.[†] [36]While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Who Has Believed Jesus’ Words?

[37]But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, [38]that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

“Lord, who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”[a]

[39]Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

[40]*“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,*

Lest they should see with their eyes,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them.”[a] [†]

[41]These things Isaiah said when[a] he saw His glory and spoke of Him.[†]

[42]Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;[†] [43]for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Jesus’ Words: From the Father

[44]Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. [45]And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. [46]I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. [47]And if anyone hears My words and does not believe,[a] I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.[†] [48]He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. [49]For I have not spoken on My own *authority;* but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. [50]And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.[†]

[2]And supper being ended,[a] the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray Him,[†] [3]Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,[ω] [4]rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. [5]After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.[†] [6]Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?”[†]

[7]Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”

[8]Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!”

Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

[9]Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!”

[10]Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” [11]For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

[12]So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you?[†] [13]You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. [14]If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15]For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. [16]Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. [17]If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

The Betrayer in Their Midst

(Mt 26:21–25; Mk 14:18–21; Lk 22:21–23)

[18]“I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, *‘He who eats bread with Me*[a] *has lifted*

up his heel against Me.'[b] [19]Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He.* [20]Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

[21]When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." [22]Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

[23]Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.[†] [24]Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

[25]Then, leaning back[a] on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

[26]Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it.*" And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.[†] [27]Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." [28]But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. [29]For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

[30]Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

The New Commandment

[31]So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.[†] [32]If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. [33]Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you. [34]A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.[†] [35]By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Peter's Denials Foretold

(Mt 26:31–35; Mk 14:27–31; Lk 22:31–38)

[36]Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?”

Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.”[†]

[37]Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.”

[38]Jesus answered him, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.

The Way to the Father

14 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. [2]In My Father's house are many mansions;[a] if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.[b] [†] [3]And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. [4]And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

[5]Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

[6]Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.[†]

[7]“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

[8]Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

[9]Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?[†] [10]Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority;* but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.[†] [11]Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

[12]“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.[†] [13]And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.[†] [14]If you ask[a] anything in My name, I will do *it.*

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

[15]“If you love Me, keep[a] My commandments. [16]And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—[†] [17]the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.[†]

The Son's Presence

[18]“I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

[19]“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.[†] [20]At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.[†] [21]He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

[22]Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

[23]Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. [24]He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

The Son's Departure

[25]“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. [26]But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.[†] [27]Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.[†] [28]You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said,[a] ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.[†]

[29]“And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.[†] [30]I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.[†] [31]But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.[†]

Union and Communion with Christ

15 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.[†] [2]Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;[a] and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. [3]You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. [4]Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

[5]"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. [6]If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. [7]If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will[a] ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. [8]By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

[9]"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. [10]If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.[†]

[11]"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. [12]This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.[†] [13]Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. [14]You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.[†] [15]No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. [16]You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. [17]These things I command you, that you love one another. [ω]

The World's Hatred

[18]“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you.[†] [19]If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20]Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. [21]But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. [22]If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. [23]He who hates Me hates My Father also. [24]If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. [25]But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘*They hated Me without a cause.*’[a]

[26]“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.[†] [27]And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

16 “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. [2]They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. [3]And these things they will do to you[a] because they have not known the Father nor Me. [4]But these things I have told you, that when the[a] time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

“And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

[5]“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ [6]But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.[†] [7]Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.[†] [8]And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:[†] [9]of sin, because they do not believe in Me; [10]of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; [11]of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

[12]“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. [13]However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.[†] [14]He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. [15]All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.[a]

Death, Resurrection, Ascension Foretold

[16]“A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.”[†]

[17]Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, “What is this that He says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” [18]They said therefore, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying.”

[19]Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’? [20]Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. [21]A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.[†] [22]Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

[23]“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. [24]Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

[25]“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.[†] [26]In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;[†] [27]for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed

that I came forth from God. [28]I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

[29]His disciples said to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! [30]Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.”

[31]Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? [32]Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. [33]These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will[a] have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Christ's Prayer for Himself

17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,[†] [ω] [2]as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should[a] give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. [3]And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.[†] [4]I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.[†] [5]And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Christ's Prayer for the Apostles

[6]“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.[†] [7]Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. [8]For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them,* and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

[9]“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.[†] [10]And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. [11]Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me,[a] that they may be one as We *are.*[†] [12]While I was with them in the world,[a] I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept;[b] and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.[†] [13]But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. [14]I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.[†] [15]I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. [16]They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [17]Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.[†] [18]As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. [19]And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Christ's Prayer for the Church

[20]“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will[a] believe in Me through their word;[†] [21]that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. [22]And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: [23]I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Christ's Prayer for All

[24]“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. [25]O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. [26]And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”[†]

Jesus’ Betrayal and Arrest

(Mt 26:47–56; Mk 14:43–52; Lk 22:47–53)

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.[†] [2]And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.[†] [3]Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. [4]Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?”[†]

[5]They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus said to them, “I am *He*.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.[†] [6]Now when He said to them, “I am *He*,” they drew back and fell to the ground.[†]

[7]Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?”

And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

[8]Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,”[†] [9]that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.”

[10]Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

[11]So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

Before the High Priests; Peter's Denials

(Mt 26:57–75; Mk 14:53–72; Lk 22:54–71)

[12]Then the detachment *of troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. [13]And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that

year.[†] [14]Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

[15]And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another[a] disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.[†] [16]But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. [17]Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?”

He said, “I am not.”[†]

[18]Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

[19]The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.[†]

[20]Jesus answered him, “I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet,[a] and in secret I have said nothing. [21]Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.”

[22]And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, “Do You answer the high priest like that?”

[23]Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”

[24]Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

[25]Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, “You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?”

He denied *it* and said, “I am not!”

[26]One of the servants of the high priest, a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” [27]Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.[†]

Jesus Before Pilate

(Mt 27:1, 2, 11–27; Mk 15:1–15; Lk 23:1–22)

[28]Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.[†] [29]Pilate then went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”

[30]They answered and said to him, “If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”

[31]Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and judge Him according to your law.”

Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,”[†] [32]that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.[†]

[33]Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

[34]Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”

[35]Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”[†]

[36]Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

[37]Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, “You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

[38]Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.[†]

[39]“But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

[40]Then they all cried again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

19 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him.*[†] [2]And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. [3]Then they said,[a] “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him with their hands.

[4]Pilate then went out again, and said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.”

Pilate's Judgment

(Mt 27:28–81; Mk 15:16–20; Lk 23:23–25)

[5]Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, “Behold the Man!”

[6]Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, “Crucify *Him,* crucify *Him!*”

Pilate said to them, “You take Him and crucify *Him*, for I find no fault in Him.”[ω]

[7]The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our[a] law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”[†]

[8]Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, [9]and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.

[10]Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”[†]

[11]Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”[†]

[12]From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, “If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.”

[13]When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The* Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. [14]Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”[†]

[15]But they cried out, “Away with *Him*, away with *Him!* Crucify Him!”

Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?”

The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!”

[16]Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led *Him* away.[a]

Crucifixion

(Mt 27:32–44; Mk 15:21–32; Lk 23:26–43)

[17]And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, [18]where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. [19]Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.[†]

[20]Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin.

[21]Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, “I am the King of the Jews.” ’ ”

[22]Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

[23]Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.[†] [24]They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

> *“They divided My garments among them,*
>
> *And for My clothing they cast lots.”*[a]

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Care for Mary

[25]Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.[†] [ω] [26]When Jesus

therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" [27]Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home.*

Jesus' Death

(Mt 27:45–50; Mk 15:33–37; Lk 23:44–49)

[28]After this, Jesus, knowing[a] that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"[†] [29]Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. [30]So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.[†]

His Side Is Pierced

[31]Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day,* that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.[ω] [32]Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. [33]But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. [34]But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.[†] [35]And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. [36]For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "*Not one of*

His bones shall be broken.”[a] [37]And again another Scripture says, “*They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”*[a]

The Burial of Jesus

(Mt 27:57–60; Mk 15:42–47; Lk 23:50–56)

[38]After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.[†] [39]And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. [40]Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. [41]Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. [42]So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews’ Preparation *Day*, for the tomb was nearby.

The Tomb Is Empty

(Mt 28:1–8; Mk 16:1–8; Lk 24:1–12)

20 Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb.[†] [2]Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”[†]

[3]Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb.[†] [4]So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. [5]And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there;* yet he did not go in. [6]Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there,* [7]and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.[†] [8]Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. [9]For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.[†] [10]Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

[11]But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb.[†] [12]And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. [13]Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”[†]

[14]Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there,* and did not know that it was Jesus.[†] [15]Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

[16]Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said to Him,[a] “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).[†]

[17]Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and *to* My God and your God.’ ”[†]

[18]Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord,[a] and *that* He had spoken these things to her.[†]

Jesus Appears to Ten Disciples

[19]Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled,[a] for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace *be* with you.”[ω] [20]When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

[21]So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”[†] [22]And when He had said this, He breathed on *them,* and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. [23]If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

[24]Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.[†] [25]The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”

So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

[26]And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” [27]Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

[28]And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

[29]Jesus said to him, “Thomas,[a] because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.”

The Purpose of John's Gospel

[30]And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;[†] [31]but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Jesus Eats with the Eleven

21 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself:*[†] [2]Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. [3]Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.”

They said to him, “We are going with you also.” They went out and immediately[a] got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. [4]But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.[†] [5]Then Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any food?”

They answered Him, “No.”

[6]And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*.” So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.[†]

[7]Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. [8]But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.[†] [9]Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. [10]Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.”

[11]Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.[†] [12]Jesus said to them, “Come *and* eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”—knowing that it was the Lord.[†] [13]Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.[†]

[14]This *is* now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Jesus Restores and Commissions Peter

[15]So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me more than these?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."[†]

[16]He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

[17]He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. [18]Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish."[†] [19]This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

The Beloved Disciple and His Book

[20]Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?”[†] [21]Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what *about* this man?”

[22]Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.”

[23]Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?”

[24]This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.[†]

[25]And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.[†]

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The Book of Acts

Author—Traditionally, Acts is ascribed to Luke—“the beloved physician,” as Paul calls him (Col 4:14); the “disciple of Paul,” as St. John Chrysostom describes him. It is a continuation by Luke of the account given in his gospel (see note on 1:1).

Date—Acts was written about AD 75–85, some time after the composition of the Gospel of Luke.

Major Theme—*The spread of the gospel by the apostles from Jerusalem to the whole world (1:8).* The Book of Acts recounts the triumphant march of the Christian mission from Jerusalem throughout the Roman empire. This achievement points to the work of the Holy Spirit, who descended on the early Church, empowering the apostles and other missionaries to carry the good news of salvation. At the same time, Acts narrates the expansion of the Church by means of small congregations.

The primary subtheme of Acts is the same as the major theme of the Gospel of Luke: Immanuel, God with us. In Luke's gospel, God is with us in His incarnate Son. In Acts, the incarnate Son of God is yet present in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Background—The Acts of the Apostles is a spiritual and theological record of how the Church developed, as seen through the actions of the early Christians. The book is not to be read as a blueprint for reproducing the specific details and aspects of the Church which we read there. However, it is of great importance for understanding the organization and structure of the Church; its method of resolving controversies; the role of apostles, bishops, priests (elders), and deacons; and the spiritual life of the Church.

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–3)

II. The Birth of the Church (1:4–12:24)

  A. Preparation for the church (1:4–26)

  B. Beginning of the church (2:1–4:37)

  C. Life in the church (5:1–7:60)

  D. Persecution and expansion of the church (8:1–12:24)

III. The Growth of the Church from Antioch: The Labor of Paul (12:25–28:31)

  A. Barnabas and Saul commissioned (12:25–13:3)

  B. The first missionary journey (13:4–14:28)

  C. The Jerusalem Council (15:1–35)

  D. The second missionary journey (15:36–18:22)

  E. The third missionary journey (18:23–21:14)

  F. Paul in Jerusalem (21:15–23:22)

  G. The journey to Rome (23:23–28:31)

From Passover to Pentecost

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,[†ω] [2]until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,[†]

Days 1–39: Jesus’ Promise of the Holy Spirit

[3]to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.[†]

[4]And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me;[†] [5]for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” [6]Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”[†] [7]And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. [8]But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me[a] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Day 40: The Ascension

[9]Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.[†] [10]And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, [11]who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Days 40–49: Preparation for Pentecost

[12]Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.[†] [13]And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son* of James. [14]These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,[a] with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

[15]And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples[a] (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, [16]“Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus;[†] [17]for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”

[18](Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.[†] [19]And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

[20]“For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

‘Let his dwelling place be desolate,

And let no one live in it’;[a]

and,

‘Let[b] *another take his office.’*[c†]

[21]“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, [22]beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

[23]And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. [24]And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen [25]to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might

go to his own place.” [26]And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.[†]

Day 50: Pentecost

2 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord[a] in one place.[†ω] [2]And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3]Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them.[†] [4]And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.[†]

CHRISMATION

From earliest times the Church has practiced chrismation immediately following baptism. In the sacrament of chrismation (Gr. *chrismatis*, “anointing”) the newly baptized person receives the Holy Spirit through anointing with oil by the bishop or priest. The roots of this sacrament are clear in both the Old and New Testaments and are especially brought to light on the Day of Pentecost.

Promises of the Holy Spirit from the Old Testament. In his sermon on Pentecost, St. Peter quotes the well-known prophecy of Joel, “I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh” (2:17; see Joel 3:1). This promise was significant because under the old covenant, the gift of the Spirit had been given only to a few—the patriarchs, the prophets, and some of the judges. Certain leaders of Israel were indwelt with the Holy Spirit to accomplish their tasks. Joel, however, prophesied that the Holy Spirit would be given to all God’s people, “all flesh.” This was fulfilled at Pentecost, for Peter exclaims, “this [outpouring of the Spirit] is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (2:16).

Other Old Testament prophets who speak of this same promise of the Spirit include Jeremiah (Jer 38:31–34) and Ezekiel (Ezk 36:25–27). In fact, the Ezekiel passage ties together the water and the Spirit in a prophetic vision of baptism and chrismation.

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus Christ repeatedly promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His disciples. Early in His public ministry He said, " 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit" (Jn 7:37–39). Jesus also said, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (Jn 14:16).

Christ promised the Holy Spirit would reveal truth to the Church. "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you" (Jn 16:13, 14). Jesus says the Holy Spirit will bring glory to Him, Christ. This gives us an excellent means of testing whether or not acts attributed to the Holy Spirit do indeed belong to Him.

The last words of Christ before His Ascension include a promise: "John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (1:5). This word was fulfilled ten days later on the Day of Pentecost.

How is the Holy Spirit given to us? The people who heard Peter speak at Pentecost asked him how they might receive salvation. He answered, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38). We repent (turn from our sins and toward Christ); we are baptized; we are given “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” chrismation. That practice has never changed.

In Acts 8, Philip, the deacon and evangelist, preached in Samaria (vv. 5–8). Many believed and were baptized (v. 12). The apostles came and later confirmed these new believers with the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands (vv. 14–17). Here is the sacrament of chrismation following Holy Baptism. Later, the apostle Paul met some disciples of John the Baptist who had not been present when Peter spoke at Pentecost (19:1–7). They believed in Christ, “were baptized” (v. 5), and “the Holy Spirit came upon them” (v. 6), again through the hands of an apostle.

The promise of God includes both our union with Christ in Holy Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit at chrismation.

Witness to the World

[5]And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. [6]And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. [7]Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? [8]And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? [9]Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10]Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, [11]Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” [12]So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?”

[13]Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

Witness to the Jews: Peter's Sermon

[14]But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.[†] [15]For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day.

The Holy Spirit Has Come

[16]But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:[†]

[17]*‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,*

That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Your young men shall see visions,

Your old men shall dream dreams.

[18]*And on My menservants and on My maidservants*

I will pour out My Spirit in those days;

And they shall prophesy.

[19]*I will show wonders in heaven above*

And signs in the earth beneath:

Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

[20]*The sun shall be turned into darkness,*

And the moon into blood,

Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

[21]*And it shall come to pass*

That whoever calls on the name of the LORD

Shall be saved.’[a]

Jesus Is the Messiah

[22]“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— [23]Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken[a] by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; [24]whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. [25]For David says concerning Him:

‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face,
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.[†]
[26]*Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;*
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.
[27]*For You will not leave my soul in Hades,*
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
[28]*You have made known to me the ways of life;*
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’[a]

[29]“Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [30]Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,[a] [31]he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. [32]This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. [33]Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

[34]“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

‘The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at My right hand,

[35]*Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” ’*[a]

[36]“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”[†]

What Shall We Do?

[37]Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”[†]

[38]Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.[†] [39]For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

The First Converts Baptized

[40]And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” [41]Then those who gladly[a] received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them.*

The Life of the First Church

[42]And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.[†] [43]Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. [44]Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,[†] [45]and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

[46]So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, [47]praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church[a] daily those who were being saved.

Evangelism: A Lame Man Is Healed

3 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.[†] [2]And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; [3]who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. [4]And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, “Look at us.” [5]So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. [6]Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”[†] [7]And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. [8]So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. [9]And all the people saw him walking and praising God. [10]Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.[†]

Peter's Sermon at Solomon's Porch

[11]Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.[†] [12]So when Peter saw *it,* he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own

power or godliness we had made this man walk?[†] [13]The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. [14]But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, [15]and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. [16]And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

[17]“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. [18]But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. [19]Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, [20]and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,[a] [21]whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. [22]For Moses truly said to the fathers, *‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.* [23]*And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’*[a] [24]Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold[a] these days. [25]You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, *‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’*[a] [26]To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities.”[†]

Peter and John Arrested

4 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,[†] [2]being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. [3]And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. [4]However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Before the Sanhedrin

[5]And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, [6]as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. [7]And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?”

[8]Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: [9]If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, [10]let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. [11]This is the ‘*stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.*’[a] [12]Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”[†]

[13]Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that

they had been with Jesus.[†] [14]And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. [15]But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, [16]saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.[†] [17]But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.”

[18]So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. [19]But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.[†] [20]For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” [21]So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. [22]For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

Prayer and Power

[23]And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. [24]So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,[†] [25]who by the mouth of Your servant David[a] have said:

‘Why did the nations rage,

And the people plot vain things?

[26]*The kings of the earth took their stand,*

And the rulers were gathered together

Against the LORD and against His Christ.'[a]

[27]"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together [28]to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. [29]Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, [30]by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

[31]And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.[†]

Giving for the Common Good

[32]Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.[†] [33]And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. [34]Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, [35]and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

[36]And Joses,[a] who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, [37]having land, sold *it*, and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.[†] [2]And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it,* and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles’ feet. [3]But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? [4]While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

[5]Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. [6]And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him.*

[7]Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. [8]And Peter answered her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?”

She said, “Yes, for so much.”

[9]Then Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out.” [10]Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband. [11]So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

Evangelism in the Spirit

[12]And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.[ω] [13]Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. [14]And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, [15]so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.[†] [16]Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

The Apostles Arrested

[17]Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, [18]and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. [19]But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said,[†] [20]"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

[21]And when they heard *that,* they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

[22]But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, [23]saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside[a] before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!" [24]Now when the high priest,[a] the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would

be. [25]So one came and told them, saying,[a] “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!”

[26]Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. [27]And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, [28]saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!”

[29]But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.[†] [30]The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.[†] [31]Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. [32]And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

[33]When they heard *this*, they were furious and plotted to kill them. [34]Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.[†] [35]And he said to them: “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. [36]For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.[†] [37]After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. [38]And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to

nothing; [39]but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”

Apostolic Evangelism

[40]And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. [41]So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His[a] name.[†] [42]And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

Deacons Ordained

6 Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists,[a] because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.[†] [ω] [2]Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.[†] [3]Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; [4]but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

[5]And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,[†] [6]whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

[7]Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the

faith.[†]

Evangelism by the Deacons

[8]And Stephen, full of faith[a] and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. [9]Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.[†] [10]And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. [11]Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”[†] [12]And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council. [13]They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous[a] words against this holy place and the law; [14]for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.”[†] [15]And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.[†]

Stephen's Defense

7 Then the high priest said, “Are these things so?”[†]

[2]And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, [3]and said to him, ‘*Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.*’[a] [4]Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. [5]And *God* gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when *Abraham* had no child, He

promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. [6]But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress *them* four hundred years.[†] [7]‘*And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,*’[a] said God, ‘*and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.*’[b] [8]Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so *Abraham* begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac *begot* Jacob, and Jacob *begot* the twelve patriarchs.[†]

[9]“And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him [10]and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. [11]Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. [12]But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. [13]And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. [14]Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him*, seventy-five[a] people. [15]So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. [16]And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.

[17]“But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt [18]till another king arose who did not know Joseph. [19]This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live.[†] [20]At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. [21]But when he was set

out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. [22]And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

[23]“Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. [24]And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. [25]For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. [26]And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and *tried to* reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?’ [27]But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, ‘*Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?* [28]*Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?’*[a] [29]Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

[30]“And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord[a] appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai.[†] [31]When Moses saw *it*, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, [32]*saying, ‘I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’*[a] *And Moses trembled and dared not look.* [33]*‘Then the Lord said to him, “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.*[†] [34]*I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.” ’*[a]

[35]“This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘*Who made you a ruler and a judge?’*[a] is the one God sent *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the

Angel who appeared to him in the bush. [36]He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

[37]“This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel,[a] *‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’*[b]

[38]“This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us,[†] [39]whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, [40]saying to Aaron, *‘Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’*[a] [41]And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. [42]Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

> *‘Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness,*
>
> *O house of Israel?*
>
> [43]*You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch,*
>
> *And the star of your god Remphan,*
>
> *Images which you made to worship;*
>
> *And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’*[a]

[44]“Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, [45]which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of

our fathers until the days of David, [46]who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. [47]But Solomon built Him a house.[†]

[48]“However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

[49]*‘Heaven is My throne,*
And earth is My footstool.
What house will you build for Me? says the LORD,
Or what is the place of My rest?
[50]*Has My hand not made all these things?’*[a]

[51]“*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you.[†] [52]Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, [53]who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it.*”

Stephen's Martyrdom

[54]When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. [55]But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,[†] [56]and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

[57]Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; [58]and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him.* And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. [59]And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, “Lord Jesus,

receive my spirit.”[†] [60]Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The First General Persecution

8 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.[†] [2]And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial,* and made great lamentation over him.

[3]As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

The Church in Samaria

[4]Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. [5]Then Philip went down to the[a] city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.[†] [6]And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. [7]For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. [8]And there was great joy in that city.

[9]But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great,[†] [10]to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” [11]And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. [12]But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. [13]Then Simon himself

also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

The Samaritan Pentecost

14Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,† 15who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.† 17Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! 21You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. 22Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.† 23For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

24Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

25So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

The Ethiopian Eunuch

[26]Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is desert. [27]So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,[†] [28]was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. [29]Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”[†]

[30]So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”[†]

[31]And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. [32]The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;

And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,

So He opened not His mouth.[†]

[33]*In His humiliation His justice was taken away,*

And who will declare His generation?

For His life is taken from the earth.”[a]

[34]So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” [35]Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.[†] [36]Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?”[†]

[37]Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”[a]

[38]So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. [39]Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. [40]But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Saul Converted

9 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest[†] [2]and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

[3]As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. [4]Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”[†]

[5]And he said, “Who are You, Lord?”

Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.[a] It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads.”[†]

[6]So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

Then the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

[7]And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. [8]Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus.[†] [9]And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

[10]Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.”

And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

[11]So the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.[†] [12]And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”

[13]Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.[†] [14]And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”

[15]But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.[†] [16]For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.”

[17]And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus,[a] who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” [18]Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.[†]

Saul's First Preaching

[19]So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

[20]Immediately he preached the Christ[a] in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

[21]Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?”

[22]But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.

[23]Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.[†] [24]But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. [25]Then the disciples took him by night and let *him* down through the wall in a large basket.

Saul in Jerusalem

[26]And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. [27]But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. [28]So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. [29]And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.[†] [30]When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

[31]Then the churches[a] throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.[†]

Peter in Gentile Judea

[32]Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country,* that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.[† ω] [33]There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. [34]And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately.[†] [35]So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.[†]

[36]At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. [37]But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. [38]And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them. [39]Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. [40]But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.[†] [41]Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. [42]And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. [43]So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

Cornelius's Vision

10 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,[†] [2]a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.[†] [3]About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius!”[†]

[4]And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, “What is it, lord?”

So he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. [5]Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. [6]He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.[a] He will tell you what you must do.” [7]And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually.[†] [8]So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

[9]The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.[†] [10]Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance [11]and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. [12]In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. [13]And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”

[14]But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.”[†]

[15]And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” [16]This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

[17]Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. [18]And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

[19]While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you. [20]Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”

[21]Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius,[a] and said, “Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?”

[22]And they said, “Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.” [23]Then he invited them in and lodged *them.*

On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter Preaches to Gentiles

[24]And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. [25]As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. [26]But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” [27]And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. [28]Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.[†] [29]Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?”

[30]So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour[a] I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,[†] [31]and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. [32]Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.[a] When he comes, he will speak to you.’ [33]So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.”[†]

[34]Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.[†] [35]But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.[†] [36]The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— [37]that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: [38]how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.[†] [39]And

we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they[a] killed by hanging on a tree. [40]Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, [41]not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. [42]And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. [43]To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

The Gentile Pentecost

[44]While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.[†] [45]And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. [46]For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, [47]"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have?*" [48]And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.[†]

The Apostles in Jerusalem

11 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. [2]And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him,[†] [3]saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

[4]But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: [5]“I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. [6]When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. [7]And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ [8]But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ [9]But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ [10]Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. [11]At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. [12]Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. [13]And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter,[†] [14]who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ [15]And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. [16]Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ [17]If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?”[†]

[18]When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

The Gentile Church: Antioch

[19]Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.[ω] [20]But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.[†] [21]And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

[22]Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.[†] [23]When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. [24]For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

[25]Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.[†] [26]And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.[†]

Aid to Jewish Christians

[27]And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch.[†] [28]Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.[†] [29]Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. [30]This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.[†]

Jerusalem Shaken

12 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church.[†ω] [2]Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. [3]And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread.[†] [4]So when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

[5]Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant[a] prayer was offered to God for him by the church.[†] [6]And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. [7]Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him,* and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, “Arise quickly!” And his chains fell off *his* hands. [8]Then the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals”; and so he did. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.” [9]So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.[†] [10]When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

[11]And when Peter had come to himself, he said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people.”

[12]So, when he had considered *this,* he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.[†] [13]And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. [14]When she recognized Peter's voice, because of *her* gladness

she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. [15]But they said to her, “You are beside yourself!” Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, “It is his angel.”[†]

[16]Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished. [17]But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, “Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren.” And he departed and went to another place.[†]

[18]Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. [19]But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be put to death.

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there.*

Herod Dies

[20]Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's *country.*

[21]So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them.[†] [22]And the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” [23]Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

[24]But the word of God grew and multiplied.[†]

[25]And Barnabas and Saul returned from[a] Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.[†]

Antioch Sends Barnabas and Saul

13 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.[†] [2]As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”[†] [3]Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.[†]

Churches Established on Cyprus

[4]So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. [5]And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as *their* assistant.[†]

[6]Now when they had gone through the island[a] to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-Jesus, [7]who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. [8]But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. [9]Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him[†] [10]and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? [11]And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.”[†]

And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. [12]Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

The Church in Pisidia

[13]Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.[†] [14]But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.[†] [15]And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

[16]Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:[†] [17]The God of this people Israel[a] chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.[†] [18]Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. [19]And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

[20]"After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. [21]And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. [22]And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said,'*I have found David*[a] the *son* of Jesse, *a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.*'[b][23]/>From this man's seed, according to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—[a][†] [24]after

John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. [25]And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not *He*. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’[ω]

[26]“Men *and* brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent.[†] [27]For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him.*[†] [28]And though they found no cause for death *in Him*, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. [29]Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb. [30]But God raised Him from the dead. [31]He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. [32]And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. [33]God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

‘You are My Son,

Today I have begotten You.’[a]

[34]And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’[a]

[35]Therefore He also says in another *Psalm:*

‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’[a]

[36]“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; [37]but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. [38]Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;[†] [39]and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. [40]Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

[41]*‘Behold, you despisers,*

Marvel and perish!

For I work a work in your days,

A work which you will by no means believe,

Though one were to declare it to you.’ ”[a]

[42]So when the Jews went out of the synagogue,[a] the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. [43]Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

Apostles to the Gentiles

[44]On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. [45]But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.[†] [46]Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. [47]For so the Lord has commanded us:

‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,

That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”[a]

[48]Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

[49]And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. [50]But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. [51]But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. [52]And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The Church in Iconium, Galatia

14 Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.[†] [2]But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.[†] [3]Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.[†]

[4]But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles.[†] [5]And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them,[†] [6]they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. [7]And they were preaching the gospel there.

In Lystra and Derbe, Galatia

[8]And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. [9]*This* man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, [10]said with a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked. [11]Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language,* “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”[†] [12]And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. [13]Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.

ORDINATION

Sacraments (or mysteries) are holy actions of the Church by which spiritual life is imparted to those receiving them. Ordination, which means “setting in place” or “selection by the outstretched hand,” is one of several Orthodox sacraments. It is extended specifically to bishops, presbyters (priests), and deacons, and generally to all through Holy Baptism.

1 *Bishops*. Christ in His ministry ordained or “set in place” the Twelve, assuring them, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain” (Jn 15:16).

Both the New Testament and the church fathers recognize the Twelve as the first bishops or overseers in the Church. When Judas had fallen away and the disciples were considering his successor, Peter said, “Let another take his office” (Gr. *episkopen*, lit., “bishopric”; Acts 1:20). This bishopric was given to Matthias (Acts 1:25).

The apostles—these first bishops—in turn ordained presbyters and deacons.

2 *Deacons*. The account of the first ordination of deacons (Acts 6:1–6) is quite detailed. “Seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,” the apostles said, “whom we may appoint [Gr. *kathistemi*, “to set down or ordain”] over this business” (Acts 6:3). The manner of this appointment is clear: “they laid hands on them” (Acts 6:6). The ordination of deacons in the Orthodox Church takes place in this same manner today, through the laying on of hands by the bishop.

3 *Presbyters*. The first account of the ordination of elders or presbyters is in Acts 14:23. The apostles Paul and Barnabas “appointed [lit., “elected by stretching forth the hand”] elders in every church, and prayed with fasting,” then “commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Similarly, Paul reminds his apostolic apprentice, Titus, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint [set in place, ordain] elders in every city as I commanded you” (Tts 1:5).

The Titus passage brings to mind the first prayer the bishop prays over one being ordained to the Orthodox priesthood: “The grace divine, which always heals that which is weak and completes that which is lacking, elevates through the laying on of my hands this most devout deacon to be priest.”

The bishop continues to ask God to “fill with the gift of the Holy Spirit this man . . . that he may be worthy to stand in innocence before Your holy altar, to proclaim the Gospel of Your Kingdom, to minister the word of Your truth, to offer You spiritual gifts and sacrifices, to renew Your people through the laver of regeneration.”

A dramatic moment in the service of ordination comes when the candidate is led around the altar three times, kissing or venerating the four corners of the altar each time. This symbolizes his marriage to Christ, his death with Christ, and his willingness to serve the Church sacrificially after the example of his Master.

Ordination is seen as an eternal appointment, “for the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable” (Rom 11:29). It is in this spirit that during each Divine Liturgy the priest prays for his bishop that “the Lord God remember him in His Kingdom always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.”

Through the sacrament of ordination in His Church, Christ entrusts to the shepherd the very salvation of His people’s souls.

[14]But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out [15]and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,[†] [16]who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. [17]Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” [18]And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.[†]

[19]Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. [20]However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.[†]

Return Visit

[21]And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, [22]strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”[†] [23]So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.[†] [24]And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. [25]Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

Report Back to Antioch

[26]From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

[27]Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. [28]So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Circumcision in Antioch

15 And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”[†] [2]Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.[†]

[3]So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. [4]And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were

received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. [5]But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.”

The Council in Jerusalem

[6]Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.[†] [7]And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: “Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.[†] [8]So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, [9]and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. [10]Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? [11]But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ[a] we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

[12]Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. [13]And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men *and* brethren, listen to me:[†] [14]Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. [15]And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

[16]‘*After this I will return*
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;

[17]*So that the rest of mankind may seek the* L*ORD*,

Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,

Says the L*ORD* *who does all these things.'*[a]

[18]"Known to God from eternity are all His works.[a] [19]Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, [20]but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality,[a] *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. [21]For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

The Decree: Early Canon Law

[22]Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely*, Judas who was also named Barsabas,[a] and Silas, leading men among the brethren.[†]

[23]They wrote this, *letter* by them:

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

[24] Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must* be circumcised and keep the law"[a] —to whom we gave no *such* commandment—[25]it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, [26]men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. [27]We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. [28]For it seemed good to the Holy

Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:[†] [29]that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.[a] If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell.

The Decree Received in Antioch

[30]So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. [31]When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. [32]Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. [33]And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.[a]

[34]However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.[a] [35]Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Paul and Barnabas Separate

[36]Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing.”[†] [37]Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.[†] [38]But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. [39]Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; [40]but Paul chose

Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. [41]And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

The Call to Europe

16 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek.[†] [2]He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. [3]Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.[†] [4]And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.[†] [5]So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

[6]Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.[†] [7]After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit[a] did not permit them. [8]So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. [9]And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” [10]Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.[†]

The First European Convert

[11]Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, [12]and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that

city for some days. [13]And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there.*[†] [14]Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us.* She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.[†] [15]And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us,* saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.[†]

Exorcism of a Spirit

[16]Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.[† ω] [17]This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” [18]And this she did for many days.

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. [19]But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

[20]And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;[†] [21]and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” [22]Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. [23]And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep

them securely. [24]Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The Philippian Jailer

[25]But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.[†] [26]Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. [27]And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.[†] [28]But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”

[29]Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. [30]And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”[†]

[31]So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” [32]Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. [33]And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized.[†] [34]Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

The Apostles Released

[35]And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, “Let those men go.”

[36]So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.”

[37]But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.”[†]

[38]And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. [39]Then they came and pleaded with them and brought *them* out, and asked *them* to depart from the city. [40]So they went out of the prison and entered *the house of* Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

The Church in Thessalonica

17 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.[†] [2]Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,[†] [3]explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.” [4]And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.[†]

[5]But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious,[a] took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. [6]But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. [7]Jason has harbored them, and these are all

acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus."[†] [8]And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. [9]So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.[†]

The Church in Berea

[10]Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. [11]These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so. [12]Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. [13]But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds.[†] [14]Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there.[†] [15]So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

The Church in Athens

[16]Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. [17]Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.[†] [18]Then[a] certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?"

Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.[†]

[19]And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine *is* of which you speak? [20]For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.” [21]For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

[22]Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; [23]for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:[†]

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: [24]God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. [25]Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. [26]And He has made from one blood[a] every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, [27]so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; [28]for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ [29]Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. [30]Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, [31]because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

[32]And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this *matter.*"[†] [33]So Paul departed from among them. [34]However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

The Church in Corinth

18 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.[†] [2]And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. [3]So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. [4]And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

Teaching in Corinth

[5]When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. [6]But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."[†] [7]And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus,[a] *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. [8]Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord

with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

[9]Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; [10]for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” [11]And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The Proconsul's Refusal

[12]When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat,[†] [13]saying, “This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

[14]And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. [15]But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*.” [16]And he drove them from the judgment seat. [17]Then all the Greeks[a] took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

Report to Jerusalem and Antioch

[18]So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.[†] [19]And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.[†] [20]When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, [21]but took leave of them, saying, “I must by all means keep this coming feast

in Jerusalem;[a] but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.[†]

In Ephesus: Apollos Instructed

[22]And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. [23]After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

[24]Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.[†] [25]This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. [26]So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. [27]And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; [28]for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Disciples of John the Baptist

19 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples[† ω] [2]he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."[†]

[3]And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”

So they said, “Into John's baptism.”

[4]Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

[5]When they heard *this,* they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.[†] [6]And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. [7]Now the men were about twelve in all.

Two Years in Ephesus

[8]And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.[†] [9]But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. [10]And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Occultists Converted

[11]Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul,[†] [12]so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. [13]Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We[a] exorcise you by the Jesus

whom Paul preaches.” [14]Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

[15]And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”

[16]Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered[a] them, and prevailed against them,[b] so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. [17]This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. [18]And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. [19]Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. [20]So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

[21]When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” [22]So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

A Greek Goddess Defended

[23]And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. [24]For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana,[a] brought no small profit to the craftsmen. [25]He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: “Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. [26]Moreover you see and hear that not only at

Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.[†] [27]So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed,[a] whom all Asia and the world worship."[†]

[28]Now when they heard *this,* they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!" [29]So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.[†] [30]And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. [31]Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. [32]Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. [33]And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people.[†] [34]But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!"

[35]And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Zeus? [36]Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. [37]For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your[a] goddess.[†] [38]Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another.

[39]But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. [40]For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.” [41]And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Return Visit to Greece

20 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself,* embraced *them,* and departed to go to Macedonia. [2]Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece [3]and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. [4]And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.[†] [5]These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.[†] [6]But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Back in Asia: Eutychus Raised

[7]Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.[†] [8]There were many lamps in the upper room where they[a] were gathered together. [9]And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.[†] [10]But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.”[†] [11]Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till

daybreak, he departed. [12]And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

Paul's Farewell Address

[13]Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. [14]And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. [15]We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus. [16]For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.[†ω]

[17]From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.[†] [18]And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, [19]serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;[†] [20]how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, [21]testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. [22]And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, [23]except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. [24]But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself,[a] so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

[25]“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. [26]Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*.[†] [27]For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. [28]Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God[a] which He purchased with His own blood.[†] [29]For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.[†] [30]Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. [31]Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

[32]“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. [33]I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.[†] [34]Yes,[a] you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. [35]I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

[36]And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. [37]Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, [38]sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Palestine and Jerusalem: Don’t Go

21 Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following *day* to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. [2]And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. [3]When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. [4]And finding disciples,[a] we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. [5]When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. [6]When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

[7]And when we had finished *our* voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. [8]On the next *day* we who were Paul's companions[a] departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him.[†] [9]Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.[†] [10]And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.[†] [11]When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.’ ”

[12]Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. [13]Then Paul answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

[14]So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, “The will of the Lord be done.”

[15]And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. [16]Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge.

In Jerusalem

[17]And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.[†] [18]On the following *day* Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. [19]When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. [20]And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; [21]but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs. [22]What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will[a] hear that you have come. [23]Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. [24]Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but *that* you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. [25]But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except[a] that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”[†]

Temple Riot, Paul Arrested

[26]Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at

which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

[27]Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, [28]crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”[†] [29](For they had previously[a] seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

[30]And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. [31]Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.[†] [32]He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. [33]Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. [34]And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another.

So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. [35]When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. [36]For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, “Away with him!”[†]

[37]Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I speak to you?”

He replied, “Can you speak Greek? [38]Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?”[†]

[39]But Paul said, “I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.”

[40]So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the Hebrew language, saying,

Paul's Defense at the Temple

22 “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now.”[†] [2]And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent.

Then he said: [3]“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.[†] [4]I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, [5]as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

[6]“Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. [7]And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ [8]So I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’

[9]“And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid,[a] but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. [10]So I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.’ [11]And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.

[12]“Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt *there*, [13]came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that same hour I looked up at him. [14]Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. [15]For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. [16]And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’[†]

[17]“Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance[†] [18]and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ [19]So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. [20]And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death,[a] and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ [21]Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’ ”[†]

An Appeal to Roman Citizenship

[22]And they listened to him until this word, and *then* they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for he is not fit to live!” [23]Then, as they cried out and tore off *their* clothes and threw dust into the air, [24]the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.[†] [25]And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?”

[26]When the centurion heard *that,* he went and told the commander, saying, “Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman.”

[27]Then the commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?”

He said, “Yes.”

[28]The commander answered, “With a large sum I obtained this citizenship.”

And Paul said, “But I was born *a citizen.*”

[29]Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Before the Sanhedrin

[30]The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.[†]

23 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, “Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”[†] [2]And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.[†] [3]Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, *you* whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?”[†]

[4]And those who stood by said, “Do you revile God's high priest?”

[5]Then Paul said, “I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, ‘*You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.*’ ”[a]

[6]But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!”[†]

[7]And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. [8]For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.[†] [9]Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees’ party arose and protested, saying, “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.” [a]

[10]Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

[11]But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."[†]

The Murder Plot Against Paul

[12]And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. [13]Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. [14]They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. [15]Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow,[a] as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

[16]So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. [17]Then Paul called one of the centurions to *him* and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him." [18]So he took him and brought *him* to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to *him* and asked *me* to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you."

[19]Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

[20]And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. [21]But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men

who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.”

22So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded *him*, “Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me.”

Paul Imprisoned in Caesarea

23And he called for two centurions, saying, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night;[†] 24and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring *him* safely to Felix the governor.”[†] 25He wrote a letter in the following manner:

26Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix:

Greetings.

27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. 29I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. 30And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man,[a] I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him.

Farewell.

31Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.[†] 32The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. [33]When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. [34]And when the governor had read *it*, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that *he was* from Cilicia, [35]he said, “I will hear you when your accusers also have come.” And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.[†]

The Trial Before Felix

24 Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.[†]

[2]And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: “Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, [3]we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. [4]Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. [5]For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.[†] [6]He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him,[a] and wanted to judge him according to our law. [7]But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, [8]commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.” [9]And the Jews also assented,[a] maintaining that these things were so.

Paul's Defense

[10]Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: “Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, [11]because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship.[†] [12]And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. [13]Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. [14]But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.[†] [15]I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead,[a] both of *the* just and *the* unjust. [16]This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

[17]“Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation,[†] [18]in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. [19]They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. [20]Or else let those who are *here* themselves say if they found any wrongdoing[a] in me while I stood before the council, [21]unless *it is* for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.’ ”

The Decision

[22]But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of *the* Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case.” [23]So he commanded the

centurion to keep Paul and to let *him* have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

[24]And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. [25]Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.”[†] [26]Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him.[a] Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

[27]But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

The Trial Before Festus

25 Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. [2]Then the high priest[a] and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, [3]asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while *they* lay in ambush along the road to kill him.[†] [4]But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going *there* shortly. [5]“Therefore,” he said, “let those who have authority among you go down with *me* and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him.”

[6]And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. [7]When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which

they could not prove,[†] [8]while he answered for himself, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.”

[9]But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?”

[10]So Paul said, “I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. [11]For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.”[†]

[12]Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, “You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!”

Festus's Plan

[13]And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.[†] [14]When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: “There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, [15]about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. [16]To them I answered, ‘It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction[a] before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.’ [17]Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. [18]When the accusers stood up, they brought no

accusation against him of such things as I supposed,[†] [19]but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. [20]And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. [21]But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar.”

[22]Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I also would like to hear the man myself.”

“Tomorrow,” he said, “you shall hear him.”

[23]So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus’ command Paul was brought in.[†] [24]And Festus said: “King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. [25]But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. [26]I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write.[†] [27]For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.”

Paul's Defense

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself.”

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: [2]“I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, [3]especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

[4]“My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. [5]They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. [6]And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. [7]To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. [8]Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

[9]“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. [10]This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against *them*.[†] [11]And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities.

[12]“While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, [13]at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. [14]And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads.’ [15]So I said, ‘Who

are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. [16]But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. [17]I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now[a] send you, [18]to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

[19]"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, [20]but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. [21]For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me*. [22]Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— [23]that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

The Tribunal's Reaction

[24]Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

[25]But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.[†] [26]For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.[†] [27]King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."[†]

[28]Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”

[29]And Paul said, “I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.”

[30]When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; [31]and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, “This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.”

[32]Then Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”[†]

The Voyage to Rome Begins

27 And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. [2]So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.[†] [3]And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care.[†] [4]When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. [5]And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. [6]There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

[7]When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of* Crete off Salmone. [8]Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city *of* Lasea.

[9]Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them,[†] [10]saying, “Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.”[†] [11]Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. [12]And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and* winter *there*.

Storm and Shipwreck

[13]When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. [14]But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.[a] [15]So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. [16]And running under *the shelter of* an island called Clauda,[a] we secured the skiff with difficulty.[†] [17]When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis[a] *Sands*, they struck sail and so were driven.[†] [18]And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship.[†] [19]On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. [20]Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

[21]But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. [22]And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. [23]For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, [24]saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ [25]Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. [26]However, we must run aground on a certain island.”

[27]Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic *Sea*, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. [28]And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. [29]Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. [30]And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, [31]Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.”[†] [32]Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

[33]And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. [34]Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.” [35]And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat.[†] [36]Then they

were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. [37]And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. [38]So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

[39]When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. [40]And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. [41]But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.[†]

[42]And the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. [43]But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, [44]and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

Winter at Malta

28 Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta.[†] [2]And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.[†] [3]But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.[†] [4]So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.”[†] [5]But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. [6]However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

[7]In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. [8]And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.[†] [9]So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. [10]They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

From Malta to Rome

[11]After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island.[†] [12]And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days.[†] [13]From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli,[†] [14]where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. [15]And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

Paul's Ministry in Rome

[16]Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.[†]

17And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: “Men *and* brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, 18who, when they had examined me, wanted to let *me* go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. 19But when the Jews[a] spoke against *it*, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. 20For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see *you* and speak with *you*, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”[†]

21Then they said to him, “We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. 22But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere.”[†]

23So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.[†] 24And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our[a] fathers, 26saying,

‘Go to this people and say:

“Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand;

And seeing you will see, and not perceive;

27*For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*

Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them." '[a]

[28]"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" [29]And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.[a]

[30]Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, [31]preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.[†]

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The Book of Romans

Author—While Pauline authorship of some epistles has been questioned, the Church has universally accepted St. Paul as the author of Romans.

Date—Romans was probably written in AD 55–57 during the latter part of Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 20:3–21:16), most likely while he was in Corinth.

Major Theme—*God's righteousness revealed in Christ for our salvation (1:16, 17).* Righteousness is the basis of a faithful relationship between God and humanity. God Himself freely offers this living and growing relationship to all through Christ.

Subthemes in Romans include:

1. *The natural mortality and actual sinfulness of all (1:18–3:20).*
2. *Salvation through Christ apart from the Mosaic Law (3:21–4:25).*
3. *New life in Christ through Holy Baptism (chs. 5–7).*
4. *New life in the Holy Spirit through chrismation (ch. 8).*
5. *God's plan for Jews and Gentiles and their reconciliation in Christ (chs. 9–11).*
6. *Christian life in the Church and in the world (chs. 12–16).*

Background—Paul's logic in Romans proceeds largely from the use of dichotomies, in which two concepts are placed in opposition to each other; and synergies, in which two concepts work together. However, many modern commentators have seen opposition between pairs of concepts where Paul intends cooperation. These pairs of concepts include: law and grace; faith and works; Old Testament and New Testament; nature and grace; spirit and body; reality and symbol; God's faithfulness and humanity's faithfulness; secular and sacred; Church and state. The areas in which Paul truly sees opposition are fewer and more fundamental: living faith versus dead faith; living works versus dead works; good versus evil; righteousness versus unrighteousness; natural versus unnatural; faithfulness versus unfaithfulness.

Romans is the most significant, the most logical, and the most doctrinally oriented of Paul's epistles, and the only one he wrote to a church he had not yet visited.

Outline

I. Introduction: The Righteousness of God Available for All (1:1–17)

II. God's Faithfulness to All: His Judgment and Salvation (1:18–4:25)

  A. Judgment on all: the unfaithfulness of Jew and Gentile (1:18–3:20)

  B. Salvation for all: through faith apart from the law (3:21–4:25)

III. Faithful Union Between God and Humanity (5:1–8:39)

  A. Righteous living through the reign of Christ (5:1–21)

  B. Resurrection life through union with Christ (6:1–7:6)

  C. Victorious life in the Spirit (7:7–8:27)

  D. Eternal life in the Father's kingdom (8:28–39)

IV. God's Faithfulness to All: Jew and Gentile (9:1–11:36)

  A. Paul's personal agony (9:1–5)

  B. Paradox: unbelief of Jews, belief of Gentiles (9:6–10:21)

  C. Destiny of Jews and Gentiles (11:1–36)

- V. Living Out a Faithful Relationship with God (12:1–15:7)
  - A. In the church (12:1–21)
  - B. With governing authorities (13:1–14)
  - C. Toward weaker Christians (14:1–15:7)
- VI. Conclusion and Greetings (15:8–16:27)

Greeting

1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God[†] [2]which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, [3]concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,[†] [4]*and* declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.[†] [5]Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,[†] [6]among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;[†]

[7]To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[†]

Desire to Visit Rome

[8]First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.[†] [9]For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, [10]making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. [11]For I long

to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—[†] [12]that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

[13]Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.[†] [14]I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.[†] [15]So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

The Theme: The Righteousness of God Through Faith in Christ

[16]For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,[a] for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.[†] [17]For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, *“The just shall live by faith.”*[a†]

Judgment of Sinning Humanity

[18]For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,[†] [19]because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. [20]For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,[†] [21]because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.[†] [22]Professing to be wise, they became fools, [23]and

changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

[24]Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, [25]who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

[26]For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.[†] [27]Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

[28]And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; [29]being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality,[a] wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers,[†] [30]backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31]undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving,[a] unmerciful; [32]who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Judgment of Each Conscience

2 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.[†] [2]But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.[†] [3]And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? [4]Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? [5]But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, [6]who "*will render to each one according to his deeds*":[a] [7]eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; [8]but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, [9]tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; [10]but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [11]For there is no partiality with God.

[12]For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law [13](for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; [14]for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,[†] [15]who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts

accusing or else excusing *them*) [16]in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

THE BASIS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

Even as believing Christians, we must not take the outcome of God's final judgment for granted. In every Divine Liturgy Orthodox Christians pray, "For a good defense before the dread Judgment Seat of Christ, let us pray to the Lord: Lord have mercy." Romans 2:2–16 describes God's judgment, showing how we can prepare ourselves for it. God's righteous judgment will be:

1 *According to truth* (2:2, 3): Nothing is hidden from God. He sees everything and knows the truth about each of us. One of mankind's great self-deceptions is to say, "Who sees us?" (Is 29:15) and think there is no judgment.

2 *According to impenitent hearts* (2:4, 5): An unrepentant or hard heart despises God's goodness, treasuring up the wrath of God at the judgment. A repentant heart, on the other hand, is grateful for God's patience and abides in Christ, practicing a lifetime of repentance, which produces confidence before Him at the judgment (1Jn 2:28).

3 *According to our deeds* (2:6–15): The "doing good" referred to in 2:7 is not an attempt to gain merit with God. Rather, it is the unity of intentions with actions, faith with works. Even unbelievers are rewarded for good works, apart from spiritual understanding (2:14, 15). But note the following:

(a) “Doing good” means seeking God’s glory (2:10), not our own glory; God’s honor, not our own honor; the eternal reward of immortality, not reward here and now. “Doing good” is seeking first the Kingdom of God (Mt 6:33).

(b) Good intentions alone, or faith without works, will not save (2:13). Simply to hear and not do is religion without reality. Those with true faith, “the doers” of the truth, practice virtue from pure and repentant hearts (Jam 1:21–27).

(c) “By nature” (v. 14) people are inspired by and cooperate with God’s grace. Therefore, good deeds are natural to us, whereas evil deeds are contrary to nature. Because we all fail, we need God’s mercy (3:9–19). The presence of God’s law in our conscience (2:15) condemns anything we do contrary to true human nature. Therefore, even Gentiles—people not under the Law of Moses, those who do not know of Christ—have an internal law from God, the natural law written in their hearts, according to which God will judge them. Melchizedek, Job, and the Ninevites are Old Testament examples of non-Jews judged to be righteous. Jews, then, have two laws from God—the Law of Moses and conscience—and are accountable to Him for both (2:12).

(d) Those who are condemned *choose* to reject God. There is no automatic, fated condem-nation: God’s just judgment of us is based on our exercise of free will. Although sin impairs our powers, it does not destroy God’s image in us or our free will.

(4) *By Jesus Christ* (2:16): In the day of judgment we are not judged directly by God the Father, whom we cannot see, but by the incarnate Son whom we do see, Christ Jesus (Acts 17:31; see Jn 3:16–21, 35, 36). Christ will judge on the basis of the light He Himself has given to each of us (Jn 1:9) and our response to His light (Jn 3:16–21). “The secrets of men” (Rom 2:16) are “the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

Judgment of the Jews

17 Indeed[a] you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,[†] 18 and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. 21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24 For “*the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,*”[a] as it is written.

25 For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.[†] 26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? 27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who,

even with *your* written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law? [28]For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; [29]but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.[†]

The Jews' Unfaithfulness

3 What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision?[†] [2]Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. [3]For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? [4]Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written:

> *"That You may be justified in Your words,*
>
> *And may overcome when You are judged."*[a†]

[5]But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) [6]Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?

[7]For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? [8]And *why* not *say*, "Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

THE LAW

One key to understanding Romans is to distinguish properly between the several ways Paul uses the word “law” in this epistle.

1 *The Mosaic Law* (2:12, 13) was written by God on tablets of stone (2Co 3:3, 7) and given to the Jews through Moses. This Law reveals God’s righteousness to prepare men for the Messiah and for God’s grace. When Paul speaks of “the law,” he is most often referring to the Mosaic Law.

The Law is good, but cannot be kept. It is revelation from God, but not an end in itself. The purpose of the Mosaic Law is (a) to reveal the difference between good and evil; (b) to make the world accountable to God (3:19); (c) to manifest sin (3:20); and (d) to be a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ (Gal 3:24). Though it is not opposed to the grace of God, the Law cannot save us or make us righteous.

2 *The natural law* (2:14, 15) has been “written” by God in the heart of every human who has ever lived as the voice of conscience. It is a reliable guide to God’s righteousness for those who are pure in heart; but it can be dulled or obscured completely by habitual sin.

3 *The law of works* (3:27) is our attempt to establish righteousness before God on the basis of keeping the natural law and/or the Mosaic Law. This law reveals human weakness and sin.

4 *The law of faith* (3:27) is the synergy, the cooperation, of our faithfulness with God’s. It alone is the means by which we attain the righteousness of God. God has been revealing His righteousness by this law little by little since the time of creation, but now has revealed it fully in Christ. As both the natural law and the Mosaic Law bear witness to this law

of faith, so those who become righteous by grace through faith fulfill in Christ both the natural and the Mosaic Law.

5 *The law of sin* (7:25; 8:2) is the power of the sinful passions in our mortal humanity. Passions—desires for such things as food, sex, praise, possessions—are natural; their sinful overindulgence is not. Carnal (physical) passions are especially strong. They aid the unnatural domination of the body over the soul. Sometimes carnal passions overpower the will. The law of sin coupled with the Mosaic Law breeds intense warfare between sin and righteousness. Only God's grace can bring victory for righteousness.

6 *The law of the Spirit* (8:2) is also called "the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) and "the law of liberty" (Jam 1:25; 2:12). It is the power and life of the Holy Spirit active in those who by faith in Christ live out their baptism and chrismation to the fullest possible degree. This makes the righteousness of God gained by faith real in one's life. Coupled with the law of faith, the law of the Spirit defeats the law of sin and fulfills the natural and Mosaic Law. It orients one's innermost being toward God and restores the power of the spirit over the flesh, the soul over the body.

Conclusion: All Are Unfaithful

[9]What then? Are we better *than they?* Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.[†]

[10]As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;[†]

11*There is none who understands;*

There is none who seeks after God.

12*They have all turned aside;*

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”[a]

13*“Their throat is an open tomb;*

With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;[a]

“The poison of asps is under their lips”;[b]

14*“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”*[a]

15*“Their feet are swift to shed blood;*

16*Destruction and misery are in their ways;*

17*And the way of peace they have not known.”*[a]

18*“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*[a]

19Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.[†] 20Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.[†]

Righteousness in Christ Fulfills the Law

21But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,[†] 22even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all[a] who believe. For there is no difference; 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,[†] 24being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,[†] 25whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance

God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,[†] [26]to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.[†]

[27]Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.[†] [28]Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. [29]Or *is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, [30]since *there is* one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. [31]Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Abraham, Model of Faith

4 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?[a][†] [2]For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. [3]For what does the Scripture say? *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a] [4]Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

[5]But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, [6]just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:[†]

[7]*"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,*

And whose sins are covered;

[8]*Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."*[a]

[9]*Does* this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only,* or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. [10]How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. [11]And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,[†] [12]and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

Abraham's Children: Faithful Believers

[13]For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.[†] [14]For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, [15]because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

[16]Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all [17](as it is written, *“I have made you a father of many nations”*[a]) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; [18]who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, *“So shall your descendants be.”*[a] [19]And not

being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. [20]He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, [21]and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. [22]And therefore *“it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*[a]

[23]Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, [24]but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, [25]who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.[†]

Righteousness as a Living Reality

5 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have[a] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,[†] [2]through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3]And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; [4]and perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5]Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.[†]

[6]For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.[†] [7]For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. [8]But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9]Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be

saved from wrath through Him. [10]For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.[†] [11]And not only *that,* but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

For most of church history, salvation was seen as comprehending all of life: Christians believed in Christ, were baptized, and were nurtured in their salvation in the Church. Key doctrines of the faith centered around the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, the atonement.

In Western Europe during the sixteenth century and before, however, justifiable concern arose among the Reformers over a prevailing understanding that salvation depended on human works of merit, and not on the grace and mercy of God. Their rediscovery of Romans 5 lead to the slogan *sola fides*: justification by *faith alone*.

This Reformation debate in the West raised the question for the Orthodox East: Why this new polarization of faith and works? It had been settled since the apostolic era that salvation was granted by the mercy of God to righteous men and women. Those baptized into Christ were called to believe in Him *and* do good works. An opposition of faith *versus* works was unprecedented in Orthodox thought.

The Orthodox understanding of justification differs from the Protestant in several ways.

1*Justification and the new covenant*. When Orthodox Christians approach the doctrine of salvation, the discussion centers around the new covenant. Justification—being or becoming righteous—by faith in God is part of being brought into a covenant relationship with Him. Whereas Israel was under the old covenant, in which salvation came through faith as revealed in the law, the Church is under the new covenant. Salvation comes through faith in Christ, who fulfills the law. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, leading us to the knowledge of God the Father. Rather than justification as a legal acquittal before God, Orthodox believers see justification by faith as a covenant relationship with Him, centered in union with Christ (Rom 6:1–6).

2 *Justification and God's mercy*. Orthodoxy emphasizes it is first God's mercy—not our faith—that saves us. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:1, 2). It is God who initiates or makes the new covenant with us.

3 *Justification by faith is dynamic, not static*. For Orthodox Christians, faith is living, dynamic, continuous—never static or merely point-in-time. Faith is not something a Christian exercises only at one critical moment, expecting it to cover all the rest of his life. True faith is not just a decision, it's a way of life. Thus, the Orthodox Christian sees salvation in at least three aspects: (a) I have been saved, being joined to Christ in Holy Baptism; (b) I am being saved, growing in Christ through the sacramental life of the Church; and (c) I will be saved, by the mercy of God at the Last Judgment.

Justification by faith, though not the major New Testament doctrine for Orthodox as it is for Protestants, poses no problem. But justification by faith *alone* brings up an objection. It contradicts Scripture, which says, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (Jam 2:24). We are “justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:28), but nowhere does the Bible say we are justified by faith “alone.” On the contrary, “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (Jam 2:17).

As Christians we are no longer under the demands of the Old Testament law (Rom 3:20), for Christ has fulfilled the law (Gal 2:21; 3:5, 24). By God’s mercy, we are brought into a new covenant relationship with Him. We who believe are granted entrance into His Kingdom by His grace. Through His mercy, we are justified by faith and empowered by God for good works or deeds of righteousness that bring glory to Him.

Reign of Sin, Reign of Grace

[12]Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—[†] [13](For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.[†] [14]Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.[†] [15]But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.[†] [16]And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in

condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification. [17]For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

[18]Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life.[†] [19]For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.[†]

[20]Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,[†] [21]so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Baptism: Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

6 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?[†] [2]Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?[†] [3]Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?[†] [ω] [4]Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

[5]For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, [†] [6]knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be

done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.[†] [7]For he who has died has been freed from sin.[†] [8]Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,[†] [9]knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. [10]For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.[†] [11]Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.[†]

[12]Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.[†] [13]And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.[†] [14]For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

HOLY BAPTISM

What is baptism? Simply put, baptism is our death, burial, and resurrection in union with Jesus Christ. It is a rite of passage, given by Christ to the Church as an entrance into the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

The apostle Paul describes the promise of God in this “mystery,” as most Orthodox call it, most succinctly when he writes, “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). To baptize (Gr. *baptizo*) literally means “to immerse, to put into.” Historically, the Orthodox Church has baptized by triple immersion, “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19).

In the Old Testament, baptism was pictured by the passage of God’s people with Moses through the Red Sea (1Co 10:1, 2). John the Baptist, the last prophet of the old covenant, baptized in water for repentance (Mk 1:4; Acts 19:4). Jesus received John’s baptism, thereby transforming the water and baptism itself. In the new covenant, baptism is the means by which we enter the Kingdom of God (Jn 3:5), are joined to Christ (Rom. 6:3), and are granted the remission of our sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

What results from baptism? From the start, the Church has understood baptism as:

1 *A first and second dying*. Our first dying with Christ in baptism was our death with Him on the Cross. In the fourth century, St. Cyril of Jerusalem instructed his new converts, “You were led by the hand to the holy pool of divine baptism . . . and each of you was asked if he believed in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And you made that saving confession, you descended into the water and came up again three times. In the very same moment you died and were born.”

The second death of baptism is continual—dying to sin daily as we walk in newness of life. St. Paul writes to the Colossians concerning baptism (Col 2:12) and concludes by saying, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5).

2 *The resurrection of righteousness*. This is our life in Christ, our new birth and entrance into God’s Kingdom (Jn 3:3), our “newness of life” (Rom 6:4). It is our being joined to Christ in His glorified humanity and indwelt by God Himself (Jn 14:23). Our relationship with God is not something static, a legal fiction given to us by a Divine Judge. Rather, this is a dynamic and real life in Christ, holding the promise of everlasting life. Our resurrection to new life now forms a prelude to the resurrection of our body at Christ’s second coming.

3 *An intimate and continual communion with God*. We are raised to new life for a purpose: union and communion with God. In this sense, baptism is the beginning of eternal life. For this reason, Peter writes that baptism now saves us (1Pt 3:21)—it is not the mere removal of dirt from our bodies, but provides us with “a good conscience toward God.”

Because of these promises, the priest prays for the newly baptized, thanking God, “who have given us, unworthy though we be, blessed purification through holy water, and divine sanctification through life-giving chrismation, and who now also have been pleased to bring new life to Your servant newly illuminated by water and the Spirit, and granted remission of sins—voluntary and involuntary.”

Baptism: Freedom from Sin Under Grace

[15]What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not![†] [16]Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?[†]

[17]But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.† [18]And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.† [19]I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness.†

[20]For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.† [21]What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.† [22]But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.† [23]For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.†

Baptism: Freedom from Law, Union with Christ

7 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?† [2]For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. [3]So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. [4]Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. [5]For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.[†] [6]But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Sin Uses What Is Holy to Produce Death

[7]What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, *"You shall not covet."*[a†] [8]But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of* evil desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. [9]I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. [10]And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. [11]For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*. [12]Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

The Flesh Uses What Is Good to Produce Sin

[13]Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.[†] [14]For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. [15]For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. [16]If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. [17]But now, *it is* no longer I who do it,

but sin that dwells in me.[†] [18]For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find.[†] [19]For the good that I will *to do,* I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do,* that I practice. [20]Now if I do what I will not *to do,* it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.[†]

[21]I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. [22]For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. [23]But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. [24]O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?[†] [25]I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord![†]

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

The Spirit Defeats Sin and the Flesh

8 *There* is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[a] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.[†] [2]For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. [3]For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,[†] [4]that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5]For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.[†] [6]For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. [7]Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. [8]So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

[9]But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.[†] [10]And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.[†] [11]But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The Spirit Conveys Divine Sonship

[12]Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [13]For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.[†] [14]For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.[†] [15]For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”[†] [16]The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17]and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.[†]

The Spirit Assists Us Through Suffering

[18]For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.[†] [19]For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. [20]For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; [21]because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.[†] [22]For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. [23]Not only *that,* but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. [24]For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?[†] [25]But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

[26]Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us[a] with groanings which cannot be uttered.[†] [27]Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is,* because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

The Father Ensures Our Destiny

[28]And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.[†] [ω] [29]For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. [30]Moreover whom He

predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

The Father's Love Triumphs in Christ

31What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?† 32He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. 34Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36As it is written:

> *"For Your sake we are killed all day long;*
>
> *We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*[a]

37Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,† 39nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Unbelief of the Jews Despite God's Blessings

9 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,† 2that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen[a] according to the flesh, [4]who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of God*, and the promises; [5]of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

IS GOD FAITHFUL TO ISRAEL?

In the early chapters of Romans (1—8), Paul expounds the gospel of God's righteousness for the salvation of all who believe in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. In the middle chapters of the epistle (9—11), he grapples with the perplexing theme of the Jews' unbelief in their own promised Messiah. This matter not only causes Paul great anguish, but also raises questions about God's faithfulness to the Jewish people.

An accusation was circulating in the first century that God had not kept His promises to Israel—that He had unjustly abandoned His chosen people in favor of idol-worshipping Gentiles. Although many Jews believed in Christ, the majority of the Jewish people adhered to their old leaders and traditions. Meanwhile, increasing numbers of Gentiles were becoming Christians.

How was one to view these developments? What was God's plan for Jews and Gentiles in this decisive period of the history of salvation? Why were most Jews unresponsive or opposed to the gospel while Gentiles were becoming the majority in the young Church?

Paul’s letter to the Romans indicates how important such questions were to Christians in the sixth decade of the first century. Has God been fair to Israel? Paul’s conclusion is yes: He has been faithful to Israel, and through them to the Gentiles. God’s unchanging faithfulness is seen in several ways.

1 *Through Paul* (Rom 9:1–3). God miraculously saved the Jewish zealot Saul (Acts 9:1–22), who later, as Paul the Apostle, confesses, “I am indeed a Jew” (Acts 22:3). The faithfulness of God to Israel and to the Gentiles is witnessed “in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 9:1) through Paul, who is even willing to be “accursed from Christ” (9:3) if by that Israel could be saved.

2 *Through Providence* (Rom 9:4, 5). God the Father shows His sovereign care for both Israel and the Gentiles through bestowing on them His adoption, glory, covenants, law, service (Gr. *latreia*, a reference to proper worship) and promises. The gospel itself came to “the Jew first” (Rom 1:16) and then to the Gentile.

3 *Through the patriarchs* (Rom 9:6–13). God has been faithful to Israel and thus to the Gentiles through His servants Abraham (v. 7), Isaac (v. 10), and Jacob (v. 13). As Isaac’s birth came by the promise of God (vv. 6–9), so the new birth comes to us by His promise. For just as it was possible to be in the nation of Israel but not truly a child of God, so being born into a Christian home, church, and culture does not *de facto* guarantee our faithfulness. We must, like Isaac, be born of God’s promise. For the Christian this new birth comes from the watery womb of baptism, with the injunction that we grow to serve the Lord with all our heart, mind, and strength.

4 *Through the prophets* (Rom 9:14–29). Beginning with Moses (v. 15) and including Hosea (vv. 25, 26) and Isaiah (vv. 27–29), the prophets reveal God’s faithfulness in His sovereign mercy and election of His faithful—Jew and Gentile alike. The “potter” has “power over the clay” (v. 21) “that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy” (v. 23).

We therefore conclude that God is faithful to Israel as He is to the Gentiles. But we also see that to benefit from His faithfulness to us, we must be faithful to Him.

God Is Sovereign, Faithful to Israel

[6]But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel,[†] [7]nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, *“In Isaac your seed shall be called.”*[a] [8]That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. [9]For this *is* the word of promise: *“At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.”*[a]

[10]And not only *this,* but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, *even* by our father Isaac[†] [11](for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), [12]it was said to her, *“The older shall serve the younger.”*[a] [13]As it is written, *“Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”*[a]

God Is Just in His Choice

[14]What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not![†] [15]For He says to Moses, *“I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”*[a] [16]So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. [17]For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, *“For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”*[a] [18]Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

[19]You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”[†] [20]But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, “Why have you made me like this?” [21]Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

[22]*What* if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,[†] [23]and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, [24]even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

[25]As He says also in Hosea:

“I will call them My people, who were not My people,

And her beloved, who was not beloved.”[a†]

[26]*“And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,*

‘You are not My people,’

There they shall be called sons of the living God.”[a]

[27]Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:[a]

“Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
The remnant will be saved.
[28]*For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,*
Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth.”[a]

[29]And as Isaiah said before:

“Unless the LORD of Sabaoth[a] *had left us a seed,*
We would have become like Sodom,
And we would have been made like Gomorrah.”[b]

Israel Pursues Self-Righteousness

[30]What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;[†] [31]but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.[a] [32]Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.[a] For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. [33]As it is written:

“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”[a]

10 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel[a] is that they may be saved.[†] [2]For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. [3]For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. [4]For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.[†]

God's Righteousness Is by Faith

[5]For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, *"The man who does those things shall live by them."*[a†] [6]But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, *"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' "*[a] (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) [7]or, *" 'Who will descend into the abyss?' "*[a] (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). [8]But what does it say? *"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"*[a] (that is, the word of faith which we preach): [9]that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.[†] [10]For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [11]For the Scripture says, *"Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*[a†] [12]For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. [13]For *"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*[a]

Israel Rejects, Gentiles Receive the Gospel

[14]How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?[†] [15]And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

> *"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,*[a]
>
> *Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*[b]

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, *“LORD, who has believed our report?”*[a] 17 So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

“Their sound has gone out to all the earth,

And their words to the ends of the world.”[a]

19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:

“I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation,

I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.”[a]

20 But Isaiah is very bold and says:

“I was found by those who did not seek Me;

I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”[a]

21 But to Israel he says:

“All day long I have stretched out My hands

To a disobedient and contrary people.”[a]

God Elects a Remnant of Israel

11 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.[†] 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 *“LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”*?[a] 4 But what does the divine response say to him? *"I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."*[a] [5]Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. [6]And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.[a] But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

[7]What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. [8]Just as it is written:

"God has given them a spirit of stupor,

Eyes that they should not see

And ears that they should not hear,

To this very day."[a]

[9]And David says:

"Let their table become a snare and a trap,

A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

[10]*Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see,*

And bow down their back always."[a]

Gentiles Are Being Saved

[11]I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles.[†] [12]Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

[13]For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, [14]if by any means I may provoke to

jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. [15]For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead?

God Will Yet Restore Israel

[16]For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy;* and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches.[†] [17]And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, [18]do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

[19]You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." [20]Well *said.* Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. [21]For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. [22]Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness,[a] if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. [23]And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. [24]For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches,* be grafted into their own olive tree?[†]

[25]For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part

has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.[†]
26And so all Israel will be saved,[a] as it is written:

> *“The Deliverer will come out of Zion,*
>
> *And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*
>
> 27*For this is My covenant with them,*
>
> *When I take away their sins.”*[a]

28Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. 30For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,[†] 31even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Doxology to God's Ways

33Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

> 34*“For who has known the mind of the* L*ORD*?
>
> *Or who has become His counselor?”*[a]
>
> 35*“Or who has first given to Him*
>
> *And it shall be repaid to him?”*[a]

36For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.[†]

Christian Renewal

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.[†] [2]And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.[†]

A Life of Unity in the Church

[3]For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.[†] [4]For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, [5]so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. [6]Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them:* if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; [7]or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; [8]he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

A Life of Mercy for All Men

[9]*Let* love *be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.[†] [10]*Be* kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; [11]not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; [12]rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; [13]distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

[14]Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. [15]Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. [16]Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

[17]Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. [18]If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. [19]Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"*[a] says the Lord.[†] [20]Therefore

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."[a]

[21]Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Duties to the State

13 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.[†] [2]Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. [3]For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. [4]For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil.[†] [5]Therefore *you* must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake.[†] [6]For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. [7]Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Love of Neighbor

[8]Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. [9]For the commandments, “*You shall not commit adultery,*” “*You shall not murder,*” “*You shall not steal,*” “*You shall not bear false witness,*”[a] “*You shall not covet,*”[b] and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”[c] [†] [10]Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

“The Day” Is at Hand

[11]And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed.[ω] [12]The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.[†] [13]Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. [14]But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

Christian Liberty in Serving God

14 Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things.[†] [2]For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. [3]Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. [4]Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

[5]One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. [6]He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord;[a] and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it*. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. [7]For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.[†] [8]For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. [9]For to this end Christ died and rose[a] and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. [10]But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.[a] [11]For it is written:

> *"As I live, says the Lord,*
>
> *Every knee shall bow to Me,*
>
> *And every tongue shall confess to God."*[a]

Loving Fellow Christians

[12]So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. [13]Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.[†]

[14]I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. [15]Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. [16]Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; [17]for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. [18]For he who serves Christ in these things[a] *is* acceptable to God and approved by men.

[19]Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another. [20]Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with offense. [21]*It is* good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.[a] [22]Do you have faith?[a] Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.[†] [23]But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not *eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.[a]

Christian Unity for God's Glory

15 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.[†] [2]Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification. [3]For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, *“The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”*[a] [4]For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.[†] [5]Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, [6]that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ's Priestly Work for Gentiles

[7]Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us,[a] to the glory of God. [8]Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, [9]and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written:

> *“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles,*
>
> *And sing to Your name.”*[a†]
>
> [10]And again he says:
>
> *“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”*[a]
>
> [11]And again:
>
> *“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles!*
>
> *Laud Him, all you peoples!”*[a]
>
> [12]And again, Isaiah says:
>
> *“There shall be a root of Jesse;*
>
> *And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,*
>
> *In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”*[a]

[13]Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's Missionary Work to the Gentiles

[14]Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.[a†] [15]Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, [16]that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.[†] [17]Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain* to God. [18]For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—[†] [19]in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. [20]And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,[†] [21]but as it is written:

> *“To whom He was not announced, they shall see;*
>
> *And those who have not heard shall understand.”*[a]

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

[22]For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. [23]But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, [24]whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you.[a] For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my

way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while. [25]But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. [26]For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. [27]It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.[†] [28]Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. [29]But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel[a] of Christ.

[30]Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, [31]that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, [32]that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. [33]Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Paul's Personal Greetings

16 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea,[†] [2]that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

[3]Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,[†] [4]who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also

all the churches of the Gentiles. [5]Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia[a] to Christ. [6]Greet Mary, who labored much for us.[ω] [7]Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.[†]

[8]Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. [9]Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. [10]Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus. [11]Greet Herodion, my countryman.[a] Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

[12]Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. [13]Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. [14]Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. [15]Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

[16]Greet one another with a holy kiss. The[a] churches of Christ greet you.

Warning About Divisive Teachers

[17]Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.[†] [18]For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus[a] Christ, but their own belly, and

by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. [19]For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. [20]And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Greetings from Paul's Friends

[21]Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

[22]I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord.[†]

[23]Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. [24]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.[a]

Benediction

[25]Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began[†] [26]but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— [27]to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.[a]

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The First Book of the Corinthians

Author—St. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles and the founder of the church at Corinth (Acts 18:1–11), is the undisputed author of this epistle.

Date—First Corinthians was probably written from Ephesus around AD 55, during Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 19:1–20:1).

Major Theme—*Communion with God versus communion with darkness*. We are created for communion (Gr. *koinonia*) with God and with each other. *Koinonia* is concretely experienced in the life of the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. But communion is not automatic; we pursue it. And while we may cooperate with evil, we are created to cooperate with God and with each other.

The subthemes of this epistle are found in the sections Paul writes to answer specific problems or concerns in the church.

1. *Factionalism (1:10–3:23)*
2. *Civil lawsuits (4:1–21; 6:1–8)*
3. *Sexual immorality (5:1–13; 6:9–7:40)*
4. *Meat sacrificed to idols (8:1–9:27)*
5. *Eucharistic theology and practice (10:1–11:34)*
6. *Spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)*
7. *Resurrection life (15:1–16:24)*

Background—There were a number of problems in the Corinthian church to which Paul responds in this letter. These problems include: (a) Church disunity. Many Corinthian Christians had broken into several factions based on improper loyalty to particular Christian leaders (1:12). (b) Doctrinal speculations. Erroneous teaching thrived in Corinth, particularly that of the gnostic variety. (c) Moral failure. The Corinthian church, free from persecution, became spiritually weak and succumbed to the moral failure the city was famous for. (d) Dealing with pagan religions. Christians in Corinth could not agree about how to respond to idolatry. (e) Self-centeredness and spiritual gifts. Corinth was brilliantly endowed with spiritual gifts, perhaps as the Holy Spirit's counter to the hedonism there. But the self-centeredness of the gifted ones brought dishonor to God.

The internal evidence of 1 and 2 Corinthians indicates Paul originally wrote two additional letters to the Corinthians which have now been lost: one before 1 Corinthians (see 5:9–11) and one between 1 and 2 Corinthians (the “sorrowful” letter; see 2Co 2:4–11; 7:8). The problems in Corinth were not quickly or easily solved.

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–9)

    A. Greeting (1:1–3)

    B. Thanksgiving for spiritual gifts (1:4–9)

II. Response to Reports Received (1:10–6:20)

    A. The church is one (1:10–4:21)

    B. The church is holy (5:1–6:20)

III. Response to Questions Asked (7:1–15:58)

- A. The church is catholic (7:1–14:40)
- B. The church is apostolic: the Resurrection (15:1–58)

IV. Conclusion (16:1–24)

- A. Collection for the Jerusalem church (16:1–4)
- B. Paul's plans (16:5–12)
- C. Exhortations, greetings, and benediction (16:13–24)

Greeting

1 Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,†

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:†

Thanksgiving for God's Grace at Corinth

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.†

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,† 5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,† 8 who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[9]God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.[†]

Reported Contentiousness in the Church

[10]Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.[†] [11]For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you.[†] [12]Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.”[†]

The Sacrament of Unity: Baptism

[13]Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?[†]

The Message of Unity: Exaltation of the Cross

[14]I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,[†] [15]lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.[†] [16]Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. [17]For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.[†]

[18]For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.[†] [ω] [19]For it is written:

> *“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,*
> *And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”*[a]

[20]Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? [21]For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. [22]For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;[†] [23]but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks[a] foolishness, [24]but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.[†] [25]Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

[26]For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. [27]But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; [28]and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,[†] [29]that no flesh should glory in His presence. [30]But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— [31]that, as it is written, *“He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”*[a]

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony[a] of God. [2]For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. [3]I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. [4]And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human[a] wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,[†] [5]that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Understanding Unity: Wisdom of the Spirit

[6]However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.[†] [7]But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, [8]which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.[†]

[9]But as it is written:

> *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*
>
> *Nor have entered into the heart of man*
>
> *The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*[a][†]

[10]But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.[†] [11]For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. [12]Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.[†]

[13]These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy[a] Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. [14]But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned. [15]But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. [16]For *"who has known the mind of the* LORD *that he may instruct Him?"*[a] But we have the mind of Christ.[†]

3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.[†] [2]I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it,* and even now you are still not able; [3]for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men? [4]For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I *am* of Apollos," are you not carnal?

Wisdom in the Apostolic Ministry

[5]Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? [6]I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.[†] [7]So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. [8]Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

[9]For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building.[†] [10]According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a

wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. [11]For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12]Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, [13]each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. [14]If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. [15]If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

[16]Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? [17]If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

Wisdom in Christ's Church

[18]Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.[†] [19]For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, *“He catches the wise in their own craftiness”*;[a] [20]and again, *“The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”*[a] [21]Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:[†] [22]whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. [23]And you *are* Christ's, and Christ *is* God's.

Wisdom in Spiritual Fatherhood

4 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. [2]Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. [3]But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court.[a] In fact, I do not even judge myself.[†] [4]For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. [5]Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

[6]Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.[†] [7]For who makes you differ *from another?* And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not received *it*?[†]

[8]You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you! [9]For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.[ω] [10]We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored![†] [11]To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. [12]And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;[†] [13]being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Appeal and Warning

[14]I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*.[†] [15]For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. [16]Therefore I urge you, imitate me. [17]For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

[18]Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.[†] [19]But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. [20]For the kingdom of God *is* not in word but in power. [21]What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Incest: The Church Must Be Pure

5 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named[a] among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife![†] [2]And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.[†] [3]For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. [4]In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,[†] [5]deliver such a one to

Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.[a†]

[6]Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?[†] [7]Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.[a] [8]Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

[9]I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.[†] [10]Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. [11]But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

[12]For what *have* I *to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?[†] [13]But those who are outside God judges. Therefore *“put away from yourselves the evil person.”*[a]

Lawsuits: The Church Has Discernment

6 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?[†] [2]Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?[†] [3]Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? [4]If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? [5]I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? [6]But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

[7]Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated?[†] [8]No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your* brethren! [9]Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,[a] nor sodomites,[†] [10]nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. [11]And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.[†]

Immorality: The Church Is a Temple

[12]All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.[†] [ω] [13]Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.[†] [14]And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

[15]Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not![†] [16]Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her?* For *"the two,"* He says, *"shall become one flesh."*[a] [17]But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him.*

[18]Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. [19]Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?[†] [20]For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body[a] and in your spirit, which are God's.

Concerning Marriage

7 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman.[†] [2]Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. [3]Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. [4]The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does.* And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does.*[†] [5]Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.[†] [6]But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. [7]For I wish that all men were even as

I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

[8]But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;[†] [9]but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn *with passion.*

[10]Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. [11]But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.[†]

[12]But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. [13]And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. [14]For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.[†] [15]But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*. But God has called us to peace. [16]For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?

[17]But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.[†] [18]Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. [19]Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of

God *is what matters.* [20]Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. [21]Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it.* [22]For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ's slave. [23]You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. [24]Brethren, let each one remain with God in that *state* in which he was called.

Concerning Virginity

[25]Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. [26]I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that *it is* good for a man to remain as he is:[†] [27]Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. [28]But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

[29]But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none,[†] [30]those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, [31]and those who use this world as not misusing *it.* For the form of this world is passing away.

[32]But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. [33]But he who is married

cares about the things of the world—how he may please *his* wife. [34]There is[a] a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please *her* husband. [35]And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

[36]But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry.[†] [37]Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin,[a] does well. [38]So then he who gives *her*[a] in marriage does well, but he who does not give *her* in marriage does better.

Concerning Widowhood

[39]A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.[†] [40]But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

Love Reigns Over Knowledge

8 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. [2]And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. [3]But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

[4]Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one.[†] [5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), [6]yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.[†]

[7]However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. [8]But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.[ω]

[9]But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. [10]For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? [11]And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? [12]But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. [13]Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

A Good Example: Paul's Rights

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?
9 Are you not my work in the Lord?[†] [2]If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.[†]

[3]My defense to those who examine me is this: [4]Do we have no right to eat and drink? [5]Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? [6]Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? [7]Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

[8]Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? [9]For it is written in the law of Moses, *“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.”*[a] Is it oxen God is concerned about? [10]Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. [11]If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things?[†] [12]If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more?

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. [13]Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of* the altar? [14]Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

Paul's Obligations

[15]But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. [16]For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! [17]For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. [18]What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ[a] without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

[19]For though I am free from all *men,* I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;[ω] [20]and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law,[a] that I might win those *who are* under the law; [21]to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God,[a] but under law toward Christ[b]), that I might win those *who are* without law; [22]to the weak I became as[a] weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men,* that I might by all means save some. [23]Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you.*

Paul's Spiritual Discipline

[24]Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it.*[†] [25]And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown.* [26]Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. [27]But I

discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

A Bad Example: Israel's Apostasy

10 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,[†] [ω] [2]all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,[†] [3]all ate the same spiritual food, [4]and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. [5]But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.[†]

[6]Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.[†] [7]And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, *"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."*[a] [8]Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; [9]nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; [10]nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. [11]Now all[a] these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

[12]Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. [13]No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,

but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

Worship Is Sacramental

[14]Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. [15]I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. [16]The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?[†] The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? [17]For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

[18]Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?[†] [19]What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?[†] [20]Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. [21]You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. [22]Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

Offend No Man, Glorify God

[23]All things are lawful for me,[a] but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me,[b] but not all things edify.[†] [24]Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*.

[25]Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;[†] [26]for "*the earth is the* L*ORD'S, and all its fullness.*"[a]

[27]If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner,* and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. [28]But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake;[a] for *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*[b] [29]"Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience? [30]But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for *the food* over which I give thanks?

[31]Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. [32]Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, [33]just as I also please all *men* in all *things,* not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

11 Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

The Conduct of Women

[2]Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you.[†] [3]But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God. [4]Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. [5]But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. [6]For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. [7]For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is

the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. [8]For man is not from woman, but woman from man. [9]Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. [10]For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels. [11]Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. [12]For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God.

[13]Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? [14]Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? [15]But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her[a] for a covering. [16]But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God.

Unity at the Eucharist

[17]Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you,* since you come together not for the better but for the worse.[†] [18]For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. [19]For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. [20]Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.[†] [21]For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others;* and one is hungry and another is drunk. [22]What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you.*

[23]For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread;[†] [24]and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat;[a] this is My body which is broken[b] for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” [25]In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

THE EUCHARIST

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks [Gr. *eucharistesas*], He broke *it* and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me” (1Co 11:23–25).

With these words—quoting the words of Christ in Luke 22:19, 20—St. Paul instructs the Corinthians concerning the Eucharist, the giving of thanks. Some two thousand years after Jesus gave Himself “for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51), there are in Christendom at least three different interpretations of His words.

For the first thousand years of Christian history, when the Church was visibly one and undivided, the holy gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ were received as just that: His Body and Blood. The Church confessed this was a mystery: The bread is truly His Body, that which is in the cup is truly His Blood, but one cannot say *how* they become so.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries brought on the scholastic era, the Age of Reason in the West. The Roman Church, which had become separated from the Orthodox Church in 1054, was pressed by the rationalists to define *how* the transformation occurs. They answered with the word *transubstantiation*, meaning a change of substance. The elements are no longer bread and wine; they are physically changed into flesh and blood. The sacrament, which only faith can comprehend, was subjected to a philosophical definition. This second view was unknown in the ancient Church.

Not surprisingly, one of the points of disagreement between Rome and the sixteenth-century reformers was this issue of transubstantiation. Unable to accept this explanation of the sacrament, the radical reformers, who were rationalists themselves, took up the opposite point of view: the gifts are nothing but bread and wine, period. They only represent Christ's Body and Blood; they have no spiritual reality. This third, symbol-only view helps explains the infrequency with which some Protestants partake of the Eucharist.

What do the Scriptures teach concerning the Eucharist?

1 Jesus said, "This *is* My body . . . this *is* My blood" (Lk 22:19, 20). He never says these gifts merely symbolize His Body and Blood. Critics have charged that Jesus also said of Himself, "I am the door" (Jn 10:7), and He certainly is not a seven-foot wooden plank. The flaw in that argument is obvious: at no time has the Church ever believed He was a literal door. But

she has always believed the consecrated gifts of bread and wine are truly His Body and Blood.

2 In the New Testament, those who receive Christ’s Body and Blood unworthily are said to bring condemnation upon themselves. “For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep” (literally, “are dead”; 1Co 11:30). A mere symbol, a quarterly reminder, could hardly have the power to cause sickness and death!

3 Historically, from New Testament days on, the central act of worship, the very apex of spiritual sacrifice, took place “on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread” (Acts 20:7). The Eucharist has always been that supreme act of thanksgiving and praise to God in His Church.

[26]For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

[27]Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood[a] of the Lord.[†] [28]But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.[†] [29]For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner[a] eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's[b] body.[†] [30]For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. [31]For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.[†] [32]But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

[33]Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.[†] [34]But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Spiritual Gifts

12 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:[†] [2]You know that[a] you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.[†] [3]Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.[†]

[4]There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.[†] [5]There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. [6]And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. [7]But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all:*[†] [8]for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,[†] [9]to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same[a] Spirit, [10]to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. [11]But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

[12]For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ.[†] [13]For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks,

whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into[a] one Spirit. [14]For in fact the body is not one member but many.[†]

[15]If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? [16]And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? [17]If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? [18]But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. [19]And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be?*

[20]But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. [21]And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." [22]No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. [23]And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, [24]but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, [25]that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. [26]And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it;* or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it.*[†]

Love, Superior to Gifts

[27]Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.[ω] [28]And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third

teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.[†] [29]*Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles? [30]Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? [31]But earnestly desire the best[a] gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

13 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.[†] [2]And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.[†] [3]And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor,* and though I give my body to be burned,[a] but have not love, it profits me nothing.[†]

[4]Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;[†] [5]does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; [6]does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; [7]bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

[8]Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away.[†] [9]For we know in part and we prophesy in part. [10]But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

[11]When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.[†] [12]For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

[13]And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

Prophecy, Superior to Tongues

14 Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.[†] [2]For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him;* however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.[†] [3]But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. [4]He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. [5]I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for[a] he who prophesies *is* greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

[6]But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? [7]Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? [8]For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? [9]So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is

spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. [10]There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them *is* without significance. [11]Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks *will be* a foreigner to me. [12]Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, *let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel.

[13]Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. [14]For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. [15]What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. [16]Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? [17]For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

[18]I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; [19]yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

[20]Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.[ω]

[21]In the law it is written:

“With men of other tongues and other lips

I will speak to this people;

And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,”[a] says the Lord.

[22]Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.[†] [23]Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? [24]But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. [25]And thus[a] the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.[†]

Order in Worship

[26]How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. [27]If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret. [28]But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. [29]Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. [30]But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. [31]For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. [32]And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. [33]For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

[34]Let your[a] women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says.[†] [35]And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

[36]Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached? [37]If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.[†] [38]But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.[a]

[39]Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. [40]Let all things be done decently and in order.

Witnesses to the Resurrection

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, [2]by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

[3]For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,[†] [4]and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, [†] [5]and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.[†] [6]After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. [7]After that He was seen by James,

then by all the apostles. [8]Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

[9]For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [10]But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. [11]Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

The Centrality of the Resurrection

[12]Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?[†] [13]But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. [14]And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. [15]Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. [16]For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. [17]And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! [18]Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19]If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

The Resurrection and the Kingdom

[20]But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.[†] [ω] [21]For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. [22]For as in Adam all die, even so in

Christ all shall be made alive.[†] [23]But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. [24]Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.[†] [25]For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. [26]The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death. [27]For *"He has put all things under His feet."*[a] But when He says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is* evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. [28]Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

[29]Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?[†] [30]And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? [31]I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. [32]If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage *is it* to me? If *the* dead do not rise, *"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"*[a†]

[33]Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." [34]Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.

The Manner of the Resurrection

[35]But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"[†] [36]Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. [37]And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be,

but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other *grain.* [38]But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

[39]All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there is* one *kind of* flesh[a] of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, *and* another of birds.

[40]*There are* also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another. [41]*There is* one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.

The One Who Resurrects Us

[42]So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. [43]It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. [44]It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. [45]And so it is written, *“The first man Adam became a living being.”*[a] The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.[†]

[46]However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. [47]The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord[a] from heaven. [48]As *was* the *man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *Man*, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly. [49]And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear[a] the image of the heavenly *Man.*

The Time of the Resurrection

[50]Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.[†] [51]Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— [52]in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53]For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

Hymn: Triumph Over Death

[54]So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: *"Death is swallowed up in victory."*[a]

[55]*"O Death, where is your sting?*[a]
O Hades, where is your victory?"[b]

[56]The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law.[†] [57]But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[58]Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.[†]

Collection for Jerusalem

16 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:[†] [2]On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. [3]And when I come, whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. [4]But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

Paul's Plans

[5]Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). [6]And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. [7]For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.

[8]But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. [9]For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are* many adversaries.

[10]And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. [11]Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.

[12]Now concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.

Final Exhortations and Greetings

[13]Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. [14]Let all *that* you *do* be done with love.

[15]I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints— [16]that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with *us*.

[17]I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied.[†] [18]For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

[19]The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.[†] [20]All the brethren greet you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

[21]The salutation with my own hand—Paul's.[†]

[22]If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.[a] O Lord, come![b]

[23]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. [24]My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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The Second Book of the Corinthians

Author—St. Paul the Apostle is identified as the author in 1:1, and there is no reason to doubt his authorship.

Date—Second Corinthians was written the same year as 1 Corinthians (c. AD 55) from Macedonia, where Titus rejoined Paul with a report about the Corinthian church.

Major Theme—*Reconciliation and communion*. This theme is clearly seen in Paul's attempt to be reconciled to the Corinthian church. Other aspects of this theme include:

1. *The communion of saints.* The Church is the Body of Christ: a corporate unity of all members in all things (see especially chs. 4–6).
2. *Apostleship and the Church.* The faith and authority of properly ordained and recognized apostles is essential to the life of the Church. The relationship between the apostles and the laity is a communion of love.
3. *The unity of the Church.* The collection for Jerusalem (chs. 8; 9) demonstrates the love and unity between the Gentile and the Judaic elements in the Church—manifested in sacrificial giving.
4. *The Church and the world.* Christianity does not renounce and forsake the world, but renews it.

Background—For the historical setting of 2 Corinthians, see the Introduction to 1 Corinthians.

A major purpose of this second epistle is Paul's defense of his apostleship and his polemic against false apostles in Corinth. Outsiders have shown up in Corinth calling themselves “the most eminent apostles” (11:5; 12:11) or “super-apostles.” They claim to be better than Paul, alleging that he does not measure up (13:5–7). They seek to prove Paul an impostor, bringing all kinds of outrageous charges against him. In their preaching they elevate themselves (4:5) and present a different gospel from Paul's (11:4). They teach that Christians must have exalted spiritual experiences and lead successful, painless lives, and should not be concerned about moral purity and holiness (6:14–7:1).

Paul perceives all this false teaching as a vain, earthly show, having nothing to do with God, the gospel, or the Kingdom (5:11–19). He reveals the false apostles as agents of Satan (4:3, 4; 6:15; 11:3, 13–15).

Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1, 2)
- II. Paul's Reconciliation to the Corinthian Church (1:3–7:16)
    - A. Thanksgiving for comfort in affliction (1:3–11)
    - B. Is Paul sincere? (1:12–2:17)
    - C. Is Paul's competent? (3:1–6:10)
    - D. Paul's plea to the Corinthians (6:11–7:4)
    - E. Paul's confidence in the Corinthians (7:5–16)
- III. The Reconciliation of Gentile and Jew (8:1–9:15)
    - A. The motivation of mutuality (8:1–15)
    - B. The means: envoys recommended (8:16–9:5)
    - C. Results: a homily on cheerful giving (9:6–15)
- IV. Paul's Vindication from Enemy Charges (10:1–12:13)
    - A. Is Paul weak? (10:1–11)
    - B. Is Paul ambitious? (10:12–18)

    C. Is Paul as good as the false apostles? (11:1–15)

    D. Is Paul qualified to be an apostle? (11:16–12:13)

  V. The Resolution: Paul's Next Visit (12:14–13:10)

  VI. Conclusion (13:11–14)

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

[2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sharing Suffering, Sharing Comfort

[3]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,[†] [4]who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. [5]For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. [6]Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.[†] [7]And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also *you will partake* of the consolation.

Sharing in Adversity by Prayer

[8]For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.[†] [9]Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, [10]who delivered us from so great a death, and does[a] deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver *us*, [11]you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our[a] behalf for the gift *granted* to us through many.

Paul's Pure Conscience Toward Corinth

[12]For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. [13]For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end[†] [14](as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul Does Not Vacillate

[15]And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit— [†] [16]to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. [17]Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? [18]But *as* God *is* faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. [19]For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among

you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.[†] [20]For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.[†] [21]Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God,[†] [22]who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Paul Is Merciful

[23]Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.[†] [24]Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

2 But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. [2]For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

[3]And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. [4]For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.[†]

Restore the Penitent Offender

[5]But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe.[†] [6]This punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority *is* sufficient for such a man, [7]so that, on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive and comfort *him,* lest perhaps such a one be

swallowed up with too much sorrow. [8]Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him. [9]For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. [10]Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one[a] for your sakes in the presence of Christ, [11]lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

God Triumphs in His Apostles

[12]Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, [13]I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

[14]Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.[†] [15]For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. [16]To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? [17]For we are not, as so many,[a] peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Paul's Letter of Recommendation

3 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you?[†] [2]You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;[†] [3]clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is,* of the heart.

Paul's Sufficiency: The Life-Giving Spirit

[4]And we have such trust through Christ toward God.[†] [5]Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, [6]who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit;[a] for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Paul's Ministry: The Glory of God

[7]But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away,[†] [8]how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? [9]For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. [10]For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. [11]For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious.

Paul's Relationship with God

[12]Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech — [13]unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. [14]But

their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. [15]But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. [16]Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.[†] [17]Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is,* there *is* liberty.[†] [18]But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul's Faithfulness to the Gospel

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.[†] [2]But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. [3]But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,[†] [4]whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. [5]For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.[†] [6]For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Power of an Apostle

[7]But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.[†] [8]*We are* hard-pressed on every side,

yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;[†] [9]persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— [10]always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. [11]For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. [12]So then death is working in us, but life in you.

[13]And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, *"I believed and therefore I spoke,"*[a] we also believe and therefore speak, [14]knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present *us* with you. [15]For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Seeing the Unseen

[16]Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.[†] [17]For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,[†] [18]while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.[†]

The Hope of the Resurrection

5 For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.[†] [ω] [2]For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, [3]if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. [4]For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. [5]Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.[†]

[6]So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. [7]For we walk by faith, not by sight. [8]We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Apostolic Motivation: Fearing and Loving God

[9]Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. [10]For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.[†] [11]Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.[†]

[12]For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. [13]For if we are beside ourselves, *it is* for God; or if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you. [14]For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all

died; [15]and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Apostolic Vision: The New Creation

[16]Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no longer.[†] [17]Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Apostolic Ministry: Reconciliation

[18]Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,[†] [19]that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

[20]Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. [21]For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The Marks of Apostleship

6 We then, *as* workers together *with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain.[†] [ω] [2]For He says:

> *"In an acceptable time I have heard you,*
>
> *And in the day of salvation I have helped you."*[a]

Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

[3]We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. [4]But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, [5]in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; [6]by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, [7]by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, [8]by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; [9]as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed; [10]as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

A Plea for Holiness

[11]O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.[†] [12]You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your *own* affections. [13]Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

[14]Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?[†] [15]And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? [16]And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you[a] are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.”[b]

[17]Therefore

“Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.”[a†]
[18]*“I will be a Father to you,*
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD *Almighty.”*[a]

7 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.[†]

[2]Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. [3]I do not say *this* to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. [4]Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

Desire and Diligence

[5]For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. [6]Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the

coming of Titus, [7]and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

[8]For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. [9]Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.[†] [10]For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. [11]For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing *of yourselves*, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. [12]Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did* not *do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

[13]Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. [14]For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. [15]And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. [16]Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

Models to Imitate

8 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:[†] [2]that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. [3]For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, [4]imploring us with much urgency that we would receive[a] the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. [5]And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God.[†] [6]So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. [7]But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—*see* that you abound in this grace also.

[8]I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. [9]For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.[†]

The Ideal of Mutual Giving

[10]And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; [11]but now you also must complete the doing *of it;* that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it,* so *there* also *may be* a completion out of what *you* have. [12]For if there is first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to what one has, *and* not according to what he does not have.

[13]For *I do* not *mean* that others should be eased and you burdened; [14]but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may *supply* your lack—that there may be equality. [15]As it is written, *“He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.”*[a]

Accountability for This Collection

[16]But thanks *be* to God who puts[a] the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. [17]For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. [18]And we have sent with him the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches, [19]and not only *that,* but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and *to show* your ready mind, [20]avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us— [21]providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

[22]And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which *we have* in you. [23]If *anyone inquires* about Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren *are inquired about, they are* messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. [24]Therefore show to them, and[a] before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.[†]

9 Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; [2]for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. [3]Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready;[†] [4]lest if *some* Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.[a] [5]Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which *you had* previously promised, that it may be ready as *a matter of* generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

Cheerful Giving

[6]But this *I say:* He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.[†] [7]*So let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. [8]And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things,* may have an abundance for every good work. [9]As it is written:

“He has dispersed abroad,

He has given to the poor;

His righteousness endures forever.”[a]

[10]Now may[a] He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, [11]while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality,

which causes thanksgiving through us to God. [12]For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, [13]while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men*, [14]and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. [15]Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!

Spiritual Warfare

10 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence *am* lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.[†] [2]But I beg *you* that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. [3]For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.[†] [4]For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,[†] [5]casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, [6]and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Paul's Authority in Christ

[7]Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he *is* Christ's, even so we *are* Christ's.[a†] [8]For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us[a]

for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed— [9]lest I seem to terrify you by letters. [10]"For *his* letters," they say, "*are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible." [11]Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *we will* also *be* in deed when we are present.

The Sphere of Labor

[12]For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.[†] [13]We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. [14]For we are not overextending ourselves (as though *our authority* did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; [15]not boasting of things beyond measure, *that is,* in other men's labors, but having hope, *that* as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, [16]to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

[17]But *"he who glories, let him glory in the Lord."*[a] [18]For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Paul Preaches the True Gospel

11 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me.[†] [2]For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. [3]But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity[a] that is in Christ. [4]For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it![†]

[5]For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. [6]Even though *I am* untrained in speech, yet *I am* not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested[a] among you in all things.

Serving out of Love

[7]Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge?[†] [8]I robbed other churches, taking wages *from them* to minister to you. [9]And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep *myself.* [10]As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. [11]Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!

[12]But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. [13]For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.[†] [14]And

no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. [15]Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Paul's Reluctant Boasting

[16]I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little.[†] [17]What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. [18]Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. [19]For you put up with fools gladly, since you *yourselves* are wise! [20]For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours *you*, if one takes *from you*, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. [21]To *our* shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.[ω]

Jewish and Christian Credentials

[22]Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I.[†] [23]Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. [24]From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. [25]Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; [26]*in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; [27]in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and

thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— [28]besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. [29]Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation?*

[30]If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. [31]The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. [32]In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; [33]but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

Paul's Visions

12 It is doubtless[a] not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:[†] [2]I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. [3]And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— [4]how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. [5]Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. [6]For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

A Thorn in the Flesh

[7]And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.[†] [8]Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. [9]And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10]Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul's Miracles

[11]I have become a fool in boasting;[a] you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.[†] [12]Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. [13]For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

A Love Rejected

[14]Now *for* the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. [15]And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.[†]

[16]But be that *as it may,* I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! [17]Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? [18]I urged Titus, and sent our brother with *him.* Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did *we* not *walk* in the same steps?

[19]Again, do you think[a] that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But *we do* all things, beloved, for your edification. [20]For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;[†] [21]lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

Resolution: A Coming Visit

13 This *will be* the third *time* I am coming to you. *"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."*[a] [2]I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write[a] to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare— [3]since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. [4]For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

[5]Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.[†] [6]But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

[7]Now I[a] pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified. [8]For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. [9]For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete. [10]Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

Greetings and Benediction

[11]Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

[12]Greet one another with a holy kiss.[†]

[13]All the saints greet you.

[14]The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.[†]

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The Book of Galatians

Author—St. Paul the Apostle.

Date—The references to time and place in Galatians are unclear; therefore its exact historical setting and date are uncertain.

Major Theme— *The true gospel versus the false gospel*. After initially believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ as a gift of God, many in Galatia had turned to the teaching of the Jewish legalizers, who claimed that Christians must also follow the laws of the Old Covenant. Paul writes to call them back to “the grace of Christ” (1:6). Subthemes include:

1. *A defense of Paul's apostolic authority (1:1–2:21*)
2. *The gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church (5:1–6:18*)
3. *The Cross of Christ*
4. *The life of faith*

Background—St. Paul had established churches in a number of cities in the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor. This is the only New Testament letter Paul addressed to a group of churches (1:2).

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–10)

  A. Greeting (1:1, 2)

  B. The true gospel versus the false gospel (1:3–10)

II. The Apostolic Authority of the True Gospel (1:11–2:14)

  A. The call to apostleship (1:11–24)

    - B. Apostles are guided by councils (2:1–10)
    - C. Apostles are guided by conscience (2:11–14)
- III. The Content of the True Gospel (2:15–4:31)
    - A. Jesus Christ and faith (2:15–21)
    - B. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (3:1–14)
    - C. Jesus Christ and sonship (3:15–4:31)
- IV. Living in the True Gospel (5:1–6:10)
    - A. The liberty of the Spirit (5:1–12)
    - B. Living in the love of the Spirit (5:13–6:10)
- V. Concluding Remarks (6:11–18)
    - A. The rule of faith (6:11–17)
    - B. Benediction (6:18)

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),[†] [2]and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

Warning: True Gospel versus False Gospel

[3]Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,[†] [4]who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, [5]to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

[6]I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,[†] [7]which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. [8]But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. [9]As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

[10]For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

God's Call: Paul the Apostle

[11]But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.[†] [12]For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.[†]

[13]For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it.[†] [14]And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

[15]But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, [16]to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, [17]nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Paul's Gospel: That of the Twelve

[18]Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,[a] and remained with him fifteen days.[†] [19]But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.[†] [20](Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

[21]Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. [22]And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. [23]But they were hearing only, “He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy.” [24]And they glorified God in me.[†]

The Apostles in Jerusalem: One Doctrine

2 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with *me.* [2]And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.[†] [3]Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. [4]And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),[†] [5]to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

[6]But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me.[†] [7]But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been

committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter[†] [8](for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),[†] [9]and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised[†] . [10]*They desired* only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.[†]

True Apostles Are Correctable

[11]Now when Peter[a] had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;[†] [12]for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.[†] [13]And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

The Source of Faith Is Christ

[14]But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you[a] compel Gentiles to live as Jews?[b†] [15]We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,[†] [16]knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.[†]

[17]“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not![†] [18]For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.[†] [19]For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.[†] [20]I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.[†] [21]I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain.”[†]

The Life of Faith Is in the Spirit

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth,[a] before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you[b] as crucified?[†] [2]This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [3]Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? [4]Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

Faith Brings Sonship

[5]Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— [6]just as Abraham “*believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*”[a†] [7]Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. [8]And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying*, “*In you all the nations shall be blessed.*”[a] [9]So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Free from the Curse

[10]For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, *“Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”*[a†] [11]But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for *“the just shall live by faith.”*[a] [12]Yet the law is not of faith, but *“the man who does them shall live by them.”*[a†]

[13]Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, *“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”*[a]),[†] [14]that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.[†]

Sonship: Promise, Not Law

[15]Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though *it is* only a man's covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.[†] [16]Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, *“And to your Seed,”*[a] who is Christ. [17]And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ,[a] that it should make the promise of no effect. [18]For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

The Law Our Tutor

[19]What purpose then *does* the law *serve?* It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.[†] [20]Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only*, but God is one.[†]

[21]*Is* the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. [22]But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.[†] [23]But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.[ω] [24]Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [25]But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Sonship by Faith and Baptism

[26]For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.[†] [27]For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. [28]There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.[†] [29]And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Sons of God Through Christ and the Spirit

4 Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,[†] [2]but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. [3]Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.[†] [4]But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born[a] of a woman, born under the law,[†] [ω] [5]to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

[6]And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”[†] [7]Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of[a] God through Christ.

The Danger of the Law

[8]But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. [9]But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? [10]You observe days and months and seasons and years.[†] [11]I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

[12]Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you. You have not injured me at all. [13]You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.[†] [14]And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.[†] [15]What[a] then was the blessing you *enjoyed?* For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. [16]Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

[17]They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. [18]But it is good to be zealous in a

good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. [19]My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, [20]I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

An Allegory: Slavery and Sonship

[21]Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?[†] [22]For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.[ω] [23]But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, [24]which things are symbolic. For these are the[a] two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— [25]for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— [26]but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. [27]For it is written:

"Rejoice, O barren,

You who do not bear!

Break forth and shout,

You who are not in labor!

For the desolate has many more children

Than she who has a husband."[a]

[28]Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was,* are children of promise. [29]But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now. [30]Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "*Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the*

bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”[a] [31]So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.[†]

Liberty of the Spirit

5 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free,[a] and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.[†] [2]Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. [3]And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. [4]You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. [5]For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.[†] [6]For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.[†]

Liberty of the Apostles

[7]You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? [8]This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you. [9]A little leaven leavens the whole lump. [10]I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

[11]And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. [12]I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

War Against the Flesh

[13]For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.[†] [14]For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*[a] [15]But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

[16]I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.[†] [17]For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. [18]But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

[19]Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery,[a] fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, [20]idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, [21]envy, murders,[a] drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[22]But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,[ω] [23]gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. [24]And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. [25]If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. [26]Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.[†]

Do Good to All

6 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.[†] [2]Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.[†] [3]For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. [4]But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. [5]For each one shall bear his own load.

[6]Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.[†]

[7]Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. [8]For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. [9]And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. [10]Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

The Rule of Faith

[11]See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! [12]As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.[†] [13]For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. [14]But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.[†] [15]For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.[†]

[16]And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.[†]

[17]From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.[†]

Benediction

[18]Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

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The Book of Ephesians

Author—Some have cited differences in style, vocabulary, and doctrinal emphasis between Ephesians and other Pauline epistles to dispute Paul's authorship of Ephesians. However, the epistle itself claims to be written by Paul (1:1), and the Church has recognized Paul as the author, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Because Paul dictated some of his letters, differences in content and style would be expected.

Date—Paul probably wrote Ephesians from Rome during his imprisonment in AD 61–63, as recorded in Acts 28:16–31.

Major Theme—*The riches of Christ in the Church.* The mystery of salvation in the Church, the body of Christ, is not only for all mankind but for all creation, affecting this age and the age to come. The body of Christ is the center and life of all. Subthemes include:

1. *The work of the Holy Trinity in our salvation (1:3–14, 17; 2:18, 22; 3:4, 5, 14–17, 20, 21; 4:3–6; 5:18–21)*
2. *The blessings of Christ to the Church (1:1–3:21)*
3. *Our response to God's grace (4:1–6:24)*
4. *God's strength for spiritual warfare (1:19–2:10; 4:17–31; 6:10–18)*

Background—Some of the early manuscripts do not have “in Ephesus” in verse 1. Further, the content of Ephesians is general, which gives it the character of a book rather than a letter. It includes no personal greetings, although it is addressed to a city where Paul had spent two and a half years in the midfifties AD (Acts 19:8, 10; 20:17, 31). It is probable, then, that this letter was intended not just for the Ephesians, but also for circulation among the churches of western Asia Minor that Paul had founded from Ephesus during his third missionary journey. It is possible

Ephesians is the “letter to the Laodiceans” mentioned in Colossians 4:16.

Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1, 2)
- II. Praise of God's Plan for the World (1:3–23)
  - A. The creative sovereignty of the Father (1:3–6)
  - B. The redemptive administration of the Son (1:7–12)
  - C. The perfecting faithfulness of the Spirit (1:13, 14)
  - D. A prayer for revelation (1:15–23)
- III. Theology of Christ and His Church (2:1–3:21)
  - A. Salvation as a gift for all (2:1–10)
  - B. The church as one household for all (2:11–22)
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  - D. A prayer for the deification of the Church (3:14–21)
- IV. Conduct of the Body of Christ (4:1–6:20)
  - A. As the body of Christ (4:1–16)
  - B. As children of God (4:17–5:5)
  - C. As partakers of light (5:6–21)
  - D. As families in the Church (5:22–6:9)
  - E. As soldiers of Christ (6:10–20)
- V. Conclusion (6:21–24)

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:[†]

[2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sovereignty of the Father

[3]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,[†] [4]just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,[†] [5]having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, [6]to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

The Administration of the Son

[7]In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace[†] [8]which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, [9]having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,[†] [10]that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both[a] which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. [11]In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,[†] [12]that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

The Faithfulness of the Spirit

[13]In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy

Spirit of promise,[†] [14]who[a] is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.[†]

Prayer for Revelation

[15]Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,[†] [16]do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: [17]that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, [18]the eyes of your understanding[a] being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,[†] [19]and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power [20]which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places,* [21]far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.[†]

[22]And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, [23]which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.[†]

Transfiguration by Grace

2 And you *He made alive,* who were dead in trespasses and sins,[†] [2]in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, [3]among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

[4]But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, [5]even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), [6]and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, [7]that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8]For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,[†] [9]not of works, lest anyone should boast. [10]For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The Former Alienation of the Gentiles

[11]Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—[†] [12]that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

The Means of Union

[13]But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.[†]

[14]For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, [15]having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is,* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to

create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, [16]and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. [17]And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. [18]For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

“WORKS” IN PAUL’S WRITING

St. Paul uses the term “works” extensively in his letters, especially in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. By this term, he means human activities which he generally classifies in two categories:

1 *Dead works:* These can be works that are evil, such as murder, adultery, idol worship, and robbery—which the Scriptures also call “works of the flesh” (Gal 5:19) and obviously condemn. But in addition, dead works can be works—even good works—done for the wrong reasons. These are works that are good in themselves—such as fasting, giving money, and feeding the poor—but are done to call attention to oneself or to gain standing in the community. Selfish motivation turns good works into dead works. (The solution to this problem is not to cease fasting, giving, or helping, but rather to turn from the sin of self-glorification.)

2 *Living works:* These are deeds that are both good in themselves and done for a good purpose: the glory of God. Good works the Scriptures commend. Paul teaches they are an outgrowth of our salvation when he writes, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). They contribute to our faith, as James teaches, “You see then that a man is justified

by works, and not by faith only [or alone]" (Jam 2:24). When we do living works, we rely on the strength and grace of God, and we seek to bring glory to Him and not to ourselves through what we do.

Some have erroneously interpreted Paul, particularly in Romans 4, to be condemning all works. A careful reading of Romans, however, reveals Paul is not putting down works in general, but *dead works*. St. Maximos the Confessor, writing in the seventh century, states clearly the view of the Church concerning dead works:

> Many human activities, good in themselves, are not good because of the motive for which they are done. For example, fasting, vigils, prayer, psalmody [the singing of hymns], acts of charity and hospitality are by nature good. But when performed for the sake of self-esteem [vainglory, self-glorification] they are not good. In everything we do, God searches out our purpose to see whether we do it for Him or for some other motive . . . quite clearly He bestows blessings only when something is done for the right purpose. For God's judgment looks not at the actions, but at the purpose behind them.

Thus, the Christian actively cultivates a habit of doing good works for the glory of God, and as a way of life. The writings of Paul are clear. If we are joined to Christ and cleansed from the dishonor of the past, we become "a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (2Ti 2:21). God sets us apart to Himself so we will be productive and useful to Him.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren," Paul tells the Corinthians, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1Co 15:58).

The Unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ

[19]Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,[†] [20]having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner*stone*, [21]in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, [22]in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Paul's Revelation

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—[†] [2]if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, [†] [3]how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,[†] [4]by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), [5]which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:[†] [6]that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,[†]

Paul's Apostolic Commission

[7]of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

[8]To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,[†] [9]and to make all see what *is* the fellowship[a] of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;[b] [10]to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,[†] [11]according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, [12]in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.[†] [13]Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.[†]

Prayer for Deification

[14]For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,[a][†] [15]from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,[†] [16]that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, [17]that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, [18]may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—[†] [19]to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Doxology to the Father

[20]Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,[†] [21]to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Live in Unity

4 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,[†] [2]with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,[†] [3]endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [4]*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;[†] [5]one Lord, one faith, one baptism; [6]one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you[a] all.

THE CHURCH

One of the tragic aberrations of so-called modern religion is “Churchless Christianity.” The assertion is that it is Christ who saves us, not the Church, so “all you need is Jesus.”

Few who claim to be Christians would argue against the statement that it is Christ who saves. For He is the eternal Son of God who has assumed human flesh, and has done so “for us and for our salvation” (Nicene Creed). Thus Paul writes, “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus” (1Ti 2:5).

But because this Mediator established the Church which is His body, we who are joined to Him are joined to His Church as well. To say we love Christ, who is Head of the Church, and at the same time reject His body is to deny New Testament teaching.

The Gospel and Acts. The first use of the word “church” (Gr. *ecclesia*) in the New Testament comes in the Gospel of Matthew, when our Lord gives His approval of Peter’s confession of faith and promises, “I will build My church” (Mt 16:18). Jesus Christ builds, and we cooperate with Him.

The Book of Acts amplifies what Jesus meant in Matthew 16. When Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost concludes, those present ask for guidance toward salvation: "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Following Peter's word, they are baptized and join with the other believers, three thousand of them (Acts 2:38, 41).

Having been joined to Christ and His Church, these baptized believers begin living as the body of Christ. We find them looking after each other, using their personal resources for one another's care, continuing together in prayer and in the Eucharist (Acts 2:42–47). From this point on "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47), and throughout Acts, we see the Church being built as the Gospel of Christ spreads.

The Epistles. Paul's instructions in his letters to the churches throughout the eastern Mediterranean clearly show what it means to be members of Christ: to be the Church and to be in the Church. Nowhere in the New Testament is Paul's teaching on the Church more fully disclosed than in Ephesians 4. He instructs us that:

1 The Church is *one*, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:3). There is one Church, one God, one doctrine, one baptism.

2 The Church is *people*, men and women who are energized by the Holy Spirit. For "to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (4:7). We are not all given the same gifts, but together we are equipped to do God's will.

3 The Head of the Church is *Christ*, “from whom the whole body [is] joined and knit together” (4:16).

4 The Church is “the *new man*” (4:24), the new creation, made to be righteous and holy. We are no longer alienated from God (4:18); we are being renewed together (4:23), “members of one another” (4:25).

The Church, then, is that place established by Christ where we each may become what we are created to be, maturing and being perfected, while the Church receives what it needs from each of us, so that it too is being perfected. The Church as the body of Christ carries us beyond our petty and worldly personal concerns, stretching our vision to the eternal and the heavenly as we ascend together to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Use the Spiritual Gifts

[7]But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.[†] [8]Therefore He says:

> *“When He ascended on high,*
>
> *He led captivity captive,*
>
> *And gave gifts to men.”*[a†]

[9](Now this, *“He ascended”*—what does it mean but that He also first[a] descended into the lower parts of the earth? [10]He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

[11]And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,[†] [12]for the equipping of the saints

for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, [13]till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; [14]that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, [15]but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— [16]from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Put Off the Old, Put On the New

[17]This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of[a] the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,[†] [18]having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; [19]who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

[20]But you have not so learned Christ, [21]if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: [22]that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, [23]and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24]and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Be Children of God

25Therefore, putting away lying, *"Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,"*[a] for we are members of one another.[†] 26*"Be angry, and do not sin"*:[a] do not let the sun go down on your wrath,[†] 27nor give place to the devil. 28Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.[†] 29Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.[†] 32And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.[†]

5 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.[†]

Separate from Darkness

3But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.[†] 5For this you know,[a] that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.[†] 6Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.[†] 7Therefore do not be partakers with them.

Walk in Christ the Light

[8]For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light[†] [9](for the fruit of the Spirit[a] *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), [ω] [10]finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

MARRIAGE

The Bible and human history begin and end with marriages. Adam and Eve come together in marital union in Paradise, before the Fall, revealing marriage as a part of God's eternal purpose for humanity in the midst of creation (Gn 2:22–25). History closes with the marriage of the Bride to the Lamb (Rev 19:7–9), earthly marriage being fulfilled in the heavenly, showing the eternal nature of the sacrament.

Between these bookend events of history are the accounts of numerous other unions of man and wife. In the centuries-old Christian wedding ceremony used to this day in the Orthodox Church, several of these historic marriages are remembered: Abraham and Sarah (Gn 11:29—23:20); Isaac and Rebecca (Gn 24); Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Virgin Mary; and Zacharias and Elizabeth (Lk 1:5–58).

The marriage most prominently featured in the wedding ceremony, however, is the one at Cana of Galilee, described in the Gospel passage read at every Orthodox wedding (Jn 2:1–11). In attending this wedding and performing His first miracle there, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, forever sanctified marriage. As with all the Christian sacraments, marriage is sacramental because it is blessed by God.

Parenthetically, we note that it is at this wedding at Cana that Mary first intercedes with Christ on behalf of others: "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3).

Then she calls all humanity to obey Him: “Whatever He says to you, do *it*” (Jn 2:5).

In modern society, as well as in Christendom, a recurring debate concerns the tension between equality of the partners in marriage and office or order in marriage. Often, this tension has turned into a polarity between men and women, and sometimes even breeds hostility. Two elements in the Orthodox service of marriage serve to heal such tension, while making clear the teaching of the Church on the twin themes of equality and order concerning husband and wife.

As to equality, during the ceremony crowns are placed on the heads of the bride and groom. This act is symbolic of their citizenship in the Kingdom of God, where “there is neither male nor female” (Gal 3:28), and of their dying to each other (the crown is often a symbol of martyrdom; see Rev 2:10). The words of St. Paul on marital equality are clear: “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*” (1Co 7:4). Husband and wife belong to each other as martyrs, they belong to God as royalty, and they are called to treat each other accordingly.

But within marital equality there is also order. The epistle passage read at the sacrament of marriage is Ephesians 5:20–33, an exhortation to husbands and wives that begins with a call to submit to each other (v. 21). The husband is to serve God as head of his wife, as Christ is Head of the Church (v. 23). The wife is to be subject to her husband as the Church is subject to Christ (v. 24). There is nothing here to suggest the wife is oppressed in marriage, any more than one would call the Church oppressed in relationship to Christ. He who calls us “bretren” (Heb 2:11) and “friends” (Jn 15:15) exhorts the husband to love his wife, to nourish and cherish her as He Himself does the Church (vv. 28, 29).

Thus, marriage is a sacrament—holy, blessed, and everlasting in the sight of God and His Church. Within the bonds of marriage, husband and wife experience a union with one another in love. We pray for them the fruit of children and one day the joy of grandchildren. And within the bonds of marriage there is both a fullness of equality between husband and wife and a clarity of order, with the husband as the icon of Christ and the wife as the icon of the Church.

Expose Darkness

[11]And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.[†] [12]For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. [13]But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. [14]Therefore He says:

> “Awake, you who sleep,
>
> Arise from the dead,
>
> And Christ will give you light.”

Walk in God's Will

[15]See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,[†] [16]redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Be Filled with the Spirit

[17]Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. [18]And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,[†] [19]speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,[†] [20]giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [21]submitting to one another in the fear of God.[a†]

The Mystery of Marriage

[22]Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.[†] [23]For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. [24]Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

[25]Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, [26]that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, [27]that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. [28]So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. [29]For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. [30]For we are members of His body,[a] of His flesh and of His bones. [31]*“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*[a] [32]This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. [33]Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.[†] [2]“*Honor your father and mother,*” which is the first commandment with promise: [3]“*that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.*”[a]

[4]And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

[5]Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;[†] [6]not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, [7]with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, [8]knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

[9]And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also[a] is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.[†]

Spiritual Warfare

[10]Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.[†ω] [11]Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [12]For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places.*

Spiritual Weaponry

[13]Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Spiritual Readiness

[14]Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15]and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; [16]above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. [17]And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; [18]praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—[†] [19]and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, [20]for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Commendation and Benediction

[21]But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;[†] [22]whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts.

[23]Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[†] [24]Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

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The Book of Philippians

Author—The early Church unanimously agreed that Paul wrote Philippians. Paul founded the church in Philippi, which was the first church in Europe, on his second missionary journey, AD 50–51 (Acts 16:11–40). On his third missionary journey he made two brief visits to Philippi, about AD 57–58 (Acts 20:1, 6).

Date—Paul probably wrote Philippians while he was under house arrest in Rome in about AD 61–63 (Acts 28:16–31). At that time he was free to receive visitors and to correspond by letter.

Major Theme—*The dynamic of our life in Christ*. Salvation is a dynamic, ongoing experience that is not merely personal, but shared among believers. St. Paul urges the believers in Philippi toward continued unity, humility, selfless generosity, and joy in Christ. Subthemes include alerting of the Philippian church to:

1. *Interference from self-serving evangelists (1:12–18)*
2. *Persecution from the world (1:27–30; 2:14–18)*
3. *Antagonism from heretics, particularly the legalistic Judaizers (3:1–11)*

Background—The church in Philippi was noted for its generosity in support of the apostolic ministry (1:5, 4:15, 16; Acts 16:15, 40). Recently, it had sent Epaphroditus to visit Paul in prison with a financial gift for the apostle and with instructions that he remain there with Paul. But Epaphroditus apparently was so devoted to his work that he forgot his own physical health (2:30). The Philippian church heard this and was concerned for him. In the meantime, Paul's trial had started (1:7) and he hoped for an early release (1:25; 2:24). Thus, the apostle wrote this letter of thanks to Philippi with the comforting word that he would send Epaphroditus home (2:25–30) and that he would shortly dispatch Timothy to Philippi (2:19).

Outline

I. Greeting (1:1, 2)

II. Life in Christ Amidst Persecution (1:3–2:30)

    A. Exemplary lives of the Philippians and Paul (1:3–30)

    B. Exhortation to persevere amidst persecution (2:1–30)

III. Life in Christ in the Face of Heresy (3:1–4:9)

    A. Exhortation to righteousness; warning against legalism (3:1–21)

    B. Exhortation to unity; warning against schism (4:1–9)

IV. Conclusion (4:10–23)

    A. Gratitude for financial help (4:10–20)

    B. Greeting and benediction (4:21–23)

Greeting

1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops[a] and deacons:[†]

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

[3]I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, [4]always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, [5]for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,[†] [6]being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; [7]just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. [8]For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

[9]And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,[†] [10]that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, [11]being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's Suffering in Prison

[12]But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, [13]so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; [14]and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[15]Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: [16]The former[a] preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; [17]but the latter out of

love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. [18]What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

[19]For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,[†] [20]according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. [21]For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. [22]But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. [23]For[a] I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. [24]Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. [25]And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, [26]that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

Be Steadfast in Suffering

[27]Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, [28]and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation,[a] and that from God. [29]For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,[†] [30]having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me.

Preserve Unity in Humility

2 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, [2]fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. [3]*Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.[†] [4]Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

[5]Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,[†ω] [6]who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,[†] [7]but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.[†] [8]And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. [9]Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, [10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [11]and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Strive for Obedience

[12]Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;[†] [13]for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

[14]Do all things without complaining and disputing, [15]that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, [16]holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Apostolic Support for Philippi

[17]Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.[†] [18]For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

[19]But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.[†] [20]For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. [21]For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. [22]But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. [23]Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. [24]But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

[25]Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; [26]since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. [27]For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. [28]Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may

be less sorrowful. [29]Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; [30]because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

Beware of Judaizers

3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.

[2]Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation![†] [3]For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit,[a] rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, [4]though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:[†] [5]circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; [6]concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

[7]But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.[†] [8]Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ [9]and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;[†] [10]that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, [11]if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Press Toward True Righteousness

[12]Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.[†] [13]Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do,* forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, [14]I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[15]Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. [16]Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule,[a] let us be of the same mind.

[17]Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.[†] [18]For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:[†] [19]whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. [20]For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,[ω] [21]who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

4 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

Exhortation for Daily Living

[2]I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.[†] [3]And[a] I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.[†]

[4]Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice![†ω]

[5]Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.[†]

[6]Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; [7]and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

[8]Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. [9]The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Gratitude for Assistance

[10]But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. [11]Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:[†] [12]I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.

Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. [13]I can do all things through Christ[a] who strengthens me.

[14]Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. [15]Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. [16]For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. [17]Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. [18]Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. [19]And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. [20]Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

Greetings and Benediction

[21]Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. [22]All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

[23]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.[a] Amen.

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The Book of Colossians

Author—All early Church testimony credits Paul with the authorship of Colossians. Some of the vocabulary is unusual for Paul because he is combating first-century gnosticism using its own terminology—thereby deepening his own understanding of Christ.

Date—Colossians was written at the same time as Ephesians and Philemon. These letters, along with Philippians, were most likely composed during Paul's Roman captivity, about AD 61–63 (see 4:3, 10, 18; Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phm 9, 10, 13).

Major Theme—*Living by the will of God versus dying by false human schemes*. The primary purpose of this epistle was to combat a form of gnosticism that was taking hold in the Colossian church. Paul preaches the true gospel to the Colossians once more, emphasizing those aspects the prevalent heresy disputed (see below).

Background—The Colossian heresy was a local blend of Jewish (perhaps Essene) and Oriental ideas. The heretics thought they were “supplementing” apostolic Christianity, which they saw as primitive, with greater knowledge and better access to spiritual things. They imagined that (a) the hierarchy of celestial powers (the “angels” in some Jewish thought) was supreme, rather than Christ; (b) Christ was not unique in His divine nature nor in His actions, for He was not God but one of several mediators; (c) sin resulted from a lack of knowledge (Gr. *gnosis*), a particular sort of knowledge in which the heretics were specialists; and (d) salvation consisted in having this gnosis imparted by a series of rituals and ascetic practices (among which Jewish rites were prized, but Christian baptism was considered a mere low-level initiation).

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–14)
  A. Greeting (1:1, 2)
  B. Thanksgiving for the Colossians’ growth (1:3–8)
  C. Prayer for continued growth and victory (1:9–14)
II. Apostolic Christology: The Basis for Living in God's Will (1:15–2:23)
  A. Christ is supreme over all (1:15–2:3)
  B. Christ is sufficient for all (2:4–23)
III. Apostolic Spirituality (3:1–4:6)
  A. Baptismal spirituality (3:1–17)
  B. In relationships between Christians (3:18–4:1)
  C. For the world (4:2–6)
IV. Conclusion (4:7–18)
  A. Commendations (4:7–9)
  B. Greetings (4:10–15)
  C. Instructions (4:16–18)

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

[2]To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[a]

Thanksgiving for Abundant Growth

[3]We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,[†] [4]since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; [5]because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, [6]which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit,[a] as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; [7]as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, [8]who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Petition for Continued Growth

[9]For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;[†] [10]that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; [11]strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; [12]giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.[†] [13]He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, [14]in whom we have redemption through His blood,[a] the forgiveness of sins.

Apostolic Christology: A Hymn

[15]He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.[†] [16]For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.[†] [17]And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. [18]And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.[†]

[19]For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell,[†] [20]and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. [†]

Salvation with Perseverance

[21]And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled [22]in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—[†] [23]if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Paul's Sacrificial Service

[24]I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the

church,[†] [25]of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,[†] [26]the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.[†] [27]To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which[a] is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [28]Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. [29]To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Paul's Concern for Their Salvation

2 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, [2]that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and[a] of Christ, [3]in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.[†]

[4]Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. [5]For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

Against False Theology

[6]As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, [7]rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it[a] with thanksgiving.

[8]Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.[†ω] [9]For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;[†] [10]and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

[11]In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins[a] of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,[†] [12]buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. [13]And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, [14]having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. [15]Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.[†]

Against False Spirituality

[16]So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,[†] [17]which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. [18]Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not[a] seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, [19]and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

[20]Therefore,[a] if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— [21]“Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” [22]which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? [23]These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Spirituality in the Church

3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.[†] [2]Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. [3]For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4]When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.[†ω]

[5]Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.[†] [6]Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, [7]in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

[8]But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. [9]Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, [10]and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,[†] [11]where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor

uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

[12]Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; [13]bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.* [14]But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. [15]And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.[†] [16]Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. [17]And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Spirituality in the Home

[18]Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.[†]

[19]Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

[20]Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

[21]Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

[22]Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. [23]And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

[24]knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for[a] you serve the Lord Christ. [25]But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

4 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Spirituality for the World

[2]Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;[†] [3]meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, [4]that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

[5]Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time. [6]*Let* your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Greetings and Instructions

[7]Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.[†] [8]I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he[a] may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, [9]with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.

[10]Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), [11]and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow

workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

[12]Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete[a] in all the will of God. [13]For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal[a] for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. [14]Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. [15]Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his[a] house.

[16]Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.[†] [17]And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

[18]This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

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The First Book of the Thessalonians

Author—The greeting identifies Paul as the author and also mentions Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy. They were co-workers with Paul in establishing the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1–9).

Date—First Thessalonians was written in Corinth in AD 50–51, about six months after the church in Thessalonica was founded. It is probably the first of Paul’s New Testament epistles, and perhaps the first of all the twenty-seven New Testament books to be written.

Major Theme—*A holy life leads to eternal life.* Paul calls believers to be holy (3:13; 4:3; 5:23), with particular calls to (a) continue as examples to others (1:7), (b) walk worthy of God’s calling (2:12), (c) stand fast in the faith (3:8), and (d) maintain moral purity (4:3).The letter closes with instruction and comfort concerning the Second Coming of Christ (4:13—5:11), along with other exhortations concerning the spiritual life.

Background—The church in Thessalonica was founded in the summer of AD 50 during Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 15:36—18:22). Built on the Aegean Sea, Thessalonica was the most prominent city in the Roman province of Macedonia and served as a naval and commercial center. While many of the early churches were composed primarily of Jews who believed in Christ, the Thessalonian believers were mostly Gentiles, former idol worshipers (1:9).They experienced persecution by fellow citizens, stirred up by the Jews

(1:6; 2:14; Acts 17:5–9), and had difficulty adhering to Christian values in a pagan setting.

Outline

I. Introduction: Greeting and Thanksgiving (1:1–10)

II. The Power of the Gospel in Paul’s Behavior (2:1—3:13)

  A. Paul’s past work prepared them to endure persecution (2:1–16)

  B. Paul’s present relationship with them is unchanged (2:17—3:13)

III. The Power of the Gospel in the Church’s Behavior (4:1—5:22)

  A. Power for holiness (4:1–12)

  B. Power for right belief, catholic and apostolic (4:13—5:11)

  C. Power for unity (5:12–22)

IV. Concluding Prayer and Instructions (5:23–28)

Greeting and Thanksgiving

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[a] [†]

[2]We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,[†] [3]remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,[†] [4]knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. [5]For our

gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

[6]And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,[†] [7]so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.[†] [8]For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. [9]For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, [10]and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.[†]

Defense of Paul’s Past Work

2 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.[†] [2]But even[a] after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.[†] [3]For our exhortation *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

[4]But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.[†] [5]For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God *is* witness. [6]Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of

Christ. [7]But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children.[†] [8]So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. [9]For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

[10]You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; [11]as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged[a] every one of you, as a father *does* his own children,[†] [12]that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Fruit of Paul's Work: They Endured Persecution

[13]For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. [14]For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans,[†] [15]who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, [16]forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

Paul's Present Relationship with Thessalonica

[17]But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. [18]Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.† [19]For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?† [20]For you are our glory and joy.

Timothy’s Visit in Paul’s Stead

3 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,† [2]and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,† [3]that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. [4]For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. [5]For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

Timothy’s Report, Paul’s Joy

[6]But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see* you—† [7]therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. [8]For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

[9]For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, [10]night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

[11]Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. [12]And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, [13]so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.[†]

Reminders Concerning Holiness

4 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;[†] [2]for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

[3]For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; [4]that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,[†] [5]not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; [6]that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. [7]For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. [8]Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given[a] us His Holy Spirit.

[9]But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; [10]and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; [11]that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,[†] [12]that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

Who Will Participate in Christ’s Return

[13]But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.[†ω] [14]For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.[a]

[15]For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. [16]For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17]Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [18]Therefore comfort one another with these words.

How to Await His Coming

5 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.[†] [2]For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. [3]For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. [4]But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. [5]You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. [6]Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. [7]For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. [8]But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. [9]For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10]who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

[11]Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Reminders Concerning Unity

[12]And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,[†] [13]and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

[14]Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. [15]See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.[†]

[16]Rejoice always, [17]pray without ceasing, [18]in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

[19]Do not quench the Spirit.[†] [20]Do not despise prophecies. [21]Test all things; hold fast what is good. [22]Abstain from every form of evil.

Prayer and Instructions

[23]Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.[†] [24]He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will do *it*.

[25]Brethren, pray for us.

[26]Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

[27]I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy[a] brethren.[†]

[28]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

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The Second Book of the Thessalonians

Author—Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy are named with the author, Paul (as they are at the opening of 1 Thessalonians), because they were his co-laborers in establishing the Thessalonian church (see Acts 17:1–9).

Date—This epistle was written in AD 51, probably from Corinth.

Major Theme—*Stand fast by means of apostolic teaching*. Some of the Thessalonians had been shaken in their faith by speculations on Christ’s return; some even said the day of the Lord had already come (2:2). As a result, these people had lost holiness of life. Paul counters such traditions of men with apostolic tradition (2:15; 3:6). Subthemes include Paul’s gratitude for the people’s faithfulness (1:3; 2:13) and for God’s faithfulness to His people (3:3).

Background—Paul had not paid a return visit to Thessalonica since the establishment of the church a year earlier. St. John Chrysostom observes he was “filling up by his writings what was lacking of his presence.” But a few months after writing 1 Thessalonians, Paul received another report. The Thessalonians’ faith amidst persecution was still firm, but speculations concerning the Second Coming were increasing, claiming to be based on Paul’s teaching (2:2). Some became so excited about the end times that they abandoned their jobs and lived off the charity of the church (3:6–13). Others grew despondent and wavered in hope (2:13–17). Paul writes to encourage them to stand fast.

Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1, 2)
- II. Apostolic Tradition Regarding the Second Coming (1:3—2:17)
    - A. Exemplified in the persecution of the Church (1:3–12)
    - B. The controversy concerning the Second Coming (2:1–12)
    - C. Encouragement to stand fast in the faith (2:13–17)
- III. Other Apostolic Traditions (3:1–15)
    - A. The apostolic ministry: Pray for and obey them (3:1–5)
    - B. Holiness: Practice orderliness by hard work (3:6–13)
    - C. Unity: Admonishing the disobedient (3:14, 15)
- IV. Benediction and Farewell (3:16–18)

Greeting

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

[2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Present Persecution

[3]We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,[†] [4]so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, [5]*which is* manifest evidence of the righteous

judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; [6]since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, [7]and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, [8]in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9]These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, [10]when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, [a]because our testimony among you was believed.

[11]Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power,[†12]that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

False Teaching on the Second Coming

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, [2]not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ[a] had come.

True Tradition on the Second Coming

[3]Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin[a] is revealed, the son of

perdition,[†4]who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or
that is worshiped, so that he sits as God[a] in the temple of God, showing
himself that he is God.

[5]Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these
things? [6]And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in
his own time. [7]For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He[a]
who now restrains *will do so* until He[b] is taken out of the way. [8]And then
the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the
breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. [9]The
coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all
power, signs, and lying wonders, [10]and with all unrighteous deception
among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth,
that they might be saved. [11]And for this reason God will send them strong
delusion, that they should believe the lie, [12]that they all may be condemned
who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Stand Fast in the Faith

[13]But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren
beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for
salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, [14]to
which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our
Lord Jesus Christ. [15]Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions
which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.[†]

[16]Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, [17]comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Pray for Us

3 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, [2]and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

[3]But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. [4]And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

[5]Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Be Industrious

[6]But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he[a] received from us.[†][7]For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; [8]nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, [9]not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

[10]For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. [11]For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. [12]Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

Preserve Unity

[13]But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.[†][14]And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. [15]Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Benediction

[16]Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.

[17]The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.[†]

[18]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

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The First Book of Timothy

Author—The apostle Paul. St. Ignatius, Polycarp, Tertullian, and St. Clement of Alexandria are all among the early Church writers who speak of St. Paul's authorship.

Date—Probably AD 64–65. The Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, appear to have been written after the events of Acts 28. If so, 1 Timothy was written before Paul's second imprisonment in Rome, perhaps from Macedonia (1:3).

Major Theme—*Pastoral care of the faithful*. The Church is to manifest the kingdom of God on earth. Therefore, how the Church is run relates to both apostolic doctrine (1:1–20; 3:14–4:5) and worship (2:1–15). Subthemes include:

1. The role of clergy
2. Combating heresy
3. Care for women, widows, and slaves
4. Money and ministry

Background—First Timothy is both personal and pastoral. Whereas most of Paul's letters are addressed to the Church in a particular location, the pastoral epistles are written to instruct specific leaders—in this case Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus. Paul speaks as an experienced mentor instructing his student, his “son,” as apostle to younger apostle or bishop to youthful bishop.

In Ephesus, some church members were promoting a variety of theological opinions—from the irrelevant to the dangerously heretical (1:3–7; 4:1, 2, 7; 6:3–5). These heterodox ideas were a mosaic of Jewish (1:4, 7), ascetic (4:1–5), gnostic (4:4, 5), and docetic (2:5; 3:16; 6:13) thought. The Church was also dealing with external pressures of Hellenistic piety, the mystery religions, which made much use of the terms “salvation” and “savior,” and with the cult of emperor worship, according to which Caesar is “Lord.”

These letters hold incomparable insight into the historical workings of the early Church as guided by the Holy Spirit and are a foundational source for pastoral theology, for clergy and their relationship to the Church.

Outline

I. Greeting (1:1, 2)

II. Faithful Ministry in Doctrine and Worship: Church Order (1:3–2:15)

  A. Faithful doctrine (1:3–20)

  B. Faithful worship (2:1–15)

III. Faithful Ministry in Conduct and Care: Pastoral Care (3:1–6:19)

  A. Faithful clergy (3:1–16)

  B. Faithful care (4:1–6:19)

IV. Conclusion: Keep the Tradition! (6:20, 21)

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,[†]

[2]To Timothy, a true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Opposing Speculations with Faith

[3]As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, [4]nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.[†] [5]Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith,

Opposing Legalism with Grace

[6]from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, [7]desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.[†]

[8]But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully,[†] [ω] [9]knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, [10]for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, [11]according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

Paul's Example: Salvation by Grace

[12]And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry,[†] [13]although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. [14]And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. [15]This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.[†] [16]However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. [17]Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise,[a] *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Timothy Called to Faithfulness

[18]This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, [19]having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, [20]of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.[†]

Faithfulness in Prayer

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men,[†] [ω] [2]for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. [3]For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,[†]

[4]who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [5]For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,[†] [6]who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,[†] [7]for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ[a] *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Faithful Lives Fitting for Prayer

[8]I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;[†] [9]in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, [10]but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. [11]Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. [12]And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.[†] [13]For Adam was formed first, then Eve. [14]And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. [15]Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.[†]

THE FOUR “ORDERS” IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The New Testament teaches that all four “orders” which form the government of the Church—laity, deacons, presbyters, and bishops—are necessary to the proper functioning of the body of Christ. All four are clearly visible in Paul’s first letter to Timothy.

1 *The laity* are also called “saints” (Rom 1:7; 2Co 1:1; 1Ti 5:10), the “faithful” (Eph 1:1), and “brethren” (Col 1:2). The laity (Gr. *laos*) are the people of God, the “priesthood” (1Pt 2:4–10). Technically, the term “laity” includes the clergy, though in our day the word usually refers to those in the Church who are not ordained. It is from among the laity that the other three orders emerge.

2 *The deacons*, literally “servants,” are ordained to serve the Church and must meet high qualifications (1Ti 3:8–13). The apostles were the first to take on the service tasks of deacons, and when the workload became too great they called for “seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:3). Besides serving the material needs of the people, deacons occupy a crucial role in the liturgical life of the Church.

3 *The presbyters*, or elders, are visible throughout the New Testament. Their ministry from the start was to “rule,” “labor in the word,” and teach true “doctrine” (1Ti 5:17) in the local congregation. Paul “appointed elders in every church” (Acts 14:23) and later instructed his apostolic apprentice, Titus, to do the same in Crete (Tts 1:5). From the word “presbyter” came the shorter form “prest,” which finally became “priest.” In no way is the ordained Christian priesthood seen as a throwback to or a reenacting of the Old Testament priesthood. Rather, joined to Christ who is our High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:6, 10), the Orthodox priest is likewise a minister of a new covenant that supersedes the old.

4 *The bishop* is the “overseer” of the congregation and clergy in a given area. Often the terms “bishop” and “elder” are used interchangeably in the

New Testament (Acts 20:17, 28), with the bishop being the leader of the elders. The qualifications for bishop listed in 1 Timothy 3:17 and Titus 1:7–9 underscore this role. Nonetheless, the bishopric is a specific office both in the New Testament and in the early Church. The Twelve were the first to hold this office (in Acts 1:20 “office” could literally be translated “bishopric”) and they in turn consecrated other bishops to follow them. For example, Timothy and Titus are clearly of a separate order from that of elder (see 1Ti 5:17–22; Tts 1:5). Early records show James was bishop of Jerusalem by AD 49 and functioned accordingly at the first council there (Acts 15:13–22). Peter is on record as the first bishop of Antioch prior to AD 53, and later first bishop of Rome, where he was martyred about AD 65.

Perhaps the strongest early reference outside the New Testament to the presence of the four orders in church government occurs in the writings of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch from AD 67–107, the very heart of the New Testament era. To the church at Philadelphia (see Rev 3:7–13) he writes of “Christians [*laity*] at one with the *bishop* and the *presbyters* and the *deacons*” (italics added).

In the Orthodox Church, authority is resident in all four orders, with the bishop providing the center of unity. His authority is not over the Church, but within the Church. He is an icon of Jesus Christ, “the Shepherd and Overseer [lit., *bishop*] of your souls” (1Pt 2:25). Church leadership does not consist of one or more of the orders functioning without the others. Rather the Church, with Christ as Head, is conducted like a symphony orchestra, a family, the body of Christ, where all the members in their given offices work together as the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity.

Qualifications for Bishops

3 This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop,[a] he desires a good work.[†] [2]A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;[†] [3]not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,[a] but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; [4]one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence [5](for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); [6]not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. [7]Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Qualifications for Deacons

[8]Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,[†] [9]holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. [10]But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless. [11]Likewise, *their* wives *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.[†] [12]Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. [13]For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.[ω]

The Guide for Faithfulness: An Early Creed

[14]These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; [15]but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.[†] [16]And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God[a] was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.[†]

False Teachers, False Rules

4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, [2]speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,[†] [3]forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.[†]

Orthodox Doctrine, Orthodox Spirituality

[4]For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; [5]for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.[†]

[6]If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. [7]But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.[†] [8]For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. [9]This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. [10]For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach,[a] because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. [11]These things command and teach.

Self-Discipline in Ministry

[12]Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit,[a] in faith, in purity. [13]Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.[†] [14]Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.[†] [15]Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. [16]Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

General Pastoral Care

5 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, [2]older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

Care for Widows

[3]Honor widows who are really widows.[†] [4]But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and[a] acceptable before God. [5]Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. [6]But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. [7]And these things command, that they may be blameless. [8]But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

[9]Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, [10]well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

[11]But refuse *the* younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, [12]having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. [13]And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. [14]Therefore I desire that *the* younger *widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. [15]For some have already turned aside after Satan. [16]If any believing man or[a] woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

Care for Elders

[17]Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. [18]For the Scripture says, *"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,"*[a] and, "The laborer *is* worthy of his wages."[b] [†] [19]Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. [20]Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

[21]I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. [22]Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

[23]No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.[†]

[24]Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. [25]Likewise, the good works *of some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Insubordinate Christian Slaves

6 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. [2]And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

Ministers of Greed

[3]If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, [4]he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, [5]useless wranglings[a] of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself.[b]

[6]Now godliness with contentment is great gain. [7]For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain[a] we can carry nothing out. [8]And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. [9]But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. [10]For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Pursue Spirituality Instead

[11]But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.[†] [12]Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.[†] [13]I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, [14]that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, [15]which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the

blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, [16]who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.[†]

Warning to Wealthy Christians

[17]Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. [18]*Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, [19]storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Keep the Tradition

[20]O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—[†] [21]by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

Grace *be* with you. Amen.

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The Second Book of Timothy

Author—St. Paul the Apostle. By the second half of the second century the whole Church accepted 2 Timothy as Pauline and canonical.

Date—AD 65–67. This letter was written from Rome (1:17) when Paul was chained, suffering, and near his execution.

Major Theme—*Overcoming hardship in the ministry.* Ordained ministers use their spiritual gifts in the Church to keep and pass on her living tradition (1:13, 14; 2:2, 8, 11–13, 15; 3:14–17; 4:3). Through living tradition—the Bible and the ongoing life of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ—the Church remains essentially as she was at her inception.

Background—Paul has been a prisoner in Rome for some time. Although no one stood with him at his first hearing, he successfully defended himself and "was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (4:16, 17). Nonetheless, he has no hope for acquittal. He knows his end is at hand (4:6–8). Worse, friends have turned against him (1:15; 4:16–18); only Luke is assisting him. Paul longs to see Timothy once more.

This is probably Paul's last letter. He knows his martyrdom is near and looks forward to being with the Lord (4:8). Paul was martyred under Emperor Nero about AD 67.

Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1, 2)
- II. Ministry: Exhortation to Strength (1:3–2:13)
    - A. To the bishop, Timothy: be bold! (1:3–18)
    - B. To other faithful men (2:1–13)
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    - A. Fellow workers and evil workers (4:9–15)
    - B. Paul's first defense (4:16–18)
    - C. Greetings and benediction (4:19–22)

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ[a] by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

[2]To Timothy, a beloved son:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving for Timothy

[3]I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, [4]greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, [5]when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

Timothy's Gift, the Power of God

[6]Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.[†] [7]For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.[†]

[8]Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, [9]who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,[†] [10]but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,[†] [11]to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.[a] [12]For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Fidelity in Spite of Desertions

[13]Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.[†] [14]That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

[15]This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. [16]The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not

ashamed of my chain; [17]but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found *me*. [18]The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me*[a] at Ephesus.[†]

Transmitting the Faith

2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.[ω] [2]And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.[†]

Strengthening Others: Discipline and Suffering

[3]You therefore must endure[a] hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.[†] [4]No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. [5]And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. [6]The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. [7]Consider what I say, and may[a] the Lord give you understanding in all things.

[8]Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,[†] [9]for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. [10]Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

[11]*This is* a faithful saying:

For if we died with *Him*,

We shall also live with *Him*.

[12]If we endure,

We shall also reign with *Him*.

If we deny *Him*,

He also will deny us.

[13]If we are faithless,

He remains faithful;

He cannot deny Himself.

Apostolic Teaching vs. Error

[14]Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. [15]Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.† [16]But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.† [17]And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,† [18]who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. [19]Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ[a] depart from iniquity.”

Apostolic Conduct vs. Error

[20]But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.† [21]Therefore

if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. [22]Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. [23]But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. [24]And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,[†] [25]in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, [26]and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Moral Decline in the Last Days

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:[†] [2]For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3]unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, [4]traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5]having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away![†] [6]For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, [7]always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. [8]Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;[†] [9]but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

The Pastor's Defense Against Apostasy: Loyalty to Tradition

[10]But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,[† ω] [11]persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. [12]Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. [13]But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14]But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them,*[†] [15]and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

[16]All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [17]that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The People's Defense Against Apostasy: Orthodox Preaching

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at[a] His appearing and His kingdom: [2]Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. [3]For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; [4]and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. [5]But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul's Example

[6]For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.[†] [7]I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.[†] [8]Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Request to See Timothy

[9]Be diligent to come to me quickly; [10]for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.[†] [11]Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.[†] [12]And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. [13]Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

[14]Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. [15]You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

Paul's First Defense

[16]At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

[17]But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. [18]And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

Farewell

[19]Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. [20]Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

[21]Do your utmost to come before winter.

Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.[†]

[22]The Lord Jesus Christ[a] be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

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The Book of Titus

Author—The greeting (1:1) and Holy Tradition both affirm that St. Paul is the author.

Date—AD 63–65. The circumstances, content, and organization of Titus are similar to those of 1 Timothy. The two books were probably written about the same time. Paul's work with Titus on Crete does not fit into the time covered by the Book of Acts, so it probably occurred after Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome.

Major Theme—*Overseeing the Church according to the true faith*. As the Church grew, it naturally developed theology and structure and encountered heresy and sub-Christian behavior among its members, as had been prophesied. Paul here advises Titus as he faces these issues.

Background—Titus was a Gentile converted to Christ by St. Paul (1:4). After Paul was released from prison in Rome about AD 63, he and Titus visited Crete (1:5). When Paul moved on, he appointed Titus as apostolic overseer there. After Paul left Titus in charge of consolidating and organizing the church on the island of Crete, he found theological problems there similar to those being confronted by Timothy in Asia Minor: elements of Judaism binding Christians, and early gnosticism. But the native culture of Crete was more vicious than those found in Asia Minor. Further, whereas Timothy was restoring order in established churches, Titus was establishing order in young churches.

Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1–4)
- II. Godly Government (1:5–16)
  - A. Organization: ordination of sound presbyters (1:5–9)
  - B. Danger and urgency concerning false teachers (1:10–16)
- III. Godly People (2:1–3:11)
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  - B. The purity of the eternal kingdom (2:11–15)
  - C. Right behavior toward the government and society (3:1, 2)
  - D. Salvation by grace in baptism and chrismation (3:3–8)
  - E. Discipline of heretical and schismatic members (3:9–11)
- IV. Conclusion: Requests, Greetings, and Benediction (3:12–15)

Greeting

1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,[†] [2]in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, [3]but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

[4]To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ[a] our Savior.

Ordination of Sound Elders

[5]For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—[†] [6]if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. [7]For a bishop [a] must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, [8]but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, [9]holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. [†]

Opposition to False Teachers

[10]For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,[†] [11]whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. [12]One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” [13]This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, [14]not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. [15]To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. [16]They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Sound Doctrine Produces Proper Behavior

2 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:[†] [2]that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; [3]the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—[†] [4]that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, [5]to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The Orthodox understanding of the second coming of Christ is clear: The Lord Jesus Christ truly will return. His second advent is not a myth nor an empty promise, nor is it a metaphor. In fact, each time the Divine Liturgy is celebrated, the priest makes a proclamation to the Father that reveals how the Church responds not only to the second coming of Christ, but to all of His work.

> Remembering this saving commandment [Jesus' command to eat His flesh and drink His blood] and all that has been done for us—the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming—we offer You Your own, from what is Your own, on behalf of all and for all.

Orthodox Christians also believe the New Testament revelation of the second coming of Christ is meant to stimulate our preparation for it, not our speculation about it. This explains the relative simplicity with which the

Nicene Creed, the most universal confession of faith in all of Christendom, addresses Christ's return: "He . . . will come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end." The emphasis of historic Orthodoxy is *that* Jesus will come again, not *when* He will come again.

Thus, St. Paul writes, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works" (Tts 2:12–14).

There are signs of Christ's coming, to be sure. Jesus prophesied many events that would take place in the world prior to His return (Mt 24; Lk 21:7–36). But even these Gospel passages close with Jesus' exhortation to virtue, righteousness, and preparation for the Judgment. Christ and His apostles issue severe warnings, implicit and explicit, against second-guessing the time of His coming (Mt 24:3–8, 36, 43, 44, 50; Lk 21:7–9, 34; Acts 1:7; 1Th 5:1–3; 2Pt 3:8–10).

Much of modern Christendom has succumbed to divisive speculation regarding Christ's return. We are divided into premillennial, postmillennial, and amillennial camps. Breaking it down even further, there are pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, and post-tribulation adherents. Christians part ways and new denominations spring up around interpretations of events that have not yet even come to pass!

Throughout history the Orthodox Church has steadfastly insisted on the reality of the second coming of Christ as a settled belief, but has always granted liberty on the question of when it will occur. In the last chapter of Revelation, Jesus speaks the words, “I am coming quickly,” three different times (22:7, 12, 20). His coming will occur on a day and at an hour when it is not expected. The apostle John, the author of Revelation, concludes his book with a warning:

> For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book (Rev 22:18, 19).

To confess the return of Christ is to stand squarely within the apostolic tradition. To add “when” to the promise of His coming is warned against in the Scriptures. As members of the Bride of Christ, let us attend instead to being ready.

[6]Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, [7]in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, [a] [8]sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.[a]

[9]*Exhort* bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things*, not answering back, [10]not pilfering, but showing all

good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Proper Behavior Supports Sound Doctrine

[11]For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,[†] [12]teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, [13]looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,[†] [14]who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

[15]Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Kindness Toward All Men

3 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, [2]to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

God's Kindness to Us

[3]For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. [4]But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,[ω] [5]not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration

and renewing of the Holy Spirit,[†] [6]whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7]that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.[†]

[8]This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Heretical and Schismatic Members

[9]But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. [10]Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,[†] [11]knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Conclusion

[12]When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. [13]Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. [14]And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

[15]All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

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The Book of Philemon

Author—St. Paul. Paul often used an assistant to whom he dictated his letters (Rom 16:22; 1Co 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2Th 3:17), but he wrote Philemon with his own hand (v. 19).

Date—AD 61–63. Philemon was written at the same time as Colossians, most likely from Rome during Paul's first Roman captivity.

Major Theme—*No longer slaves, we are brothers and sisters in Christ.*

Background—Philemon (Gr. “affectionate”) had been converted by Paul (v. 19) and was a member of the church in Colosse (Col 4:9). Onesimus (Gr. “useful”) had been an “unuseful” slave of Philemon, for he had run away, providing for his needs from the stolen treasury of his master—an offense punishable by death. Somehow Onesimus reached Paul, who brought him to Christ. He then became “useful” to Paul.

According to Roman law, Onesimus still belonged to Philemon. So Paul sent Onesimus back to Colosse with this letter under the care of Tychicus, who was also carrying the letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians. Paul urges Philemon to receive Onesimus with forgiveness as a brother in the Lord, and hints that he would not be displeased if Philemon released Onesimus from bondage in order to free him for service to Paul.

According to ancient tradition, Philemon was consecrated bishop of Colosse and later martyred. Onesimus may be the same Onesimus whom Ignatius mentions as bishop of Ephesus, forty years after this incident.

Outline

I. Greeting (vv. 1–3)

II. Commendation of Philemon (vv. 4–7)

III. Plea for Onesimus (vv. 8–21)

IV. Conclusion: Request, Greetings, and Benediction (vv. 22–25)

Greeting

[1]Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother,

To Philemon our beloved *friend* and fellow laborer,[†] [2]to the beloved[a] Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

[3]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Commendation of Philemon

[4]I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, [5]hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,[†] [6]that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you[a] in Christ Jesus.[†] [7]For we have[a] great joy[b] and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.[†]

Plea for Onesimus

[8]Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting,[†] [9]*yet* for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ— [10]I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains,[†] [11]who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.[†]

[12]I am sending him back.[a] You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, [13]whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. [14]But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.[†]

[15]For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose*, that you might receive him forever, [16]no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

[17]If then you count me as a partner, receive him as *you would* me. [18]But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.[†] [19]I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides.[†] [20]Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

[21]Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.[†] [22]But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

Personal Request, Greetings, and Benediction

[23]Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, [24]*as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

[25]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

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The Book of Hebrews

Author—In the early centuries of the Church, several differing opinions circulated as to who wrote Hebrews. By the fourth century most witnesses ascribed Hebrews to St. Paul, including St. John Chrysostom (d. AD 407) and St. Athanasius (d. AD 373). Church historian Eusebius (d. c. AD 340) included Hebrews in his list of Paul's epistles, but noted that Rome rejected the letter because it was not Pauline. A Council at Carthage (AD 397) canonized Hebrews as one of fourteen epistles of Paul. All Orthodox lectionaries introduce Hebrews with “the reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.” Nevertheless, most biblical scholars today agree authorship of the letter is uncertain.

Date—The content of the epistle and the witness of the early Church argue for some time near AD 70.

MajorTheme—*Persevering faith in the incarnate Son.* Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets, angels, Moses, and Aaron. He offers a better priesthood, sanctuary, and sacrifice, for in His worship we enter heaven. Therefore, we must faithfully hold fast to Him.

Background—Hebrews seems to be written to Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, perhaps in Palestine, who were being drawn back to Judaism. Indeed, some had returned to their roots, partly because of a low view of Jesus. Hence the subthemes: the superiority of Christ and His sacrifice over Judaism, and encouragement to continue in the Christian faith.

Outline

I. The Superiority of Christ (1:1–10:18)

  A. Introduction: the supreme revelation (1:1–4)

  B. Christ's authority is superior to the angels’ (1:5–2:18)

  C. Christ's rest is superior to Moses’ (3:1–4:13)

  D. Christ's priesthood is superior to Aaron's (4:14–7:28)

  E. Christ's worship is superior to Moses’ (8:1–10:18)

II. Persevering Toward the Entrance and Rest (10:19–13:19)

  A. Persevering in worship (10:19–39)

  B. Persevering in faith (11:1–40)

  C. Persevering in discipline (12:1–29)

  D. Persevering in holiness (13:1–19)

III. Conclusion (13:20–25)

The Supreme Revelation of the Son of God

THE PRIESTHOOD—EARTHLY AND ETERNAL

A major theme of the Book of Hebrews is the contrast between the earthly, or Levitical, priesthood and the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek, which is fulfilled in Christ.

The Levitical priesthood, established by Aaron of the tribe of Levi, is limited simply because those who fill it are ordinary human beings. The Levitical priests carry out God’s instructions and assist the people in their worship, but they cannot ultimately reconcile people to God.

The mysterious figure of Melchizedek, on the other hand, represents an entirely different kind of priesthood. Melchizedek appears in Genesis 14:18–20, long before the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. He is given no genealogy, and nothing is said of his death. He receives tithes from Abraham, implying he is superior to Abraham in rank—and by extension, superior to Abraham's descendants, the Levites. Melchizedek is not only a priest but a king as well. In this dual office he is able to reconcile the justice of God (the business of a king) with His mercy (the business of a priest). His name means "King of Righteousness," and his title "King of Salem" means "King of Peace." He maybe a theophany—a preincarnate appearance of Christ; at the very least he is a type of Christ, as the author of Hebrews explains in detail.

There are several specific points of contrast between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek, which is fulfilled in Christ.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF LEVI

1 *Genealogical requirement:* The Leviti-cal priesthood is limited to one tribe. It cannot transform mortal and corrupt humanity because it consists of mere men.

2 *Ordination:* The power given at ordination is incomplete. The Levitical priesthood is weak, its sacrifices have to be repeated, and it cannot perfect the worshipers. It cannot reconcile people to God nor give them the inner power to obey. The ordination is without direct confirmation from God.

3 *Term of office:* The Levitical priesthood is temporary. Since it is composed of mortal men, it requires many members.

4 *Moral and spiritual requirements:* These must be less than perfection, for the Levitical priests are all created beings subject to sin.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK

As Melchizedek was without earthly genealogy, so is Christ by virtue of His virgin birth. He is God incarnate, immortal and sinless, and therefore His priesthood is able to transform humanity.

The power given at ordination is strong and effective. The power of Christ’s priesthood is perfect and draws us near to God. His sacrifice is offered once for all. The Father Himself ordains the Son.

Since Christ is immortal, the priesthood of Melchizedek needs only one, eternal priest.

The requirement of perfect holiness is met in Christ, the only sinless One. He is more than mere man—He is the Son of God.

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,[†] [ω] [2]has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;[†] [†] [3]who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself[a] purged our[b] sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [4]having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.[†]

Christ's Dominion Over Creation

[5]For to which of the angels did He ever say:

“You are My Son,

Today I have begotten You”?[a]

And again:

“I will be to Him a Father,

And He shall be to Me a Son”?[b†]

[6]But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says:

“Let all the angels of God worship Him.”[a†]

[7]And of the angels He says:

“Who makes His angels spirits

And His ministers a flame of fire.”[a]

[8]But to the Son *He says:*

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;

A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.[†]

[9]*You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;*

Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You

With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.”[a]

Christ Without Beginning, Creator of All

[10]And:

“You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth,

And the heavens are the work of Your hands.[†]

[11]*They will perish, but You remain;*

And they will all grow old like a garment;

[12]*Like a cloak You will fold them up,*

And they will be changed.

But You are the same,

And Your years will not fail.”[a]

[13]But to which of the angels has He ever said:

“Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?[a]

[14]Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?[††]

Beware of Willful Negligence

2 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.[†] [2]For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,[ω] [3]how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him,* [4]God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

[5]For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.[†] [6]But one testified in a certain place, saying:

“What is man that You are mindful of him,

Or the son of man that You take care of him?[†]

[7]You have made him a little lower than the angels;

You have crowned him with glory and honor,[a]

And set him over the works of Your hands.

[8]You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”[a]

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. [9]But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.[†]

Why God Became Man

[10]For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.[†] [11]For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,[ω] [12]saying:

“I will declare Your name to My brethren;

In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”[a]

[13]And again:

“I will put My trust in Him.”[a]

And again:

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”[b]

[14]Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy

him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,[†] [15]and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.[†] [16]For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. [17]Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.[†] [18]For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Christ Is Faithful in a Superior Office

3 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,[†] [2]who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all His house. [3]For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.[†] [4]For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things *is* God. [5]And Moses indeed *was* faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward,* [6]but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.[a]

[7]Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,[†]

[8]*Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,*

In the day of trial in the wilderness,

[9]*Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,*

And saw My works forty years.

[10]*Therefore I was angry with that generation,*

And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,

And they have not known My ways.'

[11]*So I swore in My wrath,*

'They shall not enter My rest.' "[a]

Beware of Faithlessness

[12]Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;[†] [13]but exhort one another daily, while it is called *"Today,"* lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. [14]For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,[†] [15]while it is said:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."[a]

[16]For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses?[†] [17]Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? [18]And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? [19]So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Entering God's Rest

4 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.[†] [2]For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them,[a] not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it.* [3]For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

> *“So I swore in My wrath,*
>
> *‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ”*[a]

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. [4]For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way: *“And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”*;[a] [5]and again in this *place: “They shall not enter My rest.”*[a]

Christ's Rest Is Superior

[6]Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,[†] [7]again He designates a certain day, saying in David, *“Today,”* after such a long time, as it has been said:

> *“Today, if you will hear His voice,*
>
> *Do not harden your hearts.”*[a]

[8]For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.[†] [9]There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.[†] [10]For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

Work to Enter His Rest

[11]Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.[†] [12]For the word of God *is* living and

powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.[†] [13]And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

Our Merciful High Priest

[14]Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.[†] [ω] [15]For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are, yet* without sin.[†] [16]Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.[†]

Qualifications for Priesthood: Aaron and Melchizedek

5 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.[†] [2]He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. [3]Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. [4]And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron *was*.[ω]

[5]So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him:

> *"You are My Son,*

Today I have begotten You.”[a†]

[6]As *He* also says in another *place:*

“You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek”;[a]

Beware of Immaturity

[7]who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,[†] [8]though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.[†] [9]And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, [10]called by God as High Priest *“according to the order of Melchizedek,”* [11]of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.[†]

[12]For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. [13]For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. [14]But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is,* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.[†]

6 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,[†] [2]of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.[†] [3]And this we will[a] do if God permits.

[4]For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,[††] [5]and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,[†] [6]if they fall away,[a] to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.[††]

[7]For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;[†] [8]but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.

Pursue the Promise with Persistence

[9]But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. [10]For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of[a] love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.[†] [11]And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, [12]that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.[†]

God Confirms the Promise by an Oath

[13]For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,[†] [ω] [14]saying, *“Surely blessing I*

will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."[a] [15]And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. [16]For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. [17]Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, [18]that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might[a] have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.[†]

[19]This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil,[†] [20]where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.[†]

Priestly Orders: Levi and Melchizedek

7 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,[†] [2]to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," [3]without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

The Rules of the Priestly Orders

[4]Now consider how great this man *was*, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. [5]And indeed those who are of the sons

of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; [6]but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. [7]Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.[ω] [8]Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. [9]Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, [10]for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

[11]Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?[†] [12]For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. [13]For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

[14]For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.[a] [15]And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest [16]who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. [17]For He testifies:[a]

“You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek.”[b]

[18]For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, [19]for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

[20]And inasmuch as *He was* not *made priest* without an oath [21](for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him:

> *"The LORD has sworn*
>
> *And will not relent,*
>
> *'You are a priest forever*[a]
>
> *According to the order of Melchizedek' "*),[b]

[22]by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

[23]Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. [24]But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. [25]Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

[26]For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;[ω] [27]who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. [28]For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son who has been perfected forever.

The Old Worship, an Earthly Shadow

8 Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,[†] [2]a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

[3]For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore *it is* necessary that this One also have something to offer. [4]For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; [5]who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, *“See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”*[a] [6]But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.[†]

The Old Covenant Pleads for a New One

[7]For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. [8]Because finding fault with them, He says: *“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— [9]not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord. [10]For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after*

those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. [11]*None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.* [12]*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds*[a] *I will remember no more."*[b]

[13]In that He says, *"A new covenant,"* He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The Earthly Sanctuary and Liturgy

9 Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.[†ω] [2]For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part,* in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary;[†] [3]and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, [4]which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;[†] [5]and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.[†]

[6]Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing *the services.*[†] [7]But into the second part the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance; [8]the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet

made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. [9]It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— [10]*concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

The Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy

[11]But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come,[a] with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.[†] [12]Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. [13]For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, [14]how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?[†]

The New Covenant: The Blood of Christ

[15]And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.[†]

[16]For where there *is* a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. [17]For a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. [18]Therefore not even the first

covenant was dedicated without blood. [19]For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, [20]saying, *“This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.”*[a] [21]Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.[†] [22]And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

The New Worship Is Heavenly Reality

[23]Therefore *it was* necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.[†] [24]For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; [25]not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— [26]He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. [27]And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, [28]so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

The New Worship Accomplishes God's Will

10 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.[†] [2]For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.[†] [3]But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. [4]For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

[5]Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

> *“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,*
>
> *But a body You have prepared for Me.*
>
> [6]*In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin*
>
> *You had no pleasure.*
>
> [7]*Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—*
>
> *In the volume of the book it is written of Me—*
>
> *To do Your will, O God.’ ”*[a]

[8]Previously saying, *“Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them”* (which are offered according to the law),[†] [9]then He said, *“Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.”*[a] He takes away the first that He may establish the second. [10]By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*

The New Worship Gives Boldness

[11]And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.[†] [12]But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

[13]from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. [14]For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.[†]

[15]But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

[16]*“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,”*[a] [17]*then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*[a] [18]Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

Continue to Enter and Draw Near

[19]Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, [20]by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, [21]and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, [22]let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.[†] [23]Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. [24]And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,[†] [25]not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another,* and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.[†]

The Danger of Apostasy

[26]For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,[†] [27]but a certain fearful

expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30For we know Him who said, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"*[a] says the Lord.[b] And again, *"The LORD will judge His people."*[c] 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Continue to Persevere

32But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings:[†] 33partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34for you had compassion on me[a] in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.[b] 35Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37*"For yet a little while,*

And He[a] *who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

38*Now the*[a] *just shall live by faith;*

But if anyone draws back,

My soul has no pleasure in him."[b]

[39]But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Faith's Hope

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.[†] [2]For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony.

[3]By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Faith from Creation to the Flood

[4]By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

[5]By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, *“and was not found, because God had taken him”*;[a] for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [6]But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

[7]By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Faith from Abraham to Joseph

[8]By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.[†] [9]By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;[ω] [10]for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

[11]By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child[a] when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. [12]Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

[13]These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them,[a] embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. [14]For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. [15]And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. [16]But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country.* Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

[17]By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son,* [18]of whom it was said, *“In Isaac your seed shall be called,”*[a] [19]concluding that God *was*

able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

[20]By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

[21]By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.[†]

[22]By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

Faith from Moses to Joshua

[23]By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

[24]By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,[ω] [25]choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, [26]esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in[a] Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

[27]By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. [28]By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

[29]By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land, whereas* the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

[30]By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. [31]By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Faith of Other Israelites

[32]And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also *of* David and Samuel and the prophets: [33]who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,[ω] [34]quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. [35]Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. [36]Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. [37]They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted,[a] were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—[†] [38]of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth.[†]

Faith's Perfection

[39]And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, [40]God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.[†]

Look to Jesus

12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,[†] [2]looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.[†]

Do Not Despise God's Chastening

[3]For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. [4]You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.[†] [5]And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,

Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

[6]*For whom the LORD loves He chastens,*

And scourges every son whom He receives."[a]

[7]If[a] you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? [8]But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. [9]Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*,

and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? [10]For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. [11]Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

[12]Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, [13]and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.[†]

[14]Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:[†] [15]looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; [16]lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. [17]For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

The Heavenly Jerusalem

[18]For you have not come to the mountain that[a] may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness[b] and tempest,[†] [19]and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. [20](For they could not endure what was commanded: *“And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned*[a] *or shot with an arrow.”*[b] [21]And so

terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, “*I am exceedingly afraid* and trembling.”[a])

[22]But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,[†] [23]to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, [24]to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.

[25]See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven,[†] [26]whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “*Yet once more I shake*[a] *not only the earth, but also heaven.*”[b†] [27]Now this, “*Yet once more,*” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

The Purity of Christian Community

[28]Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may[a] serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.[ω] [29]For our God *is* a consuming fire.[†]

13 Let brotherly love continue.[†] [2]Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels. [3]Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

[4]Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

[5]*Let your* conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."*[a] [6]So we may boldly say:

> *"The LORD is my helper;*
>
> *I will not fear.*
>
> *What can man do to me?"*[a]

Remember Those Who Rule Over You

[7]Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct.[†] [ω] [8]Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.[†]

Loyalty to Orthodox Doctrine and Worship

[9]Do not be carried about[a] with various and strange doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.[†]

[10]We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.[†] [11]For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.[†] [12]Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. [13]Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.[†] [14]For here we have no continuing city,

but we seek the one to come. [15]Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.[†] [16]But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The Holy Life Summarized

[17]Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.[ω]

[18]Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. [19]But I especially urge *you* to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Conclusion

[20]Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,[†] [21]make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you[a] what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

[22]And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. [23]Know that *our* brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.

[24]Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

[25]Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

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The Book of James

Author—The author identifies himself as “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). Early Church tradition ascribes this letter to James, the “brother” or kinsman of our Lord and first bishop of Jerusalem, known as James the Just.

Date—AD 55–60. James the Just was martyred about AD 62. Some consider his letter the first New Testament book, written after the martyrdom of Stephen and the dispersion of Christians from Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

Major Theme—*The harmony of faith and works.* The letter has many direct parallels with the Sermon on the Mount. James does not teach we are saved by works, but he does teach that a dead faith, one without works, does not save. This is an early polemic against invisible religion, wherein salvation by faith has no visible works, and against antinomianism, the teaching that moral behavior is irrelevant to salvation. James is clear: the human will is not bypassed in salvation; grace does not nullify personal responsibility.

Background—Unlike most New Testament letters, James does not address a particular church, or even a geographical region, but “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (1:1). Though James was a Jewish Christian and assumes the recipients are familiar with the Old Testament, the letter is written in elegant Greek. There is no indication that it addresses only Jewish Christians. The people James addresses are experiencing various trials: persecution, deception, economic injustice and poverty, apostasy and personal fragmentations in the Church. James uses his authority as bishop to rekindle true living faith and encourage repentance, patience, and self-control.

Outline

I. Greeting (1:1)

II. Trials and Endurance: Love God! (1:2–27)

III. Faith and Works: Love Your Neighbor! (2:1–26)

IV. The Power of the Tongue (3:1–18)

V. Quarreling and Humility (4:1–12)

VI. Greed Versus Contentedness (4:13–5:12)

VII. Healing and Restoration (5:13–20)

Greeting

1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

Greetings.[†]

The Purpose of Trials

[2]My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,[†]
[3]knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. [4]But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Wisdom for Trials

[5]If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.[†] [6]But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.[†] [7]For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8]*he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

[9]Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,[†] [10]but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. [11]For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Temptations

[12]Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.[†] [13]Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.[†] [14]But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.[†] [15]Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

[16]Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. [17]Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.[†] [18]Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.[†]

The Corrective: Hear and Do

[19]So then,[a] my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;[†] [20]for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

[21]Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.[†]

[22]But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [23]For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; [24]for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. [25]But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.[†]

[26]If anyone among you[a] thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.[†] [27]Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

The Law of Love

2 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.[†] [2]For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, [3]and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” [4]have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

[5]Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?[†] [6]But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? [7]Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

[8]If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”*[a] you do well;[†] [9]but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. [10]For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. [11]For He who said, *“Do not commit adultery,”*[a] also said, *“Do not murder.”*[b] Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. [12]So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. [13]For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith that Works

[14]What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?[†] [15]If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, [16]and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed

for the body, what *does it* profit? [17]Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

[18]But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your[a] works, and I will show you my faith by my[b] works. [19]You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble![†] [20]But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?[a] [21]Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? [22]Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? [23]And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, *“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*[a] And he was called the friend of God. [24]You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

[25]Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

[26]For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.[†]

The Work of Faith: Controlling What We Say

3 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.[†] [2]For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. [3]Indeed,[a] we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. [4]Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. [5]Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! [6]And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. [7]For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. [8]But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. [9]With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. [10]Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. [11]Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? [12]Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.[a]

Godly Counsel

[13]Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.[†] [14]But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. [15]This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. [16]For where envy and self-seeking *exist,* confusion and every evil thing *are* there. [17]But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. [18]Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Lack of Faith and Works: Quarrels in the Church

4 Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members?[†] [2]You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet[a] you do not have because you do not ask. [3]You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. [4]Adulterers and[a] adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [5]Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

[6]But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

"God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble."[a]

[7]Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [8]Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. [9]Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. [10]Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Criticizing Others

[11]Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.[†]

[12]There is one Lawgiver,[a] who is able to save and to destroy. Who[b] are you to judge another?[c]

Being Overly Confident

[13]Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will[a] go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”;[†] [14]whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. [15]Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” [16]But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

[17]Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

Warning to Rich Oppressors

5 Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!*[†] [2]Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. [3]Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. [4]Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.[a] [5]You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as[a] in a day of slaughter. [6]You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

HEALING

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (5:14, 15).

One of the great prophetic themes of the Old Testament concerning the promised Messiah is that the Father would send His Son “to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind” (Lk 4:18; see also Is 49:8; Is 61:1). The ministry of Christ was one of numerous healings of “all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of disease” (Mt 4:23). In addition, Jesus healed darkened hearts and minds as He released people from demonic oppression.

Like their Master before them, the early apostles participated in God’s work of healing as well, attributing their miracles to the risen and ascended Christ. “Jesus the Christ heals you,” Peter told a newly restored man who had been bedridden for eight years (Acts 9:34). St. Paul identified healing as a gift of the Holy Spirit (1Co 12:9). Thus, the New Testament foundation was established for the healing ministry to be a part of the sacramental life of the Church (Jam 5:14, 15).

Healings throughout history. The Orthodox Church has never believed or behaved as though the gifts of the Spirit or the healing miracles of Christ have somehow passed away. Did not Jesus promise, “He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (Jn 14:12)?

St. Ireneaus, writing at the close of the second century, speaks of miracles in his day: “Some drive out devils . . . some have foreknowledge of the future . . . others heal the sick through the laying on of hands . . . and even the dead have been raised up before now and have remained with us for many years.” The writings of other Church Fathers speak often of miracles within the Church.

Quite widely known are the supernatural healings Christ performs through St. Seraphim of Sarov, an eighteenth-century Russian monk. He was blessed with the gift of healing during his lifetime, and even after his departure many people have been restored to wholeness at his graveside.

The practice of the Church today. To this day, the Orthodox practice of prayer for the sick follows the New Testament instruction of St. James. The Orthodox Church has a special service of healing, which may be performed at any time. The presbyter prays for the ill person, anointing him with oil and saying, “O Lord Almighty, Healer of our souls and bodies, who put down and raise up, who chastise and heal also, visit now in Your mercy our brother or sister, *N.*, who is ill. Stretch forth Your arm, which is full of healing and health, and raise (*him/her*) up from this bed, and cure this illness. Put away the spirit of disease and every malady and pain and fever. And if (*he/she*) has committed sins and transgressions, grant remission and forgiveness, because You love mankind.”

As Orthodox Christians we pray, neither commanding God to heal nor doubting His ability to heal, but pleading for His promised mercy on all who are ill.

Encouragement to the Oppressed

[7]Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.[†] [8]You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

[9]Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned.[a] Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! [10]My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.[†ω] [11]Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

[12]But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.[a] [†]

The Work of Faith: Healing

[13]Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.[†] [14]Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15]And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16]Confess *your* trespasses[a] to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.[†] [17]Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly

that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. [18]And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Restoration

[19]Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,[†] [20]let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul[a] from death and cover a multitude of sins.

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The First Book of Peter

Author—After Peter had helped to establish the church in Antioch, he preached to Jews and converts to Judaism throughout northern Asia Minor (1:1). Later, in Rome, hearing the churches of Asia Minor were being persecuted, he wrote them this letter of encouragement.

Date—First Peter was composed at Rome (5:13) sometime in AD 50–67. The exact date Peter arrived in Rome is unclear; tradition says he was martyred there later in Nero's reign, c. AD 67.

Major Theme—*Rejoice in sharing the sufferings of Christ*. The First Epistle of Peter is an exhortation for Christians suffering persecution to remember and live in their baptism. As baptism is a death and a resurrection, so Christians must enter into unjust suffering with a spirit of death and resurrection. Our goal is the fulfillment of baptism—heaven. This requires unwavering commitment now to (a) holiness (1:3–2:10), (b) submission in the roles we have in life (2:11–3:12), (c) patient suffering in this age as we prepare for the age to come (3:13–4:19), and (d) disciplined unity in the Church (5:1–11).

Background—The dispersion of which Peter speaks (1:1) is unknown. After the martyrdom of Stephen (c. AD 33), many Christians fled from persecution in Jerusalem. Or Peter may be speaking more generally, of Christians at large, who were often ill-treated and forced into exile because of their faith. We are told these Christians live in five provinces of Asia Minor (1:1), located in the central and northern segments of the peninsula.

Outline

- I. Greetings (1:1, 2)
- II. Practical Meaning of Baptism (1:3–3:12)
  - A. A life of faith and hope (1:3–12)
  - B. A life of holiness (1:13–2:10)
  - C. A life of honor (2:11–3:12)
- III. Persecution and Suffering (3:13–5:11)
  - A. Persecution for being righteous (3:13–22)
  - B. The persecution of mockery (4:1–19)
  - C. Suffering and the church (5:1–11)
- IV. Conclusion (5:12–14)

Greeting

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,[†] [2]elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.[†]

Born to a Heavenly Hope

[3]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,[†] [4]to an inheritance incorruptible

and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,[†] [5]who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.[†]

Tested for Genuine Faith

[6]In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,[†] [7]that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, [8]whom having not seen[a] you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,[†] [9]receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

[10]Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you,[†] [11]searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. [12]To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us[a] they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.[†]

Be Holy

[13]Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;[†] [14]as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former

lusts, *as* in your ignorance; [15]but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, [16]because it is written, *“Be holy, for I am holy.”*[a†]

[17]And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear;[†] [18]knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers,[†] [19]but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. [20]He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you [21]who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Love Each Other

[22]Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit[a] in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, [23]having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,[a†] [24]because

> *“All flesh is as grass,*
>
> *And all the glory of man*[a] *as the flower of the grass.*
>
> *The grass withers,*
>
> *And its flower falls away,*[†]
>
> [25]*But the word of the Lord endures forever.”*[a]

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

Desire Christ

2 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,† [2]as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,[a]† [3]if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

The New Priesthood

[4]Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious,† [5]you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.† [6]Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion

A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,

And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."[a]

[7]Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,[a]

"The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone,"[b]

[8]and

"A stone of stumbling

And a rock of offense."[a]

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

[9]But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;[†] [10]who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

All Men and Women: Bondservants of God

[11]Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,[†] [12]having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

[13]Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,[†] [14]or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. [15]For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— [16]as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. [17]Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Servants: Submissive to Masters

[18]Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.[†] [19]For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. [20]For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is*

commendable before God. [21]For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us,[a] leaving us[b] an example, that you should follow His steps:

[22]*“Who committed no sin,*
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;[a†]

[23]who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; [24]who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. [25]For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer[a] of your souls.[†]

Wives: Submissive to Husbands

3 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,[†] [2]when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. [3]Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— [4]rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. [5]For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, [6]as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Husbands: Honor Your Wives

[7]Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Christians: Bless Others

[8]Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous;[a†] [9]not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. [10]For

> *“He who would love life*
>
> *And see good days,*
>
> *Let him refrain his tongue from evil,*
>
> *And his lips from speaking deceit.*
>
> [11]*Let him turn away from evil and do good;*
>
> *Let him seek peace and pursue it.*
>
> [12]*For the eyes of the* L*ORD* *are on the righteous,*
>
> *And His ears are open to their prayers;*
>
> *But the face of the* L*ORD* *is against those who do evil.”*[a]

Suffering for Righteousness

[13]And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?[†] [14]But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, *you are* blessed. *“And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”*[a] [15]But sanctify the Lord God[a] in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with

meekness and fear;[†] [16]having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. [17]For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.[†]

Involved in Christ's Suffering

[18]For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us[a] to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,[†] [19]by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, [20]who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited[a] in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. [21]There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,[†] [22]who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Crucifying Passions

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us[a] in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,[†] [2]that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. [3]For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime[a] in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

[4]In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. [5]They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. [6]For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.[†]

Prepare for Heaven by Serving

[7]But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.[†] [8]And above all things have fervent love for one another, for *"love will cover a multitude of sins."*[a] [9]*Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling. [10]As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. [11]If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Prepare for the End by Suffering

[12]Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;[†] [13]but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. [14]If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.[a] On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. [15]But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or

as a busybody in other people's matters. [16]Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.[a]

[17]For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?[†] [18]Now

“If the righteous one is scarcely saved,

Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”[a]

[19]Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

Suffering as the Church

5 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:[†] [2]Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly,[a] not for dishonest gain but eagerly; [3]nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;[†] [4]and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

[5]Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

“God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble.”[a†]

[6]Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,[ω] [7]casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

[8]Be sober, be vigilant; because[a] your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.[†] [9]Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. [10]But may[a] the God of all grace, who called us[b] to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. [11]To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Farewell and Greeting

[12]By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

[13]She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, greets you; and *so does* Mark my son.[†] [14]Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.[†]

2 PETER

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The Second Book of Peter

Author—While the Orthodox Church is clear on the canonicity of 2 Peter, some modern scholars consider the letter to be pseudonymous, that is, written by someone else based on what Peter taught. However, internal evidence supports Peter's authorship.

Date—Given Peter's authorship, the date is likely AD 63–67, during Peter's imprisonment in Rome.

Major Theme—*True knowledge versus false knowledge.* Though the world disbelieves, deceives and mocks, Christians must maintain apostolic doctrine and an orthodox Christian way of life. We are to grow continually in holiness and virtue and pursue an entrance into “the everlasting kingdom” (1:11) which is to come.

Background—Of the 27 New Testament books, the canonicity of 2 Peter has been questioned most. However, there is unmistakable evidence it was known and used in the early Church, and its canonicity was settled in the fourth century.

Peter apparently wrote his second epistle from Roman imprisonment. The people addressed know the author (1:16) and seem to be Gentiles, former pagans, in territory evangelized by Paul (2:18, 20–22; 3:15, 16).

The Church has been infiltrated by gnostic-sounding, antinomian (lit., “against the law”) teachers, who taught that faith saves apart from repentance, works, or virtue. They deny that the Second Coming is a physical, historical event and that morality is irrelevant to salvation. The whole Church is threatened, especially the new converts; some have already fallen away.

Outline

- I. Greetings (1:1, 2)
- II. True Knowledge Deifies Us (1:3–21)
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- IV. The Doctrine at Issue: The Second Coming (3:1–17)
    - A. Certainty of the Second Coming brings comfort (3:1–10)
    - B. Expectation of the Second Coming produces virtue (3:11–17)
- V. Concluding Doxology (3:18)

Greeting

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:[†]

Partakers of the Divine Nature

[2]Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,[†] [3]as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain*

to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,[†] [4]by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.[†]

[5]But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,[†] [6]to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, [7]to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. [8]For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.[†] [9]For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.[†]

[10]Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;[ω] [11]for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.[†]

Pursue God

[12]For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. [13]Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*,[†] [14]knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. [15]Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

DEIFICATION

D*eification* is the ancient theological word used to describe the process by which a Christian becomes more like God. St. Peter speaks of this process when he writes, “As His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness . . . you may be partakers of the divine nature” (1:3, 4).

What does it mean to partake of the divine nature, and how do we experience this? To give an answer, let us first address what deification is not, and then describe what it is.

What deification is not. When the Church calls us to pursue godliness, to be more like God, this does not mean that human beings become divine. We do not become like God in His nature. That would not only be heresy, it would be impossible. For we are human, always have been human, and always will be human. We cannot take on the nature of God.

St. John of Damascus makes a remarkable observation. The word “God” in the Scriptures refers not to the divine nature or essence, for that is unknowable. “God” refers rather to the divine energies—the power and grace of God that we can perceive in this world. The Greek word for God, *theos*, comes from a verb meaning “run,” “see,” or “burn.” These are energy words, so to speak, not essence words.

In John 10:34, Jesus, quoting Psalm 81:6, repeats the passage, “You are gods.” The fact that He was speaking to a group of hypocritical religious leaders who were accusing Him of blasphemy makes the meaning doubly clear: Jesus is not using “god” to refer to divine nature. We are gods in that we bear His image, not His nature.

What deification is. Deification means we are to become more like God through His grace or divine energies. In creation, humans were made in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1:26) according to human nature. In other words, humanity by nature is an icon or image of deity: The divine image is in all humanity. Through sin, however, this image and likeness of God was marred, and we fell.

When the Son of God assumed our humanity in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, the process of our being renewed in God's image and likeness was begun. Thus, those who are joined to Christ, through faith, in Holy Baptism begin a process of re-creation, being renewed in God's image and likeness. We become, as St. Peter writes, "partakers of the divine nature" (1:4).

Because of the Incarnation of the Son of God, because the fullness of God has inhabited human flesh, being joined to Christ means that it is again possible to experience deification, the fulfillment of our human destiny. That is, through union with Christ, we become by grace what God is by nature—we "become children of God" (Jn 1:12). His deity interpenetrates our humanity.

Historically, deification has often been illustrated by the example of a sword in the fire. A steel sword is thrust into a hot fire until the sword takes on a red glow. The energy of the fire interpenetrates the sword. The sword never becomes fire, but it picks up the properties of fire.

By application, the divine energies interpenetrate the human nature of Christ. When we are joined to Christ, our humanity is interpenetrated with the energies of God through Christ's glorified flesh. Nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, we partake of the grace of God—His strength, His righteousness, His love—and are enabled to serve Him and glorify Him. Thus we, being human, are being deified.

The Apostles’ Report Is True

[16]For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.[†] [17]For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” [18]And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Interpreting Prophecy

[19]And so we have the prophetic word confirmed,[a] which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;[†] [20]knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,[a] [21]for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God[a] spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

The Deceptions of False Teachers

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves

swift destruction.[†] [2]And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. [3]By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does[a] not slumber.

The Doom of False Teachers

[4]For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;[†] [5]and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of* eight *people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; [6]and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; [7]and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked [8](for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— [9]*then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

The Depravity of False Teachers

[10]and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. *They are* presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, [11]whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

[12]But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption,[†] [13]*and* will receive the wages of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. *They are* spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, [14]having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. *They have* a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children. [15]They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; [16]but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

[17]These are wells without water, clouds[a] carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.[b]

The Tragedy of Apostasy

[18]For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped[a] from those who live in error. [19]While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.[†] [20]For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. [21]For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. [22]But it

has happened to them according to the true proverb: *“A dog returns to his own vomit,”*[a] and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Where Is His Coming?

3 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), [2]that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us,[a] the apostles of the Lord and Savior, [3]knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, [4]and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.”[†] [5]For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, [6]by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. [7]But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

[8]But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. [9]The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,[a] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.[†]

Purified by Waiting

[10]But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.[a†] [11]Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, [12]looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? [13]Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.[†]

The Truth of Apostolic Teaching

[14]Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; [15]and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,[†] [16]as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.[†]

[17]You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;[†] [18]but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

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The First Book of John

Author—John the Apostle (author of the Gospel of John). First John is so similar to the Gospel of John in language, style, and theology that few have ever disputed that the two books were written by the same man.

Date—The letter cannot be dated with certainty. Its similarity to John's Gospel, the presence among the recipients of a Christianized form of gnosticism, and the apparent age of its author suggest a time late in John's life, about the same time as he wrote his gospel (AD 90–95).

Major Theme—*Tests of true Christian life.* Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God, reveals the light (1:5–7), love (4:7–11), and life (5:11–13) of the Father, as contrasted with the darkness (1:6), hatred (2:9–11), and death (5:12) of the present world. First John is a commentary on the reality of baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist in our lives. Subthemes include:

1. Our communion with God and with each other
2. The close relationship of faith, love, obedience, and life
3. The close relationship between love of God and love of others
4. The crucial importance of holding true faith
5. A stark, eschatological contrast between the children of God and the children of the world

Background—First John is a polemic against two identifiable groups: (a) false teachers with a gnostic bent; and (b) former members of the Church who were a threat to the faith of those remaining (2:27; 3:7).

The polemic is mostly pastoral and positive, to protect God's people. While the addressee is not mentioned, this may be an encyclical to John's diocese of Asia.

Outline

- I. Introduction: The Apostolic Witness to the Incarnation (1:1–4)
- II. Live in the Light (1:5–2:27)
  - A. Walk in the light of confessed sin (1:5–2:2)
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- III. Live as God's Children (2:28–4:6)
  - A. Be righteous (2:28–3:9)
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  - A. Pray according to God's will (5:14–17)
  - B. Separate from sin and evil (5:18, 19)
  - C. Live in Jesus Christ (5:20, 21)

Introduction: The Incarnation

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—[†] 2the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—[†] [3]that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.[†] [4]And these things we write to you that your[a] joy may be full.[††]

Walk in the Light: Confession

[5]This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.[†] [6]If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.[†] [7]But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

[8]If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9]If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [10]If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Keep God's Commandments of Love

2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. [2]And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

[3]Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.[†] [4]He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His

commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. [5]But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. [6]He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

CONFESSION

Perhaps the most misunderstood sacrament of the Christian Church is confession. How did it originate? What role does a priest play? Is there a special procedure for confession? The Scriptures hold answers to these questions.

Concerning our sins, God’s Word gives a marvelous promise: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1:9). The faithful are to bring their sins to God in repentance and receive cleansing and forgiveness.

The early Christian community had a specific practice in this regard. People would stand and confess their sins to God in the presence of the whole congregation! Had not Jesus encouraged His followers to walk in the light together, to confront problems corporately, to “tell *it* to the church” (Mt 18:17)? Thus, James writes, “Confess *your* trespasses to one another” (Jam 5:16). But as time went on and the Church grew in numbers, strangers came to visit and public confession became more difficult. Out of mercy, priests began to witness confessions of sin privately on behalf of the Church.

Jesus gave His disciples the authority to forgive sin. “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained” (Jn 20:23; see also Mt 16:19). From the beginning, Christians understood that the grace of ordination endowed the shepherd of the flock with the discernment and compassion to speak the words of remission on behalf of Christ regarding the sins of those who confess and turn from sin. For God has promised to remove sin from us “as far as the east is from the west” (Ps 102:12).

“You did not choose Me,” Jesus told the Twelve, “but I chose you and appointed [ordained] you” (Jn 15:16). To these same disciples He promised, “It is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit” (Mk 13:11). Whom God calls, He equips. Paul writes to Timothy, “Stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2Ti 1:6). It is the grace of the Holy Spirit that enables the priest to serve God and the people.

Thus, the Church has encouraged her faithful: If you know you have committed a specific sin, do not hide it but confess it before coming to the Holy Eucharist. St. Paul wrote, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1Co 11:28), and “If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged” (1Co 11:31).

King David learned a lesson regarding his sin that is recorded for our benefit. For about a year, he had hidden his sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband (2Kg 11:1—12:13). Then, confronted by Nathan the prophet, David repented from his heart and confessed his sin in a psalm that is used for general confession to this day (Ps 50). The joy of salvation was restored to him.

People ask, “Can’t I confess to God privately?” Certainly, though there is no clear biblical basis for it. Even general confession occurs in the Church.

In His mercy, God provides the sacrament of confession (more properly called the sacrament of repentance) to give us deliverance from sin and from what psychologists call denial. It is easy to pray in isolation yet never come clean. It is far more effective to confess aloud to God before a priest and benefit from his guidance and help.

Thus, we come before the holy icon of Christ, to whom we confess, and are guided by our spiritual father in a cleansing inventory of our lives. When we tell God all, naming our sins and failures, we hear those glorious words of freedom that announce Christ's promise of forgiveness of all our sins. We resolve to "go and sin no more" (Jn 8:11).

[7]Brethren,[a] I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.[b] [8]Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

[9]He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. [10]He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. [11]But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

[12]I write to you, little children,

Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.[†]

[13]I write to you, fathers,

Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.
I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.
[14]I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one.

[15]Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.[†] [16]For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.[†] [17]And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The Truth: Jesus Is God

[18]Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the[a] Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.[†] [19]They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.[†]

[20]But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.[a][†] [21]I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

[22]Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.[†] [23]Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

[24]Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.[†] [25]And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

[26]These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you. [27]But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will[a] abide in Him.

Practice Righteousness: Do Not Sin

[28]And now, little children, abide in Him, that when[a] He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. [29]If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God![a] Therefore the world does not know us,[b] because it did not know Him.[†] [2]Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when

He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.[†] [3]And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

[4]Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.[†] [5]And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. [6]Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

[7]Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. [8]He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. [9]Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Love One Another

[10]In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother. [11]For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, [12]not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.[†]

[13]Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. [14]We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother[a] abides in death. [15]Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.[†]

[16]By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. [17]But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

[18]My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. [19]And by this we know[a] that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. [20]For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. [21]Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. [22]And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. [23]And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us[a] commandment.

[24]Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

The Spirit's Witness: The Incarnation

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. [2]By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, [3]and every spirit that does not confess that[a] Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the

Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.[†]

[4]You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. [5]They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. [6]We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.[†]

God Redeems Us in Love

[7]Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.[†] [8]He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. [9]In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. [10]In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.[†] [11]Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

God Abides in Us

[12]No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.[†ω] [13]By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. [14]And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. [15]Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. [16]And we have known and believed the love that God

has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

Love Overcomes Fear

[17]Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. [18]There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. [19]We love Him[a] because He first loved us.

Love of God Means Love of Others

[20]If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can[a] he love God whom he has not seen? [21]And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

Faith Overcomes the World

5 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.[†] [2]By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. [3]For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.[†] [4]For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our[a] faith. [5]Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

God Validates Our Faith

[6]This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.[†] [7]For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. [8]And there are three that bear witness on earth:[a] the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

Faith Brings Eternal Life

[9]If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which[a] He has testified of His Son. [10]He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. [11]And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. [12]He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. [13]These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,[a] and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.[†]

Pray According to God's Will

[14]Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. [15]And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

[16]If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does* not *lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.[†] [17]All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

Separate from Sin

[18]We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself,[a] and the wicked one does not touch him.

[19]We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

Live in Christ

[20]And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

[21]Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.[†]

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The Second Book of John

Author—John the Apostle. Although some in the third and fourth centuries doubted John's authorship, the early witnesses favor John and express no alternative.

Date—There is no firm evidence for fixing a date. The epistle's similarities to the Gospel of John, 1 John and 3 John suggest a date of composition close to that of these other books (AD 90–95).

Major Theme—*Tests of true Christian care.* The love of our Incarnate God brings promised victory over the antichrist.

Background—The epistle is addressed to “the elect lady” (v. 1), most likely a church under John's oversight. The Church, a feminine word in Greek, elsewhere is called the “bride” of Christ the Lord (*kyrios*), and thus she is easily called *kyria*, the feminine of *kyrios*.

John is warning his readers against the “deceivers” (v. 7), heretics who deny the Incarnation of the Son of God. These false apostles visited various churches, posing as true disciples and taking advantage of Christian hospitality.

Outline

I. Greeting and Benediction (vv. 1–3)

II. Follow the Law of Love (vv. 4–6)

III. Beware of Deceiving Heretics (vv. 7–11)

IV. John's Plans and Farewell (vv. 12, 13)

Greeting and Benediction

[1]The Elder,

To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth,[†] [2]because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

[3]Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you[a] from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.[†]

Follow the Law of Love

[4]I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.[†] [5]And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. [6]This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

Beware of Deceiving Heretics

[7]For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.[†] [8]Look to yourselves, that we[a] do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we[b] may receive a full reward.

[9]Whoever transgresses[a] and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.[†] [10]If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;[†] [11]for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

John's Plans and Farewell

[12]Having many things to write to you, I did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

[13]The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.[†]

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The Third Book of John

Author—Third John has the same author as 2 John. The language and style are the same. Both are closely related to 1 John and both are written by “the Elder,” a name by which John the Apostle was known in Asia Minor in his old age.

Date—As with 2 John, there is no firm evidence for fixing a date. It is probable that all of John's letters were written about the same time (AD 90–95).

Major Theme—*Genuine leadership versus false leadership.* Third John exhorts the Church to persevere in the true faith which they have received. True Christian leaders will adhere to that faith and respect those who passed it on to them.

Background—One of the churches under John's oversight is having a jurisdictional dispute. Evangelists sent out by John have reported back to their home church, probably Ephesus, testifying that Gaius—full of love and loyalty—had liberally supported their mission. On the other hand, Diotrephes, apparently the local bishop or aspiring to be so, has vigorously opposed them and lorded over the church instead of leading it. He was resistant to apostolic oversight (v. 9) and forbade the welcoming of missionaries from John. It may be that Demetrius (v. 12) is another missionary whom John is intending to send that way and who also will be in need of hospitality. Thus, John writes to Diotrephes’ church, but he does not trust Diotrephes with his letter (v. 9).

Outline

- I. Greeting to Gaius (vv. 1–4)
- II. Commendation of Gaius (vv. 5–8)
- III. Condemnation of Diotrephes (vv. 9–11)
- IV. Recommendation of Demetrius (v. 12)
- V. Farewell (vv. 13, 14)

Greeting to Gaius

[1]The Elder,

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:[†]

[2]Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. [3]For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth.[†] [4]I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.[a]

Commendation of Gaius

[5]Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and[a] for strangers,[†] [6]who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If* you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, [7]because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles.[†] [8]We therefore ought to receive[a] such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.[†]

Condemnation of Diotrephes

[9]I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.[†] [10]Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

[11]Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but[a] he who does evil has not seen God.

Recommendation of Demetrius

[12]Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.[†]

Farewell

[13]I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; [14]but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

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The Book of Jude

Author—Jude, a relative of Jesus (called the “brother” of the Lord in Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3) and the brother of James the Just. This is not the Jude who was one of the Twelve, also called Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus (v. 17; see Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:16; Acts 1:13).

Date—The date of the letter is uncertain, but sometime in the period AD 60–80 seems reasonable.

Major Theme—*Contending earnestly for the faith.* Jude is a polemic directed against false teachers within the Church who are jeopardizing the salvation of many. Jude bases his attack on examples from the Old Testament and the tradition of God dealing harshly with those who assault His people.

Background—To whom Jude writes is difficult to discern. Some scholars have suggested that the addressees are Christians from a Hellenistic Jewish background. The heresy Jude opposes seems to be an early form of gnosticism. These heretics are still members of the Church (vv. 4, 12, 22, 23), carrying on an aggressive campaign of propaganda and subversion. Jude's mode of attack is more *ad hominem*, that is, a censure of persons, than theological: We will know them by their fruits, he says. These heretics are obviously bad trees; they are not to be honored with a theological rebuttal.

Outline

I. Greeting (vv. 1, 2)

II. The Presence of False Teachers (vv. 3, 4)

III. The Judgment of Such False Teachers (vv. 5–7)

IV. The Character of False Teachers (vv. 8–16)

V. Resistance to False Teachers (vv. 17–23)

VI. Doxology (vv. 24, 25)

Greeting

[1]Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,

To those who are called, sanctified[a] by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:[†]

[2]Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

The Presence of False Teachers

[3]Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.[†] [4]For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God[a] and our Lord Jesus Christ.[†]

The Judgment of Such False Teachers

[5]But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those

who did not believe.[†] [6]And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; [7]as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The Character of False Teachers

[8]Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.[†] [9]Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”[†] [10]But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.[†] [11]Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.[†]

[12]These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about[a] by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;[†] [13]raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.[†]

[14]Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,[†] [15]to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all

their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Resistance to False Teachers

[16]These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling *words*, flattering people to gain advantage.[†] [17]But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: [18]how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. [19]These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.[†]

[20]But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,[†] [21]keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

[22]And on some have compassion, making a distinction;[a] [23]but others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire,[a] hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Doxology

[24]Now to Him who is able to keep you[a] from stumbling,

And to present *you* faultless

Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,[†]

[25]To God our Savior,[a]

Who alone is wise,[b]

Be glory and majesty,

Dominion and power,[c]

Both now and forever.

Amen.

Revelation

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The Book of the Revelation

Author—Traditionally, the Revelation (also called the Apocalypse) has been attributed to the apostle John.

Date—The vast majority of scholars hold that Revelation was composed during the fierce persecution in the latter part of the reign of Domitian (AD 81–96), when John was in exile on the Isle of Patmos.

Major Theme—*Faithfulness in tribulation.* “Revelation” (Gr. *apokalypsis*) means the uncovering of something that has been previously hidden, in this case the final triumph of the kingdom of God. Since this final triumph is assured, our faithfulness now—before its full revelation—will lead to ultimate victory. Subthemes include (1) divine judgment of human wickedness and (2) the symbolic presentation of most major New Testament teaching concerning eschatology, the study of the last things.

Background—The early Church was convinced the Second Coming was near (Acts 2:16, 17; Heb 1:1; 1Jn 2:18). John's vision was first of all a reminder from God to the churches not to give in to their adversaries, but to hold fast to their faith. The book can also be seen as prophecy addressing a time far distant from its era of composition, predicting actual future events; or as an exposition of the ongoing relationships and conflicts between God and His kingdom, humanity, and Satan. These three approaches are not contradictory but complementary; all are valid.

While seen as canonical and inspired by God, the Revelation is the only New Testament book not publicly read in the services of the Orthodox Church. This is partly because the book was only gradually accepted as canonical in many parts of Christendom. In addition, in the second and third centuries Revelation was widely twisted and sensationally misinterpreted, and the erroneous teachings brought troublesome confusion to Christians—a trend that continues to this day.

Outline

1. Prologue (1:1–3:22)
    1. Introduction (1:1–3)
    2. Greeting (1:4–8)
    3. John's vision of the Son of Man (1:9–20)
    4. The seven letters (2:1–3:22)
2. Warnings of the Coming Judgment (4:1–16:21)

    1. The seven seals (4:1–8:1)
    2. The seven trumpets (8:2–14:20)
    3. The seven bowls (15:1–16:21)
3. The Judgment of Babylon, the Beast, and Satan (17:1–20:15)
    1. Babylon destroyed by a great angel (17:1–19:10)
    2. Powers of evil destroyed (19:11–20:10)
    3. The Last Judgment (20:11–15)
4. The New Order (21:1–22:5)
    1. A new creation: heaven, earth, and city (21:1–8)
    2. The New Jerusalem: bride of the Lamb (21:9–22:5)
5. Conclusion (22:6–21)

imagesIntroduction and Blessingimages

[1]The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John,[†] [2]who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.[†] [3]Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.[†]

imagesGreeting to the Seven Churchesimages

[4]John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,[†] [5]and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed[a] us from our sins in His own blood,[†] [6]and has made us kings[a] and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.[†]

[7]Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of

Him. Even so, Amen.

[8]“I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End,”[a] says the Lord,[b] “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”[†]

imagesVision and Commission of Christimages

[9]I, John, both[a] your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.[b] [10]I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,[†] [11]saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,”[a] and, “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia:[b] to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”[†]

[12]Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, [13]and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.[†] [14]His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;[†] [15]His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;[†] [16]He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength.[†] [17]And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me,[a] “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.[†] [18]I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. [19]Write[a] the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.[†] [20]The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw[a] are the seven churches.[†]

imagesEphesus: Lovelessimages

2“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:[†] [2]“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;[†] [3]and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. [4]Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. [5]Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. [6]But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.[†]

[7]“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’[†]

imagesSmyrna: Persecutedimages

[8]“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:[†] [9]“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan.[†] [10]Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.[†]

[11]“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

imagesPergamos: Compromisingimages

[12]“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:[†] [13]“I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.[†] [14]But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.[†] [15]Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.[a] [16]Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.[†]

[17]“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.” ’[†]

imagesThyatira: Corruptimages

[18]“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:[†] [19]“I know your works, love, service, faith,[a] and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first. [20]Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow[a] that woman[b] Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce[c] My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.[†] [21]And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.[a] [22]Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their[a] deeds.[†] [23]I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

[24]“Now to you I say, and[a] to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will[b] put on you no other burden.[†] [25]But hold fast what you have till I come. [26]And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

1. [27]‘*He shall rule them with a rod of iron;*
2. *They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels’*[a]—

as I also have received from My Father; [28]and I will give him the morning star.[†]

[29]“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

imagesSardis: Deadimages

3“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,

‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.[†] [2]Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.[a†] [3]Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. [4]You[a] have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.[†] [5]He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.[†]

[6]“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

imagesPhiladelphia: Faithfulimages

[7]“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, *“He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”*:[a][†] [8]“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;[a] for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.[†] [9]Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.[†] [10]Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.[†] [11]Behold,[a] I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. [12]He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name.[†]

[13]“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

imagesLaodicea: Lukewarmimages

[14]“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans[a] write,

‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:[†] [15]“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.[†] [16]So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,[a] I will vomit you out of My mouth. [17]Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—[†] [18]I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. [19]As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. [20]Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.[†] [21]To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.[†]

[22]“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ”

imagesHeavenly Temple, Heavenly Worshipimages

4After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”[†]

[2]Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne.[†] [3]And He who sat there was[a] like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. [4]Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns[a] of gold on their heads.[†] [5]And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.[a] Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the[b] seven Spirits of God.

LITURGY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Virtually all students of the Bible realize there was liturgical worship in Israel. Immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1–17), instructions for building the altar were set forth (Ex 20:24–26). Then comes instruction concerning keeping the Sabbath (Ex 23:10–13), the annual feasts (Ex 23:14–19), and the various offerings and furnishings in the sanctuary (Ex 25:1–40). Following this, chapters 26—30 deal with such matters as the design of the tabernacle, the altar, and the outer court, the priests’ vestments and their consecration, and instructions for daily offerings.

Liturgical worship is also found in heaven, which is to be expected, since God instructed Moses to make the earthly place of worship as a “copy and shadow of the heavenly things”

(Heb 8:5; see Ex 25:40). Heavenly worship is revealed in such passages as Isaiah 6:1–8, where we see the prophet caught up to heaven for the liturgy, and Revelation 4, which records the apostle John’s vision of heaven’s liturgy.

The key to comprehending liturgy in the New Testament is to understand the work of the High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, who inaugurates the new covenant. Christ is “a priest forever” (Heb 7:17, 21). It is unthinkable that He would be a priest but not serve liturgically:

“forever” suggests He serves continually, without ceasing, in the heavenly tabernacle. Further, He is called not only a priest but a liturgist: “a Minister [Gr. *leitourgos*, lit., “liturgist”) of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected” (Heb 8:2). Christian worship on earth, to be fully Christian, must mirror the worship of Christ in heaven.

Moreover, Christ is “Mediator of a better covenant” (Heb 8:6). What is that covenant? In the words of the Lord, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood” (1Co 11:25). Just as the blood of bulls and goats in the old covenant prefigured Christ’s sacrifice to come, so the eucharistic feast brings to us the fullness of His new covenant offering, completed at the Cross and fulfilled in His Resurrection. This once-for-all offering of Himself (Heb 7:27) which He as High Priest presents at the heavenly altar is an offering in which we participate through the Divine Liturgy in the Church. This is the worship of the New Testament Church!

Given this biblical background, a number of New Testament passages take on new meaning.

1 *Acts 13:2:* “As they ministered to the Lord [lit., “as they were in the liturgy of the Lord”] and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul.’ ” We learn that (a) these two apostles were called by God during worship, and (b) the Holy Spirit speaks in a liturgical setting.

2 *Acts 20:7:* “Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them.” Communion was held each Sunday.

3 *Romans 16:16:* “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” A kiss of greeting was common in this ancient culture. The “holy kiss,” however, was an element of the Christian liturgy that signified the people of God were reconciled to one another, so that they might receive the Body and Blood of Christ in peace.

4 *Ephesians 5:14:* “Awake, you who sleep, / Arise from the dead, / And Christ will give you light.” This is an ancient baptismal hymn, already in use by the time Ephesians was written. Other examples of creeds and hymns of New Testament times are seen in 1 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Timothy 2:11–13.

5 *Hebrews 13:10:* “We have an altar” reveals the continuation of the altar in New Testament worship.

6 *Revelation 1:10:* “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day.” Many scholars believe John saw his vision of Christ during the Sunday liturgy, as the Lord appeared to him “in the midst of the seven lampstands” (Rev 1:13). Lampstands would be found in the Christian sanctuary just as they were in the Hebrew temple.

[6]Before the throne *there was*[a] a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.[†] [7]The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. [8]*The* four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

1. “Holy, holy, holy,[a]
2. Lord God Almighty,
3. Who was and is and is to come!”[†]

[9]Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, [10]the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:[†]

1. [11]“You are worthy, O Lord,[a]
2. To receive glory and honor and power;
3. For You created all things,
4. And by Your will they exist[b] and were created.”[†]

The Lamb Opens the Scroll

5And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.[†] [2]Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”[†] [3]And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

[4]So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read[a] the scroll, or to look at it. [5]But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose[a] its seven seals.”

[6]And I looked, and behold,[a] in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.[†] [7]Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

[8]Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.[†] [9]And they sang a new song, saying:

1. “You are worthy to take the scroll,
2. And to open its seals;

3. For You were slain,
4. And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
5. Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,[†]
6. [10]And have made us[a] kings[b] and priests to our God;
7. And we[c] shall reign on the earth.”

[11]Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, [12]saying with a loud voice:

1. “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
2. To receive power and riches and wisdom,
3. And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

[13]And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

1. “Blessing and honor and glory and power
2. *Be* to Him who sits on the throne,
3. And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”[a]

[14]Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four[a] elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.[b]

imagesSeal One: The Conquerorimages

6Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals;[a] and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.”[†] [2]And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.[†]

imagesSeal Two: Conflict on Earthimages

[3]When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.”[a†] [4]Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was

granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

imagesSeal Three: Scarcity on Earthimages

[5]When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.[†] [6]And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart[a] of wheat for a denarius,[b] and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

imagesSeal Four: Widespread Deathimages

[7]When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.”[†] [8]So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

imagesSeal Five: Cry of the Martyrsimages

[9]When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.[†] [10]And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” [11]Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were,* was completed.

imagesSeal Six: Cosmic Disturbancesimages

[12]I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold,[a] there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon[b] became like blood.[†] [13]And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. [14]Then the sky

receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. [15]And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders,[a] the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, [16]and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! [17]For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Angels Visit Earth

[7]After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.[†] [2]Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, [3]saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” [†] [4]And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:[†]

Sealing God's Servants

1. [5]of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed;[a]
2. of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed;
3. of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed;
4. [6]of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;
5. of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed;
6. of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed;
7. [7]of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed;
8. of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed;
9. of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed;
10. [8]of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed;
11. of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed;
12. of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

Final Ingathering and Worship

[9]After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,[†] [10]and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” [11]All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, [12]saying:

1. “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
2. Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
3. *Be* to our God forever and ever.
4. Amen.”

[13]Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

[14]And I said to him, “Sir,[a] you know.”

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [15]Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.[†] [16]They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; [17]for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.[a] And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Seal Seven: Prelude to the Trumpets

8When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.[†] [2]And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.[†] [3]Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.[†] [4]And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. [5]Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.[†]

[6]So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.[†]

Trumpet One: Vegetation Struck

[7]The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth.[a] And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.[†]

Trumpet Two: The Seas Struck

[8]Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.[†] [9]And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Trumpet Three: Fresh Waters Struck

[10]Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.[†] [11]The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

Trumpet Four: The Heavens Struck

[12]Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.[†]

[13]And I looked, and I heard an angel[a] flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth,

because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

Trumpet Five, Woe One: The Locusts

9Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.[†] [2]And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. [3]Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.[†] [4]They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. [5]And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.[†] [6]In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

[7]The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were* like the faces of men.[†] [8]They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions’ *teeth.* [9]And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. [10]They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. [11]And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.[†]

[12]One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

Trumpet Six, Woe Two: The Plagues

[13]Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,[†] [14]saying to the sixth angel who had

the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” [15]So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. [16]Now the number of the army of the horsemen *was* two hundred million; I heard the number of them. [17]And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.[†] [18]By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. [19]For their power[a] is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails *are* like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

[20]But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.[†] [21]And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries[a] or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Mighty Angel, Little Book

[10]I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow *was* on his head, his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.[†] [2]He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land, [†] [3]and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.[†] [4]Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices,[a] I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,[b] “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

[5]The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand[a] to heaven[†] [6]and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, [7]but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is

about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

John Eats the Book

[8]Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.”[†]

[9]So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.”

And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

[10]Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. [11]And he[a] said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

The Two Witnesses

11 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood,[a] saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.[†] [2]But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* forty-two months. [3]And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”[†]

[4]These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God[a] of the earth.[†] [5]And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.[†] [6]These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

[7]When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.[†] [8]And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our[a] Lord was crucified.[†] [9]Then *those* from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow[a] their dead bodies to be put into graves.[†] [10]And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

[11]Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.[†] [12]And they[a] heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. [13]In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

[14]The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

Trumpet Seven: The Kingdom Proclaimed

[15]Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms[a] of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"[†] [16]And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,[†] [17]saying:

1. "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
2. The One who is and who was and who is to come,[a]
3. Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.
4. [18]The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
5. And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
6. And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
7. And those who fear Your name, small and great,

8. And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

[19]Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant[a] was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

The Woman, Her Child and the Dragon

12Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.[†] [2]Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

The Child

[3]And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.[†] [4]His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. [5]She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.[†] [6]Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.[†]

War in Heaven

[7]And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,[†] [8]but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them[a] in heaven any longer. [9]So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

[10]Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God

day and night, has been cast down. [11]And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. [12]Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

War on Earth

[13]Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*.[†] [14]But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. [15]So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. [16]But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. [17]And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.[a†]

The Beast Against the Saints

13Then I[a] stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns,[b] and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.[†] [2]Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. [3]And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. [4]So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”[†]

[5]And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue[a] for forty-two months.[†] [6]Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.[†] [7]It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe,[a] tongue, and nation. [8]All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

[9]If anyone has an ear, let him hear. [10]He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.[†]

The Deception

[11]Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.[†] [12]And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. [13]He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.[†] [14]And he deceives those[a] who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. [15]He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. [16]He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,[†] [17]and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or[a] the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

[18]Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number *is* 666.[†]

The Lamb and the 144,000

14Then I looked, and behold, a[a] Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with
Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having[b] His Father's name
written on their foreheads.[†] [2]And I heard a voice from heaven, like the
voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the
sound of harpists playing their harps.[†] [3]They sang as it were a new song
before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no
one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who
were redeemed from the earth. [4]These are the ones who were not defiled
with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb
wherever He goes. These were redeemed[a] from *among* men, *being*
firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.[†] [5]And in their mouth was found no
deceit,[a] for they are without fault before the throne of God.[b]

Proclamation of Angels

[6]Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the
everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every
nation, tribe, tongue, and people—[†] [7]saying with a loud voice, “Fear God
and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship
Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

[8]And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon[a] is fallen, is fallen, that
great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath
of her fornication.”[†]

[9]Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone
worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or
on his hand,[†] [10]he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God,
which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall
be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and
in the presence of the Lamb. [11]And the smoke of their torment ascends
forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast
and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Harvest of Blessing: The Martyrs

[12]Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those[a] who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.[†]

[13]Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,[a] “Write: ‘Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

Harvest of Wrath: The Grapes

[14]Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.[†] [15]And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You[a] to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” [16]So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

[17]Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

[18]And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.”[†] [19]So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. [20]And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.[†] [†]

The Liturgy of Preparation

15Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.[†]

[2]And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark[a] *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.[†] [3]They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

1. “Great and marvelous *are* Your works,
2. Lord God Almighty!
3. Just and true *are* Your ways,
4. O King of the saints![a]
5. [4]Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
6. For *You* alone *are* holy.
7. For all nations shall come and worship before You,
8. For Your judgments have been manifested.”

[5]After these things I looked, and behold,[a] the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.[†] [6]And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. [7]Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. [8]The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.[†]

16Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls[a] of the wrath of God on the earth.”[†]

Bowl One: Loathsome Sores

[2]So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.[†]

Bowl Two: The Sea Turns to Blood

[3]Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead *man;* and every living creature in the sea died.

Bowl Three: Fresh Waters Turn to Blood

[4]Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. [5]And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

1. “You are righteous, O Lord,[a]
2. The One who is and who was and who is to be,[b]
3. Because You have judged these things.[†]
4. [6]For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
5. And You have given them blood to drink.
6. For[a] it is their just due.”

[7]And I heard another from[a] the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* Your judgments.”

Bowl Four: Men Are Scorched

[8]Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.[†] [9]And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

Bowl Five: Darkness and Pain

[10]Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.[†] [11]They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Bowl Six: Euphrates Dries Up

[12]Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might

be prepared.[†] [13]And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.[†] [14]For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and[a] of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.[†]

[15]“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”[†]

[16]And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.[a†]

Bowl Seven: Earth Utterly Shaken

[17]Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”[†] [18]And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. [19]Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. [20]Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. [21]And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

The Great Harlot and Her Beast

17Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me,[a] “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,[†] [2]with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”[†]

[3]So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.[†] [4]The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.[a†] [5]And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.[†]

[6]I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Harlot and Her Beast

[7]But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. [8]The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.[a†]

[9]“Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. [10]There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. [11]The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

[12]“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.[†] [13]These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. [14]These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb

will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful."

[15]Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.[†] [16]And the ten horns which you saw on[a] the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. [17]For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. [18]And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

The Judgment of Babylon

18After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.[†] [2]And he cried mightily[a] with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird![†] [3]For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

[4]And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.[†] [5]For her sins have reached[a] to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. [6]Render to her just as she rendered to you,[a] and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. [7]In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit *as* queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' [8]Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong *is* the Lord God who judges[a] her.

The World Mourns for Babylon

[9]“The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,[†] [10]standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

[11]“And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:[†] [12]merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; [13]and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. [14]The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you,[a] and you shall find them no more at all. [15]The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, [16]and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! [17]For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’ Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance [18]and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What *is* like this great city?’

[19]“They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.’

[20]“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* holy apostles[a] and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”[†]

The Finality of Babylon's Fall

[21]Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be

thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.[†] [22]The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. [23]The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. [24]And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

Litany of Triumph in Heaven

19After these things I heard[a] a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord[b] our God![†] [2]For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her."[†] [3]Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"[†] [4]And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" [5]Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both[a] small and great!"

[6]And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the[a] Lord God Omnipotent reigns![†] [7]Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." [8]And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

[9]Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." [†] [10]And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do* not *do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."[†]

The Word and His Army

[11]Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.[†] [12]His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had[a] a name written that no one knew except Himself. [13]He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.[†] [14]And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,[a] followed Him on white horses.[†] [15]Now out of His mouth goes a sharp[a] sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.[†] [16]And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Defeat of the Beast and False Prophet

[17]Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,[a†] [18]that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free[a] and slave, both small and great.”

[19]And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. [20]Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.[†] [21]And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

The Millennial Age

20Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.[†] [2]He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;[†] [3]and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.[†]

[4]And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a[a] thousand years.[†] [5]But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. [6]Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

After the Millennium

[7]Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison[†] [8]and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. [9]They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. [10]The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where[a] the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

[11]Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for

them.[†] [12]And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God,[a] and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book* of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.[†] [13]The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.[†] [14]Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.[a] [15]And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

A New Creation

21Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.[†] [2]Then I, John,[a] saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.[†] [3]And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.[†] [4]And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

Few saints have been blessed with a vision of heaven while still in this life. Isaiah saw heaven (Is 6:1–8), as did Ezekiel (Ezk 1:1–28), and the apostle John saw a new heaven—God’s eternal Kingdom revealed as a city (Rev 21:1—22:5).

When we read these passages, we note an abundance of mystical, apocalyptic imagery. But the strong similarities between these passages suggests an inspired consistency of reporting on the visions. The living creatures, the light, the cherubic beings, the throne, and the glory of the Lord all work together to unveil a Kingdom of celestial majesty and splendor.

While confessing with the prophet Isaiah and the apostle Paul that “eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1Co 2:9), we nonetheless find, taking the Scriptures as a whole, that certain things can be said about the eternal Kingdom.

1 *The saints who inhabit God’s Kingdom live in active fulfillment of His eternal plan.* In the Kingdom, humanity becomes all it is meant to be. There is nothing at all in Scripture to suggest that eternal life means people passively afloat on huge white clouds strumming harps unto the ages of ages.

Originally created to inhabit Paradise, our first parents chose to sin against God and were expelled from the Garden. The Kingdom of God was closed to mankind (Gn 3:24). But God in His love called His creation back to Himself, speaking to us through the law and the prophets and ultimately through His incarnate Son. Through new life in Jesus Christ, we are brought back by God’s mercy into the new creation, His everlasting Kingdom. As kings and priests we will reign with Him forever (Rev 1:6).

2 *We experience a foretaste of the Kingdom in the Church.* The very first words of the Divine Liturgy spoken by the priest are, “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.” The Church at worship enters or ascends to the heavenly Kingdom. For it is in the Church that we are seated “together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6) and are raised to “where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” (Col 3:1).

In worship we join the heavenly hosts—the saints and the angels—in giving praise to our God. As the body of Christ, we participate with that “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12:1) surrounding us as we come to “the throne of God” (Heb 12:2). We come liturgically “to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all” (Heb 12:22, 23). With this heavenly vision, the Orthodox Church each Sunday remembers not only those in the parish but “all those who in faith have gone on before us to their rest.”

3 *Knowledge of the Kingdom motivates us to live in complete devotion to Christ.* In this life, we have a foretaste of the Kingdom that inspires us to

seek its fullness. In Paul’s words, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face” (1Co 13:12). Worship is not a solitary act. Rather it is the Bride of Christ, the one Church—those on earth joining with those in heaven—giving thanks to our God and King, who has made us citizens of His magnificent domain.

The apostle John writes, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1Jn 3:2, 3).

[5]Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me,[a] “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

[6]And He said to me, “It is done![a] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.[†] [7]He who overcomes shall inherit all things,[a] and I will be his God and he shall be My son. [8]But the cowardly, unbelieving,[a] abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

The New Jerusalem

[9]Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me[a] and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.”[b†] [10]And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy[a] Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,[†] [11]having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. [12]Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:[†] [13]three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

[14]Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names[a] of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. [15]And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.[†] [16]The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. [17]Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. [18]The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. [19]The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, [20]the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. [21]The twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass.

Healing of the Nations

[22]But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.[†] [23]The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it,[a] for the glory[b] of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.[†] [24]And the nations of those who are saved[a] shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.[b] [25]Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). [26]And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.[a] [27]But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes[a] an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Paradise Regained

22And he showed me a pure[a] river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.[†] [2]In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.[†] [3]And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. [4]They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.[†] [5]There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.[†]

The Angel's Testimony

[6]Then he said to me, “These words *are* faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy[a] prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

[7]“Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”[†]

[8]Now I, John, saw and heard[a] these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.[†]

Christ's Testimony

[9]Then he said to me, “See *that you do* not *do that.* For[a] I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” [10]And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.[†] [11]He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous[a] still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

[12]“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work.[†] [13]I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last.”[a]

[14]Blessed *are* those who do His commandments,[a] that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.[†]

[15]But[a] outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

[16]“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”[†]

The Church's Testimony

[17]And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.[†]

[18]For[a] I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add[b] to him the plagues that are written in this book;[†] [19]and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away[a] his part from the Book[b] of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

[20]He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus![†]

Benediction

[21]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all.[a] Amen.[†]

FOR PRAYER,
READING
AND STUDY

The Bible: God’s Revelation to Man

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The Seventy

THE BIBLE: GOD'S REVELATION TO MAN

By The Right Reverend JOSEPH, Bishop of Los Angeles and the West

For the Christian of true worship, the Bible is the greatest source of truth, virtue, and moral ethics. It is invaluable as a source of teaching doctrine and holiness. We call it the "Book of Life," for in its pages we find the closest expression we have of the Inexpressible. From generation to generation, the books that make up the canon of Scripture have communicated to us the lessons God has taught and still is teaching His people. It is open to all, and should be read by all: men and women, clergy and laity, children and adults, believers and unbelievers.

The Bible Reveals God

From the beginning, God has revealed Himself to mankind. He never ceases to reach out to His creation with abundant blessings, desiring all to freely partake of the personal communion He offers. The Bible also establishes that it was humanity who rejected Him, following after the selfish desire to be as God. Certainly humanity has afflicted itself with this delusion. Even so, the human race, even in its fallen state, is unable to deter God's unceasing ministry to His people. The Scriptures record this ongoing spiritual struggle between the loving truth of God and man's deluded expression of pride.

Once the truth of God is accepted, and a person surrenders his pride and his denial of reality, his eyes become open to Christ our God, whose divine Light invisibly enters in. This is what we call holiness, and therefore only in genuine holiness can we begin to understand the Bible and experience God revealed in it. The Scriptures and the histories of the martyrs bear witness to the glory of God as it enters us. They also witness to us the terrible price that people pay when they refuse to acknowledge the presence of the Lord.

The Bible Reveals Our Need

The Old Testament establishes the way of thinking of the one who has "seen" God. He now sees the misery of fallen humanity. He discerns how, in our wretched state, we bring ruin upon ourselves with the lies our pride fabricates for us. In the pages of the Bible, we see how even good men can fail. And we see and hear the warning for us that, just as surely as sunset brings night, the disobedience of mankind brings death and destruction.

The Bible is not a document for individuals seeking to feel self-justified and full of wisdom. Rather, it is a mirror in which each person can see his own weakness without God and his need for Him. One who reads the Scriptures and does not fall down praying for God's mercy has not really read them. He may have read the words on the pages, but he is still a man of the world, a prisoner of his blinded intellect and fleshly desires. Perhaps such a person would do better with a technical manual or a history book. The Bible is neither of these. It is a spiritual tool, the greatest of all, designed to change us. It overcomes all boundaries of human time and transcends all cultures.

The Bible Reveals Salvation

The one who reads the Bible and repents of his own sinfulness, recognizing no good in his life without God, opens the door to a new life.

He is transformed by encountering the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son and Word of God. He is the One whom the prophets proclaim would save us from sin and the sting of death which we brought upon ourselves. When we read with a repentant heart, the words we read in the Bible are not lifeless rules and interesting stories, but insights into a world beyond expression. These words are doors through which to walk, so we may come to know God. The Bible challenges us to emerge from our own personal self-centered and illusory world, and to enter rather into the Kingdom of God. Then every word of the Bible is a window to heaven, to Paradise, and to Perfection.

Just as someone cannot “birth” himself, neither is a man “reborn” by himself. His personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ will not be fulfilled outside of the Church. For it is there that we enter into a Tradition, a dynamic history of men and women—saints—who honored what they received from God and passed it on intact to the next generation. This embodiment of Faith is found in the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body which is His Holy Orthodox Church. Within the Church, the repentant man, woman or child is born anew through the life-giving waters of Holy Baptism. Here, the passions of the individual begin to die and transformation is initiated.

Truly the fullness of the Scriptures cannot be obtained outside the mind of the Church. Heretics and unbelieving intellectuals may to read the words of Scripture, but they cannot understand it as does a spiritual man or woman within the Holy community of the Church. Without the gift of the Holy Spirit to reveal within us the truth of God, the Bible is but raw data. Certainly the Holy Spirit has whispered truth into the ears of people not in the Church, but the place where He speaks the fullness of the Faith is within the Church where He dwells.

Only with the teachings of His Church—the Church that proclaims the Truth found in the Bible—can we begin our true work of breaking out of the self-imposed imprisonment of self-idolatry. When we submit our lives to Christ in repentance and humility, the Holy Spirit comes to us through the Holy Mysteries and lifts us up. Therefore, it becomes our joyful duty to ceaselessly knock on the door of the Scriptures, asking God to reveal the truth to us through His Word, that we might walk through the gates and grow into an ever greater appreciation and experience of Him and His Heavenly Kingdom.

Simply put, the Bible must be read with serious and humble prayer, a genuine desire for God’s mercy, along with sound instruction from the Church and the very presence of the Holy Spirit within us. Our Lord Jesus Christ left Himself within this Holy Book, that He might be found by those who genuinely seek Him. May you find Him today!

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

By The Right Reverend KALLISTOS, Bishop of Diokleia

"All Scripture is inspired by God" (2Ti 3:16)

"If an earthly king, our emperor," says Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724–83), "wrote you a letter, would you not read it with joy? Certainly, with great rejoicing and careful attention." But what, he asks, is our attitude towards the letter that has been addressed to us by no one less than God Himself? "You have been sent a letter, not by any earthly emperor, but by the King of Heaven. And yet you almost despise such a gift, so priceless a treasure." To open and read this letter, Saint Tikhon adds, is to enter into a personal conversation face to face with the living God. "Whenever you read the Gospel, Christ Himself is speaking to you. And while you read, you are praying and talking to Him."

Such exactly is our Orthodox attitude to the reading of Scripture. I am to see the Bible as God's personal letter sent specifically to myself. The words are not intended merely for others, far away and long ago, but they are written particularly and directly to me, here and now. Whenever we open our Bible, we are engaging in a creative dialogue with the Savior. In listening, we also respond. "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears," we reply to God as we read (1Kg 3:10); "Here am I" (Is 6:8).

Two centuries after Saint Tikhon, at the Moscow Conference held in 1976 between the Orthodox and the Anglicans, the true attitude towards

Scripture was expressed in different but equally valid terms. This joint statement, signed by the delegates of both traditions, forms an excellent summary of the Orthodox view: “The Scriptures constitute a coherent whole. They are at once divinely inspired and humanly expressed. They bear authoritative witness to God’s revelation of Himself in creation, in the Incarnation of the Word, and in the whole history of salvation, and as such express the word of God in human language. We know, receive, and interpret Scripture through the Church and in the Church. Our approach to the Bible is one of obedience.”

Combining Saint Tikhon’s words and the Moscow statement, we may distinguish the four key characteristics which mark the Orthodox “Scriptural mind.” First, our reading of Scripture is *obedient*. Second, it is *ecclesial*, in union with the Church. Third, it is *Christ-centered*. Fourth, it is *personal*.

Reading the Bible with Obedience

First of all, then, we see Scripture as inspired by God, and so we approach it in a spirit of *obedience*. The divine inspiration of the Bible is emphasized alike by Saint Tikhon and by the 1976 Moscow Conference. Scripture is “a letter” from “the King of Heaven,” says Saint Tikhon; “Christ Himself is speaking to you.” The Bible, states the Conference, is God’s “authoritative witness” of Himself, expressing “the word of God in human language.” Our response to this divine word is rightly one of obedient receptivity. As we read, we wait on the Spirit.

Since it is divinely inspired, the Bible possesses a fundamental unity, a total coherence, for it is the same Spirit that speaks on every page. We do not refer to it as “the books” in the plural, *ta biblia*, but we call it “the Bible,” “the Book,” in the singular. It is one book, one Holy Scripture, with the same message throughout—one composite and yet single story, from Genesis to Revelation.

At the same time, however, the Bible is also humanly expressed. It is an entire library of distinct writings, composed at varying times, by different persons in widely diverse situations. We find God speaking here “in many and various ways” (Heb 1:1). Each work in the Bible reflects the outlook of the age in which it was written and the particular viewpoint of the author. For God does not abolish our created personhood but enhances it. Divine grace co-operates with human freedom: we are “fellow-workers,” “co-operators” with God (1Co 3:9). In the words of the second-century *Letter to Diognetus*, “God persuades, He does not compel; for violence is foreign to the divine nature.” So it is precisely in the writing of inspired Scripture. The author of each book was not just a passive instrument, a flute played by the Spirit, a dictation machine recording a message. Every writer of Scripture contributes his or her particular human gifts. Alongside the divine aspect, there is also a human element in Scripture, and we are to value both.

Each of the four Evangelists, for example, has his own particular standpoint. Matthew is the most “ecclesiastical” and the most Jewish of the four, with his special interest in the relationship of the Gospel to the Jewish Law, and his understanding of Christianity as the “New Law.” Mark writes in less polished Greek, closer to the language of daily life, and includes vivid narrative details not found in the other Gospels. Luke emphasizes the universality of Christ’s love, His all-embracing compassion that extends equally to Jew and Gentile. The Fourth Gospel expresses a more inward and mystical approach, and was aptly styled by Saint Clement of Alexandria “a spiritual Gospel.” Let us explore and enjoy to the full this life-giving variety within the Bible.

Because Scripture is in this way the word of God expressed in human language, there is a place for honest and exacting critical enquiry when studying the Bible. Our reasoning brain is a gift from God, and we need not be afraid to use it to the utmost when reading Scripture. We Orthodox Christians neglect at our peril the results of independent scholarly research into the origin, dates and authorship of the books of the Bible, although we shall always want to test these results in the light of Holy Tradition.

Alongside this human element, however, we are to see always the divine aspect. These texts are not simply the work of the individual authors. What we hear in Scripture are not just human words, marked by a greater or lesser skill and perceptiveness, but the uncreated Word of God Himself, the Father’s Word “coming forth from silence,” to use the phrase of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the eternal Word of salvation. Approaching the Bible, then, we come not merely out of curiosity, to gain historical information. We come with a specific question: “How can I be saved?”

Obedient receptivity to God’s word means above all two things: *a sense of wonder* and an *attitude of listening*. (1) Wonder is easily quenched. Do we not feel all too often, as we read the Bible, that it has become over-familiar, even boring? Have we not lost our alertness, our sense of expectation? How far are we changed by what we read? Continually we need to cleanse the doors of our perception and to look with new eyes, in awe and amazement, at the miracle that is set before us—the ever-present miracle of God’s divine word of salvation, expressed in human language. As Plato remarked, “The beginning of truth is to wonder at things.”

Some years ago I had a dream that I still remember vividly. I was back in the house where, for three years as a child, I lived in boarding school. A friend took me first through the rooms already familiar to me from the waking life of my childhood. But then in my dream we entered other rooms that I had never seen before—spacious, elegant, filled with light. Finally we came to a small, dark chapel, with golden mosaics gleaming in the candlelight. “How strange,” I said to my companion, “that I have lived here for so long, and yet I never knew about the existence of all these rooms.” And he replied, “But it is always so.” I awoke, and behold, it was a dream.

Should we not react in the presence of the Bible with exactly the same surprise, the same feeling of joy and discovery, that I experienced in my dream? There are so many rooms in Scripture that we have never as yet entered. There is so much for us still to explore.

(2) If obedience means wonder, it also means listening. Such indeed is the literal meaning of the word for “obey” in both Greek and Latin—to hear. The trouble is that most of us are better at talking than at listening. An incident in the “Goon Show,” which I used to follow eagerly on the radio in my student days, sums up our predicament all too well. The telephone rings, and one of the characters picks it up. “Hello,” he exclaims, “hello, hello.” His volume rises. “Who is speaking? I can’t hear you. Hello, who is speaking?” A voice at the other end says, “You are speaking.” “Ah,” he replies, “I thought the voice sounded familiar.” And he puts the receiver down.

One of the primary requirements, if we are to acquire a “Scriptural mind,” is to stop talking and to start listening. When we enter an Orthodox Church, decorated in the traditional way, and look up towards the sanctuary, we see there in the apse the figure of the Mother of God with her hands raised to heaven—the ancient Scriptural manner of praying that many still use today. Such is also to be our attitude to Scripture—an attitude of openness and attentive receptivity, our hands invisibly outstretched to heaven.

As we read our Bible, then, we are to model ourselves in this way on the Blessed Virgin Mary, for she is supremely the one who listens. At the Annunciation, listening to the angel she responds obediently, “Let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Had she not first listened to God’s word and received it spiritually in her heart, she would never have borne the Word of God bodily in her womb. Receptive listening continues to be her attitude throughout the Gospel story. At Christ’s nativity, after the adoration of the shepherds, “Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19). After the visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old, “His Mother kept all these things in her heart” (Lk 2:51). The vital importance of listening is also indicated in the last words attributed to the Theotokos in Holy Scripture, at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. “Do whatever He tells you” (Jn 2:5), she says to the servants and to each one of us.

In all this the Virgin serves as a mirror and living icon of the biblical Christian. Hearing God’s word, we are to be like her: pondering, keeping all these things in our hearts, doing whatever He tells us. We are to listen in obedience while God speaks.

Understanding the Bible through the Church

In the second place, as the Moscow Conference affirms, “We know, receive, and interpret Scripture through the Church and in the Church.” Our approach to the Bible is not only obedient but ecclesial. The words of Scripture, while addressed to us personally, are at the same time addressed to us as members of a community. Book and Church are not to be separated.

The interdependence of Church and Bible is evident in at least two ways. (1) First, we *receive* Scripture through and in the Church. It is the Church that tells us what is Scripture. In the first three centuries of Christian history, a lengthy process of sifting and testing was needed, in order to distinguish between that which is authentically “canonical” Scripture, bearing authoritative witness to Christ’s person and message, and that which is “apocryphal”—useful perhaps for teaching, but not a normative source of doctrine. It is thus the Church that has decided which books form the Canon of the New Testament. A book is not part of Holy Scripture because of any particular theory about its date and authorship, but because the Church treats it as canonical. Suppose, for example, that it could be proved that the Fourth Gospel was not actually written by Saint John the beloved disciple of Christ—in my view, there are in fact strong reasons for continuing to accept John’s authorship—yet, even so, this would not alter the fact that we regard the Fourth Gospel as Scripture. Why? Because the Fourth Gospel, whoever the author may be, is accepted by the Church and in the Church.

(2) Secondly, we *interpret* Scripture through and in the Church. If it is the Church that tells us what is Scripture, equally it is the Church that tells us

how Scripture is to be understood. Coming upon the Ethiopian as he read the Old Testament in his chariot, Philip the Apostle asked him, “Do you understand what you are reading?” “How can I,” answered the Ethiopian, “unless someone guides me?” (Acts 8:30, 31). His difficulty is also ours. The words of Scripture are not always self-explanatory. The Bible has a marvelous underlying simplicity, but when studied in detail it can prove a difficult book. God does indeed speak directly to the heart of each one of us during our Scripture reading—as Saint Tikhon says, our reading is a personal dialogue between each one and Christ Himself—but we also need guidance. And our guide is the Church. We make full use of our private understanding, illuminated by the Spirit; we make full use of biblical commentaries and of the findings of modern research. But we submit individual opinions, whether our own or those of the scholars, to the judgment of the Church.

We read the Bible personally, but not as isolated individuals. We say not “I” but “we.” We read as the members of a family, the family of the Orthodox Catholic Church. We read in communion with all the other members of the Body of Christ in all parts of the world and in all generations of time. This communal or *catholic* approach to the Bible is underlined in one of the questions asked of a convert at the reception service used in the Russian Church: “Do you acknowledge that the Holy Scripture must be accepted and interpreted in accordance with the belief which has been handed down by the Holy Fathers, and which the Holy Orthodox Church, our Mother, had always held and still does hold?” The decisive criterion of our understanding of what Scripture means is *the mind of the Church*. The Bible is the book of the Church.

To discover this “mind of the Church,” where do we begin? A first step is to see how Scripture is used in worship. How, in particular, are biblical lessons chosen for reading at the different feasts? A second step is to consult the writings of the Church Fathers, especially St. John Chrysostom. How do they analyze and apply the text of Scripture? An ecclesial manner of reading the Bible is in this way both *liturgical* and *Patristic*.

To illustrate what it means to interpret Scripture in a liturgical way, let us consider the Old Testament lessons at Vespers for the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) and at Vespers on Holy Saturday, the first part of the ancient Paschal Vigil. At the Annunciation there are five readings:

(1) Genesis 28:10–17: Jacob’s dream of a ladder set up from earth to heaven.

(2) Ezekiel 43:27—44:4: the prophet’s vision of the Jerusalem temple, with the closed gate through which none but the Prince may pass.

(3) Proverbs 9:1–11: one of the great Sophianic passages in the Old Testament, beginning “Wisdom has build her house.”

(4) Exodus 3:1–8: Moses at the Burning Bush.

(5) Proverbs 8:22–30: another Sophianic text, describing Wisdom’s place in God’s eternal providence: “Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.”

In these passages from the Old Testament, then, we have a series of powerful images to indicate the role of the Theotokos in God’s unfolding plan of salvation. She is Jacob’s ladder, for by means of her God comes down and enters our world, assuming the flesh that she supplies. She is both Mother and Ever-Virgin; Christ is born from her, yet she remains still inviolate, the gate of her virginity sealed. She provides the humanity or house which Christ the Wisdom of God (1Co 1:24) takes as His dwelling; alternatively, she is herself to be regarded as God's Wisdom. She is the Burning Bush, who contains within her womb the uncreated fire of the Godhead and yet is not consumed. From all eternity, "ages ago . . . before the beginning of the earth," she was forechosen by God to be His Mother.

Reading these passages in their original context within the Old Testament, we might not at once appreciate that they foreshadow the Saviour's Incarnation from the Virgin. But, by exploring the use made of the Old Testament in the Church lectionary, we can discover layer upon layer of meanings that are far from obvious at first sight.

The same thing happens when we consider how Scripture is used on Holy Saturday. Here there are no less than fifteen Old Testament lessons. Regrettably in many of our parishes the majority of these are omitted, and so God's people are starved of their proper biblical nourishment. This long sequence of readings sets before us the deeper significance of Christ's "passing over" through death to resurrection. First among the lessons is the account of the creation (Gn 1:1–13): Christ's resurrection is a new creation (2Co 5:17; Rev 21:5), the inauguration of a new age, the age to come. The third lesson describes the Jewish ritual of the Passover meal: Christ crucified and risen is the new Passover, the Paschal Lamb who alone can take away the sin of the world (1Co 5:7; Jn 1:29). The fourth lesson is the Book of Jonah in its entirety: the prophet's three days in the belly of the whale foreshadow Christ's resurrection after three days in the tomb (Mt

12:40). The sixth lesson recounts the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites (Ex 13:20—15:19): Christ leads us from the bondage of Egypt (sin), through the Red Sea (baptism), into the promised land (the Church). The final lesson is the story of the three Holy Children in the fiery furnace (Dan 3), once more a "type" or foreshowing of Christ's rising from the tomb.

How can we develop this ecclesial and liturgical way of reading Scripture in the Bible study circles within our parishes? One person can be given the task of noting whenever a particular passage is used for a festival or saint's day, and the group can then discuss together the reasons why it has been so chosen. Others in the group may be assigned to do homework among the Fathers, relying above all upon the biblical homilies of St. John Chrysostom, which are available in English translation in the series *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, reissued by Eerdmans. Initially, we may be disappointed: the Fathers' manner of thinking and speaking is often strikingly different from our own today. But there is gold in the Patristic texts, if only we have the persistence and imagination to discover it.

Christ, the Heart of the Bible

The third requirement in our reading of Scripture is that it should be Christ-centered. If we agree with the 1976 Moscow Conference that the "Scriptures constitute a coherent whole," where are we to locate their wholeness and coherence? *In the person of Christ*. He is the unifying thread that runs through the entirety of the Bible, from the first sentence to the last. Jesus meets us on every page. It all ties up because of Him. "In Him all things hold together" (Col 1:16).

Much study of Scripture by modern western scholars has adopted an analytical approach, breaking up each book into what are seen as its original sources. The connecting links are unravelled, and the Bible is reduced to a series of isolated units. Recently there has been a reaction against this, with Biblical critics in the West devoting much greater attention to the way in which these primary units have come to be joined together. This is something that we Orthodox may certainly welcome. It is important to see the unity of Scripture as well as the diversity, the all-embracing end as well as the scattered beginnings. Orthodoxy prefers for the most part a "synthetic" rather than an analytical style of hermeneutics, seeing the Bible as an integrated whole, with Christ everywhere as the bond of union.

Such, as we have just seen, is precisely the effect of reading Scripture within the context of the Church's worship. As the lessons for the Annunciation and Holy Saturday make clear, everywhere in the Old Testament we find signposts and waymarks pointing to the mystery of Christ and His Mother Mary. Interpreting the Old Testament in the light of the New, and the New in the light of the Old—as the Church lectionary encourages us to do—we discover how the whole of Scripture finds its point of convergence in the Saviour.

Orthodoxy makes extensive use of this "typological" method of interpretation, whereby "types" of Christ, signs and symbols of His work, are to be detected throughout the Old Testament. Melchizedek, for example, the priest-king of Salem who offered bread and wine to Abraham (Gn 14:18), is regarded as a "type" of Christ not only by the Fathers but equally in the New Testament itself (Heb 5:6; 7:1–19). The rock that flowed with water in the wilderness of Sinai (Ex 17:6; Nm 30:7–11) is likewise a symbol of Christ (1Co 10:4). Typology explains the choice of lessons, not only on Holy Saturday, but throughout the second half of Lent. Why are the Genesis readings in the sixth week dominated by the figure of Joseph? Why read from the Book of Job in Holy Week? Because Joseph and Job, who both suffered innocently, foreshadow the redemptive suffering of Christ on the Cross.

We can discover many other correspondences between the Old and New Testament by using a Biblical concordance. Often the best commentary of all is simply a concordance, or an edition of the Bible with well-chosen marginal cross-references. Only connect. It all ties up. In the words of Father Alexander Schmemann, “A Christian is the one who, wherever he looks, finds everywhere Christ, and rejoices in Him.” This is true in particular of the Biblical Christian. Wherever he looks, on every page, he finds everywhere Christ.

The Bible as Personal

According to Saint Mark the Monk (“Mark the Ascetic,” fifth/sixth century), “He who is humble in his thoughts and engaged in spiritual work, when he reads the Holy Scriptures, will apply everything to himself and not to his neighbor.” We are to look throughout Scripture for a *personal* application. Our question is not simply, “What does it mean?” but “What does it mean *for me*?” As Saint Tikhon insists, “Christ Himself is speaking to *you*.” Scripture is a direct, intimate dialogue between the Saviour and myself—Christ addressing me, and my heart responding. That is the fourth criterion in our Bible reading.

I am to see all the narratives in Scripture as part of my own personal story. The description of Adam's fall is equally an account of something in my own experience. Who is Adam? His name means simply "man," "human": it is I who am Adam. It is to me that God says, "Adam, Where are You?" (Gn 3:9). We often ask, "Where is God?" But the real question is the one that God puts to the Adam in each one of us: "Where are *you*?"

Who is Cain, the murderer of his brother? It is myself. God's challenge, "Where is Abel your brother?" (Gn 4:9), is addressed to the Cain in each of us. The way to God lies through love for other people, and there is no other way. Disowning my sister or brother, I replace the image of God with the mark of Cain, and deny my essential humanity.

The same personal application is evident in the Lenten services, and above all in the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete. "I am the man who fell among thieves," we say (Lk 10:30); "I was Your younger son, and wasted the wealth that You gave me . . . and now I am starved and hungry" (Lk 15:11–14). "Who are the sheep, and who are the goats?" the Desert Fathers of Egypt used to ask (Mt 25:31–46). "The sheep are known to God," they replied. "As for the goats—that means *me*."

There are three steps to be taken when reading Scripture. (1) First, we reflect that what we have in Scripture is *sacred history*: the history of the world from the Creation, the history of God's chosen people, the history of God Himself incarnate in Palestine, the history of the "mighty works" (Acts 2:11) after Pentecost. We are never to forget that what we find in the Bible is not an ideology, not a philosophical theory, but a historical faith.

(2) Next, we observe the *particularity*, the specificity, of this sacred history. In the Bible we find God intervening at specific times and in particular places, entering into dialogue with individual humans. We see before us the distinctive calls issued by God to each different person, to Abraham, Moses and David, to Rebekah and Ruth, to Isaiah and the prophets. We see God becoming incarnate once only, in a particular corner of the earth, at a particular moment and from a particular Mother. This particularity we are to regard not as a scandal but as a blessing. Divine love is universal in its scope, but always personal in its expression.

This sense of the specificity of the Bible is a vital element in the Orthodox "Scriptural mind." If you really love the Bible, you will love genealogies and details of dating and geography. One of the best ways to enliven your study of Scripture is to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Walk where Christ walked. Go down near the Dead Sea, climb the mountain of the Temptation, scan the desolation, feel how Christ must have felt during His forty days alone in the wilderness. Drink from the well where Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman. Take a boat out on the Sea of Galilee, have the sailors stop the engine, gaze in silence across the water. Go at night to the Garden of Gethsemane, sit in the dark under the ancient olives, and look across the valley to the lights of the city. Taste to the utmost the characteristic "isness" of the historical setting, and take that experience back with you to your daily Scripture reading.

(3) Then we are to take a third step. After reliving Bible history in all its particularity, we are to apply it *directly to ourselves*. We are to say to ourselves, "These are not just distant places, events in the remote past. They belong to my own encounter with the Lord. The stories include me."

Betrayal, for instance, is part of the personal story of everyone. Have we not all betrayed others at some time in our life, and have we not all known what it is to be betrayed? And does not the memory of these moments leave deep, continuing scars on our psyche? Reading, then, the account of Saint Peter's betrayal of Jesus and of his restoration after the resurrection, we can see ourselves as each an actor in the story. Imagining what both Peter and Christ experienced at the moment immediately after the betrayal, we make their feelings our own. I am Peter; in the situation of betrayal, can I also be Christ? Reflecting likewise on the moment of reconciliation—seeing how the risen Saviour with a love utterly devoid of sentimentality restored the fallen Peter to fellowship, seeing how Peter on his side had the humility and courage to accept this restoration—we ask ourselves: How Christ-like am I to those who have betrayed me? And, after my own acts of betrayal, am I able to accept the forgiveness of others, am I able to forgive myself?

Take, as another example, the "woman who was a sinner," who emptied the flask of ointment over Christ's feet (Lk 7:36–50), and whom some identify with Saint Mary Magdalene, although that is not the usual Orthodox interpretation. Can I see her mirrored in myself? Do I share in her generosity, in her spontaneity and loving impulsiveness? "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much." Or am I calculating, mean, timid—holding myself back, never willing to commit myself fully to anything, either good or bad? As the Desert Fathers say, "Better someone who has sinned, if he knows he has sinned and repents, than a person who has not sinned and thinks of himself as righteous."

A personal approach of this kind means that in reading the Bible we are not simply detached and objective observers, absorbing information, taking note of facts. The Bible is not merely a work of literature or a collection of historical documents, although certainly it can be approached on that level. It is, much more fundamentally, a *sacred* book, addressed to *believers*, to be read with faith and love. We shall not profit fully from reading the Gospels unless we are in love with Christ. “Heart speaks to heart”: I enter into the living truth of Scripture only when my heart responds with love to the heart of God.

Reading Scripture in this way—in obedience, as a member of the Church, finding Christ everywhere, seeing everything as part of my own personal story—we shall sense something of the power and healing to be found in the Bible. Yet always in our biblical voyage of exploration we are only at the very beginning. We are like someone launching out in a tiny boat across a limitless ocean. But, however great the journey, we can embark on it today, at this very hour, in this very moment.

At the high point of his spiritual crisis, wrestling with himself alone in the garden, Saint Augustine heard a child’s voice crying out, “Take up and read, take up and read.” He took up his bible and read; and what he read altered his entire life. Let us do the same: *Take up and read*.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths” (Ps 118:105).

LECTIONARY

Please note: *This lectionary is intended strictly as a rough guide for personal reading for those who wish to follow the church calendar through the year.* ***It is not intended for liturgical use.*** *Because the Paschal cycle occurs at a different time each year while other feasts are fixed on a certain calendar date, there is considerable overlap between the two cycles, which affects what scriptures are actually read on any given day of a particular year. Variations also occur between jurisdictions of the Church, and decisions are sometimes made at the parish level concerning which saints' days to celebrate with the accompanying readings. For an accurate lectionary for a particular year, consult one of the many Orthodox calendars available that list scripture readings for each day, or consult your parish priest for the readings used in your parish. For another plan for reading through the complete Bible, go to www.thomasnelson.com/orthodoxreadingplan.*

Dates, where applicable, are listed according to the New, or Gregorian, Calendar, with the Old, or Julian, Calendar date following.

The church year officially begins on September 1/14, but for the purposes of this lectionary it is more convenient to begin with the Paschal cycle.

TRIODION AND GREAT LENT

The Triodion refers to the weeks leading up to Great Lent. The beginning of the Triodion falls on a different date each year.

Fourth Week Before Lent

Monday

1 Peter 2:21—3:9; Mark 12:13–17

Tuesday

1 Peter 3:10–22; Mark 12:18–27

Wednesday

1 Peter 4:1–11; Mark 12:28–37

Thursday

1 Peter 4:12—5:5; Mark 12:38–44

Friday

2 Peter 1:1–10; Mark 13:1–8

Saturday

2 Timothy 2:11–19; Luke 18:2–8

Fourth Sunday Before Lent: Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

2 Timothy 3:10–15; Luke 18:10–14

Third Week Before Lent

Monday

2 Peter 1:20—2:9; Mark 13:9–13

Tuesday

2 Peter 2:9–22; Mark 13:14–23

Wednesday

2 Peter 3:1–18; Mark 13:24–31

Thursday

1 John 1:8—2:6; Mark 13:31—14:2

Friday

1 John 2:7–17; Mark 14:3–9

Saturday

2 Timothy 3:1–9; Luke 20:45—21:4

Third Sunday Before Lent: Sunday of the Prodigal Son

1 Corinthians 6:12–20; Luke 15:11–32

Meatfare Week

Monday

1 John 2:18—3:10; Mark 11:1–11

Tuesday

1 John 3:11–20; Mark 14:10–42

Wednesday

1 John 3:21—4:6; Mark 14:43—15:1

Thursday

1 John 4:20—5:21; Mark 15:1–15

Friday

2 John 1:1–13; Mark 15:22–25, 33–41

Saturday

1 Corinthians 10:23–28; Luke 21:8, 9, 25–27, 33–36

Commemoration of the Departed

1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; John 5:24–30

Second Sunday Before Lent: Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday)

1 Corinthians 8:8—9:2; Matthew 25:31–46

Cheesefare Week

Monday

3 John 1:1–14; Luke 19:29–40; 22:7–39

Tuesday

Jude 1:1–10; Luke 22:39–42, 45—23:1

Wednesday

Joel 2:12–26; Joel 3:12–21

Thursday

Jude 1:11–25; Luke 23:2–34, 44–56

Friday

Zechariah 8:7–14; Zechariah 8:19–23

Saturday

Romans 14:19–23; 16:25–27; Matthew 6:1–13

Sunday Before Lent: Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday)

Romans 13:11—14:4; Matthew 6:14–21

GREAT LENT

First Week of Great Lent

Monday

Isaiah 1:1–20; Genesis 1:1–13; Proverbs 1:1–20

Tuesday

Isaiah 1:19—2:3; Genesis 1:14–23; Proverbs 1:20–33

Wednesday

Isaiah 2:3–11; Genesis 1:24—2:3; Proverbs 2:1–22

Thursday

Isaiah 2:11–22; Genesis 2:4–19; Proverbs 3:1–18

Friday

Isaiah 3:1–14; Genesis 2:20—3:20; Proverbs 3:19–34

Saturday

Hebrews 1:1–12; Mark 2:23—3:5

First Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy

Hebrews 11:24–26, 32—12:2; John 1:43–51

Second Week of Great Lent

Monday

Isaiah 4:2–6, 5:1–7; Genesis 3:21—4:7; Proverbs 3:34—4:22

Tuesday

Isaiah 5:7–16; Genesis 4:8–15; Proverbs 5:1–15

Wednesday

Isaiah 5:16–26; Genesis 4:16–26; Proverbs 5:15—6:3

Thursday

Isaiah 6:1–12; Genesis 5:1–24; Proverbs 6:3–20

Friday

Isaiah 7:1–14; Genesis 5:32—6:8; Proverbs 6:20—7:1

Saturday

Hebrews 3:12–16; Mark 1:35–44

Second Sunday of Great Lent: Commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas

Hebrews 1:10—2:3; Mark 2:1–12

Third Week of Great Lent

Monday

Isaiah 8:13—9:7; Genesis 6:9–22; Proverbs 8:1–21

Tuesday

Isaiah 9:9—10:4; Genesis 7:1–5; Proverbs 8:32—9:11

Wednesday

Isaiah 10:12–20; Genesis 7:6–9; Proverbs 9:12–18

Thursday

Isaiah 11:10—12:2; Genesis 7:11—8:3; Proverbs 10:1–22

Friday

Isaiah 13:2–13; Genesis 8:4–21; Proverbs 10:31—11:12

Saturday

Hebrews 10:32–38; Mark 2:14–17

Third Sunday of Great Lent: Adoration of the Holy Cross

Hebrews 4:14—5:6; Mark 8:34—9:1

Fourth Week of Great Lent

Monday

Isaiah 14:24–32; Genesis 8:21—9:7; Proverbs 11:19—12:6

Tuesday

Isaiah 25:1–9; Genesis 9:8–17; Proverbs 12:8–22

Wednesday

Isaiah 26:21—27:9; Genesis 9:18—10:1; Proverbs 12:23—13:9

Thursday

Isaiah 28:14–22; Genesis 10:32—11:9; Proverbs 13:20—14:6

Friday

Isaiah 29:13–23; Genesis 12:1–7; Proverbs 14:15–26

Saturday

Hebrews 6:9–12; Mark 7:31–37

Fourth Sunday of Great Lent: Commemoration of Saint John of the Ladder

Hebrews 6:13–20; Mark 9:17–31

Fifth Week of Great Lent

Monday

Isaiah 37:33—38:6; Genesis 13:12–18; Proverbs 14:27—15:4

Tuesday

Isaiah 40:18–31; Genesis 15:1–15; Proverbs 15:7–19

Wednesday

Isaiah 41:4–14; Genesis 17:1–9; Proverbs 15:20—16:9

Thursday

Isaiah 42:5–16: Genesis 18:20–33; Proverbs 16:17—17:17

Friday

Isaiah 45:11–17; Genesis 22:1–18; Proverbs 17:17—18:5

Saturday

Hebrews 9:24–28; Mark 8:27–31

Fifth Sunday of Great Lent: Commemoration of Saint Mary of Egypt

Hebrews 9:11–14; Mark 10:32–45

Sixth Week of Great Lent

Monday

Isaiah 48:17—49:4; Genesis 27:1–41; Proverbs 19:16–25

Tuesday

Isaiah 49:6–10; Genesis 31:3–16; Proverbs 21:3–21

Wednesday

Isaiah 58:1–11; Genesis 43:26–31; 45:1–16; Proverbs 21:23—22:4

Thursday

Isaiah 65:8–16; Genesis 46:1–7; Proverbs 23:15—24:5

Friday

Isaiah 66:10–24; Genesis 49:33—50:26; Proverbs 31:8–31

Lazarus Saturday

Hebrews 12:28—13:8; John 11:1–45

The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem: Palm Sunday

Philippians 4:4–9; John 12:1–18

HOLY WEEK

Holy Monday

Matthew 24:3–35

Holy Tuesday

Matthew 24:36—26:2

Holy Wednesday

Matthew 26:6–16

Holy Thursday

1 Corinthians 11:23–32; Matthew 26:1–20; John 13:3–17; Matthew 26:21–39; Luke 22:43–45; Matthew 26:40—27:2

Holy Friday

VESPERS: (1) Exodus 33:11–23; (2) Job 42:12–16; (3) Isaiah 52:13—54:1; 1 Corinthians 1:18—2:2; Matthew 27:1–38; Luke 23:39–43; Matthew 27:39–54; John 19:31–37; Matthew 27:55–61

Holy Saturday

VESPERS: (1) Genesis 1:1–13; (2) Isaiah 60:1–16; (3) Exodus 12:1–11; (4) The Book of Jonah; (5) Joshua 5:10–15; (6) Exodus 13:20—

15:19; (7) Zephaniah 3:8–15; (8) 1 Kings 17:8–24; (9) Isaiah 61:10—62:5; (10) Genesis 22:1–18; (11) Isaiah 61:1–9; (12) 2 Kings 4:8–37; (13) Isaiah 63:11—64:5; (14) Jeremiah 31:31–34; (15) Daniel 3:1–23 and the Song of the Holy Children (Apocrypha). LITURGY: Romans 6:3–11; Matthew 28:1–20

PASCHA

The Resurrection of Christ (Easter)

Acts 1:1–8; John 1:1–17

Bright Week

Bright Monday

Acts 1:12–17; 21–26; John 1:18–28

Bright Tuesday

Acts 2:14–21; Luke 24:12–35

Bright Wednesday

Acts 2:22–36; John 1:35–51

Bright Thursday

Acts 2:38–43; John 3:1–15

Bright Friday

Acts 3:1–8; John 2:12–22

Bright Saturday

Acts 3:11–16; John 3:22–33

Second Sunday of Pascha: Thomas Sunday

Acts 5:12–20; John 20:19–31

Second Week of Pascha

Monday

Acts 3:19–26; John 2:1–11

Tuesday

Acts 4:1–10; John 3:16–21

Wednesday

Acts 4:13–22; John 5:17–24

Thursday

Acts 4:23–31; John 5:24–30

Friday

Acts 5:1–11; John 5:30—6:2

Saturday

Acts 5:21–33; John 6:14–27

Third Sunday of Pascha: Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

Acts 6:17; Mark 15:43—16:8

Third Week of Pascha

Monday

Acts 6:8—7:5, 47–60; John 4:46–54

Tuesday

Acts 8:5–17; John 6:27–33

Wednesday

Acts 8:18–25; John 6:35–39

Thursday

Acts 8:26–39; John 6:40–44

Friday

Acts 8:40—9:19; John 6:48–54

Saturday

Acts 9:19–31; John 15:17—16:2

Fourth Sunday of Pascha: Sunday of the Paralytic

Acts 9:32—42; John 5:1–15

Fourth Week of Pascha

Monday

Acts 10:1–16; John 6:56–69

Tuesday

Acts 10:21–33; John 7:1–13

Wednesday

Acts 14:6–18; John 7:14–30

Thursday

Acts 10:34–43; John 8:12–20

Friday

Acts 10:44—11:10; John 8:21–30

Saturday

Acts 12:1–11; John 8:31–42

Fifth Sunday of Pascha: Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Acts 11:19–26, 29–30; John 4:5–42

Fifth Week of Pascha

Monday

Acts 12:12–17; John 8:42–51

Tuesday

Acts 12:25—13:12; John 8:51–59

Wednesday

Acts 13:13–24; John 6:5–14

Thursday

Acts 14:20–27; John 9:39—10:9

Friday

Acts 15:5–34; John 10:17–28

Saturday

Acts 15:35–41; John 10:27–38

Sixth Sunday of Pascha: Sunday of the Blind Man

Acts 16:16–34; John 9:1–38

Sixth Week of Pascha

Monday

Acts 17:1–15; John 11:47–57

Tuesday

Acts 17:19–28; John 12:19–36

Wednesday

Acts 18:22–28; John 12:36–47

Thursday: **The Ascension of Our Lord**

Acts 1:1–12; Luke 24:36–53

Friday

Acts 19:1–8; John 14:1–11

Saturday

Acts 20:7–12; John 14:10–21

Seventh Sunday of Pascha: Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

Acts 20:16–18, 28–36; John 17:1–13

Seventh Week of Pascha

Monday

Acts 21:8–14; John 14:27—15:7

Tuesday

Acts 21:26–32; John 16:2–13

Wednesday

Acts 23:1–11; John 16:15–23

Thursday

Acts 25:13–19; John 16:23–33

Friday

Acts 27:1–44; John 17:18–26

Saturday

Acts 28:1–31; John 21:15–25

PENTECOST (Seventh Sunday after Pascha) Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Disciples (Trinity Sunday)

Acts 2:1–11; John 7:37–52; 8:12

First Week after Pentecost

Monday: Day of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:9–19; Matthew 18:10–20

Tuesday

Romans 1:1–7, 13–17; Matthew 4:25—5:13

Wednesday

Romans 1:18–27; Matthew 5:20–26

Thursday

Romans 1:28—2:9; Matthew 5:27–32

Friday

Romans 2:14–29; Matthew 5:33–41

Saturday

Romans 1:7–12; Matthew 5:42–48

First Sunday after Pentecost: Sunday of All Saints

Hebrews 11:33—12:2; Matthew 10:32–33, 37–38; 19:27–30

Second Week after Pentecost

Monday

Romans 2:28—3:18; Matthew 6:31–34; 7:9–11

Tuesday

Romans 4:4–12; Matthew 7:15–21

Wednesday

Romans 4:13–25; Matthew 7:21–23

Thursday

Romans 5:10–16; Matthew 8:23–27

Friday

Romans 5:17—6:2; Matthew 9:14–17

Saturday

Romans 3:19–26; Matthew 7:1–8

Second Sunday after Pentecost

Romans 2:10–16; Matthew 4:18–23

Third Week after Pentecost

Monday

Romans 7:1–13; Matthew 9:36—10:8

Tuesday

Romans 7:14—8:2; Matthew 10:9–15

Wednesday

Romans 8:1–13; Matthew 10:16–22

Thursday

Romans 8:22–27; Matthew 10:23–31

Friday

Romans 9:6–19; Matthew 10:32–36; 11:1

Saturday

Romans 3:28—4:3; Matthew 7:24—8:4

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Romans 5:1–10; Matthew 6:22–33

Fourth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Romans 9:18–33; Matthew 11:2–15

Tuesday

Romans 10:11—11:2; Matthew 11:16–20

Wednesday

Romans 11:2–12; Matthew 11:20–26

Thursday

Romans 11:13–24; Matthew 11:27–30

Friday

Romans 11:25–36; Matthew 12:1–8

Saturday

Romans 6:11–17; Matthew 8:14–23

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Romans 6:18–23; Matthew 8:5–13

Fifth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Romans 12:4–5, 15–21; Matthew 12:9–13

Tuesday

Romans 14:9–18; Matthew 12:14–16, 22–30

Wednesday

Romans 15:7–16; Matthew 12:38–45

Thursday

Romans 15:17–29; Matthew 12:46—13:3

Friday

Romans 16:1–16; Matthew 13:4–9

Saturday

Romans 8:14–21; Matthew 9:9–13

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Romans 10:1–10; Matthew 8:28—9:1

Sixth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Romans 16:17–24; Matthew 13:10–23

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 1:1–9; Matthew 13:24–30

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 2:9—3:8; Matthew 13:31–36

Thursday

1 Corinthians 3:18–23; Matthew 13:36–43

Friday

1 Corinthians 4:5–8; Matthew 13:44–54

Saturday

Romans 9:1–5; Matthew 9:18–26

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Romans 12:6–14; Matthew 9:1–8

Seventh Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Corinthians 5:9—6:11; Matthew 13:54–58

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 6:20—7:12; Matthew 14:1–13

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 7:12–24; Matthew 14:35— 15:11

Thursday

1 Corinthians 7:24–35; Matthew 15:12–21

Friday

1 Corinthians 7:35—8:7; Matthew 15:29–31

Saturday

Romans 12:1–3; Matthew 10:37—11:1

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Romans 15:1–7; Matthew 9:27–35

Eighth Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Corinthians 9:13–18; Matthew 16:1–6

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 10:5–12; Matthew 16:6–12

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 10:12–22; Matthew 16:20–24

Thursday

1 Corinthians 10:28—11:7; Matthew 16:24–28

Friday

1 Corinthians 11:8–22; Matthew 17:10–18

Saturday

Romans 13:1–10; Matthew 12:30–37

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Corinthians 1:10–18; Matthew 14:14–22

Ninth Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Corinthians 11:31—12:6; Matthew 18:1–11

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 12:12–26; Matthew 18:18–22; 19:1–2, 13–15

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 13:4—14:5; Matthew 20:1–16

Thursday

1 Corinthians 14:6–19; Matthew 20:17–28

Friday

1 Corinthians 14:26–40; Matthew 21:12–14, 17–20

Saturday

Romans 14:6–9; Matthew 15:32–39

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Corinthians 3:9–17; Matthew 14:22–34

Tenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Corinthians 15:12–19; Matthew 21:18–22

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 15:29–38; Matthew 21:23–27

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 16:4–12; Matthew 21:28–32

Thursday

2 Corinthians 1:1–7; Matthew 21:43–46

Friday

2 Corinthians 1:12–20; Matthew 22:23–33

Saturday

Romans 15:30–33; Matthew 17:24—18:4

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Corinthians 4:9–16; Matthew 17:14–23

Eleventh Week after Pentecost

Monday

2 Corinthians 2:4–15; Matthew 23:13–22

Tuesday

2 Corinthians 2:14—3:3; Matthew 23:23–28

Wednesday

2 Corinthians 3:4–11; Matthew 23:29–39

Thursday

2 Corinthians 4:1–6; Matthew 24:13–28

Friday

2 Corinthians 4:13–18; Matthew 24:27–33, 42–51

Saturday

1 Corinthians 1:3–9; Matthew 19:3–12

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

1 Corinthians 9:2–12; Matthew 18:23–35

Twelfth Week after Pentecost

Monday

2 Corinthians 5:10–15; Mark 1:9–15

Tuesday

2 Corinthians 5:15–21; Mark 1:16–22

Wednesday

2 Corinthians 6:11–16; Mark 1:23–28

Thursday

2 Corinthians 7:1–10; Mark 1:29–35

Friday

2 Corinthians 7:10–16; Mark 2:18–22

Saturday

1 Corinthians 1:26–29; Matthew 20:29–34

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Corinthians 15:1–11; Matthew 19:16–26

Thirteenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

2 Corinthians 8:7–15; Mark 3:6–12

Tuesday

2 Corinthians 8:16—9:5; Mark 3:13–19

Wednesday

2 Corinthians 9:12—10:7; Mark 3:20–27

Thursday

2 Corinthians 10:7–18; Mark 3:28–35

Friday

2 Corinthians 11:5–12; Mark 4:1–9

Saturday

1 Corinthians 2:6–9; Matthew 22:15–22

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Corinthians 16:13–24; Matthew 21:33–42

Fourteenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

2 Corinthians 12:10–19; Mark 4:10–23

Tuesday

2 Corinthians 12:20—13:2; Mark 4:24–34

Wednesday

2 Corinthians 13:3–13; Mark 4:35–41

Thursday

Galatians 1:1–10, 20–24—2:5; Mark 5:1–20

Friday

Galatians 2:6–10; Mark 5:22–24, 35—6:1

Saturday

1 Corinthians 4:1–5; Matthew 23:1–12

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Corinthians 1:21—2:4; Matthew 22:1–14

Fifteenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Galatians 2:11–16; Mark 5:24–34

Tuesday

Galatians 2:21—3:7; Mark 6:1–7

Wednesday

Galatians 3:15–22; Mark 6:7–13

Thursday

Galatians 3:23—4:5; Mark 6:30–45

Friday

Galatians 4:8–21; Mark 6:45–53

Saturday

1 Corinthians 4:17—5:5; Matthew 24:1–13

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Corinthians 4:6–15; Matthew 22:35–46

Sixteenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Galatians 4:28—5:10; Mark 6:54—7:8

Tuesday

Galatians 5:11–21; Mark 7:5–16

Wednesday

Galatians 6:2–10; Mark 7:14–24

Thursday

Ephesians 1:1–9; Mark 7:24–30

Friday

Ephesians 1:7–17; Mark 8:1–10

Saturday

1 Corinthians 10:23–28; Matthew 24:34–44

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Corinthians 6:1–10; Matthew 25:14–30

Seventeenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Ephesians 1:22—2:3; Mark 10:46–52

Tuesday

Ephesians 2:19—3:7; Mark 11:11–23

Wednesday

Ephesians 3:8–21; Mark 11:23–26

Thursday

Ephesians 4:14–19; Mark 11:27–33

Friday

Ephesians 4:17–25; Mark 12:1–12

Saturday

1 Corinthians 14:20–25; Matthew 25:1–13

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Corinthians 6:16—7:1; Matthew 15:21–28

Eighteenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Ephesians 4:25–32; Luke 3:19–22

Tuesday

Ephesians 5:20–26; Luke 3:23—4:1

Wednesday

Ephesians 5:25–33; Luke 4:1–15

Thursday

Ephesians 5:33—6:9; Luke 4:16–22

Friday

Ephesians 6:18–24; Luke 4:22–30

Saturday

1 Corinthians 15:39–45; Luke 4:31–36

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Corinthians 9:6–11; Luke 5:1–11

Nineteenth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Philippians 1:1–7; Luke 4:37–44

Tuesday

Philippians 1:8–14; Luke 5:12–16

Wednesday

Philippians 1:12–20; Luke 5:33–39

Thursday

Philippians 1:20–27; Luke 6:12–19

Friday

Philippians 1:27—2:4; Luke 6:17–23

Saturday

1 Corinthians 15:58—16:3; Luke 5:17–26

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Corinthians 11:31—12:9; Luke 6:31–36

Twentieth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Philippians 2:12–16; Luke 6:24–30

Tuesday

Philippians 2:17–23; Luke 6:37–45

Wednesday

Philippians 2:24–30; Luke 6:46—7:1

Thursday

Philippians 3:1–8; Luke 7:17–30

Friday

Philippians 3:8–19; Luke 7:31–35

Saturday

2 Corinthians 1:8–11; Luke 5:27–32

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Galatians 1:11–19; Luke 7:11–16

Twenty–First Week after Pentecost

Monday

Philippians 4:10–23; Luke 7:36–50

Tuesday

Colossians 1:1, 2, 7–11; Luke 8:1–3

Wednesday

Colossians 1:18–23; Luke 8:22–25

Thursday

Colossians 1:24–29; Luke 9:7–11

Friday

Colossians 2:1–7; Luke 9:12–18

Saturday

2 Corinthians 3:12–18; Luke 6:1–10

Twenty–First Sunday after Pentecost

Galatians 2:16–20; Luke 8:5–15

Twenty–Second Week after Pentecost

Monday

Colossians 2:13–20; Luke 9:18–22

Tuesday

Colossians 2:20—3:3; Luke 9:23–27

Wednesday

Colossians 3:17—4:1; Luke 9:44–50

Thursday

Colossians 4:2–9; Luke 9:49–56

Friday

Colossians 4:10–18; Luke 10:1–15

Saturday

2 Corinthians 5:1–10; Luke 7:1–10

Twenty–Second Sunday after Pentecost

Galatians 6:11–18; Luke 16:19–31

Twenty–Third Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Thessalonians 1:1–5; Luke 10:22–24

Tuesday

1 Thessalonians 1:6–10; Luke 11:1–10

Wednesday

1 Thessalonians 2:1–8; Luke 11:9–13

Thursday

1 Thessalonians 2:9–14; Luke 11:14–23

Friday

1 Thessalonians 2:14–19; Luke 11:23–26

Saturday

2 Corinthians 8:1–5; Luke 8:16–21

Twenty–Third Sunday after Pentecost

Ephesians 2:4–10: Luke 8:26–39

Twenty–Fourth Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Thessalonians 2:20—3:8; Luke 11:29–33

Tuesday

1 Thessalonians 3:9–13; Luke 11:34–41

Wednesday

1 Thessalonians 4:1–12; Luke 11:42–46

Thursday

1 Thessalonians 5:1–8; Luke 11:47—12:1

Friday

1 Thessalonians 5:9–13, 24–28; Luke 12:2–12

Saturday

2 Corinthians 11:1–6; Luke 9:1–6

Twenty–Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Ephesians 2:4–22; Luke 8:41–56

Twenty–Fifth Week after Pentecost

Monday

2 Thessalonians 1:1–10; Luke 12:13–15, 22–31

Tuesday

2 Thessalonians 1:10—2:2; Luke 12:42–48

Wednesday

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12; Luke 12:48–59

Thursday

2 Thessalonians 2:13—3:5; Luke 13:1–9

Friday

2 Thessalonians 3:6–18; Luke 13:31–35

Saturday

Galatians 1:3–10; Luke 9:37–43

Twenty–Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Ephesians 4:1–6; Luke 10:25–37

Twenty–Sixth Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Timothy 1:1–7; Luke 14:12–15

Tuesday

1 Timothy 1:8–14; Luke 14:25–35

Wednesday

1 Timothy 1:18–20, 2:8–15; Luke 15:1–10

Thursday

1 Timothy 3:1–13; Luke 16:1–9

Friday

1 Timothy 4:4–8, 16; Luke 16:15–18, 17:1–4

Saturday

Galatians 3:8–12; Luke 9:57–62

Twenty–Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Ephesians 5:9–19; Luke 12:16–21

Twenty–Seventh Week after Pentecost

Monday

1 Timothy 5:1–10; Luke 17:20–25

Tuesday

1 Timothy 5:11–21; Luke 17:26–37

Wednesday

1 Timothy 5:22—6:11; Luke 18:15–17, 26–30

Thursday

1 Timothy 6:17–21; Luke 18:31–34

Friday

2 Timothy 1:1, 2, 8–18; Luke 19:12–28

Saturday

Galatians 5:22—6:2; Luke 10:19–21

Twenty–Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Ephesians 6:10–17; Luke 13:10–17

Twenty–Eighth Week after Pentecost

Monday

2 Timothy 2:20–26; Luke 19:37–44

Tuesday

2 Timothy 3:16—4:4; Luke 19:45–48

Wednesday

2 Timothy 4:9–22; Luke 20:1–8

Thursday

Titus 1:5—2:1; Luke 20:9–18

Friday

Titus 1:15—2:10; Luke 20:19–26

Saturday

Ephesians 1:16–23; Luke 12:32–40

Twenty–Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Colossians 1:12–18; Luke 18:35–43

Twenty–Ninth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Hebrews 3:5–11; Luke 20:27–44

Tuesday

Hebrews 4:1–13; Luke 21:12–19

Wednesday

Hebrews 5:11—6:8; Luke 21:5–7, 10–11, 20–24

Thursday

Hebrews 7:1–6; Luke 21:28–33

Friday

Hebrews 7:18–25; Luke 21:37—22:8

Saturday

Ephesians 2:11–13; Luke 13:18–29

Twenty–Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Colossians 3:12–16; Luke 17:12–19

Thirtieth Week after Pentecost

Monday

Hebrews 8:7–13; Mark 8:11–21

Tuesday

Hebrews 9:8–10, 15–23; Mark 8:22–26

Wednesday

Hebrews 10:1–18; Mark 8:30–34

Thursday

Hebrews 10:35—11:7; Mark 9:10–16

Friday

Hebrews 11:8, 11–16; Mark 9:33–41

Saturday

Ephesians 5:1–8; Luke 14:1–11

Thirtieth Sunday after Pentecost

Colossians 3:12–16; Luke 18:18–27

Thirty–First Week after Pentecost

Monday

Hebrews 11:17, 27–31; Mark 9:42—10:1

Tuesday

Hebrews 12:25, 26, 13:22–25; Mark 10:2–12

Wednesday

James 1:1–18; Mark 10:11–16

Thursday

James 1:19–27; Mark 10:17–27

Friday

James 2:1–13; Mark 10:23–32

Saturday

Colossians 1:3–6; Luke 16:10–15

Thirty–First Sunday after Pentecost

1 Timothy 1:15–17; Luke 18:35–43

Thirty–Second Week after Pentecost

Monday

James 2:14–26; Mark 10:46–52

Tuesday

James 3:1–10; Mark 11:11–23

Wednesday

James 3:11—4:6; Mark 11:23–26

Thursday

James 4:7—5:9; Mark 11:27–33

Friday

1 Peter 1:1, 2, 10–12, 2:6–10; Mark 12:1–12

Saturday

1 Thessalonians 5:14–23; Luke 17:3–10

Thirty–Second Sunday after Pentecost

1 Timothy 4:9–15; Luke 19:1–10

NOTE: *In years when there are fewer than thirty–two weeks after Pentecost and before the Triodion, some readings are omitted. In years when there are more than thirty–two weeks between Pentecost and the Triodion, some readings may be repeated. Refer to the yearly calendar for your diocese for details.*

MAJOR FIXED FEASTS

The readings for these feasts supersede those of the Pentecost cycle.

The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ (February 2/15)

Hebrews 7:7–17; Luke 2:22–40

The Annunciation to the Theotokos (March 25/April 7)

Hebrews 2:11–18; Luke 1:24–38

The Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ (August 6/19)

2 Peter 1:10–19; Matthew 17:1–9

The Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15/28)

Philippians 2:5–11; Luke 10:38–42; 11:27, 28

The Nativity of the Theotokos (September 8/21)

Philippians 2:5–11; Luke 10:38–42; 11:27, 28

The Exaltation of the Precious and Life–Giving Cross (September 14/27)

1 Corinthians 1:18–24; John 19:6–11, 13–20, 25–28, 30–35

The Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple (November 21/December 4)

Hebrews 9:1–7; Luke 10:38–42; 11:27, 28

NATIVITY CYCLE

The Nativity cycle begins two Sundays before December 25/January 7. The number of weeks after Pentecost and before Nativity varies from year to year. The Nativity and Theophany readings supersede those of the Pentecost cycle, which picks up again following the Sunday after Theophany and runs until the week before the beginning of the Triodion. (In years when Pascha is early, there may be little or no lapse of time between the two.)

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ (Two Sundays before Nativity)

Colossians 3:4–11; Luke 14:16–24

Saturday before Nativity

Galatians 3:8–12; Luke 13:18–29

Sunday before Nativity: Sunday of the Holy Fathers

Hebrews 11:9–10, 17–23, 32–40; Matthew 1:1–25

Eve of the Nativity of Christ (December 24/January 6)

VESPERS: (1) Genesis 1:1–13; (2) Numbers 24:2, 3; 5–9, 17, 18; (3) Micah 4:6, 7; 5:2–4; (4) Isaiah 11:1–10; (5) Baruch 3:36—4:4; (6) Daniel 2:31–36; 44, 45; (7) Isaiah 9:6–7; (8) Isaiah 7:10–16; 8:1–4, 8–10; LITURGY: Hebrews 1:1–12; Luke 2:1–20

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (December 25/ January 7)

Galatians 4:4–7; Matthew 2:1–12

Saturday after Nativity

1 Timothy 6:11–16; Matthew 12:15–21

Sunday after the Nativity

Galatians 1:11–19; Matthew 2:13–23

THEOPHANY CYCLE

Saturday before Theophany

1 Timothy 3:14—4:5; Matthew 3:1–11

Sunday before Theophany

2 Timothy 4:5–8; Mark 1:1–8

Eve of the Theophany (January 5/18)

VESPERS: (1) Genesis 1:1–13; (2) Exodus 14:15–18, 21–23, 27–29; (3) Exodus 15:22–27; 16:1; (4) Joshua 3:7, 8, 15–17; (5) 2 Kings 2:6–14; (6) 2 Kings 5:9–14; (7) Isaiah 1:16–20; (8) Genesis 32:1–10; (9) Exodus 2:5–10; (10) Judges 6:36–40; (11) 1 Kings 18:30–39; (12) 2 Kings 2:19–22; (13) Isaiah 49:8–15. LITURGY: 1 Corinthians 9:19–27; Luke 3:1–18. BLESSING OF WATER: (1) Isaiah 35:1–10; (2) Isaiah 55:1–13; (3) Isaiah 12:3–6; 1 Corinthians 10:1–4; Mark 1:9–11

The Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ (January 6/19)

Titus 2:11–14, 3:4–7; Matthew 3:13–17

Saturday after the Theophany

Ephesians 6:10–17; Matthew 4:1–11

Sunday after the Theophany

Ephesians 4:7–13; Matthew 4:12–17

LESSER FIXED FEASTS

These readings supersede those of the Pentecost cycle.

The First and Second Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist (February 24/March 9)

2 Corinthians 4:6–12; Matthew 11:2–15

The Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist (May 29/June 7)

2 Corinthians 4:6–12; Matthew 11:2–15

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 4/July 7)

Romans 13:11—14:4; Luke 1:1–15, 57–68, 76, 80

The Holy Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul (June 29/July 12)

2 Corinthians 11:21—12:9; Matthew 16:13–19

The Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29/ September 11)

Acts 13:25–32; Mark 6:14–30.

The Conception of St. John the Baptist (September 23/October 6)

Galatians 4:22–31; Luke 1:5–25

The Protection of the Theotokos (October 1/14)

Hebrews 9:1–7; Luke 10:38–42; 11:27–28

Synaxis of the Archangel Michael and All the Bodiless Powers (November 8/21)

Hebrew 2:2–10; Luke 10:16–21

The Conception of the Theotokos (December 9/21)

Galatians 4:22–27; Luke 13:10–17

OTHER SPECIAL AND GENERAL FEASTDAYS

These feasts may be celebrated for certain saints at the discretion of the local parish.

Holy Monks

Galatians 5:22—6:2; Matthew 11:27–30

Holy Nuns

Galatians 3:23–29; Matthew 25:1–13 or Luke 7:36–50

Holy Confessors

Ephesians 6:10–17; Luke 12:8–12

Holy Martyr

2 Timothy 2:1–10 or Acts 12:1–11; Luke 12:1–12 or John 15:17—16:2

Holy Martyrs

Romans 8:28–39; Matthew 10:16–22 or Luke 21:12–19

Hieromartyr

Hebrews 13:7–16; Luke 12:32–40

Hieromartyrs

Hebrews 5:4–10 or Philippians 3:20—4:3; Luke 6:17–23, Luke 10:22–24 or Luke 14:25–35

Monk Martyr

1 Timothy 1:8–18; Mark 8:34—9:1

Monk Martyrs

Romans 8:28–39; Matthew 10:32–33, 37, 38; 19:27–30 or Luke 12:8–12

Female Martyrs

2 Corinthians 6:1–10 or Galatians 3:23–29; Matthew 15:21–28 or Mark 5:24

Holy Unmercenary Healers

1 Corinthians 12:27—13:8; Matthew 10:1, 5–8.

Prophets

1 Corinthians 14:20–25, Hebrews 6:13–20 or James 5:10–20; Matthew 23:29–39 or Luke 11:47–54

Hierarch

Hebrews 7:26—8:2; John 10:9–16

Hierarchs

Hebrews 13:17–21; Matthew 5:14–19; John 10:9–16 or Luke 6:17–23

Commemoration of the Departed

Monday

Romans 16:6–9; John 5:17–24

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 15:39–57; John 5:24–30

Wednesday

2 Corinthians 5:1–10; John 6:35–39

Thursday

1 Corinthians 15:20–28; John 6:40–44

Friday

1 Corinthians 15:47–57; John 6:48–54

Saturday

1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; John 5:24–30

GLOSSARY

Words appearing in CAPITAL LETTERS have their own entries elsewhere in the glossary.

A

ABBA The Aramaic term of intimacy used in addressing one’s father, somewhat equivalent to the English “Papa.” Christ uses *Abba* in addressing God the FATHER (Mk 14:36). St. Paul tells believers that their relationship with God through the HOLY SPIRIT is so personal that they too may speak to Him as intimately as to their own father (Rom 8:15).

ABED-NEGO The name given by Nebuchadnezzar to Azariah, a Hebrew youth who was a prisoner along with Daniel the prophet and two others. A famous PRAYER by Azariah is recorded in Daniel 3:25–45. The Seventh and Eight Odes of canons chanted in Matins and other services are based on the Song of the Three Young Men.

ABSOLUTION The PRAYER offered by a BISHOP or PRESBYTER for the FORGIVENESS of sins. Following His glorious RESURRECTION, Christ breathed on His apostles and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (Jn 20:22, 23). This gift of proclaiming God’s forgiveness of sins remains forever in the CHURCH. It is exercised in the sacraments of BAPTISM and CONFESSION—the RECONCILIATION to the Church of Christian believers who have sinned and repented. The priest or bishop is the WITNESS who bears testimony to the REPENTANCE; only God forgives sins. (See article, “Confession,” at 1Jn 1.)

ADVENT A forty-day period of PRAYER, REPENTANCE, and FASTING in preparation for Christmas. The word stems from the Latin word for “coming.” During the fast the faithful prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas, and also anticipate His SECOND COMING**.** See also FASTING, NATIVITY**.**

AGAPE Greek for the self-sacrificial love which God extends to His people. *Agape* also designates a communal meal connected to the EUCHARIST which was a practice of the early CHURCH (1Co 11:20–34).

ALEXANDRIA A city in Egypt founded by Alexander the Great in 332 BC and prominent in the books of the Maccabees.

ALLEGORY A story filled with symbolism illustrating a spiritual reality beyond the actual historical event being described. It is possible for a story to be both historical and allegorical. Some Church Fathers combined both elements in interpreting the Bible. (See Lk 15:4–7; Gal 4:21–26.) See also TYPE.

ALLELUIA The Greek form of the Hebrew word *Hallelujah*, which means “praise God.” Orthodox Christians sing a chorus of *Alleluias* interspersed with verses from the Psalms prior to the Gospel reading at the Divine Liturgy. See also PRAISE.

ALMS Works of MERCY or monetary gifts given to help the poor. Throughout the Scriptures, God’s people are called to help those less fortunate than themselves. (See Mt 25:31–46.)

ALPHA AND OMEGA The letters which begin and end the Greek alphabet, and symbolize the beginning and the end. “The Alpha and the

Omega” is used as a title of Christ (Rev 1:8).

AMEN “So be it” in Hebrew. *Amen* is said or sung at the close of a PRAYER or hymn, showing the agreement of the people to what has been said (Dt 27:15–26; 1Co 14:16).

AMOS A PROPHET of the Lord and author of the OT book of prophecy in which he announced judgment against the nations and condemned the sins of Israel. He also foretold many blessings to come. (See Am 9:11–15.)

ANGELS Bodiless powers created before the CREATION of the physical universe. The English word “angel” comes from the Greek word for “messenger.” Throughout the Scripture, angels are messengers who carry the WORD OF GOD to earth (e.g., Gabriel’s visit to Mary, Lk 1:26–38). The Orthodox Church recognizes nine “choirs” or groups of angels as found in the Scriptures: Angels, Archangels, Powers, Authorities, Principalities, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim. (See Gn 3:24; Is 6:2; Eph 1:21; Col 1:16; 1Th 4:16; 1Pt 3:22.)

ANNUNCIATION The visit of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to announce to her that she had been chosen to bear Christ, the Son of God. The Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated exactly nine months before Christmas on March 25. Mary’s Son was no ordinary child, but God’s divine Son and Word in human flesh. (See article, “Mary,” at Lk 1; Is 7:14; Lk 1:26–38; Jn 1:1–14.)

ANTICHRIST Literally; “against Christ” or “instead of Christ.” *Antichrist* is used by John to refer to (a) the opponent of Christ who will arise at the end of this age, and (b) the “many antichrists” who stand against the Son of God (1Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3).

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES The Greek King of Syria who persecuted the JEWS for many years in the second century BC. (See 1Mc 6, 2Mc 2, and 4.)

APOSTASY Literally, “turning away.” This sin is committed when a Christian or body of believers rejects the true faith of Christ (1Ti 1:5–7; 4:1–3).

APOSTLE Literally, “one who is sent.” *Apostle* is used as a title for the Twelve Disciples who formed the foundation of the NT CHURCH, replacing, symbolically, the twelve tribes of Israel. In order to maintain this symbolism, Matthias was elected to replace Judas (Acts 1:15–26). The word is also used of The Seventy (or 72) sent by Christ, as well as of Paul, the repentant persecutor whom the risen Christ sent as “apostle to the Gentiles” (Rom 11:13). Great missionaries in the Church, such as Mary Magdalene (the “apostle to the apostles”), Thekla, Nina, Vladimir, and Innocent of Alaska are often called “equal to the apostles.” The extension of the apostolic ministry in the Church today is in the EPISCOPACY. See also BISHOP.

ARK OF THE COVENANT The chest with two cherubim on the lid in which Israel kept the tablets of the COVENANT (the Ten Commandments) and other holy items. Stored at first in the TABERNACLE and later in the Most Holy Place of the Jerusalem TEMPLE, it was later lost to the Israelites. (See Ex 25:10, 16; Dt 10:8; 3Kg 8).

ASCENSION The return of Christ, the Son of God in the flesh, to heaven following His RESURRECTION (Lk 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9–11). Christ's *Ascension* completes the union of God and man, for a Man who is God now reigns in Heaven.

ASCETICISM (from Gr. *askesis*, "athlete") A spiritual struggle—the CRUCIFIXION of the desires of the flesh—through a life of PRAYER, FASTING, and self-denial. Through asceticism the Christian fights temptation to sin and thereby grows in spiritual strength. Such spiritual classics as *The Philokalia* and *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* give directions for the ascetic life. (See Lk 9:23; Gal 5:24.)

AUTHORITY The rule of God over the world and the legitimate authority given by God to those ORDAINED to shepherd the faithful (Heb 13:17). Also, one of the nine choirs of angels. See also ANGELS.

B

BAAL The (male) god worshiped by the Canaanites and other heathen faced by Israel in the OT. Sometimes Israelites turned from WORSHIP of the Lord God to worship Baal. This false god is often associated with immorality. (See especially the books of Judges, Numbers, and Kings.)

BALAAM A PROPHET who predicted the coming Messiah in his very last prophecy "A Star shall rise out of Jacob; and a Man shall rise out of Israel" (Nm 24:17).

BAPTISM (from Gr. *baptizo,* "to be plunged") The SACRAMENT whereby one is BORN AGAIN, buried with Christ, resurrected with Him and united to Him. In baptism, one becomes a Christian and is joined to the

CHURCH. Through Christ’s baptism, water was set apart unto God as the means by which the HOLY SPIRIT would bring to us new life and entrance into the heavenly Kingdom. (See article “Holy Baptism,” at Rom 6; see also Mt 3:13–17; 28:19; Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38, 39; Rom 6:3; Col 2:12; 1Pt 3:21.)

BEATITUDE Literally, “exalted happiness” or “blessing.” The ninefold blessing of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount is called the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3–12).

BELIEF The acceptance of the truths of the gospel. More than a mental assent, *belief* as used in the NT includes relying upon or trusting in God from the HEART. Such belief results from (1) hearing the WORD OF GOD (Rom 10:17) and (2) a gift of the HOLY SPIRIT (Eph 2:8). But faith without action (that is, a distinct movement of the will to follow Christ) is hollow and void of the RIGHTEOUSNESS that brings us SALVATION. (See article, “Justification by Faith,” at Rom 5; Mt 7:21; Jn 3:16; Jam 2:14–26.)

BENEDICTION Literally, “good word.” Benedictions were given by Christ (Lk 24:50, 51) and by the APOSTLES (2Co 13:14), and are given by the BISHOP or PRIEST at the close of every Divine Liturgy. (Other biblical benedictions include: Nm 6:24–26; Eph 3:20, 21; and Heb 13:20, 21.)

BISHOP (Gr. *episkopos,* “overseer.”) A bishop is the leader of a local community of Christians. In the New Testament there is often no clear distinction between the offices of bishop and elder (PRESBYTER), both of which function as leaders of the community. How ever, by the mid to late first century, the CHURCH began to reserve the title *bishop* for the men of spiritual qualification who were consecrated to follow the apostles in their office of oversight. (See article, “The Four ‘Orders’ in Church Government,” at 1Ti; Acts 1:15–26; 14:23; 1Ti 3:1–7.)

BORN AGAIN Literally, “born from above.” A person is *born again* to new life in Christ to enter God’s eternal Kingdom. This new birth takes place through the SACRAMENT of BAPTISM (Jn 3:16; Rom 6:3, 4; Gal 3:27). Spiritual life begins by receiving the HOLY SPIRIT in baptism and CHRIS-MATION**,** and is a dynamic process which continues throughout life. (See article, “The New Birth,” at Jn 3.)

BROTHERS OF THE LORD St. James, the first BISHOP of Jerusalem, Joses, Simon, and Judas are referred to as brothers of Christ (Mt 13:55). In the ancient Middle East one’s close relatives were frequently referred to as brothers and sisters. For example, Lot is clearly Abram’s nephew (Gn 14:12), but Lot is also called “his brother” (Gn 14:14). There is an ancient TRADITION that the “brothers and sisters” of Christ were actually children of St. Joseph from an earlier marriage; they are never in Scripture called the children of Mary and Joseph. Thus, these references to siblings of Christ do not contradict the belief of the historic CHURCH—East and West—that the Virgin Mary was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Christ. The absence of blood brothers is strongly reinforced by Christ’s act of entrusting Mary to the care of the apostle John (Jn 19:26, 27), which would have been against the Mosaic Law had she had other natural children.

C

CANON Literally, “a rule.” It describes (1) the inspired Books of the Bible—the Canon of Scripture; (2) the rules and decrees issued by the early Church (see Acts 15:23–29) and by Ecumenical Councils—Canon Law;

and (3) certain parts of worship, such as the Liturgical Canon or the Canon of MATINS.

CHRISMATION The sacrament completing BAPTISM, whereby one receives the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT through anointing with the Chrism, a specially prepared oil which must be consecrated by a BISHOP. In Acts, a baptized Christian received the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the hands of an APOSTLE. (See Acts 8:14–17; 19:6.) Chrismation is a continuation of this ancient practice in the Church. (See article, "Chrismation," at Acts 2.)

CHURCH (Gr. *ekklesia,* the "called out," the "assembly.") The faithful are called out of the world to be the Church: the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the New Israel, the ark of SALVATION, the assembly of believers. Through the Church, Christians are united to Christ and to each other. In this community, the believer receives the GRACE of God through the sacraments and hears the truth of the gospel. This mystical transformation of people into one body in Christ takes place in the EUCHARIST. Because Christ is Head of the Church, the Church is a reflection of His INCARNATION, with both human and divine qualities. (See Mt 16:18; 1Co 10:16, 17; Gal 6:16; Eph 4:12; 5:22–32.)

CLOUD A "pillar of cloud" (Ex 13:21) was sent by God to help Israel find its way in the wilderness when the people left Egypt.

COMMANDMENT The Law of God, given first to Moses in the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, and completed or fulfilled by the teaching of Christ (Ex 20:1–17; Mt 5:1–7:27; Jn 15:12).

COMMUNION (Gr. *koinonia)* A common union of the most intimate kind, enjoyed by Christians with God and with each other in the CHURCH. This communion is especially realized in the mystery of the EUCHARIST (Jn 6:56; 1Co 10:16, 17). See also KOINONIA.

CONFESSION (1) The avowal or verbal witness of faith in Christ, leading to SALVATION (Rom 10:9). (2) The SACRAMENT of the FORGIVENESS of sins, whereby the repentant sinner confesses his sins to Christ in the presence of the priest, who pronounces God's ABSOLUTION of those sins. (See article, "Confession," at 1Jn; Jn 20:22, 23; 1Jn 1:9.)

CONVERSION The beginning of SALVATION, occurring when a person repents, believes the gospel, and enters into a personal union and relationship with Christ. Conversion is not merely a change of belief but the beginning of a new life in Christ (2Co 5:17), which is a process of growth into the image and likeness of God. Our salvation is the working together of conversion, JUSTIFICATION and SANCTIFICATION throughout life.

CORNERSTONE The stone which ties together walls meeting at right angles, especially the one establishing the stability of a building. (See Ps 117:22; Ps 2:6–8; Is 28:16 and 1Pt 2:6–8.)

CORRUPTION The state of mortality and sinfulness, the universal condition of fallen humanity. All people are born into a world suffering the consequences of the Fall, the sin of Adam and Eve. These consequences include physical suffering, death, lack of perfection and a propensity to sin. (See Ps 52:4; Is 53:6; Rom 3:23; 1Jn 5:19.)

COSMOS The universe or world, created by God from nothing. It is controlled by God; He is the life of the world. Sin has corrupted the entire *cosmos*, and the rule of evil will not be abolished until the SECOND COMING of Jesus Christ. The universe will finally be redeemed by Christ when He comes again to transform the *cosmos* into a new heaven and a new earth. (See Gn 1:1; Rom 8:19–22; Rev 21:1.)

COUNCIL A group of Christians gathered to deliberate and ask for the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT to administer the CHURCH and decide various doctrinal, moral, and liturgical questions. The Orthodox Church is conciliar (operating by councils) on all levels, from a parish to a worldwide *council*. While councils are not seen as infallible, their decisions become part of Church life when they are received by the entire Church. Besides the Jerusalem Council recorded in Acts 15, the Church counts Seven Ecumenical Councils in her history, from AD 325 to 787.

COVENANT An agreement or testament between men or between God and His people. In the OT, God chose the people of Israel, ending with John the Baptist, to prepare the way for the coming of His Only Begotten Son. Through Christ, the *covenant* was perfected, and the promises of God to Abraham and the Jews are fulfilled through the CHURCH, the New Israel, the new covenant people of God. (See Gn 13:14–16; Gal 3:6–9; 1Pt 2:9, 10.)

CREATION Everything made by God. The term *creation* is applied to the COSMOS in general and to mankind in particular. Our regeneration in Christ and the RESURRECTION of the dead are both often called the "new creation" (2Co 5:17; also Rev 21:1). Creation has no existence apart from

God, but is nevertheless distinct from God. (That which is not created, such as divine GRACE, the divine energies, belongs to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)

CREED A statement of belief. Creeds in their earlier forms were used by the apostles, and many are recorded in the NT (Eph 5:14; 1Ti 3:16; 2Ti 2:11–13). The *Creed* used throughout the CHURCH was adopted at the COUNCIL of Nicea in AD 325 and expanded at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381. This Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, commonly called the Nicene Creed, is used at baptisms, in the Divine Liturgy, and in personal daily prayers.

CRUCIFIXION A form of execution of criminals used by the ancient Romans in which the offender was nailed through his wrists and ankles to a cross. A crucified person usually died from suffocation after becoming too exhausted to pull himself up in order to breathe. Besides Christ Himself (Mt 27:35–50), the apostles Peter, Andrew, James the Less, and Simon were also crucified.

CURSE (Gr. *anathema)* To “cut off,” “separate”; the opposite of blessing. A divine *curse* is God’s judgment. Christ delivers believers from the *curse* caused by their inability to live by the law of God. (See Gn 3:14–19; 9:25; Mk 11:21; Gal 3:10–14.)

CYRENE A colonial city in today’s Libya established by the Greeks as a regional center in North Africa (1Mc 15:23). Simon, who carried Jesus’ Cross, was “a man of *Cyrene*” (Mt 27:32).

D

DARKNESS A symbol of sin and rejection of God, who is LIGHT and whose followers walk in the light of RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jn 1:5; Rom 13:12).

DAY OF ATONEMENT The one day each year when the OT high priest offered sacrifices for the sins of the people; on this day (and on no other) the high priest entered the Most Holy Place of the TEMPLE to sprinkle blood on the ARK OF THE COVENANT, the mercy seat, to reconcile Israel with God.

DEACON Literally, “servant.” Originally seven deacons were ordained to assist the apostles with the temporal affairs of the CHURCH (Acts 6:1–7). St. Paul writes of the qualifications for *deacon* (1Ti 3:8–13). This established office has continued in the CHURCH Deacons help in the Church and assist the BISHOP and priest in liturgical services, but cannot preside over the EUCHARIST, give blessings or pronounce ABSOLUTION. In the NT (Rom 16:1) and the early Church, women also served as deacons or deaconesses, assisting others but not serving liturgically.

DEIFICATION The GRACE of God through which believers grow to become like Him and enjoy intimate COMMUNION with the FATHER through the Son in the HOLY SPIRIT. (See article, “Deification,” at 2Pt 1; 2Co 3:18; 5:17; 2Pt 1:2–4.)

DEPARTED The dead. Following death and judgment, those who have accepted God’s truth and love as fully revealed in Christ and the HOLY SPIRIT inherit eternal life in heaven. Those who have rejected His gift inherit eternal darkness. (See Mk 16:16; Lk 16:19–31; Heb 9:27.)

DEVIL Satan, the leader of the fallen angels. Called by Jesus the “father of lies” (Jn 8:44), Satan tempts the faithful to join his rebellion against God. The Greek word for devil means “separator”; he seeks to steal people away from God (Jn 10:10). Although not evil by NATURE, the devil turned by his free choice from what was according to nature to what was against it (Is 14:12–15). At the end of time, Christ will judge the devil and his followers and cast them into hell. (See Mt 25:41; Lk 10:18; 1Pt 5:8.)

DISCIPLESHIP The life of learning, growing, self-sacrifice, and commitment required of every Christian. A Christian not only believes in Christ but leaves everything to follow Him. (See Mt 4:18–22; 7:21–23; Lk 9:23; Gal 5:24.)

DOCTRINE The teaching of the Church, called variously the *doctrine* of Christ (2Jn 9), the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42), or sound doctrine (Tts 1:9; see 2Ti 3:16; Rom 16:17).

E

EASTER The Feast of the RESURRECTION of Christ, also known as PASCHA (from the Hebrew word for PASSOVER). St. Paul calls Christ “our Passover” who “was sacrificed for us” 1Co 5:7). Orthodox Christians celebrate Pascha or Easter according to the decree of the COUNCIL of Nicea in AD 325: the first Sunday following the first full moon following the spring equinox following the Jewish Passover. Thus, Orthodox Easter is sometimes one, four, or five weeks after the Roman Catholic Easter—which Protestants also follow.

EDOMITES Descendants of Esau. They warred against Israel during the days of the Maccabees. Edomites are also known as Idumeans. The name *Idumea* was used by both the Greeks and Romans for the country of Edom. (See 1Mc 5:65.)

ENERGY Used theologically, that which radiates from the hidden ESSENCE or NATURE of God. The energies of God, such as GRACE, are not created, and allow the believer to enter into a personal relationship with God whose essence always remains hidden from humanity. Moses was permitted to see the GLORY of God, His energies, but was forbidden to gaze on the face of God, His hidden essence. (See Ex 33:18–23; 2Pt 1:2–4.)

EPIPHANY Literally, “a breaking through from above.” The word means a manifestation or THEOPHANY of God. Examples of epiphanies are the burning bush (Ex 3:1–6) and the TRANSFIGURATION of Christ (Mt 17:1–13). Twelve days after Christmas, the Church celebrates the Feast of *Epiphany* to honor the manifestation of the Holy TRINITY at the BAPTISM of Christ (Mk 1:9–11).

EPISCOPACY The order of bishops in the Church (from Gr. *episkopos*, “overseer”). See also BISHOP.

ESCHATOLOGY The study of the last days. According to the Holy Scriptures, Christ will come again at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, destroy the power of evil, and fully reveal the everlasting Kingdom (Mt 25:31–46; Rev 20:10–21:1). See also SECOND COMING.

ESSENCE Also called “substance,” “NATURE” or “form.” God the FATHER, the Son, and the HOLY SPIRIT are “of one essence.” Jesus

Christ is “of one essence” with God the Father and the Holy Spirit in His divinity, and “of one essence” with all human beings in His humanity. God’s essence is beyond the understanding and comprehension of His creatures. God can be known by humans through the divine energies and operations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Ex 33:18–23). See also ENERGY.

EUCHARIST Taken from a Greek word meaning “THANKSGIVING,” *Eucharist* designates Holy COMMUNION, the central act of Christian WORSHIP At the Last Supper Christ gave thanks (Mt 26:27; 1Co 11:24), and embodied in the communion service is our own thanksgiving. The word came into use very early, and appears in the late first century document, *The Didache* (“Now concerning the Eucharist. . . .” Did. 9:1) and also the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch (Ign. Phil. 4:1) written about AD 107.

EVANGELIST One who preaches the gospel; used especially of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who wrote the four NT Gospels. It is also one of Christ’s gifts (Eph 4:11).

EXCOMMUNICATION Literally, “out of communion.” This judgment is pronounced usually by the BISHOP of the CHURCH on willfully heretical, immoral, or divisive persons who refuse to repent of their sins, excluding them from the sacramental life of the Church (1Co 5:1–5). *Excommunication* is not viewed as eternal damnation but as temporal discipline. It is administered for the SALVATION of the excommunicated person, with the hope the sinner will repent.

F

FAITH Belief and trust in Christ as one's Savior, or a reference to Orthodox Christianity as "The Faith." The effects of this *faith* are freedom from the power of the DEVIL, the growth and maturity in VIRTUE, and progress toward perfection and union with God. One is saved by faith through GRACE—a living faith manifested by a righteous life. (See article, "Justification by Faith," at Rom 5; see also Rom 3:28; Gal 2:1; Eph 2:8; Jam 2:14–17.)

FASTING An exercise or discipline whereby one typically gives up certain foods as a means of disciplining the body and stilling human PASSION. Fasting is a part of the practice of ASCETICISM in the Church and a sign of REPENTANCE Orthodox Christians fast on most Wednesdays and Fridays (in memory of the betrayal and CRUCIFIXION of Christ) and during four fasting seasons: (1) ADVENT, the forty days before Christmas; (2) Great Lent, forty days before Palm Sunday and the week before Easter; (3) two weeks before the Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul (June 29); and (4) two weeks before the Feast of the Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary (Aug. 15). (See Mt 6:16; Rom 13:14; Gal 5:16, 17.)

FATHER (1) God the *Father* is the "fountainhead" of the Holy TRINITY, for God the Son is eternally begotten of God the *Father*, and God the HOLY SPIRIT proceeds eternally from God the *Father*. (See Mt 28:19; Jn 3:16; 14:10; 15:26.) (2) "*Father*" is also a title given to one's spiritual father based on the custom of the Jews, who spoke of their father Abraham or their father David, and on the words of St. Paul, who called himself the father of his flock. (See Lk 1:73; 16:24; 1Co 4:15.)

FELLOWSHIP (Gr. *koinonia)* Literally, “COMMUNION”; the unity of believers through Christ based on the *fellowship* of the FATHER, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT. Christians are united into a special fellowship through their love for one another and common union with Christ (Acts 2:42; 1Jn 1:3, 7). See also COMMUNION.

FILIOQUE A Latin word meaning *“and the Son.”* Roman Catholic and, later, Protestant churches have added words to the Nicene Creed: “I believe in the HOLY SPIRIT . . . who proceeds from the FATHER *and the Son.”* The *filioque* is judged by the Orthodox Church as error because it is contrary to what Jesus taught (Jn 15:26). Thus, the *filioque* confuses the true belief concerning the Holy Trinity. The addition of the *filioque* was a major factor contributing to the Great Schism in the eleventh century.

FORGIVENESS: The remission of sin and guilt through the love of Christ. *Forgiveness* is given originally in BAPTISM; forgiveness for continuing sin is reclaimed through REPENTANCE As God has forgiven the sins of believers, so are Christians to forgive those who have sinned against them (Mt 6:14, 15; 18:21–35; 1Jn 1:9).

FORNICATION (Gr. *porneia)*; from which we get the word “pornography.” It is the sin of sexual immorality. *Fornication* is strongly condemned in Scripture. (See 1Co 6:16–18; Gal 5:19; Col 3:5.)

FREE WILL The freedom to choose between good and evil. Free will is one aspect of human NATURE created in God’s image. According to Orthodox teaching, sin stains the image of God but does not destroy it. Human beings have the right to accept or reject the gospel, but must accept the consequences of their decision. (See Gn 3:22, 23; Rev 3:20.)

G

GABRIEL Literally “man of God.” An archangel who explained to Daniel the meaning of a vision (Dan 8:16 and following). Later, he also told Daniel the meaning of a prophecy (Dan 9:21–27). In the NT we see *Gabriel* announcing first the conception of John the Baptist (Lk 1:11–22) and sometime later the conception of our Lord Jesus Christ (Lk 1:26–38).

GENTILE A non-Jew. Christ and His apostles first preached the gospel to the JEWS, those chosen by God to prepare the way for the Messiah. But because Christ Himself died for all, Jew and *Gentile*, SALVATION is therefore offered to all, both Gentile and Jew. Those Gentiles (and Jews) who believe in Christ become the true sons of Abraham. (See Acts 11; 15:1–29; Rom 1:16; Gal 3:6–9.)

GIFTS Charismatic or spiritual *gifts* are blessings and abilities given by the HOLY SPIRIT to believers for the building up of the Body of Christ. (See Rom 12:6–8; 1Co 12; 13; 1Jn 3:24.)

GLORY The divine splendor of God, or a specific manifestation of God’s presence, frequently likened to a CLOUD, smoke, or brilliant LIGHT. To serve and WORSHIP God is to glorify Him. Through the HOLY SPIRIT, Christians are being changed to be like God and to reflect His *glory.* (See Ex 19:9, 16–18; Is 60:1; Lk 2:9; Rom 8:16–18; 2Co 3:18; 4:6.) See also SHEKINAH.

GLOSSOLALIA Literally, “speaking in tongues.” St. Paul used the term to describe a spiritual gift in the early CHURCH, not an emotional experience (1Co 12:10). At PENTECOST the gift was given to allow those present to hear the gospel in their native language (Acts 2:6). In Corinth, the gift was an ecstatic utterance (1Co 14:2). The APOSTLE warned against too much emphasis on this experience, urging instead that believers seek to manifest love (1Co 13:1) and communicate the gospel intelligibly (1Co 14:19). *Glossolalia* has never played a significant role in historic Orthodox spirituality. (See 1Co 12–14.)

GNOSTICISM A very complex ancient heresy that was manifested in many different forms and beliefs. The Gnostics taught that Christ had imparted secret knowledge (Gr. *gnosis*) to a select few, who in turn transmitted hidden truths to an elite. Central to *Gnosticism* is the denial of the goodness of matter, leading to a denial of the reality of the INCARNATION of the Son of God and of His bodily RESURRECTION. Several schools of *Gnosticism* taught that SALVATION consisted of liberation from the physical body and of growth to a higher, nonphysical, spiritual level of existence. Orthodoxy has always rejected *Gnosticism*, teaching that the world and man were created good and will be redeemed by Christ and transformed at the end of this age (Gn 1:1–31; Rom 8:19–22; 1Co 15:35–55; Rev 21:1).

GOSPEL Literally, “the good news.” The term comes from the ancient word announcing the ascension of a new ruler to the throne. The Christian gospel is summarized in the statement, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Mt 3:2; 4:17).

GRACE The gift of God’s own presence and action in His creation. Through *grace*, God forgives sins and transforms the believer into His image and likeness. Grace is not merely unmerited favor—an attitude of

God toward the believer. Grace is God's uncreated ENERGY bestowed in the sacraments and is therefore truly experienced. A Christian is saved through grace, which is a gift of God and not a reward for good works. However, because grace changes a person, he or she will manifest the effects of grace through righteous living. (See Jn 1:17; Rom 5:21; Eph 1:7; 2:8; 2Th 1:12; 1Pt 5:5.)

H

HADES A Greek word equivalent to the Hebrew *Sheol*—the realm of the dead. Following His burial and before His glorious RESURRECTION, Christ liberated the righteous dead in *Hades*, enabling them to enter PARADISE because He had destroyed sin and death by His life-giving death (1Pt 3:18–20).

HANANIAH Jewish name of one of the three youths held by Nebuchadnezzar along with Daniel. Hananiah's name in exile was Shadrach (See Dan 1:6, 7, 11). He is described as one whose faith saved him from fire (1Mc 2:59).

HANUKKAH The Jewish festival of lights that commemorates the rededication of the Jerusalem TEMPLE to more traditional modes of Jewish worship by JUDAS MAC-CABEUS around 164 BC after its desecration by the Seleucid King ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES.

HEART In scriptural terms, the spiritual center of one's being. The *heart* is the seat of divine presence and GRACE and the source of moral acts. The ongoing transformation of the heart is the major work of God's saving grace. (See Mt 5:8; 6:21; 22:37; Lk 6:45; Jn 7:38; Rom 2:29; 10:9, 10; Heb 13:9.)

HERESY Following one’s own choice or opinion so as to cause division among Christians. *Heresy* is a system of thought contradicting the true teachings of the CHURCH. It is false teaching, which true Christians must reject (Mt 7:15; 2Pt 2:1).

HOLINESS is the goodness of God Who alone is good (Mt 19:17). *Holiness* is manifested in people being renewed and transformed by the HOLY SPIRIT, who seek to become holy as God is holy (Rom 12:1; 1Pt 1:14–16; 2:9).

HOLY SPIRIT One of the Holy TRINITY, sometimes referred to as “The Spirit of the Lord God” (Is 61:1).

HOPE An expectation of something desired through faith (Heb 11:1). Hope for Christians is to “look forward to the RESURRECTION from the dead and the life of the world to come” (*The CREED*). (Jn 16:20–24, 33; Rom 5:2; 8:24, 25; 2Th 2:16).

I

ICON A transliterated Greek word meaning “IMAGE” (Col 1:15). Icons of Christ and His saints depict the reality of the INCAR-NATION: because the Son of God became Man, He can be imaged. Orthodox Christians honor or venerate icons, but never WORSHIP them, for worship is due the Holy TRINITY alone. The honor given to icons passes on to the one represented on the icon, as a means of THANKSGIVING for what God has done in that person’s life.

IDOL A statue or other IMAGE of a false god, such as the “golden calf” (Ex 32:4–8). Also, anything that is worshiped in place of the one true God. Money, possessions, fame, even family members can become idols if we put them ahead of Christ our God. (See Lv 26:1; Col 3:5.)

ILLUMINATION “Enlightenment.” In the Bible, DARKNESS is often used as an image of sin and death. To be illuminated is to be shown the true path of RIGHTEOUSNESS in God, thereby being led out of the darkness of sin and death. BAPTISM is called *illumination,* because in it we are delivered from sin and death and regenerated by the HOLY SPIRIT. (See 2Ez 9:8; Ps 12:4; 18:28; Dan 5:11, 14; Tb 12:15–22; Eph 1:18.)

IMAGE (Gr. *eikon)* The Bible teaches that man was created in the image and likeness of God. Men and women reflect the divine image by their ability to reason and to choose freely. Through Christ, the image of God is renewed in fallen man as believers are renewed and transformed by the GRACE of the HOLY SPIRIT. (See Gn 1:26; Rom 8:29; 2Co 3:18.) See ICON.

IMMANUEL “God with us,” a title of Christ Who is God in the flesh (Is 7:14; Mt 1:22, 23).

INCARNATE From Latin, meaning “to become flesh.” Christ is God Incarnate: He became flesh, that is, a Man. Thus, Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect Man in one Divine PERSON (Lk 1:26–38; Jn 1:1–14; Php 2:5–7).

INCENSE The sap of the frankincense tree, or other aromatic substances, dried and burned in honor of God. The offering of *incense* has been associated with the WORSHIP of God since God commanded Moses to burn incense to Him in the TABERNACLE (Ex 30:1–8). The WORD OF GOD came to the PROPHET Malachi (1:11) predicting, “among the Gentiles [the Church] . . . incense shall be offered to My name . . .” The Magi offered frankincense to the infant Christ (Mt 2:9–11). Incense manifests the prayers of the saints as they ascend to heaven (Ps 140:2). It is found in OT and NT accounts of the worship of God in heaven (Is 6:4; Rev 5:8).

INFANT BAPTISM There are numerous biblical passages which support the ancient Christian practice of *infant baptism*, which was universal in the CHURCH until the Anabaptist reaction after the Protestant Reformation. Among these are: “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19:14); the BAPTISM of whole households and families, presumably including children (Acts 16:14, 15, 25–33); and Paul’s comparison of circumcision—given to infant boys—to baptism (Col 2:11, 12; see also Jn 3:3–6; Rom 6:3, 4; Gal 3:27; 1Pt 3:21)

INTERCESSION Supplication to God in behalf of another person. Christ intercedes before God the FATHER in behalf of the repentant sinner, and God’s people intercede for one another. (See Is 53:12; Jer 27:18; Dan 9:3–19; Rom 8:34.)

J

JEWS Originally, God’s chosen people who followed the COVENANT given by the Lord to Moses. In the OT, the Jews are (1) citizens of Judah, (2) the postexilic people of Israel, or (3) the worshipers of Yahweh. God chose the Jews to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus

Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. Through Christ the distinction between Jew and GENTILE has been overcome, and all who truly follow Him have become the chosen people of God. (See Acts 22:3; Rom 1:16; 2:28, 29; Gal 3:28; 1Pt 2:9.)

JUDAS MACCABEUS Son of Mattathias. Called “Maccabeus” (Hammer) because of his sturdy defense of the Israelites in the face of those who wished to destroy them. (See 1Mc 2:4.)

JUDGES The period of the *Judges* ruling Israel was between the conquest of the Canaanites (Jdg 1:1) and the establishment of the monarchy under Saul (1Kg 10:17–24) when the Israelites were settling the land of Canaan. The Book of Judges contains the stories of several individual judges.

JUSTIFICATION In BAPTISM (Rom 6:1–6), God forgives one’s sins and begins to transform him or her into a righteous person. (See article, “Justification by Faith,” at Rom 5; also Rom 5:1, 2; Gal 2:16; Php 2:12, 13; Jam 2:24.)

K

KINGDOM OF GOD God’s rule and reign. This Kingdom, revealed by Christ, is present in the world through the CHURCH. The fullness of the Kingdom will come when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead, creating a new heaven and earth. (See Mk 1:15; Jn 3:3–5; Rom 8:20, 21; 1Co 6:9, 10; Rev 21:1—22:5.)

KISS OF PEACE A kiss given by one believer to another. It is a sign of Christian unity and fellowship. (See 1Co 16:20.) In the Divine Liturgy, the clergy and in some Churches, also the laity, exchange the *kiss of peace* before saying the Nicene CREED.

KOINONIA A Greek word meaning COMMUNION or intimate fellowship. This relationship exists between Christians who are united by love into one body in Christ. (See Acts 2:41, 42; 2Co 13:14; 1Jn 1:1–7.)

L

LAMB OF GOD Jesus Christ, the *Lamb of God*, offered Himself as a perfect SACRIFICE for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). In the Preparatory Service of the Orthodox Church, the bread and wine are made ready to be consecrated in the EUCHARIST. The priest cuts out the center section of the loaf, called “the Lamb,” for use in COMMUNION as the Body of Christ. (See the OT prophecy in Is 53:7–8.)

LAST JUDGMENT The judgment that takes place after the SECOND COMING of Christ and the final RESURRECTION from the dead. (See Mt 25:31–46; 16:8–11; Rev 20:11–15.)

LIGHT The Bible frequently uses *light* as a symbol of God and of that which is good, that which overcomes the DARKNESS of sin and death. Candles are used in the CHURCH to symbolize the light of Christ. Christians are to be lights shining in the world to show the way of RIGHTEOUSNESS and SALVATION (Mt 5:14; Jn 8:12).

LITURGY The work or public service of the people of God, which is the WORSHIP of the one true God. The Eucharistic service of the Orthodox Church is called the “Divine Liturgy.”

M

MAGNIFICAT The PRAYER or hymn sung by the Virgin Mary when she visited Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, shortly after the ANNUNCIATION (Lk 1:46–55). This hymn is sung frequently during MATINS in the Orthodox Church, and takes its title from the Latin for the beginning phrase, “My soul magnifies the Lord.” (See also 1Kg 2:1–10.)

MAN (Gr. *Anthropos*) Frequently used in the Bible in the generic sense for both man and woman. *Man* is the pinnacle of God’s CREATION, for only he among the creatures was made in the IMAGE and likeness of God. (See Gn 1:26, 27; Lk 4:4.)

MARTYR (Gr. *martyria)* Literally, “a WITNESS.” The term is used to describe those who give their lives for Christ, both in life and in death. (See Jn 1:6–8; Acts 6:8—7:60.)

MATINS The early morning PRAYER service in the Orthodox CHURCH.

MEDIATOR One who intervenes on behalf of another. Jesus Christ mediates on behalf of the faithful before God the FATHER (1Ti 2:5).

MERCY The compassionate, steadfast love of God for sinners. Christians reflect the *mercy* of God by caring for others. The most frequent PRAYER in Orthodox WORSHIP is “Lord, have mercy.” (See Mt 5:7; Eph 2:4–7; Tts 3:4–7.)

MESSIAH The Christ, the anointed one of God. Jesus Christ is the *Messiah*, fulfilling all the promises made by God to His chosen people. (See

Is 7:14; 9:6; Mt 16:13–17.)

MIRACLE A sign whereby God supersedes the laws of nature in a MYSTERY. Jesus Christ performed many miracles, showing His mastery over NATURE, while other miracles demonstrated His POWER over sin, disease, and death. The apostles continued to manifest the power of God through miracles in Jesus' name. Healings, weeping icons, and other contemporary miracles show His power and presence in the CHURCH today. (See Mt 8:1–34; Jn 11:1–44; Acts 3:6–9.)

MISSION A task given by God to His people. Christ sent The Seventy on a *mission* (Lk 10:1–24). St. Paul went on three missionary journeys to preach the gospel (Acts 13:1—14:28; 15:36—18:22; 18:23—21:16). The *mission* of the Church today is to proclaim Christ to the world (Mt 28:18–20).

MYSTERY The ways of God, especially God's plan for SALVATION, cannot be known with the rational, finite human mind. It can only be experienced by the revelation of God. The Orthodox Church also uses the term *mystery* for the sacraments of the Church. (See Mk 4:11; 1Co 2:7, 8; Eph 5:32.) See also SACRAMENT.

N

NATIVITY The birth of Christ according to the flesh. (See note for Matthew 2:11; notes for Lk 1:8; 2:1–3; 2:7.) This holy day is also called "Christmas."

NATURE The sum of the qualities shared by individuals of the same type. (The qualities which distinguish individuals of a type from another make up the “PERSON.”) The Holy TRINITY is one Divine Nature in three Persons. Humanity is one human nature in the image of God. Although stained by sin, human nature is good, having been created in the IMAGE of God. Through GRACE, the SPIRIT restores the nature of the believer to its true, uncorrupted state, so that he or she may grow into union with God. (See Gn 1:26–31; 2Co 3:18; 5:17.)

NETHINIM Temple servants in the OT. In the LXX, the word is transliterated from the Hebrew and usually appears as “the Nethinim,” and never in the singular.

NEW JERUSALEM The center of the KINGDOM OF GOD which will be established following the SECOND COMING of Christ and the LAST JUDGMENT (Gal 4:26; Rev 3:12; 21:2).

NEW MAN One who is being transformed or deified by the HOLY SPIRIT into a new creature in COMMUNION with God (2Co 5:17; Gal 6:15).

O

ORDINATION The sacramental act setting a man apart for the ministry of the CHURCH by the laying on of hands of a BISHOP. The original meaning of *ordination* includes both election and imposing of hands. (See article, “Ordination,” at Acts 14; Acts 6:1–6; 14:23; 1Ti 4:14.)

ORIGINAL SIN The fact that every PERSON born comes into the world facing mortality: we die. With REDEMPTION in Christ, however, comes new life in Him. Original sin does not carry guilt, for a person is guilty only of his or her own sins, not of those of Adam. Therefore, the Orthodox

CHURCH does not believe that a baby who dies unbaptized is condemned to hell. (See Gn 3:1–24; Rom 5:12–16.)

P

PARABLE A story told to illustrate a greater truth through familiar examples related to the daily lives of the hearers. Christ's teaching is filled with parables. (See article, "Parables," at Mt 13; Mt 13:1–54; Lk 8:9–15.)

PARADISE The place of rest for the DEPARTED in Christ. The original *Paradise*, (see Gn 2:8–14) will be restored in its fullness following the SECOND COMING of Christ. (See 2Ez; Lk 23:43; 2Co 12:4; 2Pt 3:13; Rev 2:7; 21:1.)

PARALEIPOMENON—see definition from fr. Peter.

PASCHA Greek for "PASSOVER." Originally *Pascha* designated the. Jewish Passover; now, it is the Feast of the RESURRECTION of Christ, also called "Easter." Christ is the LAMB OF GOD whose SACRIFICE delivers the faithful from death, as the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb delivered the ancient **JEWS** from slavery and death in Egypt (Ex 12; 13; 1Co 5:7, 8).

PASSION (1) A term used to describe the SACRIFICE of Christ on the Cross. (2) Holy Week is often called Passion Week, describing Christ's struggle and suffering in Jerusalem. (3) In addition, there are blameless passions including human appetites or urges—such as hunger, the desire for pleasure and sexual drives—which can become a source of sin when not controlled or directed by submission to the will of God. (See Rom 1:26; 7:5; Gal 5:24; Col 3:5.)

PEACE (Heb. *shalom)* Tranquillity, harmony with God, self, and other people made possible through Christ, who unites the faithful to God and to each other. (See Rom 14:17; Gal 5:22; Eph 2:13–16; Php 4:6, 7.)

PENTATEUCH Refers to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (The Old Testament) traditionally attributed to Moses. The JEWS call these books the "Torah."

PENTECOST Originally an OT harvest festival celebrated fifty days following the PASSOVER. In time, *Pentecost* became the commemoration of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Pentecost took on a new meaning with the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT on the apostles at the time of Pentecost. Through the SACRAMENT of CHRISMATION, Orthodox Christians experience their own personal Pentecost. Every Divine Liturgy becomes a Pentecost through the descent of the Holy Spirit on the faithful and the gifts (the bread and wine), transforming them into the Body and Blood of Christ. (See Ex 23:14–17; Lv 23:15–21; 2Mc 12:32; Acts 2:1–41.)

PERSON (Gr. *prosopon;* Lat. *persona*) Regarding the Holy Trinity, there are three Divine Persons: God the FATHER, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT. The *Person* of God the Son became Man, Jesus Christ, "for us and for our SALVATION" (*The CREED*; see also Mt 28:19).

PHARISEES One of the parties of first-century Judaism. The Pharisees favored strict legalistic application of traditional interpretations of the Law stemming from oral Jewish traditions. Unlike the SADDUCEES, they believed in ANGELS and in the RESURRECTION of the dead. The Pharisees were generally hostile to the mission of Christ, who condemned their legalism and their preoccupation with outward forms, ignoring true RIGHTEOUSNESS of the HEART. (See Mt 3:7; 12:14; 22:34; 23:13–36.)

PILGRIM One who makes a journey to a religious shrine or a spiritual journey from sin and suffering in this life to eternal life with Christ in heaven. (See Ps 41:4–5; Heb 11:13; 1Pt 2:11.)

POWER (1) A divine attribute or energy (Mt 6:13; Lk 1:35; Rom 1:16). (2) The authority and ability to act (Mt 9:6). (3) A category of angelic beings (Eph 1:21).

PRAISE To glorify and give thanks to God or to speak highly of someone or something (Jdg 5:3; Ps 9:1–12; Ps 20:14; Ps 88:6; Ps 118:164; Rom 15:11). See ALLELUIA.

PRAYER COMMUNION with God through words of PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, REPENTANCE, supplication, and INTERCESSION. *Prayer* is “raising up the HEART and mind to God” (St. John of Damascus). Usually prayer is verbal. However, prayer of the heart or in the Spirit, the highest form of prayer, is without words. (See Tb 8:4–8; Dan 4:34, 35; Mt 6:5–13; 21:22; Rom 8:26; Php 4:6; 1Th 5:17.)

PRESBYTER Literally, “elder;” now generally called **“**priest.” *Presbyter* is one of the three orders of the ordained ministry of the CHURCH: BISHOP, presbyter and DEACON. (See article, “The Four ‘Orders’ in Church Government,” at 1Ti; Acts 14:23; 15:4–23; 1Ti 5:17–19; Tts 1:5.)

PROCEED “To come forth from” or “come to.” The HOLY SPIRIT proceeds from the FATHER, the fountainhead of the Holy TRINITY (Jn 15:26).

PROPHET Descriptive title given to accepted spokespersons of God (or their opposites, “false prophets”); a PERSON who speaks in the name of God. One who proclaims the will of God and/or foretells the future, especially the coming and mission of Christ, through the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT. (See Dt 18:18; Acts 28:25.)

PROPITIATION An offering that results in atonement, REDEMPTION, and RECONCILIATION. Christ offered Himself on the Cross as a *propitiation* for our sins, to liberate humanity from sin and death. (See Rom 3:21–26; Heb 2:17; 1Jn 2:2; 4:10.)

PROSELYTE Literally, “one who comes toward.” A *proselyte* is a convert to faith, usually from another religion. In the NT, the word usually refers to a GENTILE convert to Judaism. (See Dt 29:10–13; Is 56:3–8; Ru 1:16; Acts 2:10; 13:43.)

PROVIDENCE God’s sovereign care in governing His CREATION, especially His care for the faithful. (See Ps 144:17; Rom 8:28.)

PURIFICATION The OT rite whereby one is cleansed of ritual impurity caused by such things as contact with leprosy, a dead body or sexual acts. This cleansing consists of making a SACRIFICE or being sprinkled with “water of purification” (Nm 19:9). Christ liberated the faithful from these rites. Christians are purified by the sacraments and by their spiritual struggle towards transforming their passions. (See Lv 12:6; Nm 19:9–21; Mt 15:11; Lk 2:22–33; Acts 10:9–16; 15:1–29.)

R

RAPHAEL Archangel sent to help Tobit and his son, and Sarah who became the wife of Tobiah. (See Tb 3:1–17 and references to *Raphael* throughout.)

RECONCILIATION Making peace between enemies, especially the removal of hostility and barriers between humans and God, and between individuals, accomplished by Christ. (See Rom 5:11; 2Co 5:18, 19.)

REDEMPTION The deliverance of humanity from sin and death by Christ, who took on human NATURE by His INCARNATION, conquering sin and death by His life-giving death and glorious RESURRECTION. *Redemption* releases those who are in captivity to the evil one, and unites humanity to God by Christ's ASCENSION. (See Dt 7:8; Gal 3:13; Heb 9:15.) See also DEIFICATION and SALVATION.

REMEMBRANCE (Gr. *anamnesis)* Making present by means of recollection. Remembrance of the COVENANT was crucial for Israel (Ex 2:24; 13:3). The EUCHARIST is not merely a calling to mind but a remembrance of and mystical participation in the very SACRIFICE of Christ, His RESURRECTION, His ASCENSION, and His SECOND COMING (1Co 11:23–26).

REMISSION The FORGIVENESS and putting aside of sins. As the faithful are released from their sins through the sacramental life of the CHURCH, they in turn are called to remit the sins of any who have offended them. (See Mt 26:28; Jn 20:23; Acts 2:37, 38.)

REPENTANCE Literally, "a change of mind" or attitude, and thus of behavior. God is the author of *repentance,* which is an integral part of

BAPTISM, CONFESSION, and ongoing spiritual life. Repentance is not simply sorrow for sins but a firm determination to turn away from sin to a new life of RIGHTEOUSNESS in Jesus Christ. (See Ezk 18:31; Mt 4:17; 2Pt 3:9; 1Jn 1:9.)

RESURRECTION The reunion of the soul and body after death which will revitalize and transform the physical body into a spiritual body. Jesus Himself is the firstfruits of perfect *resurrection*; He will never again be subject to death. Because He conquered death by His Resurrection, all will rise again: the righteous to life with Christ, the wicked to judgment. (See Is 26:19; Jn 5:28, 29; 1Co 15:35–55.)

RIGHTEOUSNESS Being good, just, and blameless. All are called to a life of humble obedience to God. *Righteousness* is the fruit of the HOLY SPIRIT, and the way in which Christians respond with living faith to God's gift of SALVATION. (See WSol 5:6, 18; Is 11:5; 46:13; Mt 5:6, 20; Rom 4:3; Gal 5:22; Jam 2:14–26.)

RITES Forms of WORSHIP, music, vestments, and architecture. Most Orthodox Christians follow the liturgical practice of the ancient Churches in the East (Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria), the rite commonly known as the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. However, some Orthodox follow a Western Rite, forms that developed in the West before the separation of Rome from the Orthodox Church (see 1Co 11:23–26).

RITUAL Ceremonies and texts used in the WORSHIP of the CHURCH. Having her roots in the TEMPLE and SYNAGOGUE, the Church has employed ritual in her worship from the very beginning. See also LITURGY.

S

SABBATH Saturday, the seventh day of the week, originally a day of rest, for after CREATION “He rested on the seventh day” (Gn 2:2). Since Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, Sunday, the CHURCH gathers on this day instead of the seventh to worship God. Sunday is also called “the Lord’s Day” and “the eighth day,” because it transcends the *Sabbath* and is seen as being a part of heavenly time rather than earthly time. (See Ex 20:8–11; Acts 20:7.)

SACRAMENT Literally, a “MYSTERY”. A *sacrament* is a way in which God imparts grace to His people. Orthodox Christians frequently speak of seven sacraments, but God’s gift of GRACE is not limited only to these seven—the entire life of the CHURCH is mystical and sacramental. The sacraments were instituted by Christ Himself (Jn 1:16, 17). The Seven Mysteries are: BAPTISM (Mt 28:18–20; Rom 6:4; Gal 3:27), CHRISMATION (Acts 8:15–17; 1Jn 2:27), the EUCHARIST (Mt 26:26–28; Jn 6:30–58; 1Co 10:16; 11:23–31), CONFESSION (Jn 20:22, 23; 1Jn 1:8, 9), ORDINATION (Mk 3:14; Acts 1:15–26; 6:1–6; 1Ti 3:1–13; 4:14), Marriage (Gn 2:18–25; Eph 5:22–33), and Healing or UNCTION (Lk 9:1–6; Jam 5:14, 15).

SACRIFICE To offer something up to God. In the old COVENANT, God commanded His people to *sacrifice* animals, grain, or oil as an act of THANKSGIVING, PRAISE, FORGIVENESS, and cleansing. However, these sacrifices were only a foreshadowing of the one perfect sacrifice—Christ. He, the Eternal Son and the WORD OF GOD became Man, giving His life as a sacrifice on the Cross to liberate humanity from the CURSE of sin and death. In the EUCHARIST, the faithful participate in the life-giving once for all sacrifice of Christ. (See Lv 1:1–7:38; 1Co 11:23–26; Php 2:5–8; Heb 9:1–10:18.) See also REMEMBRANCE.

SADDUCEES A party in Judaism at the time of Christ. The *Sadducees* steadfastly held to a literal interpretation of the Law contained in the first five books of the Old Testament (the PENTATEUCH or Torah), and rejected traditional interpretations favored by other groups of JEWS, especially the PHARISEES. Sadducees came from the priestly class and rejected the RESURRECTION of the dead and the existence of ANGELS. Christ condemned these Jewish leaders for their preoccupation with outward forms, ignoring or neglecting true RIGHTEOUSNESS of the HEART. (See Mt 16:1–12.)

SAINT Literally, “a holy person.” With God as the source of true HOLINESS, all Christians are called to be saints. (See Rom 16:2; 1Co 1:1, 2). But from the earliest times, the CHURCH has designated certain outstanding men and women who have departed this life and reached DEIFICATION as worthy of veneration and canonization as saints or holy persons.

SALVATION is the FORGIVENESS of sin and reunion with God and His Kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord (Jn 3; Rom 6). (See articles, “The New Birth,” at Jn 3; “Justification by Faith,” at Rom 5; and “Deification,” at 2Pt 1.) See also DEIFICATION, JUSTIFICATION, KINGDOM OF GOD, REDEMPTION and SACRAMENT.

SANCTIFICATION Literally, “being set apart” to God. The process of growth in Christ whereby the believer is made holy as God is holy, through the HOLY SPIRIT. (See article, “Deification,” at 2Pt 1; Rom 6:22; 15:16.) See also DEIFICATION, JUSTIFICATION and SALVATION.

SANCTUARY The Holy of Holies or Most Holy Place. The place in the Old Testament TABERNACLE or TEMPLE containing the ARK OF THE COVENANT, the dwelling place of God. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place and only on the DAY OF ATONEMENT. When the early Christians built Churches, they followed the general pattern of the temple, and the altar area is often called the *sanctuary*. (See Ex 26:31–35; 40:34, 35; Lv 16:1–5; 1 Kin. 6:1–38; 8:1–11.)

SATRAP A governor or ruler in ancient Babylon, as mentioned in numerous OT passages.

SECOND COMING At the end of the ages, Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. Following the LAST JUDGMENT, a new heaven and new earth will take the place of the old earth, which has been scarred by sin. Because Christ is already present through the CHURCH, Christians enter into the KINGDOM OF GOD through their participation in the sacramental life of the Church as they await the coming of the Lord. (See article, “The Second Coming of Christ,” at Tts 2; Mt 25:31–46; Rom 8:18–21; 1Th 4:16, 17; Rev 20:11–22:5.) See also RESURRECTION.

SHEKINAH The GLORY of God, frequently revealed in the symbols of fire and CLOUD in the OT. Although Christians experience the energies of God, including His GLORY, they never penetrate beyond the cloud to the inner ESSENCE of God, which remains hidden. (See Ex 13:21; 24:15–18; 33:18–23; 40:34, 35; 2Ch 7:1; Mt 17:1–5.) See also ENERGY.

SIN (Gr. *hamartia)* Literally, “missing the mark.” This word in ancient Greek could describe the action of an archer who failed to hit the target. All humans are sinners who miss the mark of perfection that God has set for His people, resulting in alienation from God. (See Mt 5:48; Rom 3:23; 6:23; 1Jn 1:8.)

SOJOURNER A stranger or foreigner. Because the CHURCH exists in a sinful world that has rejected God, Christians—citizens of the KINGDOM OF GOD—are strangers in a foreign land. Therefore, faithful *sojourners* are on guard, lest they adopt the ways of the fallen society in which they live. Abraham and Jacob were sojourners before us (Gn 12:10; 32:4); Israel was sojourning in Egypt (Gn 47:4); Naomi was a sojourner in Moab (Ru 1:1). Christians, too, are sojourners (1Pt 2:11; 1Jn 2:15–17).

SON OF MAN An important messianic title of Christ, who is perfect God and perfect Man. The Gospels reveal that Jesus often applied this title to Himself. In Christ, the Second Adam, God assumed and perfected sinful humanity, freeing those who follow Him from the consequences of the rebellion of the first man, Adam. (See Mk 2:28; 9:31; Rom 5:12–21; 1Co 15:21, 22, 45–49.) See also INCARNATION.

SORROW The Scriptures distinguish between godly *sorrow*, which produces REPENTANCE, and ungodly sorrow, the sadness of being found out, which produces death (Mt 5:4; 2Co 7:9, 10).

SOUL A living substance, simple, bodiless, and invisible by NATURE, activating the body to which it brings life, growth, sensation and reproduction. The mind is not distinct from the soul but serves as a window to the soul. The soul is free, endowed with will, and the POWER to act.

Along with the body, the soul is created by God in His IMAGE. The soul of man will never die (Gn 1:26; 2:7; Mt 10:28).

STEWARD(SHIP) A *steward* is one who manages property belonging to another. All that a Christian has belongs to God. Thus, the Christian gives back to God out of the material blessings he has received from Him for the work of the CHURCH. In the OT, God commanded the faithful to give a TITHE or ten percent of their goods to God; though not under law, St. John Chrysostom teaches Christians should give that much and more. Christians are also stewards of the spiritual knowledge which God has entrusted to us. We must preserve the heritage of apostolic DOCTRINE intact for future generations. (See Gn 14:18–20; Lv 27:30–33; 1Co 4:1, 2; 2Co 9:6–8; 1Pt 4:10.)

SPIRIT (Gr. *pneuma)* Literally, “breath”; that which is living but immaterial. *Spirit* is used in three ways in Scripture: (1) the HOLY SPIRIT is one of the three Persons of the TRINITY (Jn 4:24; 20:22); (2) the ANGELS are called spirits (Ps 103:4); and (3) and the human spirit possesses the intuitive ability to know and experience God (Rom 8:16; 1Co 2:10–12).

SPIRITUALITY The ascetic and pious struggle against sin through REPENTANCE, PRAYER, FASTING, and participation in the sacramental life of the Church. (See Gal 5:16–26; Php 2:12, 13.) See also SYNERGISM**.**

SYMBOL In Orthodox usage, the manifestation in material form of a spiritual reality. A *symbol* does not merely stand for something else, as does a “sign”; it manifests the actual presence of its subject. Names of things are often symbols (Is 7:3, 14). The dove, for example, is the symbol which brought to Jesus the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT (Mt 3:13–16).

SYNAGOGUE A “gathering” or “assembly.” The synagogue appears in Judea as a result of the Babylonian exile, as it continues today as the main center of Jewish communal worship. (See 1Mc 2:42; Lk 4:16; 8:41; Acts 18:4; Rev 2:9.)

SYNAXIS Literally, “gathering” or “assembly.” *Synaxis* is the word used for the ancient Greek senate. The first part of the Divine Liturgy is called the synaxis because the faithful gather to sing, pray, hear the Scriptures read, and to hear the homily. The saints’ days are also called a synaxis, such as the Synaxis of St. Michael and all ANGELS.

SYNERGISM (from Gr. *syn:* same, together; *ergos:* energy, work.) Working together; the act of cooperation. In the NT *synergism* is the idea of being “workers together with” God (2Co 6:1), or of working “out your own salvation . . . for it is God who works in you” (Php 2:12, 13). This is not a cooperation between equals, but finite man working together with Almighty God. Man responds to Christ’s SALVATION through cooperation with God’s GRACE in living by faith, righteous works and rejection of evil (Jam 2:14–26). See also FREE WILL and PASSIONS.

SYNOPTIC (From Gr. *syn:* same, together; *optic:* eye, vision.) The books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which hold essentially the same viewpoint and are similar are called the “Synoptic Gospels.”

T

TEMPLE Ancient Israel had many temples, located throughout the country, but the *temple* in Jerusalem eventually became the central and only authorized place to WORSHIP the Lord. The first one was built by King Solomon around 950 BC. It was destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. It was rebuilt about 70 years later, but it was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. More recently, *temple* has come to be used synonymously with SYNAGOGUE. (See 3Kg 6; 4Kg 25:9–17; 2Ez 1:1–4; 3:3–13; 1Mc 4:37–39; 4:48–51.)

TEMPTATION The seductive attraction of sin. Those united to Christ are given His POWER to withstand temptation through patience, courage, and obedience. (See Mt 4:1–11; 1Co 10:13; Heb 2:17, 18; Jam 1:12.)

THANKSGIVING To be grateful, to offer thanks, especially to God for His love and MERCY. The Eucharistic prayer is called The Thanksgiving. (See 1Th 5:18.) See also EUCHARIST.

THEOPHANY A manifestation of God in His uncreated GLORY. It refers also to Christ's RESURRRECTION appearances. The revelation of the Holy TRINITY at the BAPTISM of Christ (Lk 3:21, 22) is the greatest *theophany*; it is celebrated in the Orthodox Church on EPIPHANY (Jan. 6). Other theophanies are found throughout the Bible. For example, God appeared to Abraham (Gn 18:1–15), and to Jacob in a dream (Gn 28:10–17).

THEOTOKOS God-bearer, birth-giver, frequently translated "Mother of God." Because Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, Mary is called the Mother of God to profess our faith that in the INCARNATION, God was in her womb. Elizabeth called Mary "blessed" and "the mother of my Lord"

(Lk 1:42, 43). At the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, the Church condemned Nestorius and other heretics who refused to call the Virgin Mary the *Theotokos*. For if it was not God in Mary's womb, there is no SALVATION for mankind. (See article, "Mary," at Lk 1; Lk 1:26–43; Jn 1:1–14.)

TITHE A tenth of one's income. It is first revealed in Genesis 14:18–20 when Abraham paid a *tithe* to Melchizedek, centuries before the Law was given to Moses. Abraham's grandson, Jacob, told the Lord he would give Him a tithe (Gn 28:22; see also Lv 27:30, 32; Mal 3:8–12; WSir 35:3; Lk 18:12).

TRADITION That which is handed down, transmitted. In the NT, there are two types of *tradition*: (1) the "tradition of men" which Christ strongly condemns (Mk 7:6–8), and (2) holy or apostolic tradition which St. Paul calls us to steadfastly follow (2Th 2:15). Holy *Tradition* is the life of the HOLY SPIRIT in the CHURCH. He leads the Church "into all truth" (Jn 16:13) and enables her to preserve the truth taught by Christ to His APOSTLES. The Scriptures are the core of this Tradition, as interpreted through the writings of the Fathers, the Ecumenical Councils, and the WORSHIP of the Church. Together, these traditions manifest the faith of the ancient undivided Church. (See also Jn 21:25; Acts 15:1–29; 2Th 3:6.)

TRANSFIGURATION A change or transformation. Christ was transfigured on Mt. Tabor, showing He is God in the flesh (Mt 17:1–8). Christians are called to be transformed by the HOLY SPIRIT into the IMAGE and likeness of God (Rom 12:1, 2). (See article, "The Transfiguration," at Mt 17.) See also DEIFICATION.

TRANSGRESSION Lawlessness, as in "He will not clear the guilty, visiting the lawlessness of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation" (Ex 34:8; see also Dt 17:2–5; Nm 14:41; Jos 7:11; Job 13:38; Pr 17; Mic 6:7; Lk 15:29; Rom 4:15; 1Ti 2:14).

TRIBULATION The Scriptures reveal that much trouble and violence—great tribulation—will engulf the world before the SECOND COMING of Christ (Mt 24:4–29). See also ESCHATOLOGY.

TRINITY God the FATHER and His Son and His HOLY SPIRIT: one in ESSENCE and undivided. God revealed the MYSTERY of the *Trinity* at Christ's BAPTISM (Mt 3:13–17), but even before that event, numerous OT references pointed to the Trinity. For example, the frequent use of plural pronouns referring to the one God (Gn 1:26); the three angels who appeared to Abraham (Gn 18:1–16); and the Thrice Holy hymn sung by the angels in Isaiah's vision (Is 6:1–4) all suggest one God in three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).

TRISAGION Literally, "Thrice Holy." The biblical *Trisagion*, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is the hymn of the ANGELS before the throne of God (Is 6:1–3; Rev 4:8), and is one of the most important hymns of the Divine Liturgy. In the TRADITION of the CHURCH, this hymn has been amplified into the Trisagion frequently sung during services and said during prayers: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us." The biblical use of "Holy" three times reveals the three Persons in the Godhead.

TYPE An historical event that has a deeper meaning, pointing to our SALVATION in Christ. For example, the three days that Jonah spent in the belly of the fish is a *type* of the three days that Christ would spend in the tomb (Mt 12:40). The serpent that Moses lifted up on the staff is a type of the lifting up of Christ on the Cross (Jn 3:14–16). The burning bush, aflame but not consumed, is a type of the Virgin Mary, who carried the incarnate God in her womb but was not consumed by His presence (Lk 1:26–38). Noah's ark, which saved Noah and his family from death in the flood, is a type of BAPTISM, which brings the believer from death to life (1Pt 3:18–22). See also ALLEGORY.

U

UNCTION Anointing of the sick with blessed oil, for the healing of body and SOUL. The gift of healing is bestowed by the HOLY SPIRIT through the anointing, together with the prayers of the Unction service. (See article "Healing," at Jam 5.) See also SACRAMENT.

UNLEAVENED BREAD Bread baked without yeast. The JEWS used unleavened bread for the PASSOVER to symbolize the fact they had no time to wait for the yeast to rise in the bread (Ex 12:1–20). By contrast, the bread of the new COVENANT is leavened.

V

VESPERS The evening prayer service in the Orthodox Church.

VICE A particular immoral, depraved, or degrading habit, as contrasted with VIRTUE. Christians are called to flee from the vices and to preserve their personal purity (Rom 13:13; Eph 4:17–24). See also PASSION.

VIRTUE A righteous characteristic such as self-control, patience, or humility; the opposite of VICE or PASSION. As a PERSON grows spiritually, he or she grows in *virtue* while the passions are conquered by the GRACE of God. (See WSol 4:1, 2; 5:13; Php 4:8 2Pt 1:2–7.

W

WISDOM (OF GOD) A name for God's Son and Word; Christ is the Wisdom of God. Also, *wisdom* is given to the CHURCH as a gift of the HOLY SPIRIT. (See Ex 31:3; 3Kg 3:16–28; Pr 9:10; Dan 1:17; WSir 1:9; Jn 1:1; 1Co 2:6–8; Col 3:16.)

WITNESS (Gr. *martyria)* One who makes known the GRACE and GLORY of the Lord by word and deed. In the NT, the word is also rendered "MARTYR," a reference to those who give their lives for the gospel of Christ. The HOLY SPIRIT bears *witness* to the spirits of those who believe in Christ, that they belong to Him. (See Dt 31:19–21, 26; Rom 8:16; Heb 10:15; 12:1; 1Jn 5:6–12; Rev 11:3–12.)

WONDERS Miracles and the attitude of mankind toward them. (See Ex 11:10; Ps 106; Dan 4:3; 6:27; 1Ch 16:8, 9, 12; Job 37:13–19; Acts 2:22–36; 6:8; 14:3; 2Co 12:12.)

WORD OF GOD (Gr. *Logos)* The Son of God, who from the MYSTERY of His eternal birth is called the Word of the FATHER. The "Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14) for the SALVATION of the world. The Holy Scriptures are also called the *Word of God*, for they reveal the truth of God (Jn 1:1–14; 2Pt 1:19–21). See also INCARNATION.

WORSHIP Literally, “to bow down.” Commanded for God’s people (1 Ch 16:29). In the Christian sense *worship* is the adoration of God through participation in the services of the CHURCH, the highest act of a Christian (Jn 4:19–24). See also LITURGY.

WORTHY (Gr. *axios*) Describes those who act in a manner befitting one who is a follower of Christ. No one is *worthy* of SALVATION in and of himself, but all are made worthy through Christ (1Th 2:10–12) In the Church, when a newly-ordained man is being vested, the faithful shout out, “Axios!”

WRATH OF GOD His anger and its consequences (Nm 32:10–13). His wrath can be caused by sympathy with evil (Lv 10:1–6), by APOSTASY (2Ch 34:24, 25), by association with evil (Jn 3:36), and it can be displayed to demonstrate the greatness of His GLORY (Rom 9:22–26).

Z

ZEAL Devotion; enthusiastic obedience to God; a quality of divine diligence or fervor. Zeal is shown by Moses (Ex 32:19–35), Joshua (Jos 24:14–16), David (1Kg 17:26–51), Elijah (3Kg 19:10, and Timothy (Php 2:19–22). Christians are (1) called to follow Christ with enthusiasm and zeal (Acts 18:25; Rom 12:10, 11) and (2) warned against misguided enthusiasm, a zeal “not according to knowledge” (Rom 10:2).

MORNING PRAYERS

The Trisagion Prayers

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who are in all places and fill all things, the Treasury of good things and the Giver of life: Come and abide in us, cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (three times).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your Name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. (three times).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Morning Prayer to the Holy Trinity

Arising from sleep, I thank You, O Most Holy Trinity, that, for the sake of Your great kindness and longsuffering, You have not had indignation against me, for I am slothful and sinful. Neither have You destroyed me in my transgressions. But You have shown Your customary love toward mankind, and have raised me up as I lay in heedlessness, that I might sing my morning hymn and glorify Your sovereignty. Do now enlighten the eyes of my understanding, open my ears to receive Your words, and teach me Your commandments. Help me to do Your will, to sing to You, to confess You from my heart, and to praise Your All-Holy Name: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Psalms

Sunday	Psalm 5
Monday	Psalm 89
Tuesday	Psalm 100
Wednesday	Psalm 3
Thursday	Psalm 62
Friday	Psalm 102
Saturday	Psalm 5

The Gospel and Epistle

Referring to the Lectionary in the back of *The Orthodox Study Bible,* you may, as time permits, read the Gospel and Epistle for this day.

Intercessory Prayers

Remember, O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, Your mercies and lovingkindnesses, which have been from everlasting, and for the sake of which You did become man and deign to endure crucifixion and death for the salvation of all who rightly believe in You. You rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and sit at the right hand of God the Father, and regard the humble prayers of all who call upon You with their whole heart. Incline Your ear and hear the humble entreaty of me, Your unprofitable servant, who offers it for an odor of spiritual fragrance for all Your people.

And first of all remember Your Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church which You have purchased with Your precious blood. Confirm and strengthen it, enlarge and multiply it, keep it in peace, and preserve it unconquerable by the gates of hell forever. Heal the schisms of the churches, quench the ragings of the heathen, speedily undo and root out the growths of heresies, and bring them to naught by the power of Your Holy Spirit.

Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon all world rulers, on our president (*name*), on (*names*), and on all our civil authorities. Speak peace and blessing in their hearts for Your holy Church and for all Your peoples, in order that we may live a calm and peaceful life, in all godliness and dignity.

Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon patriarchs, metropolitans, archbishops, priests, ministers and deacons, and the whole clergy of Your Church, which You have established to feed the flock of Your word, and by their prayers have mercy upon me, and save me, a sinner.

Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon my spiritual father (*name*) and by his holy prayers forgive me my transgressions.

Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon my parents (*names*), my spouse (*name*), my brothers and sisters (*names*), my children (*names*), my kinsmen after the flesh and my friends, and grant them Your blessings both here and hereafter.

Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon the old, the young, the needy, the orphans and the widows, and on all that are in sickness and sorrow, in distress and affliction, in oppression and captivity, in prison and confinement. More especially have mercy upon Your servants who are under persecution for Your sake and for the sake of the Orthodox faith at the hands of heathen nations, of apostates, and of heretics: remember them, visit, strengthen, keep and comfort them, and make haste to grant them, by Your power, relief, freedom and deliverance.

Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon all who are sent on duty, all who travel, our fathers, brothers and sisters, and upon all true Christians.

Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon those who envy and affront me, and do me mischief, and do not let them perish through me, a sinner.

Those who depart from the Orthodox faith, dazzled by destroying heresies, do enlighten by the light of Your holy wisdom, and unite them to Your Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church.

Prayer for the Beginning of the Day

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming of the day in peace, help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray. And, Yourself, pray in me. Amen.

Benediction

It is truly right to bless you, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnifiy you.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (three times)

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

EVENING PRAYERS

The Trisagion Prayers

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who are in all places and fill all things, the Treasury of good things and the Giver of life: Come and abide in us, cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (three times).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your Name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. (three times).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Now that the day has come to a close, I thank You, O Lord, and I ask that the evening with the night may be sinless; grant this to me, O Savior, and save me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Now that the day has passed, I glorify You, O Master, and I ask that the evening, with the night may be without offence; grant this to me, O Savior, and save me.

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Now that the day has run its course, I praise You, O Holy One, and I ask that the evening with the night may be undisturbed; grant this to me, O Savior, and save me.

Lord, have mercy. (twelve times)

Prayer for Forgiveness

O Lord our God, if during this day I have sinned, whether in word or deed or thought, forgive me all, for You are good and love mankind. Grant me peaceful and undisturbed sleep, and deliver me from all influence and temptation of the evil one. Raise me up again in proper time that I may glorify You; for You are blessed with Your Only-begotten Son and Your All-holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer for the End of the Day

O Christ our God, who at all times and in every hour, in heaven and on earth, are worshipped and glorified; who are long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; who love the just and show mercy upon the sinner; who call all to salvation through the promise of blessings to come; O Lord, in this hour receive our supplications and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, hallow our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds; deliver us from all tribulation, evil and distress. Encompass us with Your holy Angels that, guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory, for You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

It is truly right to bless you, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnifiy you.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (three times).

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Into Your hands, O Lord, I commend my soul and my body. Bless me, have mercy upon me, and grant me life eternal. Amen.

INDEX TO ANNOTATIONS

This is a thorough, but not exhaustive, index to topics and names discussed in the annotations and articles of the *Orthodox Study Bible*. For further information on topics, see the Glossary and the Index to Articles. Entries that cover several verses may refer to two or more annotations within a passage of Scripture.

In addition to the usual book name abbreviations, the abbreviation "Dan-Sus" refers to the story of Susanna found at the beginning of the Book of Daniel, which is not numbered as a chapter. The abbreviation "Dan-Bel" refers to the story of Bel and the Serpent, found at the end of the Book of Daniel and also not numbered as a chapter.

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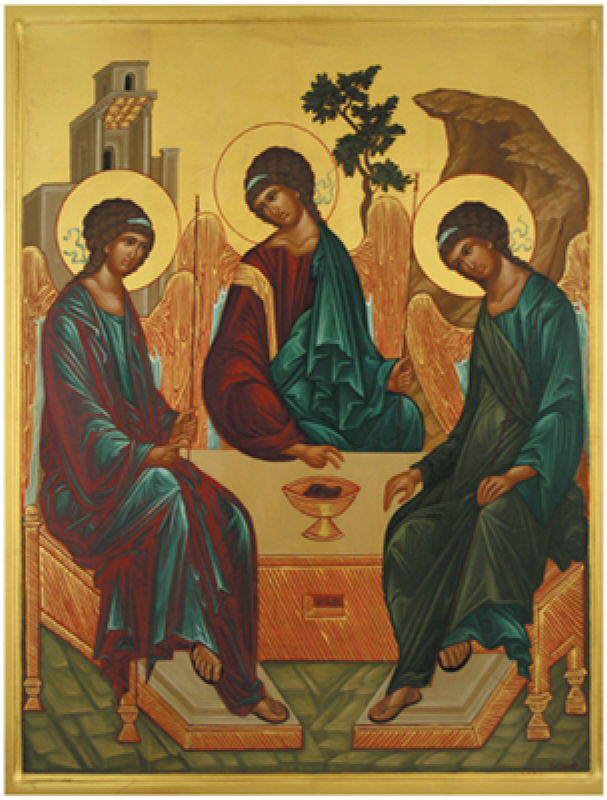
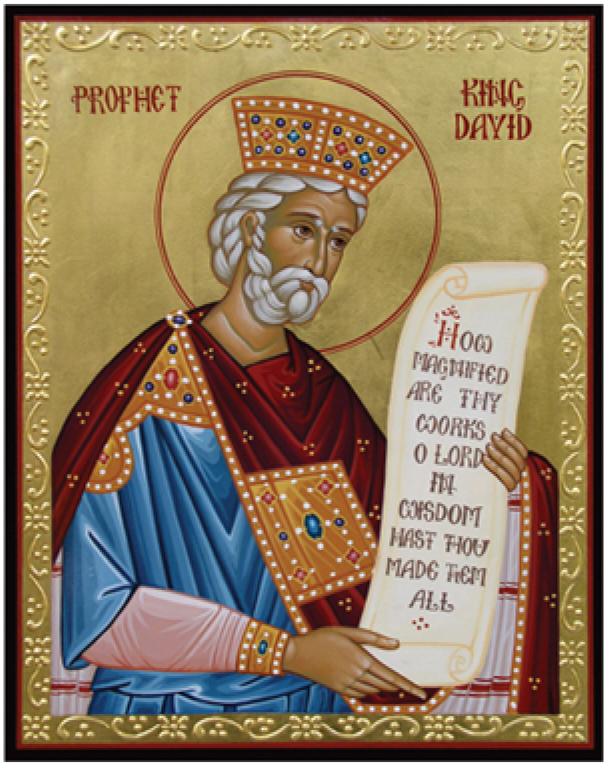
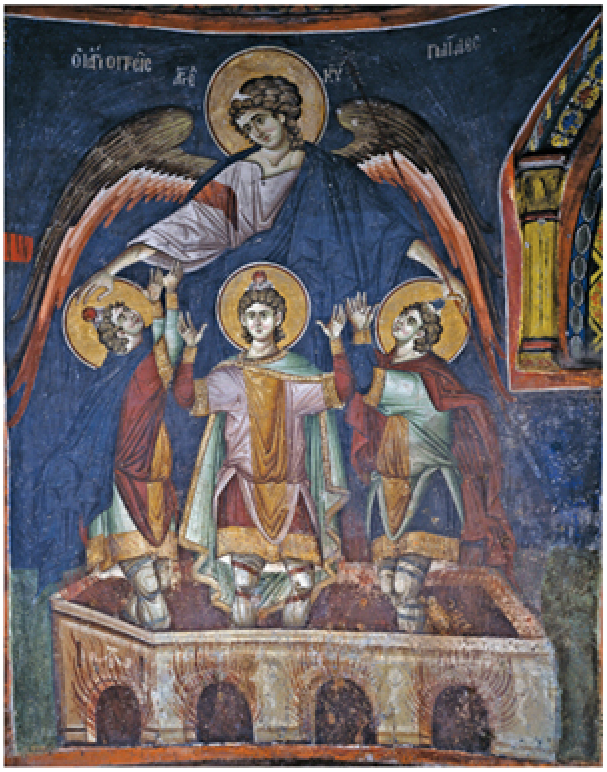


The Hospitality of Abraham, also known as The Holy Trinity, *by the hand Tatiana Romanova-Grant*

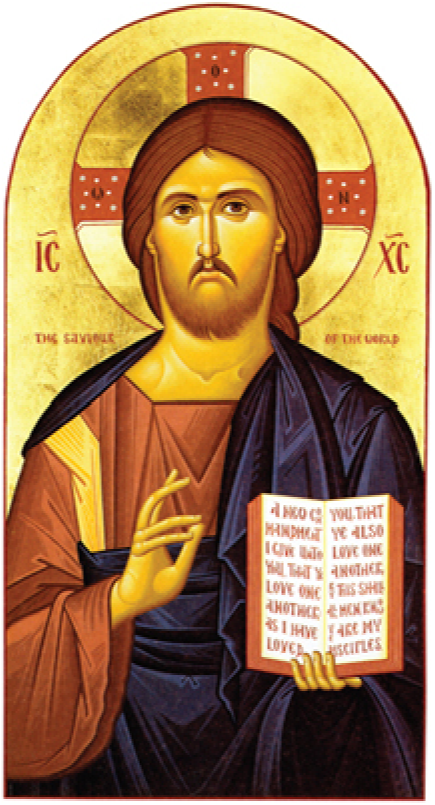

PROPHET
KING DAVID
HOW MAGNIFIED ARE THY WORKS O LORD IN WISDOM HAST THOU MADE THEM ALL

The Prophet and King David

Courtesy of the Icon Studio of the Convent of St. Elizabeth, Etna, California (www.sisqtel.net/~cse)



The Three Holy Youths in the Furnace. Wall-painting in the principal church of the Holy Great Monastery of Vatopaidi, Mount Athos, Greece. AD 1312.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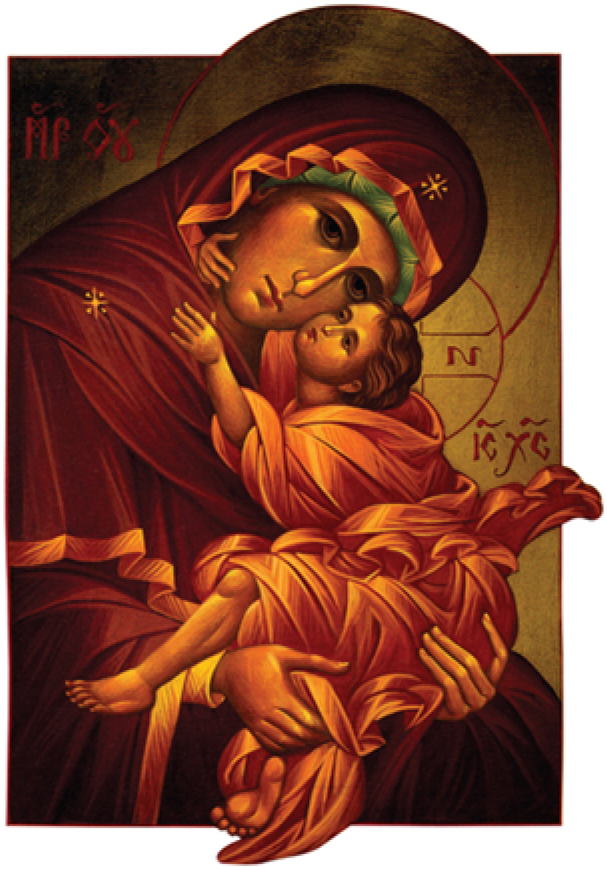
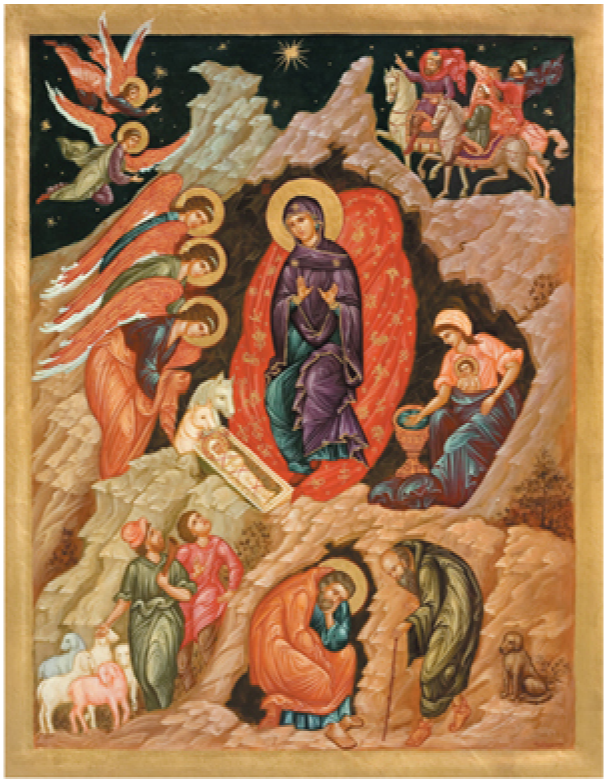
Ο Ω Ν
THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD
A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU THAT YE ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER BY THIS SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT YE ARE MY DISCIPLES

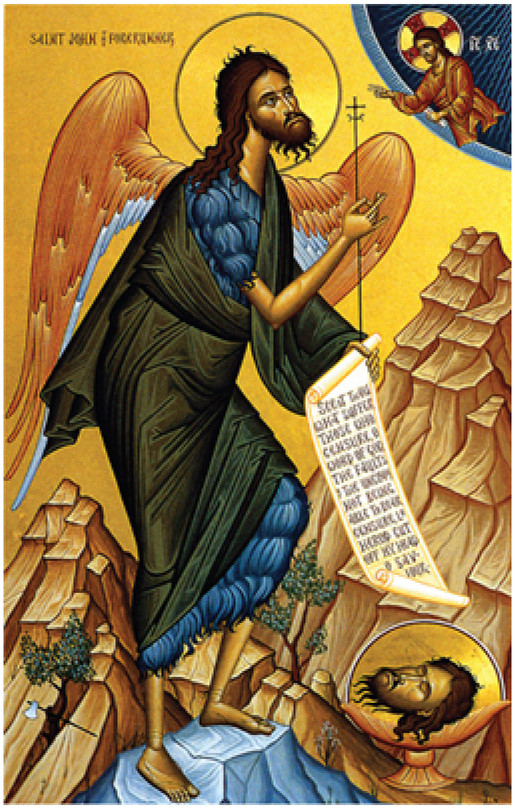
Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World, *by the hand of Father Gregory*
Courtesy of St. George Cathedral, Wichita, Kansas, and Dormition Skete, Buena Vista, Colorado



Mother of God, *by the hand of Jan Isham*.

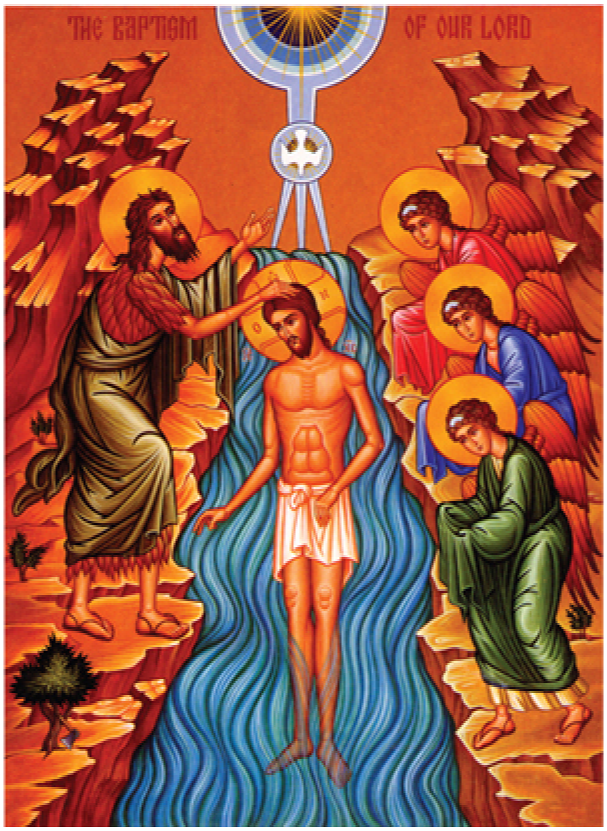


The Nativity of Our Lord, *by the hand Tatiana Romanova-Grant*

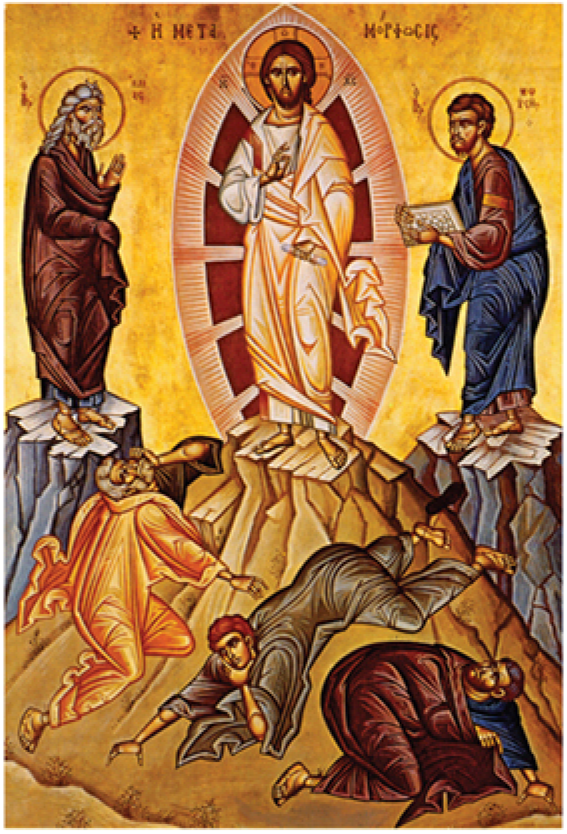

SAINT JOHN THE FORERUNNER
IC XC

St. John the Forerunner, *by the hand of Father Gregory*

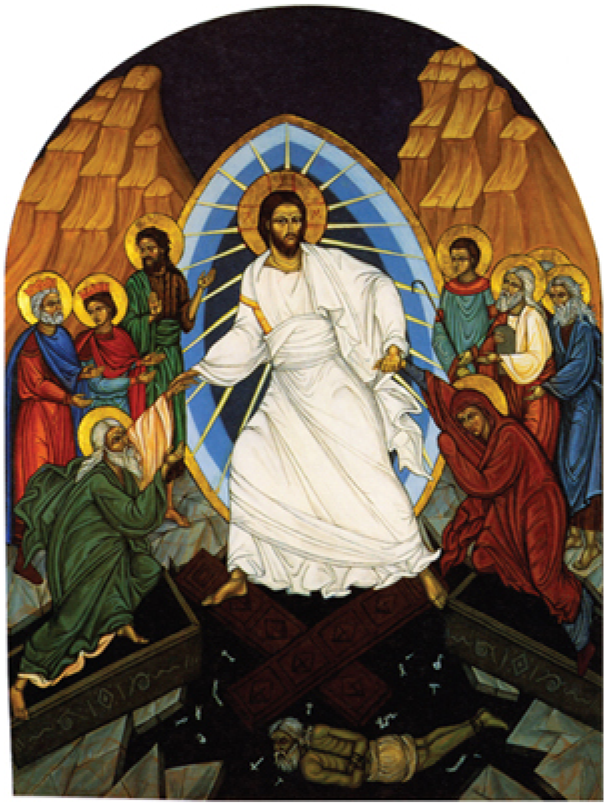
Courtesy of Dormition Skete, Buena Vista, Colorado.


THE BAPTISM
OF OUR LORD

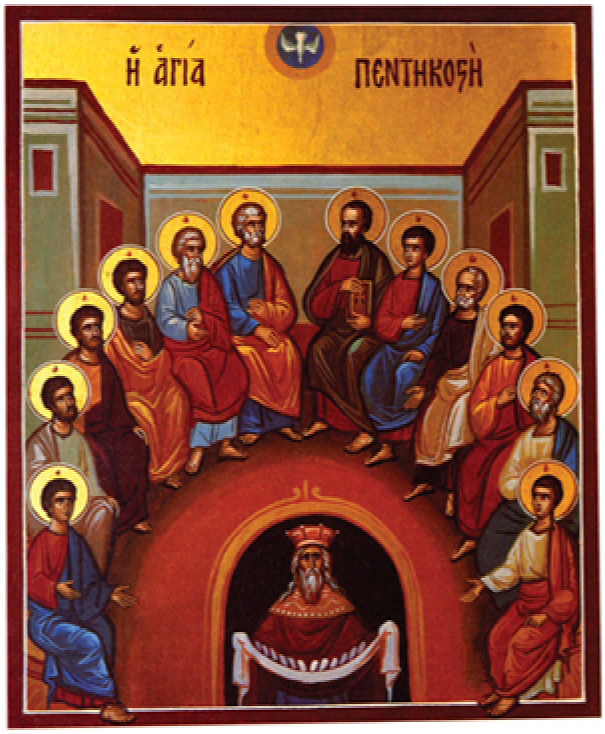
The Baptism of Christ, *by the hand of Father Luke Dingman*



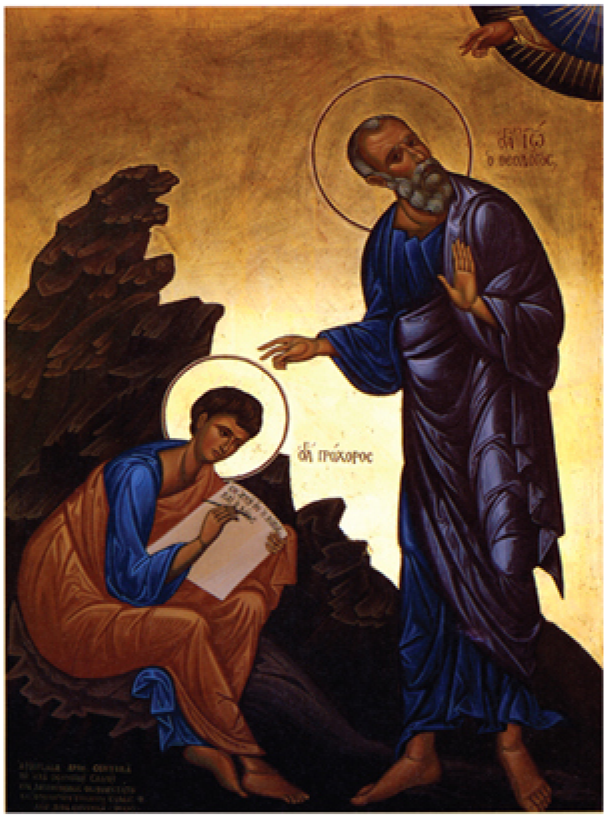
The Transfiguration of Christ, *by the hand of Photios Kontoglu*
Courtesy of Dormition Skete, Buena Vista, Colorado



The Resurrection of Christ, *by the hand of Robin Armstrong*


Ἡ Ἁγία
Πεντηκοστή

Pentecost: The Coming of the Holy Spirit, *by the hand of Constantine Youssis*
Courtesy of the Department of Religious Education, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.



John Dictating the Gospel, *by the hand of Demetrios Doukas*
Courtesy of the Department of Religious Education, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.

Endnotes

1:1 God the Father made heaven and earth. “I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth” (Creed).

1:2 The Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit (BasilG; EphS). He proceeds from the Father, and is “the Lord and Giver of Life” (Creed). Since He is Lord, He is coequal with the Father, and is His Coworker in making heaven and earth.

1:3 God the Father spoke to His Word and Only-begotten Son, through whom He made the light (AthanG). Since the Son, too, is Lord, He is coequal with the Father, and is His Coworker in making heaven and earth.

The Holy Fathers teach that the Father made heaven and earth through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Trinity made heaven and earth, and the Church sings, “We glorify the Father, we exalt the Son, and we worship the Holy Spirit—the indivisible Trinity who exists as One—the Light and Lights, the Life and Lives, who grants light and life to the ends of the world” (CanonAnd).

1:4-25 Since the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit made heaven and earth, They also made everything mentioned in these verses.

1:26-30 The Holy Trinity also made man. God the Father is speaking to God the Son (JohnChr), and He uses the personal pronouns **Us** and **Our**. These pronouns indicate three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as noted in 1:1–3.

The word **image** is in the singular, and shows the three distinct Persons of the Holy Trinity are one in nature and undivided. For it does *not* say, “Our images” (HilryP). Therefore, the Holy Trinity is one undivided nature in three distinct Persons.

Man is not one in nature with the Holy Trinity. But He was made in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity; and he was made male and female. Therefore, the dignity of each man and each woman is this image and likeness.

1:31 Everything God made, including man, is **very good**, because God is good. Nothing He made is therefore evil in itself. So then, human nature is good in itself. But sin is a free choice of man's will, and it is contrary both to God's nature and human nature.

2:1-3 God finished the making of heaven and earth for man's sake. He rested from His creative activity on the seventh day to show His love and providential care for man, and to invite man to enjoy this Sabbath-rest. For as Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mk 2:27).

Man failed to keep this Sabbath-rest. But Jesus fulfilled it for man by resting in the tomb on Great and Holy Saturday, after He said on the cross, “It is finished” (Jn 19:30). For He destroyed sin and death, and rose again on the first day of the week. Through His saving work on man's behalf, He is man's Sabbath-rest, and He now invites all to find rest in Himself (Mt 11:28–30).

[2:4] Here the Book of Genesis refers to itself by name.

2:7 God formed Adam's body **out of dust from the ground**. The **breath of life** is the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life (the Creed). God breathed the breath of life into man's body, and he became **a living soul**. Therefore, Adam was a living soul because he possessed a body, a soul, and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

After He rose from the dead, Jesus breathed on His disciples, and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). For man failed to keep the grace of the Spirit, but through His Resurrection Jesus supplies His disciples abundantly with the life-giving grace of the Spirit. A disciple's responsibility is to live by this grace.

2:8-17 God gave man a place and a law (AthanG). The place was Paradise, and the law was the commandment given in 2:16, 17. Man was to obey this commandment through the grace of God the Word. If he was obedient, he would enjoy the blessings of Paradise. But if he were to disobey the commandment, he would die and his body would decay in the grave (“die by death,” AthanG).

2:18-25 God, not man, established the law of marriage; therefore, marriage is holy. In the marriage union, the husband and wife become **one flesh** (v. 24), which St. Paul calls “a great mystery” (Eph 5:32). This mystery is so great and wonderful that a man will leave his father and mother with their blessing, and be joined to a woman in marriage. In this joining, he will be devoted to her with sacrificial love and devotion, and she to him.

This great mystery points to the greater mystery: the marriage of Christ and His Bride, the Church (Eph 5:22–33). For He left His Father and became Man to seek a Bride. He loved His Bride and gave Himself for her. And in his divine vision of the new heaven and earth, the apostle John saw this Bride, the “New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:1, 2).

3:1-7 The **serpent** is the devil (2Co 11:3; Rev 12:9), and he tempted Eve. He contradicted God's commandment (2:16, 17) by denying death and decay in the grave as the penalty for disobedience (**you shall not die by death**). He also tempted Eve with the promise of deification (**you will be like gods, knowing good and evil**). But deification comes through obedience to God, not through disobedience. Nevertheless, Eve was deceived, and thus disobeyed God. She, in turn, gave the fruit to her husband, and he ate. In his disobedience, he willed contrary to the will of God, and thus ate. His free will was the first thing to suffer in the Fall, and thus is the first thing that needs healing in man (JohnDm).

3:8 Adam and Eve now had a fallen will and tried to hide from God. Fallen man now has a fallen will, thus he has a tendency to run away from God. But the grace of Christ heals the will of those who return to Him through repentance, so they might freely pursue God and do His will.

3:15 The woman's **seed** is first Christ, and second His Church (Gal 3:16, 26). The serpent's seed are those who reject Christ and follow the devil (1Jn 3:8–10). Christ destroyed the devil through the cross (**bruise your head**).

3:17-20 Adam's disobedience **cursed the ground** and placed mankind under toil and labor until his end in death and decay in the grave (**return to the ground**). For death and decay in the grave entered the world through him (Rom 5:12).

3:24 Because of Adam, man is born outside Paradise. The **tree of life** prefigures Christ, through whom man regains Paradise.

4:1, 2 Cain and Abel came into existence **through God** and through Adam and Eve. Each came into existence at the moment of conception (**she conceived**) and was born nine months later. God brings every human being into existence in the womb of the mother at the moment of conception. His creative activity is simultaneous with conception.

4:3, 4 Both Cain and Abel worshiped the Lord and brought sacrifices to Him. The Lord accepted Abel and his gifts, because Abel had a good and discerning heart. He discerned through faith the Lord's coming Incarnation and His sacrifice as a lamb for the salvation of the world. (See also Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; Heb 11:4; 12:24).

4:5 The Lord rejected Cain and his gifts. Why? The inward state of his heart was not right with God. As 1Jn 3:12 says of him, “who was of the wicked one.” His passions are described in Jude 11 as “the way of Cain.”

4:6 Cain's way was characterized by his sinful passions that dominated him. One of these was extreme sorrow, made manifest in his fallen countenance. His arrogant worship was rejected, and he fell into the opposite condition of extreme sorrow. Whereas godly sorrow leads one to humility and repentance, extreme sorrow nullifies both.

4:7 Because the Lord loved Cain, He sought to bring him to repentance (**did you not sin**). He commended him for having the right worship (**brought it rightly**), but reproved him for not having a right heart (**did not divide it rightly**). He commanded him to still his heart (**be still**) through repentance, for it was filled with turbulence because of the passions. He also commanded him to be his brother's keeper, as this is what is meant by the words **recourse** and **rule**. As the eldest, he was responsible for Abel's welfare. As Cain's parents looked out for his welfare, he too should show the same love to his younger brother.

4:8 However, Cain refused to deal with his passions through repentance, and his anger led to hate and murder.

4:9 Cain rejected the notion that he was his brother's keeper and thus responsible for his welfare.

4:13 Cain used his guilt as an excuse to avoid repentance, for he did not believe in the grace of God. He willfully allowed his passions to blind his heart.

4:16 The name **Nod** means “one who wanders away from God.” Such was Cain's state.

4:25 The name **Seth** signifies that God compensated Adam and Eve by raising up Seth in the place of Abel—out of death comes life. As such, Seth is a type of Christ's Resurrection, which overcomes the way of Cain and compensates the faithful for the ills they have undergone. Christ's genealogy is traced through Seth to Adam, showing that the true God became incarnate as true Man in order to compensate all who call upon His Name (Lk 3:38).

4:26 In contrast to Cain's offspring, Seth's offspring, Enosh, hoped in the Lord and called on His name. For this is the way of salvation. “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Joel 2:32; Rom 10:13).

5:1, 2 Here, the Book of Genesis refers to itself a second time. In 2:4 it calls itself “the book of the genesis of heaven and earth.” Here it is **the book of the genesis of mankind**. Creation has a *beginning* of existence and an *end*. This does not mean creation in itself will come to an end. Rather, its beginning points to its end purpose—the Incarnation of God the Word. Man's very existence foreshadows His coming in the flesh to draw to the Father all who will come.

5:3 Seth was begotten from Adam and Eve. This threefold relationship illustrates, to a certain extent, the Holy Trinity. Adam had no human father. He was begotten by no one. Thus, he was *unbegotten.* Seth was *begotten* from Adam. Eve was neither unbegotten nor begotten. Instead she *proceeded* from Adam (2:21). Therefore, Eve and Seth were related to the unbegotten Adam, but each in a unique manner—Eve proceeded from Adam, but Seth was begotten from him. Each person had his or her own distinct and unique properties—unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding—but all three possessed the same human nature.

Similarly, the manner in which these three existed images the Holy Trinity. God the Father is *Unbegotten;* God the Son is *Begotten* from the Father; and God the Holy Spirit *proceeds* from the Father. These distinct and unique properties—unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding—distinguish each of the individual Persons of the Holy Trinity from each other; yet, They are one in nature (JohnDm).

5:4-28 This passage focuses on the genealogy of Christ (Lk 3:23–38) and the reality of death and decay in the grave—the debt man owed to the broken commandment in the Garden of Eden. The Word became flesh to abolish death and decay through His death and Resurrection, and to release man from the debt he owed (AthanG).

5:29-32 Noah is born into incarnational history, and he is a key ancestor in Christ's genealogy (Lk 3:36), for the next several chapters focus on him and his family.

Lamech named his son Noah, and as 5:29 points out, this name means “to give rest.” For he would give them **rest from our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground the Lord God cursed**. In this meaning, Noah is a type of Christ, who said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

6:3 In his disobedience and expulsion from Paradise, man lost the grace of the Holy Spirit (**My Spirit shall not remain**). Nevertheless, His grace was always available to man, but man continually refused it (**for they are flesh**). So God gave them a grace period of **one hundred and twenty years** to come to repentance.

6:5 Without the grace of the Holy Spirit, man is easily overcome by the devil, for his willpower alone is incapable of resisting the devil's temptations. Furthermore, his will was weakened through his disobedience and expulsion from Paradise. But he willfully refused God's helping grace (**every intent** . . . **was only evil continually**).

6:6 **So God was grieved** over man's condition. Murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, and every manner of sin were rampant everywhere. The human race was in danger of disappearing from the face of the earth (AthanG).

6:7 God was grieved over these people He created, and swore to **blot** them **out** . . . **from the face of the earth**. Yet He gave them a grace period of one hundred and twenty years to respond to the grace of the Holy Spirit. Their refusal brought judgment upon themselves, for they had no excuses for not responding to the grace of God.

6:8 But Noah was different from the rest, for he discovered the grace of the Holy Spirit. Because of this discovery, God would preserve a remnant, through which God the Word would become Man. For He would become Man through Noah's “genealogy” (vv. 9, 10; Lk 3:36).

6:9 **Noah was a righteous man** because he found the grace of the Holy Spirit, through which man becomes righteous. He was **perfect** because through the grace of the Holy Spirit he obeyed everything God told him to do (6:22). His righteous living was **well-pleasing to God**.

6:11-13 **The earth was corrupt** . . . **and filled with unrighteousness** because of man's willful refusal to become righteous through the grace of the Holy Spirit (**corrupted their way on the earth**). Their unrighteousness was their own fault (**through them**), for they had every opportunity to come to repentance.

6:14-21 The ark was a type of the Mother of God with Christ and the Church in her womb (Akath). The floodwaters were a type of baptism, in which we are saved (1Pt 3:18–22).

7:1 The Lord God made Noah righteous through faith, by which he pleased God (Heb 11:6, 7). Through the grace of the Holy Spirit he obeyed everything God commanded him to do. So he and his family entered the ark, which typified salvation.

7:2-15 Noah's faith also saved the animals. The whole creation will be saved through the children of God (Rom 8:18–22).

7:16-24 The Lord God closed the door of the ark, for He is the Judge and determines who is *in* and who is *out*. The people on the outside were going about their usual manner of life—buying, selling, eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage—but they were indifferent to God and His grace. The Flood caught them unawares, but it was too late for them to respond. So it will be in the Day of Judgment (Mt 24:37–39; Lk 17:26, 27; 2Pt 2:4, 5).

8:1 **God remembered Noah** and saved him from the floodwaters, for He **made a wind** that caused the waters to subside. Noah was saved because God remembered him. This remembrance is salvation. Many Scriptures speak of God remembering man in salvation. For example, Ps 24:6, 7: “Remember Your compassion, O Lord, / And Your mercy, for they are from of old. / Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor of my ignorance; / But remember me according to Your mercy, / Because of Your loving-kindness, O Lord.” The thief on the cross said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Lk 23:42–43).

8:10, 11 The dove foreshadowed the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:16), who caused the Holy Virgin to conceive Christ in her womb, and the olive leaf speaks of the Virgin herself (Lk 1:35; Akath). The olive leaf was also a token of man's reconciliation to God and foreshadowed the fulfillment of grace in the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) of the Church (Service of Baptism).

8:20 “God remembered Noah” (8:1), but Noah also remembered God. Remembrance in salvation is a two-way street. As the Psalmist said, “I remembered Your name in the night, O Lord, / And I kept Your law” (Ps 118:55). This Noah did, and he **built an altar to God**.

8:21 Noah's sacrifices were **a sweet aroma** to the Lord God. The Church, likewise, has an altar on which she offers the sweet aroma of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord (Heb 13:10, 15).

8:22 The earth will remain with its regular cycles until the new heaven and the new earth come (Rev 21:1).

9:1 God not only “remembered” Noah (8:1), He also **blessed** him. Remembrance is salvation and so is blessing. Many Scriptures speak to this. For example, the Psalmist said, “He shall receive blessing from the Lord, / And mercy from the God of his salvation” (Ps 23:5).

9:8-16 Noah's **seed** is Christ (Lk 3:23, 36), and the **everlasting covenant** (v. 16) is the new covenant God established in Him. God's **rainbow** in the clouds is His **sign of the covenant**.

9:26 Not only did the Lord God bless Noah (9:1), but Noah blessed Him. Many Scriptures speak to this. For example, the Psalmist said, “For my foot stands in uprightness; / In the churches I will bless You, O Lord” (Ps 25:12; Vesting Service). Noah blessed God because of Shem, through whom Christ would come to save the world (Lk 3:36).

10:1 This chapter continues Christ's genealogy through Shem **after the flood**.

10:21-31 Christ's genealogy is traced from Shem down to Peleg (Lk 3:35, 36). His name means *division*, **for in his days the earth was divided** (v. 25). This division is described in the history of 11:1–9.

11:6 Mankind was united as **one race and one language**. But this unity existed without the Holy Trinity, for man's true unity is union and communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Church is “the race of Christians” (Kairon Service), “a holy nation” (1Pt 2:9), and glorifies God “with . . . one mouth” (Rom 15:6). In the Great Litany, the Church prays “for the union of all men,” a union based in the Holy Trinity.

11:7 The pronoun **Us** refers to the Holy Trinity. The words **go down** are a figure of speech, for the Trinity is everywhere present and fills all things. The words “came down to see” (v. 5) are also a figure of speech, for the Trinity is not ignorant of anything. God condescends to our weakness that we might understand something about Him and His works.

11:8 The Lord divided this false unity for the sake of man's salvation, that man might seek and find Him (Acts 17:26–28). For they sought to build their unity by making a name for themselves (v. 4). They cared nothing for the name of the Lord God, by which man is saved.

11:10-31 The genealogy of Shem carries Christ's genealogy down to Abraham, for the true unity of the human race is Christ Himself.

12:1-7 “The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets” (Creed). He spoke through the prophet Moses, who wrote this Scripture. Thus, St. Paul said, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed’” (Gal 3:8). Thus the Holy Spirit preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham.

The Holy Spirit inspired Moses to write in v. 1 that **the Lord said to Abram** this scripture. Who is this Lord? He is God the Father, as St. Paul indicated in Gal 3:8: “God would justify the Gentiles by faith.” Thus, the Father preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham.

In v. 7, the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to write that **the Lord appeared** to Abraham and spoke to him. Who is this Lord who appeared? The Holy Spirit identified Him in 15:1 as the Word of the Lord whom Abraham saw in a vision, and He identified Him as the Angel of the Lord in 16:7, 9, 10, 11, and 13. This Word is the Son of God (AthanG) and the Angel is also the Son of God, for He was no created angel (HilryP). “He is called *Angel* because He alone reveals the Father” (AthanG). Thus, the Son also preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, for the Father always speaks through His Word.

Therefore, where one Person of the Trinity is present and working, the other two Persons are also present in one and the same working for the salvation of man. The Father works through the Son and in the Spirit.

12:8 Abraham is the father of all the faithful (Rom 4:11). Since he built an altar of worship, therefore an altar is part of his faith. **Bethel** means “house of God,” which foreshadows the Church as the house of God. The altar is central to worship. At the altar, the Church **calls on the name of the Lord**, as did Abraham.

12:17 The Lord protected Sarah's virtue, and also the Incarnation. For Abraham and Sarah begot Isaac, through whom the promise in Christ was made (Rom 9:7).

13:1-5 Canaan, not Egypt, was the land of promise. While in Egypt, Abraham never lost his focus on God's promise in the gospel of salvation, for he returned to Bethel, the house of God, and **called on the name of the Lord** (v. 4). Similarly, those who possess Abraham's faith keep their focus on this same gospel.

13:6-9 Abraham was a peacemaker, and “Blessed are the peacemakers, / For they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9). He was looking for his eternal inheritance in “the world to come” (Creed; see also Heb 11:9–11). Although he was very rich, he was a man of virtue. For in his heart he was detached from his wealth and also from the love of land. Thus he overcame **strife** (v. 7) and made peace with Lot. Therefore, virtue characterized the faith of Abraham. It will also characterize his spiritual children.

13:10-13 Lot, on the other hand, was attached to the beauty of the landscape. It looked like the Garden of Eden. Unlike Abraham, he walked by sight, and not by faith (2Co 5:7). Thus, he chose wrongfully, not because of the beauty itself, but because of his immature faith. His poor judgment landed him with the people of Sodom. They **were exceedingly wicked and sinful before God** (v. 13)—beautiful scenery but an extremely depraved environment. Their godless behavior oppressed and tormented his righteous soul every day (2Pt 2:7, 8).

13:14-18 Lot “pitched his tent” in Sodom (v. 12), but Abraham **built an altar** (v. 18)—a notable difference in the two men. One trapped himself in the environment of this fallen world; the other focused himself on the Lord. However, the Lord would eventually deliver righteous Lot from Sodom (2Pt 2:9).

14:14 The 318 bishops of the Orthodox Church at the Council of Nicea were likened to these **trained servants** of Abraham. As Abraham's servants overcame insurmountable odds, so the bishops, the trained servants of the Church, defeated the arguments of the many heretics who denied that the Son of God is coeternal and one in essence with the Father. These servants defended Abraham's faith, handed down in the Church.

14:18 Melchizedek **brought out bread and wine** to Abraham. His priesthood typified the High Priesthood of Christ, who gives His precious body and blood to the faithful in the bread and wine of the Eucharist (CypC).

Christ's priesthood is called “the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 109:4; Heb 5:6), and it is superior to the order of Aaron in the Mosaic Law (Heb 7:11). The Book of Hebrews gives numerous reasons for this superiority.

14:19, 20 Two of the many reasons for the superiority of the order of Melchizedek are: (1) Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Aaron was a descendant of Abraham through Levi. Thus, in blessing Abraham, Melchizedek also blessed Levi and Aaron. It is always the greater who blesses the lesser. (2) Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek, and in this act, so did Levi and Aaron (Heb 7). Therefore, salvation comes through the superior order.

14:21-24 Abraham showed his complete detachment from earthly wealth, because (1) he knew that **God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth** (v. 22) had given him everything he possessed, and (2) he loved God supremely, and not the wealth God gave him. He also loved his neighbor as himself, for he saw to the needs of Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Thus, Abraham was, so to speak, heaven-bound. The king of Sodom, on the other hand, was earthbound. Faithful people follow Abraham's example.

15:1-3 The **Word of the Lord** is the Word of the Father (AthanG). He is also the Son of God. Abraham saw God the Word **in a vision**. Thus, he saw Him before He became incarnate, as did the other Old Testament prophets. Abraham was fearful the promise God had given him in 12:1 would not be fulfilled, for he had no heir.

15:4 The **Voice of the Lord** is also the Word of the Father. He reassures Abraham that his heir **will come from your own body**. This refers to the birth of Isaac, based on God's promise. For man is saved by this promise through faith in Christ (Rom 4:17–25; 9:7, 8).

15:5 The **seed** is first Christ, then His Church (Gal 3:16; Rom 4:16). The **stars** are a type of all the members of His body (Php 2:15). Their number is countless, and consists of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:11–16).

15:6 Abraham believed the promise in 12:1, and he continued to believe it in 15:5. For Abraham's faith was living and growing—something dynamic. He was made righteous by this faith. So are both Jews and Gentiles. Righteousness is the gift of God through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17).

15:7 God the Word said to Abraham, **“I am the God who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.”** Thus, He identifies Himself as God. The Creed calls Him “True God of True God.” For He is the Only-begotten of the Father, through whom the Father speaks and reveals Himself.

15:8 Abraham calls the Word his own **Master and Lord**, and thus recognizes His divinity. The Church does the same thing.

16:1 In Gal 4:21–31, St. Paul uses Hagar and Sarah as an allegory, representing two covenants. Hagar and Ishmael represent the old covenant of the Law, which “gives birth to bondage.” Sarah and Isaac represent the new covenant, which gives birth to freedom. The Jerusalem below is made up of those under the bondage of the Law, but the Jerusalem above is the Church, those under the freedom of God's grace.

16:7 **The Lord** is the Father, and **the Angel** is His Son (HilryP). And the prophet Isaiah calls Him “the Angel of Great Counsel” (Is 9:5). “The Son is called *Angel* because He alone reveals the Father” (AthanG).

16:8 The Lord asked Hagar questions, not because He was ignorant, but for Hagar's sake and for ours. After He became Man, He also asked questions in the four Gospels, not because He was ignorant, but for the sake of the immediate listeners and of the faithful. For He is God in the flesh, and therefore, never ignorant of anything (JohnDm).

16:9 Since He is God, the Angel commanded Hagar. She obeyed (v. 15). This Angel is the Word of God.

16:10 This statement by the Angel could not have been made by a created angel, for only God can say, **“I will surely multiply your seed exceedingly, that it may not be counted because of its multitude.”** No created angel can do this. The Angel is God the Son.

16:11 The Angel then spoke to Hagar concerning the Father and said, **“The Lord has taken notice of your humiliation.”**

16:13 Hagar called the Angel who appeared to her both Lord and God. The Church knows Him as the Only-begotten of the Father (Jn 1). As the Father's Only-begotten, He is “true God of true God” (Creed).

One meaning of the name *God* is, **You are the God who sees me**. The Only-begotten sees everything. So do God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

17:1 Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael (16:16), **the Lord appeared to Abram** again and identified Himself as God, for He said to him, **“I am your God.”** This appearance is another of the personal appearances of the Son of God to Abraham.

17:2-4 The covenant is that established “in Christ” (Gal 3:17). God established it before the Mosaic covenant. Therefore, the Law of Moses, which came later, could not cancel it. Abraham's faith is **multiplied exceedingly** in the Church. For he is the **father of many nations** (see also Rom 4:16, 17).

17:5 Abram's name (meaning “exalted father”) was changed to **Abraham** (“father of many”). This very name change proves the gospel of salvation is for **many nations**, the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

17:7 The God of the **everlasting covenant** is the Holy Trinity, for the Son is God of God, the Only-begotten of the Father. The Holy Spirit is also God of God, for He “proceeds from the Father” (Creed).

17:10-14 The rite of circumcision was not the covenant itself. It was **a sign of the covenant** (v. 11). It was a temporary sign, because it applied only to Abraham's **genealogy** (v. 12), that is, to Abraham's physical lineage, and also to those born in his house or bought with his money. Thus, the rite did not apply to the “many nations,” or Gentiles, to be made righteous by faith in the gospel (v. 3; see also Rom 4:9–17). Christ Himself fulfilled this rite and brought it to an end when He was circumcised on the eighth day after His birth from the Virgin (Lk 2:21).

17:19-21 God's covenant with Abraham was established in Isaac, because his birth was based on the promise of God (Rom 9). It was not based on physical lineage, for Abraham and Sarah were past the age of childbearing at the time. Therefore, salvation is based on the promise of the Word of God, and not on Abraham's physical descendants, such as the Ishmaelites or the Jews, or on any of the other physical offspring of Abraham, such as the Midianites (25:1, 2).

18:1-3 The Holy Spirit says through the prophet Moses that **God appeared** to Abraham. This is another personal appearance of the Son of God to him. He saw three men standing before him, but he worshiped only one of them as **Lord**, for He is Lord and God. The other two are called “angels” (19:1). The Son of God is the Lord of all the angels.

18:4-8 The hospitality of Abraham was a virtue that should be shared by his spiritual children.

18:9 The Lord was not ignorant of Sarah's location. He asked the question for Abraham's sake and for that of those who read the Scriptures. He also asked questions for the same reason after He became incarnate, for example, concerning the location of Lazarus's grave (Jn 11:34).

18:14 The Lord speaks of God the Father, who does not will everything He can do, but He can do everything He wills. For nothing is impossible with Him. Likewise, nothing is impossible with His Son, for the Father works all things through the Son. As St. Athanasius the Great said, “He *is* the Will of the Father.” Therefore, the Son would strengthen Abraham and Sarah, and Sarah would conceive to bear Isaac, the child of promise.

18:17-19 The Lord possesses foreknowledge (**for I know**). Abraham and his spiritual children would be characterized by **righteousness and judgment**, because they know the Lord and **keep** His ways. Righteousness and judgment are the gifts of the Lord to the faithful. These are two of the four general virtues of wisdom that produce all the other virtues (see the notes at Pr 1:2b–5).

18:22 One of the three men was the Lord, and **Abraham remained before** Him. The other two men, who were the Lord's angels, **went toward Sodom** (see also 19:1).

18:23-32 Abraham interceded for the righteous in Sodom, but actually the city was so morally depraved that Lot was the only righteous person in the entire place. Abraham's intercession delivered him. The Lord delivered Lot, but He allowed Abraham to participate in the work.

18:33 Abraham returned to his home, but the Lord went on to Sodom.

19:1 The Holy Spirit through the prophet Moses calls two of the three men **angels**. When they arrived in Sodom, they met Lot at the city gate.

19:2 Lot paid the angels due respect by calling them **lords**, but he did not worship them, for they were created beings.

19:13 The third man was the Lord, the Son of God, and he sent the other two to Sodom to destroy it.

19:16 He also came to Sodom after He finished talking to Abraham. By His mercy (**the Lord being merciful**), His two angels seized the hands of Lot, his wife, and two daughters and brought them outside the city.

19:18 Lot spoke to all three men, but prayed to the Lord in particular.

19:21 The Lord granted his request (**I have acquiesced to you**) to escape to a small city, called Zoar. The Son *is* the Will of the Father; thus He said, **“I will not overthrow this city.”** The Son is also the Word, Wisdom, and Power of the Father (Jn 1:1–3 and 1Co 1:24).

19:22 The Lord can do anything He wills to do. But He would not will to destroy Sodom before Lot arrived in Zoar.

19:24 **The Lord rained brimstone and fire** . . . **from the Lord out of heaven**, that is, the Son rained brimstone and fire from the Father (AthanG, BasilG, AmbM, and HilryP). Both have the name “Lord” because of Their equality and oneness of lordship. For in Their essence, the Two are One and undivided (Creed). The Holy Spirit, who spoke this Scripture through the prophet Moses, is also one in lordship with the Father and the Son, for as the Creed says, “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord . . . who proceeds from the Father.”

The destruction of Sodom and the adjoining city of Gomorrah is a warning to the ungodly concerning the Day of Judgment (2Pt 2:6, 9; Jude 7).

19:22-24 During Great Lent, the Church sings, “O my soul, flee like Lot to the mountain, and take refuge in Zoar before it is too late. Flee from the flames, my soul, flee from the burning heat of Sodom, flee from destruction by the fire of God.”

19:26 In Lk 17:28–33, the Lord commanded us to remember Lot's wife, for she lost her life because she turned back in disobedience to the Lord.

20:1 Abraham was a sojourner because he waited for “the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb 11:10). The Creed calls this city “the world to come.” Abraham believed he would be raised from the dead to dwell in his true city.

20:2 The city of Gerar was not Abraham's true city, for it was given to idolatry. The Gerarites worshiped the god Dagon (3Kg 5:2) and the goddess Ashtaroth (3Kg 31:10). But when the Son of God became incarnate, and the word of the gospel went out to Gerar, idolatry in that place was destroyed. A church and a monastery were established there. One of its bishops, Marcian, attended the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. Truly, the city embraced the faith of Abraham.

21:1 The Son of God **visited Sarah** and fulfilled the promise He had given in 18:10 (HilryP). Abraham and Sarah would have a son in their old age.

21:2 Thus, Sarah conceived, based on the word of promise. She did not conceive based on the power of the flesh, for both she and Abraham were past the time of childbearing. Therefore, it is not the children of the flesh—that is, Abraham's offspring through procreation—who are the children of God. Rather, the children of this promise are counted as Abraham's seed (Rom 9:8). These children are those who embrace Abraham's faith through the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16).

21:10 Hagar was cast out to show that it is not Abraham's children according to procreation who are God's children. For example, Abraham's children according to the flesh are such peoples as the Jews, the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and the Midianites. But none of these are the children of God because of their fleshly relationship. Rather, God's children are any and all who embrace Abraham's faith through the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 4:22–31).

21:17 The Angel of God is the Son of God. He told Hagar that God, that is, God the Father, had heard Ishmael's crying. “The Son is called *Angel* because He alone reveals the Father” (AthanG).

21:18 The Angel told Hagar He Himself (**I will make**) would make a great nation of Ishmael. Therefore, this Angel is God (see also vv. 19, 20), for God alone could do such a thing. This Angel is not a created angel, but the Son of God Himself. And why would He make a great nation of Ishmael? Because after His Incarnation, Ishmael's descendants would embrace Abraham's faith based on the word of promise.

22:1 God the Word tested Abraham (AthanG).

22:2 The Word is the Son of God, and by calling Isaac Abraham's **beloved son**, He is teaching Abraham concerning His eternal birth from God the Father (AthanG). For He is “the Only-begotten from the Father” (Creed). He is also teaching Abraham that He Himself would be offered up as **a whole burnt offering** for the world's salvation, and be raised from the dead.

22:3 Abraham's faith was tested, and he obeyed the Son of God. Such faith and obedience made Abraham righteous and a friend of God (Jam 2:22–23).

22:12 Abraham received Isaac back alive. This prefigured the Resurrection of Christ and the future resurrection from the dead, in which Abraham believed (Heb 11:19).

22:14, 15 The **Angel of the Lord** is the Son of God, and He appeared to Abraham. **The Lord** is God the Father.

22:16 Abraham and Abimelech counseled together and swore by the greater, namely, by the name of God (21:23, 24). The seven ewe lambs confirmed the oath, and Abraham named the place the Well of Oath. So they were reconciled. However, God cannot swear by anyone greater; therefore, He swore by Himself. He confirmed the oath by His Lamb, the Son of God, through whom God's eternal covenant is established (Heb 6:13–20). The Well of Oath foreshadows the reconciliation of man to God through Jesus Christ.

22:17 Abraham's seed would be **as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore**. These are Abraham's seed based on the word of promise. This seed is Christ and His Church begotten from Him (Gal 3:16). It does not refer to Israel according to the flesh. It refers to both Jews and Gentiles who are the children of the promise.

23:1 The days of Sarah's life were numbered. She knew this because she was a woman of faith. She did not know when she would die, but knew she would. For she saw herself as a sojourner and stranger passing through this life to the world to come (Heb 11:11–16).

23:4 Abraham describes himself as **a sojourner and a stranger** living in this present world. As a sojourner, he was passing through this world to the one to come (Heb 11:8–10). As a stranger, he saw himself as a foreigner in this world, which was not his true home.

23:8 Abraham calls Sarah **my dead**. He does not say “my corpse,” as though Sarah's dead body no longer had meaning and value. For he buried Sarah believing her body would be raised from the dead.

23:19 Abraham **buried Sarah his wife**. He buried a person, for a person consists of both body and soul. It requires both natures to be a person, and at death one does not cease to be a person. Therefore, Sarah's dead body was *her* dead body. It was part of her person, awaiting the resurrection from the dead. In the resurrection her soul would be reunited with her body, which would then become immortal.

24:3 Abraham believed in one God, whom he called **the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth**. This Lord is God the Father, as the Creed says: “I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”

24:7 The Lord's Angel is the Son of God. The word *angel* also means *messenger.* In this meaning it is also akin to the term *word*. The Son of God is called both *Angel* and *Word*, for “He alone reveals the Father” (AthanG). Both names emphasize that the Son *is* the Will of God the Father. Thus, God spoke to Abraham through His Will, and told him to leave his **father's house** for the land of promise. The words **He will send His Angel before you** were prophesied by Abraham to his servant. He spoke these words by the Holy Spirit, as the Creed says: “I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . who spoke by the prophets.”

24:8 Neither the Lord nor Abraham would force the woman to follow Abraham's servant to become Isaac's wife. Both honored free will.

24:12 Abraham's servant also embraced Abraham's faith. He, too, was a child of God according to the word of promise. He also knew the mercy of God.

24:14 The Lord appointed Rebekah to be Isaac's wife. However, this appointment was based on His foreknowledge, for He knew beforehand how she would respond. Her free will was not forced. Similarly, election to salvation is based in the same foreknowledge. As St. Paul said, “whom He foreknew, He also predestined” (Rom 8:29).

24:27 Abraham's servant knew how to pray, for he began, **“Blessed is . . .”** This is the way the services of the Church begin. In his prayer he recognized the Lord's righteousness and truth. The Lord makes people righteous through Abraham's faith, and this faith is based in the truth. The Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1Ti 3:15).

24:58 Rebekah went with Abraham's servant of her own free will. She freely submitted her will to the Lord's will.

24:62, 63 At **the Well of the Vision**, the Son of God appeared to Hagar (16:7–14). Isaac was meditating on this vision.

25:1-4 The children of God are not Abraham's children according to the flesh. If this were so, the six children of Abraham by Keturah would be the children of God. So also would be the Jews, the Ishmaelites, and the Edomites, by right of birth. For the Jews came from Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. The Ishmaelites sprang from Hagar, Abraham's concubine. The Edomites were the offspring of Esau, Jacob's twin brother. But the children of God are any and all who embrace the faith of Abraham through the word of promise.

25:5-7 Abraham sent all the children of Keturah away from Isaac, who was born according to the word of promise. He sent them away to emphasize that the children of God are born according to this word.

25:7, 8 Abraham died **in a good old age, old and full of days**; that is, he died full of faith and blessing from God. He **was added to his people**, that is, to the children of God. These children are awaiting the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come (Creed).

25:11 **Isaac dwelt at the Well of the Vision**, where the Son of God appeared to Hagar (16:7–14). He knew the Son of God.

25:19 Christ came through the genealogy of Isaac (Mt 1:2).

25:23 This prophecy shows that God's purpose in salvation stands on the basis of His calling, and not on the basis of works, either good or bad (Rom 9:11). For God foreknew which of the two sons would believe the word of promise given to Abraham. Jacob embraced the faith of Abraham, whereas Esau rejected it. Both were called, but Jacob alone responded to the call through faith. The Jews came from Jacob, and those who respond to God's calling, as did Jacob, are the children of God. For the Jews who do not embrace Abraham's faith are like Esau.

25:27-33 Esau was the older son, so the right of the firstborn was his. This right taught the firstborn to embrace Abraham's faith. But he despised this faith, because of his fear of death (v. 32). He despised the very faith that could save him from death (Heb 12:16, 17).

26:2 The Word, who is the Son of God, appeared to Isaac and told him not to go down to Egypt, but to live in the land promised to Abraham. For Egypt was a type of the fallen world, whereas the land promised to Abraham was a type of the world to come. It reminded Isaac to keep his focus on Abraham's faith.

26:3 The Word also told Isaac to **sojourn in this land**. A sojourner is one who sees the world to come as the land of promise (Creed). The land of Canaan was only a land in which to sojourn. Like his father, Abraham, he saw the world to come as his true inheritance. “By faith he [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God” (Heb 11:9, 10).

26:4 The phrase **your seed** includes both Jews and Gentiles (**all the nations**) who embrace the promise given to Abraham. The phrase “in your seed” is a reference to Christ (Gal 3:16). For both Jews and Gentiles who believe are joined together as one body in Christ, that is, in Christ and His Church.

26:5 All who believe are blessed with Abraham, because he **obeyed** the **voice** of God the Son and kept what He commanded him to do. The faithful are those who obey the voice of the Son of God (Jn 10).

26:20-22 The names of the two wells, Injustice and Enmity, show the opposition between righteousness and unrighteousness. Isaac was righteous through faith, but the herdsmen of Gerar were representatives of this fallen world. Isaac was a man of peace, but they were men of war, who fought against the righteous man. The well called Room shows that the Lord makes room for the righteous in this world, in order to increase their number. These will inherit the land of promise to come.

26:24 God the Son appeared to Isaac at the Well of Oath and swore to him concerning the promise made to Abraham. This swearing emphasized the unchangeableness of the Lord's will and purpose (Heb 6:17, 18). The Lord will fulfill His purpose in the world to come and give it to the heirs of promise. Isaac laid hold of this oath and the hope it gave him (Heb 6:19, 20).

26:25 Isaac worshiped the Son of God at the altar he built. At the altar, the Church worships the Son, and together with Him, the Father and the Spirit.

26:34, 35 The wives of Esau represent those who contend with Christ and His Church.

27:2 Isaac did not know the day he would die, nor does any man. But he was a man of faith, and he looked to the day he would die. He faced this reality by faith and prepared himself for it.

27:7 The Lord is present everywhere and fills all things. Thus, Isaac would give the blessing of the firstborn in His presence. The blessing of the firstborn gave the eldest son a double portion of his father's inheritance. He would also become the ruler and head over his brethren upon his father's death, and be responsible for the welfare and administration of the family. All this foreshadowed the Lord's Incarnation as the Firstborn of the Father and the ruler and head over the Church. Through His Incarnation, He would secure the Church's eternal inheritance (Rom 4:13; 8:29; Gal 3:3, 18, 29; 4:7; Eph 1:11, 14, 18; 3:6; Col 1:12, 15, 18; 3:24; Tts 3:7; Heb 1:2, 4, 6; 6:17; 9:15; 11:7–9; Jam 2:5; 1Pt 1:4; 3:7; 12:23; Rev 1:5).

27:34 The blessing of the firstborn was denied Esau because he despised the faith of Abraham. Because of this, he could find no place of repentance in order to inherit the blessing of the firstborn son (Heb 12:16, 17). Likewise, in the Day of Judgment, people who in this life reject the offer of the future inheritance will be unable to find repentance in that day.

28:4 The **blessing of Abraham** was given to Jacob, as noted in v. 3. The **seed** is first Christ, then His Offspring, the Church (Gal 3). **The land** is a type of the world to come, which will be this present world redeemed (Rom 8). This present world is **the land of your sojourning**. In the world to come, it will be the permanent home of those who **inherit** it.

28:12 The **ladder** that **reached to heaven** speaks of the Mother of God and of the Son of God born of her. The icon in the apse of the church is called *the Platytera*, which means *wide, broad, spacious*. It reveals Christ in her womb, and she connects heaven and earth through Him for our salvation.

28:17 The **house of God** speaks of the Church, and **the gate of heaven** is the Mother of God (Kairon and Akathist Services). Because the Son was conceived in her womb, she opened the gate of heaven to those who embrace the faith of Abraham.

28:18 The **stone** is Christ, the foundation stone of the Church (Mt 21:42–44; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17, 18; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:32, 33; 1Co 3:10, 11; 1Pt 2:4–8). The **oil** signifies Christ, whose human nature was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:18; 3:16; Heb 1:9).

28:22 **God's house** speaks of the Church. Jacob gave a tithe of all God gave him. A tithe is ten percent given to the Church.

29:14 Laban called Jacob **my bone and my flesh**, for they were blood relatives. In contrast to this, the Church is not based on blood relationships. It is based on the life-giving flesh of Christ, by which those who embrace Him in faith become “members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones” (Eph 5:30). The members of His body are closer in relationship than blood relations.

29:15 Laban called Jacob **my brother**. Technically, Jacob was Laban's nephew. Therefore, the title *brother* does not necessarily mean a son of the same father or mother. In Mt 13:55 and Mk 3:31, Jesus is said to have brothers. These are not sons of Mary His mother. They are simply close relatives. The Church calls Mary *Ever-virgin*. This belief is a dogma of the Church, for she bore only one Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

29:27 One week in this case equals seven years. Thus, each week in Daniel's prophecy equals seven years (Daniel 9), to the coming of Christ in the Incarnation.

29:34, 35 Levi was the forefather of the levitical priesthood, also known as the order of Aaron, for Aaron came from Levi (Heb 7:11). But the Christ could not be part of this order, because He would descend from Judah (Heb 7:14). However, the prophecy said Christ would be the High Priest of the order of Melchizedek (Ps 109:4). Thus, both orders cannot coexist as the way to be perfected. The order of Aaron became obsolete because Levi and his offspring are still dead, whereas Christ is alive from the dead. Therefore, Jews are not made children of God through the order of Aaron. Both Jews and Gentiles become the children of God only through the order of Melchizedek, in the one body of Christ, the Church, which is also called “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16).

30:6 The names of the sons of Jacob reveal things concerning the Incarnation of the Son of God. For example, Rachel speaks of Dan's birth in relation to God as Judge; Christ “shall come to judge the living and the dead” (Creed). Also, Reuben's birth relates to humiliation (29:32); the Son humbled Himself to become Man for man's salvation (Php 2:7). Simeon's birth emphasizes hatred (29:33); Christ was hated without cause (Jn 15:25), and sometimes, so is the Church (Jn 15:18). Levi's birth speaks of union, for “on my side” speaks of union (29:34). Christ unites His Church to Himself in baptism (Rom 6:5). Judah's birth relates to thanksgiving (29:35); Christ established the Eucharist, which means Thanksgiving.

30:8 Naphtali's birth emphasizes victory; Christ prevailed over death by triumphing over it through the cross (Col 2:14, 15).

30:11 Gad's name speaks of good fortune, or prosperity. Christ's Incarnation is man's true prosperity and health (3Jn 2, 3).

30:13 Asher relates to blessing. Christ's Incarnation blesses His own with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph 1:3).

30:18 Issachar's name speaks of wages or reward. Christ will bring His reward, to give each one according to his works (Rev 22:12).

30:20 Zebulun's name emphasizes endowment. Zebulun is a haven for ships (49:13). Christ is our endowment as a haven from the stormy sea of life.

30:23, 24 Joseph's name relates to the bearing of reproach, and he bore the reproach of his brothers when they sold him into Egypt. Christ bore our reproach (Rom 15:3).

30:33 Jacob was made righteous by faith, as were his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham. This righ-teousness is a gift of God's grace, one of the four general virtues of Wisdom (see notes on Pr 1:2b–5). Jacob lived out this righteousness in his behavior toward his uncle Laban.

31:3 The Lord is the Word and Son of God. He told Jacob to return to the land of his father, for this land was a type of the world to come. Laban's country was not Jacob's permanent residence (Heb 11:14–16, 21).

31:11 The Word is also called **the Angel of God**, because it is He alone who reveals the Father, and also because when the Son is beheld, so is the Father, for He is the Father's Radiance; therefore, the Father and the Son are one (AthanG).

31:13 In verse 11, the name “God” refers to the Father. But in this verse, the Angel is called **the God who appeared**. Thus, the Son is “true God of true God” (Creed).

31:24 The Son of God came to Laban in a dream, and warned him to do Jacob no harm.

31:29 Laban calls the Word the God of Jacob's father, that is, the God of Isaac. Laban's problem was his unbelief, for he did not believe in the very One who appeared to him in a dream.

31:42 Jacob believed in the Son of God and thanked Him for rebuking Laban for his injustice. Laban was a liar and a cheat, for he had changed Jacob's wages ten times (v. 7). In all this, Jacob, so to speak, had stepped aside and allowed the Lord to fight his battles over the twenty-year period (v. 38).

31:45 The stone set up as a pillar was a type of the Incarnate Son, for He is the foundation stone and pillar of the Church (1Co 3:11).

31:46 These stones are types of the living stones in the Church (1Pt 2:4, 5).

31:48, 49 The pillar and the stones were called **This-Heap-Witnesses** and **The Vision**. This vision was the vision of God the Word who appeared to both Laban and Jacob (vv. 11, 24). The pillar and stones foreshadow the Incarnation and the Church.

32:12 **Your seed** is a reference to Christ (Gal 3:16), and together with Him, the Church, composed of both Jews and Gentiles. It is not a reference to the Jews based on physical lineage.

32:24 The **man** who **wrestled** with Jacob was the Son of God, who appeared to him as a weak man (AthanG and HilryP). When He became incarnate, He assumed the weakness of human flesh for man's salvation.

32:28 Jacob's name was changed to **Israel**, which means “God prevails.” In this meaning, Jacob was a type of the Son of God, who became Man and prevailed as God and Man for man's salvation.

32:30, 31 The **Form of God** was the Son and Word of God, who revealed Himself to Jacob (AthanG and HilryP). He is the Radiance of the Father who reveals the Father in Himself, for as He said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). The rising and radiating of the sun on Jacob illustrated this relation of the Son to the Father.

33:5 Gen 33:5, 9, 11: Jacob acknowledged that God gave him all his possessions. For he was a man of faith who looked to the world to come (Heb 11:13–15, 21). Esau, on the other hand, did not glorify God for the possessions God gave him, for he was an unbeliever.

33:19, 20 Jacob bought a small piece of land, set up an altar, and called on the true God. The Church does the same.

34:2 Shechem was a ruler of the land, but not a ruler of his passions. His lack of self-control would cost him his own life and the lives of his countrymen.

34:8 The passionate love Shechem had for Dinah was not true love. It was a sinful passion—its true name.

34:31 The sons of Jacob repaid evil for evil, for they, so to speak, took the law into their own hands. Furthermore, the punishment did not fit the crime. They turned out to be worse sinners than Shechem.

35:1 God speaks, and it is God of whom He speaks. Two distinct Persons own the same name, *God*. For the Father who is true God speaks of His Son who is also true God, for the Son is begotten from the Father as true God (Creed). Thus, the God who appeared to Jacob at Bethel was the Son, who is true God of true God (HilryP).

35:9 The God who appeared to Jacob again is true God of true God, that is, the Son of the Father. In Him the Father is revealed, for He alone reveals the Father (AthanG).

35:11 The God who appeared to Jacob also calls Himself Jacob's God, for He is true God of true God, the Only-begotten of the Father. It was He who changed Jacob's name to Israel.

35:13 The Only-begotten appeared to Jacob temporarily as a man, then ascended from him. After He became incarnate in the Mother of God, He ascended to the Father.

37:3, 4 Israel's love was partial, for he loved Joseph more than his other sons. Such love divided his family and opened the door to hatred. Thus Jacob was not yet perfected in love, for perfect love is impartial. But Christ loves all equally, and died for all.

37:8 Joseph's brothers were blinded by their hatred for him, and therefore, could not understand the things of God.

37:26, 27 Joseph's brothers were motivated by the love of money and possessions, for they did not know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

37:28 Joseph's brothers cast him into a pit (v. 24), then lifted him out and sold him as a slave into Egypt. However, he ultimately became the lord of all Egypt. Similarly, Jesus was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, was killed and buried in His grave. But He rose again, and became the Lord of all (Acts 2:36; 10:36).

38:24 Those who reported to Judah viewed fornication and adultery as one and the same sin. For some say fornication is sin committed by single people, whereas adultery is committed by married people. Both fornication and adultery, however, are one and the same sin.

39:9 Joseph viewed adultery and/or fornication as great wickedness and sin against God. But people who treat such sin lightly simply do not know God.

39:20 Joseph's holiness cost him his freedom. “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2Ti 3:12).

39:21 Joseph suffered for righteousness' sake; therefore, the Lord was with him. Truly, he was a blessed man (Mt 5:10).

39:23 Joseph's **authority** speaks of his human will, and **the Lord was with him** speaks of God's will. This shows that Joseph's will was in submission to the will of God. Both wills, therefore, worked in synergy.

40:8 Joseph glorified God and not himself. This is humility in the truest sense.

40:23 Since the cupbearer forgot Joseph, he also forgot the true God who delivered him from prison. His position as the king's favorite caused him to forget, for he loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

41:13 Joseph was a true prophet, and the Holy Spirit prophesied through him (Creed). His short-term prophecies came to pass in a matter of three days (40:12, 18). This proved that his long-term prophecies concerning Jacob and his family would also come to pass (ch. 37). All God's prophets are judged on this basis: if their short-term prophecies come to pass, then their long-term ones are to be believed. Otherwise, they are false prophets.

41:37 Although Pharaoh was an idolater, he recognized the Spirit of God speaking in the prophet Joseph (Creed).

41:52 Joseph calls Egypt **the land of my humiliation**. Such is this fallen world to those who look for their inheritance in the world to come (Heb 11:13–16, 22; Creed).

42:1 Jacob's sons were lazy, and lazy people are unruly (2Th 3:6–12). Such people lack reverence, lack self-control in speech, and are quick to abuse others (JohnCas). These sinful passions characterized Jacob's sons when they sold Joseph into Egypt.

42:9 Joseph was a true prophet, for the Holy Spirit spoke by him. Thus, his prophecies concerning Jacob and his sons came to pass. His long-term prophecy concerning the general resurrection will also come to pass (50:25; Heb 11:22). Therefore, his prophecies are trustworthy.

42:18 Joseph feared God. “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and those who practice it have a good understanding” (Pr 1:7). Joseph's fear and good understanding enabled him to love his brothers and to forgive them for their abuse of him.

42:22 Joseph's brothers did not fear God; therefore, they would not listen to wise counsel when they sinned against him. So they ended up with a guilty conscience (AthanG).

43:14 Jacob knew the grace of God, which enabled him to accept whatever the outcome would be in the case of Simeon and Benjamin. St. Paul also said, “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1Co 15:10). And St. Athanasius the Great said that man fell into death because he abandoned the grace of God the Word.

43:18 Their guilty consciences regarding their previous abuse of Joseph also led them into vain imaginations in this circumstance. Their imaginings, so to speak, ran wild, causing them great anxiety.

43:23 In spite of their guilty consciences, the grace of God was abundant toward them and delivered them from anxiety. Both God and Joseph loved them, for both cared about them.

43:28 Joseph honored his father Jacob by blessing him in God, which also showed he knew God's grace. In honoring Jacob he honored God.

43:34 God's grace in people leads to great joy in their midst.

45:1 Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Jesus makes Himself known to His own brethren (Jn 10:4, 14; Heb 2:11).

45:5 Joseph's brothers **sold** him into Egypt, but God **sent** him there. The brothers sold him for profit, but God sent him to save lives. God overcame their sinful purpose with His saving purpose. Christ died for our sins, and thus overcame all injustices for man's salvation.

45:9 God made Joseph lord of all Egypt, but He made Jesus Lord of all the world (Acts 2:36; 10:36).

45:1-16 This passage, coupled with 43:26–31, is read during Wednesday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

45:27 Jacob's spirit revived when he realized Joseph was alive; our spirit revives when we realize Jesus is risen from the dead.

46:1 The Well of Oath foreshadowed the reconciliation of man to God through the Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (see note at 22:16).

46:2 God spoke to Israel in and through His Word and Son, for He alone reveals the Father (AthanG). Therefore, Israel's vision was a personal appearance of the Son of God to him. The Son is also called the Angel of God. As He spoke to Abraham and said, “Abraham! Abraham!” (22:11), so now He speaks to Jacob, saying, **“Jacob, Jacob!”** Therefore, Jacob went to Egypt by divine revelation from the Father through the Son.

46:30 Israel could die in peace because Joseph was alive. Even so, we can die in peace because Jesus is risen from the dead, and we believe in Him.

47:9 Jacob described himself and his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, as sojourners, for he embraced Abraham's faith and thus “looked for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed; Heb 11:13–16, 21). And although he had suffered much in his life, he saw this as nothing compared to the glory to be revealed (Rom 8:18).

47:29 Jacob sees grace as synonymous with mercy and as coupled with truth. The apostle John said that the Word of God who became flesh is “full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).

47:30 Jacob wished to be buried with his fathers because he looked to the inheritance of the world to come.

48:3 The God who appeared to Jacob at Luz was the Son and Word of God, also called the Angel of God. It was He who blessed Jacob, for no created angel could do this (AthanG).

48:4 God the Word speaks of His Incarnation, by which the Church (**a gathering of nations**) would be established. He would give His Church the world to come (**this land** as **an everlasting possession**). Jacob's seed would be Christ, and with Him, His Church (Gal 3).

48:5 Ephraim and Manasseh were born to Joseph as his natural sons, born from his nature. So too, the Son and Word is the natural Son and Word of the Father, born from His nature (AthanG).

48:8 Joseph recognized his sons as gifts from God, for they belonged to God more than to him.

48:15, 16 The Holy Spirit spoke by the prophet Jacob (Creed), who identified the Angel as God. He is the Son and Word of God. For no created angel could **redeem** Jacob **from all evil** (AthanG). Therefore, the Holy Trinity is revealed to a certain extent in the Old Testament, and fully in the New.

48:21 The Holy Spirit spoke by Jacob and predicted that God would bring Joseph back to Canaan. Joseph's bones were later taken to Canaan, prefiguring the resurrection from the dead (Heb 11:22).

49:1 The Holy Spirit prophesies by Jacob concerning the last days (Creed). These last days are those between the two comings of Christ, and all these prophecies refer to these last days.

49:3 Reuben is called the firstborn and the beginning of Jacob's children; therefore, he was Jacob's natural son, as were all his brothers. But he was not a work of Jacob's, as for example, when he took care of his sheep. So too, the Son and Word of God is begotten from the nature of the Father; therefore, He is not a work of the Father (AthanG).

49:7 Simeon and Levi, as well as their brother, Reuben (v. 3), were hardened in their self-will. For their injustice was chosen freely (v. 5). Therefore, sin is a matter of will and choice. It is not a matter of nature, for they were good by nature, but evil by choice. The same is true of all who sin.

49:8-12 This prophecy relates to Christ in numerous ways, two of which are as follows: He would rise from the dead (**who shall rouse Him**, v. 9), and He would be the Lawgiver (v. 10). For every law of God the Father given to man, including the Mosaic Law, is given in and through Him.

49:14, 15 Issachar rested between the inheritances of both the Old and New Testaments, and he farmed them by hard work (AthanG).

50:21 Joseph spoke to the heart of his brothers, for the heart has spiritual eyes to see the things of God (Eph 1:18). If their eyes were clear, they would be able to see God's forgiveness expressed through Joseph (v. 17), and that He worked their evil for good, in order to save many people alive (v. 20). They would also be thankful to God for providing for their welfare (v. 21). Truly, God is good!

50:24, 25 The Holy Spirit spoke two prophecies by the prophet Joseph (Creed): the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and the resurrection from the dead. For the burial of his bones in Canaan prefigures “the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed).

50:26 The life that began in Paradise (2:8) ended in a coffin in Egypt. For Adam's sin brought mortality and death into the world. But Christ came, trampled down death by death, and opened the gates of heaven to us.

1:6 Death continued to reign. Joseph and all his generation died. Nevertheless, the appearances of the Son of God to the prophets and the Holy Spirit speaking through them—especially in relation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—laid the beginnings of His future plan for the overthrow of death. These beginnings will continue as the Son reveals Himself to Moses and the Holy Spirit speaks through him.

1:10 The deceitfulness of Pharaoh ties this story to two others. First to the account of the serpent, who was “more cunning than all the wild animals the Lord God made on the earth” (Gn 3:1); and second, to a later pharaoh's attempt to outwit Moses. This early verse of *Exodus* introduces a major motif of this book, namely, the matching of wits—the wisdom of the serpent again encounters the wisdom of God. Similarly, when the Son of God became incarnate, He easily outwitted the devil and destroyed him and death through His Cross (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14, 15).

1:12 The Egyptians severely humbled the children of Israel, but the more they persecuted them, the more their numbers multiplied. For the Lord preserved Israel so that He might become incarnate through them for man's salvation. When He became Man, He suffered the extreme humiliation of the Cross; nevertheless, through the Cross His Church grew and multiplied in great numbers.

1:15 Shiphrah and Puah outmaneuvered Pharaoh, for they feared God, who gave them wisdom. And whereas the enemy outsmarted Eve at the beginning of Genesis, these women at the beginning of Exodus outwit the enemy. God's plan for the Incarnation cannot be stopped.

2:2 Moses' parents were Amram and Jochebed (6:20; Nm 26:59). They hid Moses for three months because they embraced the faith of Abraham (Heb 11:8–15; 23). Thus, they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

2:4 Miriam, Moses' sister, was watching from a distance to learn what would become of Moses. She, too, was a woman of God whose faith led to learning. She would learn through observing the divine providence in the situation (Acts 7:20). And we can learn how easy it is for the Lord to keep incarnational history in motion in the midst of great opposition.

2:9 Jochebed may be the only woman in history to be paid for nursing her own child.

2:11 Moses went out to see his brethren because he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Why? Because of his faith, for he chose the Lord and holiness over the riches of Egypt and the passing pleasures of sin. He had his eyes on the world to come (Heb 11:24–26).

2:12 Moses was forty years old at this time, and he knew he was Israel's deliverer. Thus, he defended an Israelite and killed the Egyptian. He supposed the Israelites would understand his calling from God, but they did not (Acts 7:23–28). That generation never would.

2:15 This is another instance of divine providence preserving Moses' life. He fled to Midian, where he lived for forty years (Acts 7:29, 30).

2:22 Moses named this son Gershom, which name relates to sojourning in a foreign land. As a man of God, he looked to the reward (Heb 11:26), which is the world to come. For this world is a foreign land to people of faith.

2:24 God remembered His covenant, for His remembrance is salvation. This covenant is the New Testament in Christ. It is called the covenant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to instruct the Jews and all mankind that salvation comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3:2 God the Word revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush to forecast His coming Incarnation (JohnDm, AthanG, JohnChr, GrgTheo, AmbM). He is called **the Angel of the Lord** because He is the Angel or Messenger of the Father who reveals the Father's will. For He *is* the Will of the Father (AthanG). He is the Only-begotten God because He is begotten from the Unbegotten Father before all time and ages (GrgNy). Isaiah the prophet called the Son “the Angel of Great Counsel” (Is 9:5).

The bush was on fire but was not consumed, for the Son of God became Man to save man and not to consume him. He became Man in the womb of the Mother of God, for the bush itself typifies her.

3:3 Moses was shown this great sight of the Lord's coming Incarnation because he was detached from the fleeting pleasures of this world (JohnDm, AmbM). For he was looking to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come (Creed).

3:4 The Angel is called **Lord** and **God**, for He is the Speaker. Since He is begotten from the Father before all time and ages, He is therefore the Only-Begotten God.

3:5 Moses was to remove his sandals. This indicates that nothing dead is to stand between God and man, for He is the God of the living (AmbM).

3:6 The Angel also called Himself **the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**. For the Son is true God of true God, and He reveals the Father in Himself. He who sees the Son also sees the Father. He who sees the Only-begotten God also sees the Unbegotten Father.

3:7 The Lord loves His people and knows their pain and suffering, and His Incarnation is the remedy for all their sorrows.

3:14 The name **I AM the Existing One** is the name for the Essence of God, which is one and undivided (AthanG, JohnDm). This Essence is like a boundless sea, containing all things yet not contained by anything. The Son is eternally begotten from the Essence of the Father. When Jesus said He was the Existing One, the Jews who were listening took up stones to stone Him, for they knew this passage in Exodus (Jn 8:57–59). He is acknowledged as the Existing One in every Vespers service of the Church.

4:2, 3 The rod was Moses' staff as a shepherd. It was a type of the Cross (Jn 3:14), which is the antidote to the serpent's bite. The devil poisoned man with sin and death, but the Lord destroyed all three enemies by His Cross.

4:7, 8 Leprosy was a type of sin and death. The Cross heals man of his leprosy.

4:14 God is dispassionate; therefore, He does not possess passion in His nature. He is said to be **very angry** by way of analogy with man's anger. In this sense, the Lord was displeased with Moses, but He Himself is without such passion.

4:17 The Son of God worked miracles through the instrument of Moses' staff. Having become incarnate, He now works miracles through the Cross.

4:21 It is customary for Holy Scripture to call God's permission His action (JohnDm). Therefore, when the Lord said to Moses, **I will harden his heart**, this hardness was by way of divine permission. For Pharaoh hardened his own heart through his free choice.

4:22 The Lord calls Israel His **firstborn son**. The use of the term *firstborn* in this verse, therefore, cannot imply other offspring born afterward. Similarly, Jesus is called the “firstborn” of the Virgin Mary (Mt 1:25). Therefore, no one can claim this necessarily implies she had other children, for in truth He was her only offspring.

4:30, 31 The people believed, rejoiced, and worshiped because they saw the signs, but did they love the Lord? No, for later on these same people would die in the wilderness because of their unbelief. Similarly, when Jesus did signs before the people, they believed; however, He would not commit Himself to them, for they did not love Him (Jn 2:23–25). Moreover, people who ask for signs are tempters, for those who love Christ have no need for signs (JohnChr).

5:2 Pharaoh asked perhaps the most important question in human history: “Who is the Lord?” But in his arrogance he boldly said, “**I do not know the Lord**.” His ignorance stemmed from his arrogance, for he was his own lord. Shortly, he would know Him to be the Lord of all the earth, but he would still refuse to obey Him.

5:21 A short time before, the clerks had believed, rejoiced, and worshiped the Lord along with the people when they saw the signs. But now they were unwilling to suffer for His sake, although believing and suffering belong together as a privilege (Php 1:29). For suffering on the Lord's behalf results in eternal glory (2Co 4:17). But they condemned Moses. So although they gave mental assent to belief in the Lord, they actually had no heart for Him.

5:22, 23 Moses asked the Lord, “**Why have You brought trouble on this people?**” The answer is, “To test their faith” (see Jam 1:2–4), for such testing produces patience in those who pass the test. And Moses, along with the people, needed such patience.

6:2, 3 The Son of the Father appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their God. He told Jacob, for example, that He was the Lord (Gn 28:13), but He did not show him the power He had over all the earth. Now He was about to reveal His almighty power in relation to the Egyptians, for He is the Wisdom and Power of the Father (1Co 1:24). After He became incarnate, and in many places of the New Testament, He is now called the Lord Jesus Christ.

6:4 The land of Canaan is called **the land of their** [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's] **sojourn, in which they were strangers**. They did not see Canaan as their permanent home, for they “waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God,” and “they desired a better, that is, a heavenly *country*” (Heb 11:10, 16). The Jews who embraced this faith had the same vision, as do the Gentiles who do the same. For Canaan was a type of the world to come. But the Jews who came out of Egypt and did not embrace this faith saw the Canaan of this world as their true home, a false vision on their part.

6:7 The Son of the Father is speaking, and the Jews were to know that He was the Lord their God, together with His Father and the Holy Spirit. When He became incarnate, He revealed the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Jews in full measure.

6:9 The children of Israel had a heart problem—they were willing to believe, but not to suffer for the Lord's sake. Therefore, they were fainthearted and disobedient because of their cruel bondage.

7:1 The Lord made Moses a god to Pharaoh, but it is one thing to be made a god and another to be God (HilryP). The Scripture uses the name *god* in three ways: (1) gods in name only, as are Moses and the saints; (2) false gods, as are the demons and idols; and (3) the true God, as is the Father (AmbM). Moses was god in name only, but not in nature. But the Son is True God of True God (Creed), because He is God both in name and in nature. For before all time and ages, He is begotten from God to be God. He is begotten, not made (Creed).

7:5 The Egyptians would learn that the Lord is the Lord of all, not only of the Hebrews.

7:9 Thus, signs are for unbelievers (1Co 14:22).

7:23 Pharaoh's heart was not moved by the signs toward faith in the Lord. He was too arrogant to humble himself.

8:4 In 5:2, Pharaoh refuses to acknowledge the Lord, saying, “Who is He, that I should obey His voice?” But now he asks for intercessory prayer to the Lord on his behalf and that of his people. However, he still worships the gods of Egypt; the Lord is only another god to add to his list.

8:6 The Lord is the Lord of all, and Pharaoh needed to realize this. He is not one among others.

8:11 Pharaoh still refused to forsake his idols and believe in the Lord. So he hardened his heart (see note at 4:21).

8:15 The **finger of God** is the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20). The operation of the Spirit brought the lice upon Egypt, for the Father works through the Son and in the Spirit.

8:18 Egypt's gods were lords of Egypt, but the Lord is the Lord of all the earth. Therefore, the gods of Egypt were not lords in any sense, but Pharaoh was too arrogant to acknowledge the true Lord. After the Lord became incarnate, His parents took Him to Egypt, where as a baby He destroyed the idols of Egypt and brought the nation to Himself (Is 19:1, 18–22).

8:28 Pharaoh hardened his own heart through free choice (see also note at 4:21).

9:14-16 The Lord of all the earth used Pharaoh to declare His mighty power throughout the earth, for He shows compassion to whom He will, and He shows mercy to whom He will (Rom 9:17, 18). We should never inquire into why God does what He does, nor even raise any questions about it. Our response should be obedience to Him (JohnChr).

9:17 Pharaoh's problem was self-exaltation, which opposes faith in the Lord.

9:20, 21 Some among Pharaoh's servants believed in the Lord, for faith produces fear of the Lord. But some did not believe the Lord's word. Thus, some exercised their free will to believe and some did not. However, all had the opportunity to know the Lord through faith, for He desires that all be saved.

10:1 Ex 10:1, 20, 27: Both Pharaoh and his servants hardened their hearts (see note at 4:21).

10:2 Future generations are instructed by the Lord's works as to how easy it is for the Lord to do what He does. Recounting His works helps these generations know the true Lord of all.

10:3 Humility is to know the Lord and to humble oneself before Him. Pharaoh refused to humble himself through his own free choice. Humility is the beginning and end of salvation (JohnChr).

10:16, 17 Pharaoh's confession was not from his heart, for it was motivated by self-interest. He wanted death removed from him, but he still refused to glorify the Lord.

10:21 The soul also feels the darkness caused by unbelief.

11:3 The Lord gave Israel grace in the sight of the Egyptians, for as the Only-begotten of the Father, He is full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14). And as Moses became great in their sight, similarly, the Incarnate Son became great in their sight when He established His Church throughout that land.

12:2 The Law of Moses commanded that Pascha (or Passover) be celebrated in the **beginning of months** . . . **the first month of the year**. But the Lord came down “at the end of the ages” (Heb 9:26), and He is “the end of the law” (Rom 10:4); therefore, He established a different day (AthanG).

12:3 The Lord's commandment through Moses was the type, for a lamb was commanded to be sacrificed. But the incarnate Lord did not command any such thing, for He became the command itself by offering Himself as the Sacrifice to the Father (JohnChr).

12:7 The two doorposts speak of our heart and its vision and action with regard to the New Covenant made in Christ's Blood, that we might be crucified with Him and rise up to be glorified and reign with Him, both now and at His Second Coming (GrgTheo).

12:10-46 Not a bone of Christ's Body was broken (Jn 19:33, 36), which fulfilled this commandment concerning Pascha (see also Nm 9:12). We see the strong connection between the type and the reality (JohnChr).

12:11 The **haste** in eating **the Lord's Pascha** speaks of sojourning. Likewise, we are to eat the Lord's Eucharist as sojourners (JohnChr), for we "look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come" (Creed). Originally, Passover was called "the Lord's Pascha," but later it was called "the Jews' Pascha" (see Jn 6:4), because they denied the Lord who fulfilled the type (AthanG).

12:13 Death would not touch Israel because of the blood. Christ's Blood destroyed death and delivers His Church from the same (Heb 2:14, 15). The firstborn were preserved by God from being touched by the destroyer to show that we who were made alive in Christ no longer die in Adam (BasilG).

12:14 This eternal memorial is fulfilled in Christ, who said the Eucharist is to be eaten “in remembrance of Me” (1Co 11:24, 25; JohnChr).

12:16 **Servile work**: the things necessary to life done during the course of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But now we are to keep the feast our whole life long: “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth” (1Co 5:8). For this is necessary to life (JohnChr).

12:22 The hyssop speaks of Christ's garments that were whiter than snow in the Resurrection, and of the purity bestowed by the remission of sins in baptism (AmbM). See also Ps 50:9.

12:23 Ex 12:23, 26, 27: Christ's Paschal sacrifice saves us from death, for He trampled down death by His death and bestowed life on those in the grave. In the eucharistic cup, His precious Blood saves us from death.

12:30 A great cry arose throughout Egypt because they had no hope beyond this life and were without God in this world (Eph 2:12).

12:33 The Egyptians lived under the fear of death (Heb 2:15).

12:38-48 A mixed multitude of Gentiles also went with Israel because they believed. But those who wished to partake of Pascha had to be circumcised. Similarly, baptism is the door to the Eucharist.

13:1 The sanctification of the firstborn foreshadows the Incarnation of the Son of God. For He is the Firstborn of the Mother of God (Mt 1:25; Lk 2:7). The Church of the Firstborn are His brethren, whose names are registered in heaven (Heb 2:11, 17; 12:23).

13:22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night speak of baptism, the sacrament of illumination or enlightenment (1Co 10:1, 2). The cloud itself is a foreshadowing of the Holy Spirit, who in baptism cools the flame of the sinful passions (BasilG). As one walks in his baptism, the Holy Spirit enlightens him on the pathway to the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come.

14:15 Moses cried out to the Lord with inward tears in the silence of his heart, and the Lord answered him (GrgTheo; JohnChr; GrgNy).

14:19-24 The Angel of God the Father is the Lord, who looked down through the pillar of fire and cloud. He is the Only-begotten God, because He is begotten from the Unbegotten Father before all time and ages (GrgNy). Thus, the Son of God troubled the army of the Egyptians.

14:21 Moses accomplished what he did through prayer and as a servant of Christ, but Christ Himself walked on the Sea of Galilee by His own absolute power (Mt 14:25). Job 9:8 prophesied of Christ, “who walks on the sea as on firm ground” (JohnChr).

14:22 Based on their own nature, the waters of the sea could not form walls on either side of Israel as they walked through. But through the prophetic office of Moses, the sea's nature was changed. This shows that the power of blessing is greater than that of nature, for Israel was blessed with deliverance. Similarly, the power of blessing is greater than nature when the bread and wine of the Eucharist become in a mystery the Body and Blood of Christ (AmbM).

14:27, 28 Pharaoh and his servants are types of the devil and his angels, whom the Lord destroyed on the Cross and in the waters of baptism (BasilG; GrgNy).

15:1 The Egyptians were **thrown into the sea**. Their opposition to Israel was instigated by the devil (AthanG).

15:2 The verb translated **became** means “to make.” Thus, in what sense was the Lord made? In the sense of His Incarnation (AmbM). For He “became flesh” (Jn 1:14) to become man's **helper** and **shield** in **salvation**. This prophecy also acknowledges the Incarnate Lord as God (**my God** and **my father's God**).

15:6-12 The **right hand** of **God** is the Son of the Father (BasilG; AmbM). As the hand is one in essence with its body, similarly, the Son is one in essence with the Father.

15:8-10 **The Spirit** is the Holy Spirit (AmbM).

15:16 The Lord gave the enemy a spirit of fear, in contrast to the spirit "of power and of love and of a sound mind" that He gives the faithful (2Ti 1:7; JohnChr).

15:21 Miriam was a type of the Mother of God (GrgNy) and of the Church (AmbM). The Mother of God leads the Church in songs of praise to the Lord.

15:22-1 These verses are read during the Feast of the Precious and Life-giving Cross.

15:23 The waters of Marah were called **Bitterness**, which describes man's condition apart from the grace of Christ.

15:25 The tree cast into the waters made them fit for the people to drink. This tree speaks of the Cross of Christ and baptism (AmbM). For the Cross is baptism, and baptism is the Cross. The Cross is in the baptismal water, and the baptismal water is in the Cross. This is why baptism saves man (1Pt 3:21).

15:26 God heals those who hear His voice and obey Him.

15:27 Israel camped by **twelve fountains of water and seventy palm trees**. Similarly, the Twelve Apostles of Christ were twelve fountains of spiritual water, which quenches the thirst of those who seek the true God. Also, Christ sent forth the Seventy to provide heavenly shade from desert heat.

16:2-8 The entire congregation complained against the godly leadership, but they were actually complaining against God. This sin arose from the sins of gluttony and unbelief. These sins led them into rebellion against the Lord and His appointed leadership, and their complaining ultimately caused their destruction in the desert (Heb 3:7–11). Similarly, the Church suffers when its members complain (1Co 10:10).

16:3 The Egyptians were gluttons (**pots of meat**), and the Hebrews followed their example (JohnChr). They refused to renounce this sin (JohnCas). The New Testament also warns against the sin of gluttony (Php 3:19).

16:4 The Lord **rained bread out of heaven** for them. It was a type of Christ, “the bread of life” (Jn 6:48–51). In the Church, He gives Himself and His life to the Church in the Eucharist (Jn 6:53–58).

16:13, 14 Israel saw the quail and the manna with their physical eyes, but these things were limited to this present life. The future life in the world to come is seen by those who walk in the Spirit (1Co 2:9, 10; AmbM).

16:18 Each one gathered what he needed. This shows the need for moderation in relation to the body (GrgNy).

16:20 Some of them left the manna over until the next morning because they were covetous. The leftovers bred worms and stank. Covetousness is a foul-smelling sin (JohnChr).

16:29 Every man was to remain in his house on the Sabbath. Yet the Jewish leaders left their houses, contrary to the Law of Moses, to plot against Jesus (Mt 27:62–66; JohnChr). They broke the Law to plot against the Lawgiver.

16:33 Manna was a type of Christ as the Bread of Life, and the **golden pot** a type of the Mother of God. For Christ became the Bread of Life in her holy womb for the salvation of the world.

17:6 The rock was a type of the Son of God (1Co 10:4; AmbM). He stood on the rock in Horeb and caused it to pour forth water. Rocks do not pour forth water by nature, but in a mystery this rock did. It remained a rock but simultaneously became a fountain. Similarly, bread and wine are not by nature the Body and Blood of Christ, but in a mystery they become so. They remain bread and wine, but simultaneously are Christ's Body and Blood.

17:11 Although Moses was silent, he was crying out to God, and although he was at ease, he was triumphing (AmbM; GrgTheo). His body was still, but he was actively engaged in spiritual warfare. Triumph in spiritual warfare comes through stillness in prayer and through the victory of the Cross.

17:12 Moses' hands were outstretched by Aaron and Hur, which was a type of the Cross. However, Christ alone outstretched His hands in triumph over the enemy (JohnChr; GrgTheo).

18:3, 4 The names of Moses' two sons summarize two aspects of salvation. One aspect is deliverance *from* Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who were a type of sin, death, and the devil. Another aspect is sojourning in a foreign land: this world was not Moses' true home, for he looked *to* the reward of the world to come (Heb 11:26).

18:14 Although Moses had done mighty works in God, he was still only a man and needed wise counsel. Similarly, wise leaders in the Church seek the godly counsel of others, for they are not dictators. Rather, they are counselors who seek the wise counsel of others (JohnChr).

19:4 The Son of God brought Israel to Himself from Egyptian bondage. This prefigures His Incarnation, by which He brings the Church to Himself as the Great High Priest (AmbM).

19:6 The children of Israel were to be a holy nation and a royal priesthood. These things were fulfilled in the Church (1Pt 2:4–10).

19:8 They said they would obey but did not, “for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified” (Rom 2:13; JohnChr).

19:14, 15 The washing of clothes and refraining from wives speak of spiritual seed conceived through the love and fear of God in the spiritual womb, travailing and bringing forth the spirit of salvation (JohnDm).

19:17 Ex 19:17, 20, 21: Moses brought out the people to meet with God, that is, with God the Son. He is the Lord who came down on Mt. Sinai, and He is God, for it was He who spoke to Moses on the mountain (HilryP).

19:19 The Jews acknowledged that God spoke to Moses, but said concerning Jesus they did not know where He was from (Jn 9:29). Yet it was He who spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

20:1 **All these words** refers to the Ten Commandments. But what need was there for these to be written? For God implanted all His laws in man's nature when He created him. It was necessary because of free will and man's corruption through sin (JohnCas; see also Rom 2:14, 15). However, the written law is a lower standard than the law of nature (JohnChr), for these commandments in the Old Testament condescend to man's weakness and thus refer only to keeping the body pure. But in the New Testament, the law of Christ elevates man to be pure in both body and soul.

20:2 It is not enough to be brought out of **Egypt, out of the house of bondage** into freedom. Far greater than this, Christ gave Himself for us to free us from our sins and to lead us into the true freedom of the children of God (Rom 8:21; AmbM).

20:3 The Lord our God is the true Son of the true Father; thus we do not worship any false god (GrgNy). However, false gods do not exist in themselves, for this commandment refers to the future, and what is in the future does not yet exist (AthanG). But the Son is true God of true God; therefore, He exists eternally with the Father and the Holy Spirit. We worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, our one God.

20:4-23 An idol, or image, depicts some god as having a form or shape, but the true God has no form or shape. Why therefore did Israel use images in their worship? Because all these foreshadowed the Incarnation of the Son of God, whom we worship both as God and Man. Also, icons used in Church worship do not depict the divine nature. They draw attention to the Incarnation.

20:5 God is without passion, but He condescends to call Himself a jealous God to show the intensity of His love for man. Therefore, let us love Him with intensity, for this is very pleasing to Him (JohnChr).

20:12 God offers no rewards in the prohibitions of the Ten Commandments. God's promise of reward is offered to those who keep the positive ones. For example, to honor one's father and mother is the first commandment in the Ten to promise a reward, namely, a long and spiritually prosperous life on earth (Eph 6:1, 2; JohnChr).

20:13, 14 All sinful passions are evil, but murder is listed before adultery because it is worse than lust (JohnChr).

20:17 Evil desire is an ancient vice, especially the love of money, and this commandment was given to check it (AmbM).

20:19 Moses was a mediator between God and the people, and they believed him. In this sense, he was a type of Christ, the Mediator between God and man (1Ti 2:5; BasilG).

20:21 The Son of God humbled Himself to allow Moses to see and talk with Him (GrgTheo), and He humbled Himself to the extreme by becoming Man to be crucified for us. He, the Father, and the Holy Spirit dwell in **the thick darkness**, that is, They cannot be comprehended in Their nature or essence. We cannot know God in His essence; we can only know Him through the revelation of the Son.

20:24-26 Man is not to worship before idols. Israel worshiped the true God at an altar. The Church also worships the true God at an altar (Heb 13:10).

20:24-26 Man is not to worship before idols. Israel worshiped the true God at an altar. The Church also worships the true God at an altar (Heb 13:10).

21:5, 6 The Law honored free will, for the permanent relationship of servant to master was based on it. Similarly, our service to the Lord Jesus Christ is based on free will.

21:13 The Word of the Father appointed cities of refuge, and when He became incarnate, He also commanded, “When they persecute you in this city, flee into another” (Mt 10:23; AthanG).

21:16 The Law imposed the death penalty for cursing one's father or mother. Similarly, the heretics curse the Holy Fathers and the teachings of the Church. They constantly change their own teachings, because they cannot find Christ, the Wisdom of God (AthanG).

21:24 The Law allowed vengeance to be taken on one's enemy, but the saints in the Old Testament did not fulfill this law. They went beyond it and suffered all kinds of deprivation from their enemies (Heb 11:37, 38). The law of Christ would have our patience proved by the injuries and blows offered to us being redoubled, and bids us be ready to endure twice as much damage (Mt 5:38, 39; JohnCas).

22:20 The children of Israel were to be a holy people in their behavior toward one another. Holiness in personal relationships was to be motivated by one commandment: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” and this applied to both fellow Israelites and resident aliens (Lv 19:18, 34). All the ordinances given Israel regarding neighbors are summed up in this one commandment (Rom 13:9).

23:1 One should never accept a report that belittles someone without investigating its validity, for the Holy Spirit warns against circulating a false report (BasilG).

23:2 The majority are not always right. Sometimes they pervert justice.

23:3 If a poor man is not to be shown partiality, much less the rich. This holds true not only for judges in the courts but also for all men, for justice is to be kept pure (JohnChr).

23:4, 5 If we are to return an enemy's domestic animal that is straying, how much more are we to return his soul and that of our friends to God (JohnChr).

23:10-12 Love of God and neighbor also includes love of creation, for the land needs rest. And this benefits both the poor and the wild animals. Then too, man is refreshed, for the Sabbath is made for man and creation, and not man and creation for the Sabbath.

23:15 When you appear before God, do not appear before Him empty-handed. This applies to almsgiving, for when you enter before God to implore mercy, you must first show mercy. Make God your debtor, then offer your prayers. Lend to Him, then ask for a return, and you will receive it with interest (JohnChr).

23:20 This is the Angel who said to Moses, “I AM the Existing One” (3:14). He is the Only-begotten God, because He is begotten from the Unbegotten Father before all time and ages. He is called **Angel** to distinguish Him from the Father. The word *angel* means *messenger*, and this Angel reveals the will of the Father to man. Moses believed in the Holy Trinity (GrgNy). Thus, “My” refers to the Father, and “Angel” refers to the Son.

23:21 This Angel has the authority to forgive sins, for the Father's **name is in Him**. The Father's name is the Lord; therefore, the Son is also called by this name (AmbM). When He became incarnate, He also forgave sins. But the Jews challenged His authority in vain, because they did not believe He was the Son of God (Mt 9:1–7).

23:22 Israel was to be **a royal priesthood and a holy nation** based on obedience to the Lord. The Lord speaking to Israel was the Word, and when He became Incarnate, the nation disobeyed Him. Therefore, He took the kingdom away from Israel and gave it to a nation bearing the fruits of it (Mt 21:43). This nation consists of the obedient in the Church, both Jews and Gentiles (1Pt 2:9, 10).

23:23 Again, **My Angel** is the Son of the Father. He led Israel into the land of promise (JohnCas). He also became incarnate to lead us into the world to come. Moses believed in the Holy Trinity and in the Incarnation.

23:25 The Word commanded them to serve **the Lord** their **God**, who is the Father. The Word incarnate now draws all who obey Him into the service of His Father.

23:26 The Lord promises to **fulfill the number of** our **days** if we truly serve Him. Those who do so will not die before their service is completed. Abraham was an example of this (Gn 25:8), and the Psalmist prays, “Take me not away in the midst of my days” (Ps 101:25; AthanG).

24:1, 2 Moses alone could draw near to God because he had the unquenchable grace of the Spirit. St. Paul also said, “Do not quench the Spirit” (1Th 5:19), for so shall we be partakers of Christ if we hold fast to the end the Spirit given to us at the beginning. By quenching the Spirit, he did not mean the Spirit is placed in the power of men and is able to suffer anything from them. Rather, evil and unthankful people are such who wish to quench Him (AthanG).

24:3 The people said they would **do** all the Lord's **words**, but saying is one thing and doing another. So the Apostle John said we are to love “in deed and in truth” (1Jn 3:18).

24:4-8 Moses' activity prefigured four things involved in worship: Scripture, the altar, the Church (**the twelve stones**), and the Blood of Christ (Heb 9:19–24).

24:12-18 These verses are read as the first reading during the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration.

24:15 Joshua, too, was covered by the sacred cloud, for he had the grace of the Spirit (AmbM).

24:18 Moses broke the law regarding the Sabbath, which requires rest but not fasting. Yet he was guiltless in spite of journeying on the mountain and fasting for forty days and nights. He directed his whole desire toward God, and his anger against the enemies of God. This foreshadowed grace, in which the Sabbath Day would be fulfilled. Under grace, we no longer serve God one day a week, but we are to direct our whole desire toward God and our anger toward the devil throughout our life. We also cause our bodies to cease from sin and urge them forward to assist our obedience to the divine precepts (JohnDm).

25:1 The Law of Moses honored free will.

25:9 The use of icons in the Church is not idol worship. For God commanded Israel to use icons in their worship. These icons were **the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings**. The honor given the icons in the Church passes over to the prototype (JohnDm; BasilG).

25:10 The first thing made for the tabernacle was the **ark of testimony**, because it foreshadows the Mother of God with Christ in her womb (Akathist). Christ in her womb is typified by the contents eventually placed in the ark: the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the Ten Commandments (Heb 9:4). For He is the heavenly manna, His death and Resurrection are life-giving, and He is the Lawgiver and the fulfiller of the Law He gave.

25:18 The holy angels are members of the Church.

25:22 God does not make Himself known in His essence, for no creature can know this. God makes Himself known in intimate communion (BasilG).

25:40 **The pattern shown** Moses **on the mountain** speaks of true worship in the heavenly holy of holies (Heb 8:5). The pattern speaks of Christ, the Mother of God, and the Church.

26:31 The veil was a type of the life-giving flesh of Christ (Heb 10:20; Jn 6:51). In a mystery, the bread and wine of the Eucharist become the Body and Blood of Christ, which give life to the faithful.

28:17-20 The twelve stones speak of twelve names of Christ by which our holy faith is built up. They reveal His oneness of essence with the Father and the fact that He is undivided from Him. He is called God and Word (Jn 1:1), Son and Only-begotten (Jn 1:18), Brightness and Impress (Heb 1:3), Mirror (Jn 14:9) and Image (Col 1:15), Wisdom and Power (1Co 1:24), and Truth and Life (Jn 14:6; AmbM).

29:5 Aaron was not born a high priest, but when God willed, he became one. And when God willed, the Word became flesh, and as High Priest He offered Himself to the Father to cleanse us from all sin by His precious Blood (AthanG).

29:14 The flesh of the sin offering was burned outside the camp. Similarly, no one placed amid the evil of this world can lay aside sin, nor is his blood acceptable to God, unless he put away the defilement of the body (AmbM).

30:10 The Law of Moses was a type and shadow of the New Covenant made in Christ. For example, the high priest could only go into the holy of holies once a year with the blood of atonement. By this the Holy Spirit was indicating that the way into the heavenly holy of holies was not yet manifested. For external gifts and sacrifices under the Law could not cleanse and perfect the conscience of the worshipers. But Christ our Great High Priest entered the holy of holies once for all, and His precious blood cleanses and perfects the conscience of the worshipers. The blessing of a cleansed conscience is unspeakable joy, and in the Eucharist the faithful enter the heavenly holy of holies to partake of this cleansing and perfection (Heb 9).

31:3 **The divine Spirit** is the Holy Spirit (BasilG; GrgTheo; CyrJer).

31:15 The penalty for breaking the Sabbath was death. Yet the Jewish leaders did not rest on the Sabbath (Mt 27:62–66), but were running around and seeking to keep Christ in the tomb (AthanG).

31:18 **The finger of God** is the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20).

32:1-6 These words were written to warn everyone to beware of spiritual arrogance, for anyone can fall into sin if he fails to guard against temptation (1Co 10:6–12).

32:10-32 Moses performed many great wonders and signs, but nothing made him as great as the love he showed in these statements. For he looked to the interest of his neighbors. He distinguished between God's work and the devil's work, for he loved them as God's handiwork while hating their evil behavior. He did not despise them, but only their sin. He chose rather to perish with them than to be saved without them. He would rather perish with them than have the honor of a great nation (JohnChr).

32:34 **My Angel** is the Only-begotten God and Son of the Father. He is called “Angel” (or “Messenger”) because He reveals the Father's will to man (GrgNy). For He *is* the Will of the Father (AthanG).

33:3 Ex 33:3, 12–17: **My Angel** is the Son of the Father, and He sent Him to lead Israel to the promised land (GrgNy). “Angel” means “messenger,” for the Son is the Will and Word of the Father (AthanG). He is the Angel who appeared to Moses in Exodus 3 and said, “I AM the Existing One” (3:2, 14). The Father also sent Him to become incarnate for the salvation of the world (1Jn 4:14).

33:7 Moses pitched the tabernacle **outside the camp, far from the camp**. Everyone who sought the Lord went outside the camp. When the Lord became incarnate, He suffered on the Cross outside Jerusalem. Those who wish to find Him must leave the earthly Jerusalem to find Him in the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 13:12–14; AmbM).

33:19 The Lord has mercy and compassion on whom He wills, because He alone knows the secrets of the heart and who is worthy and who is not (JohnChr).

33:20 No man can see the essence of the Father ("My face"), either in this world or in the one to come (JohnChr; GrgNy). The Apostle John also said the same thing: "No one has seen God at any time" (Jn 1:18). But the Son is one in essence with the Father, and therefore fully sees and knows the Father's essence (AthanG; JohnChr).

33:21 **A place** refers to the Holy Spirit, for He is often called the place of those being sanctified. Moses as well gained some knowledge of God by the Spirit (BasilG).

33:22 The Son of the Father is **the rock** and the **hand**. The rock reveals the mystery of the Incarnation (1Co 10:4; AmbM). The hand reveals the oneness in essence of the Son with the Father. For as the hand is one in essence with the body, similarly, the Son is one in essence with the Father (AthanG). Therefore, He reveals the Father and makes Him known to man.

33:23 **My back** refers to the glory of God, for man can see His glory if his heart is pure. For Moses saw His glory to the extent he was capable, as is the case with any man. This glory is also called His energy. Man can know God in His energy, but not in His essence.

34:5 The Lord who **descended in the cloud** is the Only-begotten Lord, and He **called upon the name of the Lord**, who is the Father. Thus, the Son speaks of the Father.

34:6, 7 The Lord **proclaimed** the Lord, that is, the Son and Word proclaimed the Father and revealed things concerning Him. For example, the Father is true, that is, he is the True God. The Son and Word is “True God of True God” (Creed).

34:9-11 Moses requested that the Lord Himself lead Israel to the promised land, and his prayer was answered. The Lord is the Angel of the Father, mentioned in previous chapters. “Angel” means “messenger,” for the Son is the Word of the Father. He interpreted the Father's will through Moses to Israel.

34:14 The Word calls His Father **a jealous God**. He does not mean the Father has passion in His nature. He uses “jealous” by way of analogy with human nature. For example, as a loving father is intolerant toward bad things happening to his children, so the loving Father is intolerant of the evil things that happen to His children when they go astray to worship other gods.

34:29-35 The glory of the Law that shone on Moses' face was to point the Jews to Christ. But their hearts were hard; therefore, they were unable to look upon this glory. The Law was not the problem. The problem was their hardness of heart, which prevented them from seeing Christ in the Law. When, therefore, either a Jew or Gentile now turns to Christ, he sees His glory not only in the Law, but also in the New Covenant (2Co 3; JohnChr).

35:5 Ex 35:5, 21, 22, 26, 29: The offering was to be made from a willing heart, for the Law did not force anyone to serve the Lord. The same is true under grace in the New Testament, for the Lord never forces anyone against his will.

35:31-35 The Holy Spirit filled Bezalel and Aholiab with the effects or gifts of His energies: **wisdom**, **understanding**, **knowledge**, **skill**, and **the ability to teach**. By the Holy Spirit they were able to build the tabernacle of testimony. By the Holy Spirit's variety of gifts in the New Testament, the Church as the Body of Christ is being built (1Co 12).

36:2, 3 Great things were accomplished when the children of Israel freely submitted their will to the will of God. Two wills worked in synergy to build the tabernacle—the human will of the people freely willing the same thing as the divine will. Great things are also accomplished in the Church when both wills work in synergy (Php 2:13).

36:6, 7 When the will of the people works freely in synergy with the will of God, the offerings exceed the needs. God loves this kind of giving (2Co 9:7).

38:1 The ark was a type of the Mother of God (Akathist). Inside the ark would be placed the jar of manna, a type of Christ as the Bread of Life. Also within would be Aaron's rod that budded, a type of the Life-giving Cross, and the Ten Commandments, which spoke of Christ as the Lawgiver. Christ was conceived in the Virgin's womb to give life to the world.

38:5 The mercy seat was a type of the Cross and the shed blood of Christ by which He makes people righteous (Rom 3:25). Those cleansed by His precious blood are made righteous immediately. The unbelieving Jews, however, hoped to obtain righteousness by keeping the commandments of the Law, but this was an impossibility. They failed to see what the mercy seat was teaching them, namely, that Christ is the mercy seat for their sins and “the end of the law for righteousness” (Rom 10:4).

38:6 The cherubim were icons or images of two angels. These were not idols, yet they were part of Israel's worship. Similarly, icons used in the Church are not idols. These are venerated, and the honor paid to them passes to the ones they image.

38:11, 12 Worship in Israel was liturgical. Liturgy means “the work of the people.” Israel's worship included four orders: the high priest, the priests, the Levites, and Israel in general. Similarly, Church worship is liturgical and includes four orders: the bishop (high priest), the priests, the deacons (Levites), and the laity. These orders are essential to liturgical worship.

38:13 The lampstand was a type of Christ as the Light of the world (Jn 8:12).

39:23 In six months, what was required for the liturgical worship was completed and brought to Moses (vv. 13–22). Moses **blessed them** to show the end of willing obedience to the Lord is blessing.

40:1-38 Here the Lord directs Moses to set up the tabernacle for liturgical worship on the first day of the first month—one year after Israel came out of Egypt (v. 15). Now the Lord manifested His presence in a cloud by day and in fire by night. The tabernacle **was filled with the Lord's glory** (vv. 28–32). Both these items speak of type and prophecy. For the physical manifestations of cloud and fire typify His human nature. The glory typifies His divine nature—both of which are united in His one Person. And **the Lord**—the source of **the glory**—is the Father. Thus when He became incarnate, the Cloud and the Fire "tabernacled" or dwelt among us (Jn 1:14). And just as some Israelites in the Old Testament could see the cloud and the fire—but not the glory within it—so too, some saw Jesus in the flesh, but did not see the glory of His divinity. They failed to see Him as the very Lord God who spoke to Moses and directed him in establishing the tabernacle of Testimony.

At His conception, the Son of God ("the Power") "overshadowed" the Virgin Mary and became a Man in her womb (Lk 1:35). When He overshadowed the tabernacle, this became a type of His overshadowing Mary at His conception. And as He led Israel by the cloud and the fire (vv. 30–32), the Incarnate Lord now leads His Church. For the Church hears His voice and follows Him, as Israel did when they heard His voice speaking in and through Moses.

40:28 The tabernacle was a type of the Mother of God, and the cloud was the presence of the Holy Trinity. When God the Word was conceived in her womb, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the Power of the Highest overshadowed her (Lk 1:35). The Power was the Son and the Highest was the Father. The Son became incarnate, but all three Persons were actively involved.

1:2 The statement, **If a man among you should offer gifts to the Lord**, emphasizes the freewill characteristic of any offering. God never forces anyone to worship Him.

Offering animal sacrifices to the Lord was not new and was well known in antiquity. Both Abel and Abraham offered animal sacrifices to the Lord (Gn 4; 22). What are newly introduced are (1) the specific instructions about the sacrifices, (2) the enumeration of them, and (3) laws governing where, how, and by whom they were to be offered.

God gave these instructions for the benefit of both Israel and those under the new covenant, for their purpose was to lead mankind to Christ. St. Paul says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal 3:24, 25).

Only domesticated animals could be offered to God—animals dependent on the people, who in turn depended on them. These sacrificial animals were a type of Christ, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29).

1:3 All such animals were to be without blemish to be acceptable to God. These unblemished animals were types of Christ: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14).

1:4 In the Levitical liturgy of worship, the people participated in the worship. They were not passive observers who watched while the priests did all the work, for the word *liturgy* means *the work of the people*. Both priest and people were actively involved. Similarly, in the new covenant liturgy of worship, both laity and clergy actively participate in the worship.

Here, the worshiper placed his hand on the head of the animal and killed it, and in so doing was united with the offering; for the animal's death became the death of the offerer. Similarly, in baptism, the worshiper is united with Christ, for Christ's death becomes in the mystery of baptism the very death, burial, and resurrection of the one baptized (Rom 6:3, 4).

In the Levitical liturgy of worship, the burnt offering was accepted as an atonement on behalf of the worshiper. Atonement is reconciliation to God. Similarly, in the new covenant liturgy of worship, Christ's offering of Himself is accepted as the worshiper's means of reconciliation to God (Rom 5:10, 11; 2Co 5:18).

1:5 Aaron, the high priest, and his sons were types of the new covenant clergy. Under the new covenant, Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest. As High Priest, He is both the one who offers and the one who is offered as the sacrifice. Prior to the Great Entrance in the Divine Liturgy, the priest prays, “For Thou art He who offers and is offered.” Without Him to offer, no offering can be made. Apart from Him, no sacrifice is acceptable to God. This relationship will be seen often throughout Leviticus, and much will be gained by careful observation of Israel's Old Testament service of worship.

A life was given to God and that life was in the blood of the animal offered. It was acceptable to God as atonement for the offerer. Its fulfillment is made known in Heb 9:11–22. Verse 14 clearly shows the role of the blood of Christ in giving people access to the Holy Trinity: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

1:9 The whole burnt offering was totally consumed on the altar—an unmistakable picture of complete commitment to God. The Church displays this spirit of commitment in its responsive prayers: “Let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.”

The burnt offering was a sweet aroma to the Father. This aroma speaks of the love of Christ in giving Himself as an offering and sacrifice for us, for no aroma is sweeter to the Father than this. When we walk in this love, we, too, are a sweet aroma to Him (Eph 5:2).

2:1 Offerings were gifts in order to gain the grace of the one to whom the gift was offered (Gn 32:13–21). So it was imperative that the offering be acceptable to the one receiving it. Likewise in Leviticus, gifts acceptable to God were carefully prescribed to Israel.

The grain offering of cultivated wheat milled into fine flour was offered as the fruit of the people's labor. As the animals offered were not wild but domestic, so wild grains were not offered. The grain offering pictures Christ as the totally acceptable grain offering to God—He who offers all His works as an acceptable offering to the Father. In Jn 12:24, He says of Himself, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” Jesus Himself is the grain of wheat that died and rose again as man's true spiritual food—the living bread that came down out of heaven to give life to the world (Jn 6:41–51).

The grain offering also pictures the faithful of the Church who offer to God for His blessing the works of their hands as co-laborers with Him. As St. Paul wrote, “We are God's fellow workers” (1Co 3:9).

Oil added to the flour typifies the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ offered Himself to the Father through the Holy Spirit (Heb 9:14). The Holy Spirit also helps us co-labor with God that our labors might be acceptable to Him (Acts 1:8; Eph 5:18).

Frankincense was also added to the various grain offerings. It typified the prayers of the Church. In Vespers, the Church sings, “Let my prayer arise in Your sight as incense.” Co-laboring with God must be accompanied by prayer.

2:2 The priest placed the grain offering on the altar as a memorial. This memorial speaks of Christ when He established the Eucharist on Great and Holy Thursday. He said, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Lk 22:19). Remembrance of Him is more than the memory of Christ's death on the cross in history. It also includes the sprinkling of His precious blood in heaven when He ascended on high (Heb 9:23, 24). Thus, in partaking of His body and blood in the Eucharist, the Church eats and drinks eternal life, for His flesh is life-giving.

2:4, 5 The grain offering baked in the oven was to be without either leaven or honey (v. 11). As used here, leaven and honey typify sin and its corruption. Thus, concerning leaven, St. Paul writes, “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth” (1Co 5:8). Christ was without sin (Jn 8:46; Heb 7:26–28), and we are to cleanse ourselves from all sin; for sin has no place in the Christian way of life.

2:13 Salt, a symbol of an indissoluble covenant, was added to this offering. The oil symbolized the Holy Spirit, and incense was a symbol of prayer. Further, “In Leviticus, every gift, unless it is seasoned with salt, is forbidden to be offered as an oblation to the Lord God. Now the whole spiritual meditation of the Scriptures is given to us as salt which stings in order to benefit, and which disinfects, without which it is impossible for a soul, by means of reason, to be brought to the Almighty; for ‘ye are the salt of the earth,’ said the Lord to the apostles” (Meth).

3:1 The peace offering was not new, but the laws governing it were new—the how, by whom and where it was to be offered. Gn 31:54 provides background for the peace offering: “Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren; and they ate bread and drank and stayed all night on the mountain.” They dined together in peace. Lv 7:11–34; 19:5–8; 22:21–25 also provide more details concerning the peace offering. Christ Himself is our peace offering (Eph 2:14; Col 1:20), and through Him we are reconciled to God and one another in peace. Through Him we also offer our entire self—body and soul—to God, with whom we find peace (Rom 5:1, 10).

3:3-5 Portions of the animal were offered as a burnt offering to God, but in the new covenant we are to offer all the members of our body to Him in the service of righteousness and holiness (Rom 6:19; 12:1; GrgTheo; Nic).

3:8 The sacrificial animal was to be killed **before the doors of the tabernacle of testimony**. The blood was then sprinkled **all around on the altar**. Both statements show the close connection between the altar and the tabernacle of testimony. The altar speaks of the cross, and the tabernacle speaks of heaven. Thus, the cross is connected to heaven, for after Jesus ascended to the Father, He sprinkled His blood on the heavenly altar (Heb 9:11–24).

The Church worships in heaven, for worship is heaven on earth. Thus, the bread and wine of the Eucharist become in a mystery the body and blood of Christ, His very blood sprinkled on the heavenly altar.

3:16 Anyone eating the fat portions of the offered animal was cut off from his people. The fat was considered the best, and the best was to be reserved for the Lord alone. As to the blood, it was never to be eaten. God's response is strong: “I will set My face against that soul who eats blood and will utterly destroy him from among his people” (17:10). Not only is the life of the flesh in the blood, but the blood has been given by God to make atonement for the soul (17:11; see notes on 17:11).

4:2 The sin offering only covered sins committed involuntarily, that is, sins committed in ignorance of the Law (v. 13). In the Law of Moses, no provision was made for willful sins, which are called sins of arrogance: “But the soul who may do something with a hand of arrogance, whether he is native-born or a resident alien, that one is provoking God; and he shall be utterly destroyed from among His people” (Nm 15:30). Willful sins were sins committed with knowledge of the Law. But in Christ all sins are remitted—voluntary sins, involuntary sins, and sins in thought, word, and deed—if there is appropriate repentance.

4:3 A Levitical priest is called **the anointed priest**. *Anointed* is the word from which the name *Christ* is derived. “Moses was the first to make known the name *Christ* as being especially august and glorious. When he delivered types and symbols of heavenly things, and mysterious images, in accordance with the oracle which said to him, ‘Look that you make all things according to the pattern shown you in the mount,’ he consecrated a man high priest of God, in so far as that was possible, and him he called *Christ*. And thus to this dignity of the high priesthood, which in his opinion surpassed the most honorable position among men, he attached for the sake of honor and glory the name of Christ” (Eusb).

The involuntary sin of some individual may have been detrimental not only to himself but also to others. This was especially true of a priest who sinned. “Wishing to show that sins receive more serious punishment by far when they occur in the case of the priest than in the case of the laity, Moses enjoins as great a sacrifice to be offered for the priest as for the whole people, and this amounts to a proof on his part, that the wounds of the priesthood need more assistance, that is, as great as those of all the people together” (JohnChr). The sins of the priesthood under the new covenant also carry as much guilt as those of the entire Church. The priesthood therefore has the awesome responsibility of living a holy life.

4:6-17 The blood was also treated differently in the variations of the sin offering—those for the anointed priest, the whole congregation, etc. In the case of the priest and the whole congregation, the blood was sprinkled (1) before the veil in the Holy Place, (2) on the horns of the altar of incense, and (3) at the altar of burnt offering. We see this type fulfilled in Jesus, who went into the very heavenly holy of holies with His own blood, and presents it before God continually (Heb 8:1–6; 9:11–13). No one can get closer to God than that.

4:12-21 The sin offering for the priest and all the people had to be burned outside the camp. When any blood was taken into the holy place, the remains of the animal of the sin offering had to be completely burned outside the camp. Regarding Jesus, this point is precisely made in Hebrews: “For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate” (Heb 13:11, 12). Jesus said, “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me” (Jn 5:46). Thus, according to His own words, the sin offering in Leviticus is about Himself.

4:13-21 There is such a thing as corporate sin. Here, the whole congregation of Israel sins (see also Nm 15:22–26). This typified the Church in the new covenant. Why? Because God holds his people accountable—individually and corporately—and even if unknown, sin will still have consequences. When sin becomes known, there must be an offering, because the people of God have a responsibility to represent God to the world. Thus, their failure is a disaster to the world around them. Paul says of Israel, “For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you’” (Rom 2:24).

4:22-26 There was a distinction of accountability between a private individual's sin and the sin of the political leader or ruler. And though there may be no awareness of sins committed, consequences remain, and ignorance is not an legitimate excuse. Therefore, it is good to pray for “the president and all civil authorities,” a prayer said in most all our church services, for at the day of judgment, they will be accountable before God for their sins and the consequences of them for those they governed. This is equally true for all nations, even for a democracy. As St. Paul indicates, rulers are appointed by God, not by the people: “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God” (Rom 13:1, 2).

4:27-35 Though the common people are less accountable before God for their sins, more is said about their individual offerings than those of priest, the entire congregation together, or a ruler. The sin offerings of the individuals make up the greater part of all sin offerings made. Thus, provision must be made for all, even the poorest (see also Nm 15:27–29).

The type here reveals Christ the sinless One as being the offering for sin: “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2Co 5:21). He is accessible to all as an offering—to priest, congregation, ruler, or any individual. One's station in life or wealth is no issue.

5:2, 3 Under the Law of Moses, to touch any unclean thing—the carcass of an unclean animal, or an animal killed by a wild animal, or unclean carcasses of creeping things, or the unclean carcasses of cattle, or any human uncleanness—was sin. This uncleanness was a type of uncleanness relating to both soul and body. Rom 1:23–32; Gal 5:18–21; Eph 5:3–5 list examples of such uncleanness.

Under the new covenant, to live an unclean life in body and soul is contrary to the teachings of Christ (Eph 4:19, 20). Therefore, we must not touch what is unclean, but if we do, we must cleanse ourselves to be acceptable to the Father (2Co 6:17–7:1).

5:6 Involuntary sin committed contrary to the Mosaic Law—such as failing to give testimony regarding an oath heard (v. 1), any uncleanness (vv. 2, 3), sinning with the tongue (v. 4)—required confession, which includes knowledge of the sin and genuine repentance. Under the new covenant, any sin of thought, word, or deed, whether voluntary or involuntary, is to be confessed to God, and He is faithful and righteous to forgive and cleanse the confessor. If we genuinely confess our known sins, He even forgives and cleanses the unknown ones as we walk in the light (1Jn 1:7–9).

The priest would make atonement for the sinner, that is, reconcile him with God. This speaks of Christ, our Great High Priest, who is now in the heavenly holy of holies reconciling the repentant sinner through His precious blood. He cleanses and remits the sins of the repentant.

5:11 Under the Law of Moses, poverty was no hindrance to attaining the remission of sins. Under the new covenant, Christ became poor for our sakes, for poverty cannot keep a person from Him and His salvation (2Co 8:9). But love of riches does (Mt 6:24).

5:15 Lev 5:15, 21, 25: The sin offering and the trespass offering were similar in that both were offered for transgressing the Lord's commandments. They were distinct in that the trespass offering also included offerings for transgressions committed against one's neighbor. But no special provisions were made for the poor in their transgressions against a neighbor, as was the case with the sin offering. Everyone, whether rich or poor, was on equal footing in this regard. The poor had no more excuse for infringing on the rights of others than the rich.

In this modern era, some believe the poor have the right to steal from the rich, but poverty is no justification for sinning against a neighbor. Nor do the rich have any excuse for transgressions. But God's law is fulfilled through love of neighbor, whether they are rich or poor.

5:24-26 Full restoration was to be made, with one-fifth more added to it. This restoration evidenced at least two things on the part of the offender. It showed genuine repentance toward God and love toward neighbor. With these two things in place, the trespass offering was then brought and the sin atoned for.

Zacchaeus made full restitution to his neighbors, which showed genuine repentance and love on his part. Thus, the Lord said of him, “Today salvation has come to this house” (Lk 19:9). Jesus also, for His part, made full restitution for sins and trespasses plus **one-fifth more**, through the cross.

6:9 The fire on the bronze altar was to burn continually. The priests were to be sure the fire never went out. Here it was a type of the perpetual offering of Christ in heaven. For Israel, it was the sign of uninterrupted worship of God, based on an animal offered for a burnt offering. In the new covenant, it is the same—the same open door for uninterrupted worship of God and fellowship with Him—but now based on the sacrifice of Christ for our sins as its fulfilled foundation.

6:12-16 The grain offering to be baked is offered as integral to the burnt offering (see ch. 2). The daily morning and evening offerings—both the burnt and grain offerings—were offered together. This action was a type of the work of our hands being offered and made acceptable to God because of the burnt-offering offered with it. God accepts our works, done in the name of the Holy Spirit and because of the work of Christ—but never apart or disunited from His offering of Himself to God as our “burnt offering.”

6:16 The people brought their gifts to God through the priest. The priest often received a portion of what was given by the people to God—in this case the grain offering. The priest did not directly receive from the people what was theirs. He received back something prescribed by God of what had been given to God. Even when the priest eats of the offering, he partakes of something belonging to God.

In the new covenant, this is true of the clergy and of all the people of the Church—themselves members of the royal priesthood—when they partake of the food of God, the eucharistic feast. The bread and the wine are given to God and given back to the people as the body and blood of Christ.

6:17-23 Instructions were given regarding specific parts of the sin offering. These were important (1) as types of aspects of our eucharistic worship, and (2) as types of the sanctity with which the eucharistic gifts themselves are treated. At the Divine Liturgy the celebrant proclaims, “The holy things for the holy.” It is the eucharistic gifts—the body and blood of Christ—to which he is referring. In response, the people proclaim, “One is holy, One is the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.” He is the ultimate holy sacrifice, and all of this is pictured in Leviticus.

How meticulous was the care for holy things—so important if we are to keep a clear sense of the holy. In the offering of Christ in the Divine Liturgy, detailed care is taken with every part of the body of Christ, with every drop of the blood of Christ. If the animal offered in the sin offering of the Old Testament was considered so holy, how much more the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

6:18 Touching what is holy affects our holiness—our very sanctification. Here we see a profound biblical concept whereby contact with what is holy offers holiness—and to the unworthy, possible condemnation.

This issue deeply affects our understanding of how one is affected by the holy Eucharist, holy icons, holy water, holy oil, holy bread, and all things holy in the life of the Church. Our participation in these things is not merely a remembrance of an historical event, but in spirit and in truth, God works through them to effect a healing within us—a reconciliation to Him and to our neighbor.

7:12, 13 In thankfulness of heart and spirit, we offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving—one made worthy because Jesus is our acceptable offering of thanks to God. The word *Eucharist* means *Thanksgiving*. In the Divine Liturgy we sing, “A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise.”

7:15 The flesh of the peace offering of thanksgiving was to be eaten by the priest. This typified eucharistic Communion, in which the worshiper participates in the sacrifice, the sacrifice being Christ Himself. He invites us to eat of Himself: “Take, eat, this is My body broken for you.”

7:16-18 No flesh of the peace offering was allowed to remain beyond the third day. To prevent corruption, anything left was totally burned with fire. But in Jesus there is no fear of corruption, for He is the living bread. Thus, having leaven in the bread of the Eucharist is no longer feared.

7:19-22 Cleansing was an essential condition for eating the sacrifice. In the new covenant, the blood of Christ in the Eucharist cleanses those who walk in the light with God: “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1Jn 1:7).

7:29, 30 The offerer himself was to offer up the gift from the peace offering. In the new covenant, Christ Himself is both the offerer and the gift offered on behalf of the Church. He also accepts the gift of Himself and distributes it to the faithful in the Eucharist: “For Thou Thyself art He who offers and is offered, who accepts and is distributed” (Prayer of the Cherubic Hymn).

8:2 Aaron did not take this honor to himself to be the high priest, but was called by God (Heb 5:4). “So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, *but* . . . [was] called by God as High Priest ‘according to the order of Melchizedek’” (Heb 5:5, 10).

8:6 Moses washed Aaron the high priest with water to prepare him for the high priesthood. This washing was a type of baptism. However, Jesus was not baptized because He needed it, but “to fulfill all righteousness” (Mt 3:15), for He fulfilled the righteousness required by the Mosaic Law. Therefore, He was baptized for our sake, “that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2Co 5:21).

8:7-9 Vestments were made for Aaron “for honor and glory” (Ex 28:2). For they were patterned after the Great High Priest in His heavenly honor and glory (Ex 25:40; Heb 8:5). Similarly, vestments are essential to worship under the new covenant, for they speak of the Great High Priest in His glory. This is why the vestments of the priest are so grand and beautiful, for they refer to our Great High Priest ministering on our behalf at the heavenly altar.

8:12 Moses anointed the head of Aaron with oil to sanctify him for the high priesthood. This oil typified the Holy Spirit under the new covenant. However, Jesus did not need the anointing of the Holy Spirit to qualify Him as the Great High Priest, for He Himself anoints others with the Holy Spirit. Then why was He anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Mt 3:16)? First, to identify the Holy Spirit as One of the Holy Trinity, and second, for our sakes, that He might anoint us with the Holy Spirit when we are baptized.

8:14 Lev 8:14, 18, 22: Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the heads of these offerings. This typified Christ, the Great High Priest, who both offered and was offered for our reconciliation with God (Heb 10:12). For since He is God, He offered Himself. He was also offered by the Father (Heb 9:28) and by the Holy Spirit (Heb 9:14). Therefore, although Christ alone was the sacrifice, the Holy Trinity was involved in the reconciliation of man.

8:15 Lev 8:15, 19, 23, 24: The blood of the sacrifices was connected with the altar of whole burnt offering and the priests themselves. This typified the Great High Priest, who took His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to sanctify it for our salvation (Heb 9:23, 24).

8:26 The unleavened bread speaks of Christ as our sinless sacrifice (Heb 7:26). But since He is sinless, in what sense was He made sin for us (2Co 5:21), made a curse (Gal 3:13), forsaken by the Father (Mt 27:46), and made subject to Him (1Co 15:28)? By appropriation and in a relative sense. “For neither as God nor as Man was He ever forsaken by the Father; neither was He made sin or a curse, nor did He need to be subject to the Father. For as God He is equal to the Father and in no way at variance with Him or subject to Him, while as Man He was never at any time so deaf to His Begetter that He should stand in need of subjection. So it was in appropriating our appearance and classing Himself with us that He said these things. For it was we who were subject to sin and curse, because we were disobedient and unhearing and thus forsaken” (JohnDm).

8:30 The anointing oil and the blood were sprinkled on the vestments of Aaron and his sons. This typified the connection between the blood of the Incarnate Son and the Holy Spirit. The entire work of the Holy Spirit is accomplished in and through the Incarnation, for He never bypasses the Incarnation in His workings. Moreover, both the works of Christ in His Incarnation and the works of the Holy Spirit are in the sacraments of the Church. This is why the sacraments save us.

9:2-21 Four offerings were prescribed by the Lord to initiate the tabernacle service: a sin offering, a whole burnt offering, a grain offering, and a peace offering, all in that order. The sin offering speaks of reconciliation with God (Rom 5:10); the whole burnt offering, of the full surrender of a life to God (Rom 12:1, 2); the grain offering, of the works of our hands (Jn 14:12); and the peace offering, of intimate communion with God in which we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ (Jn 6:53–58).

9:16 Worship in the old covenant was to be done **according to the prescribed manner**. No creativity whatsoever with regard to sacrifice was allowed. Nothing was to be done haphazardly. Quite to the contrary, creativity was prohibited and even punished, as seen in the next chapter. God, not man, set the rules for worship. Communion with God was approached on His terms, not man's. Thus, a priesthood was initiated in Israel, and only those ordained were to officiate at an altar, and not just any willing and able Israelite.

So too in the new covenant. The worship is to be accomplished “decently and in order” (1Co 14:40). Priests (clergy) are to be ordained to officiate at the altar. But amazingly, we live in a day when many professing Christians, claiming to be guided by the Bible, spurn order, even mock it, as though it were ungodly. They even call an order of worship dead. Spontaneity and creativity are exalted as if they were truly life. However, there is no biblical basis for such worship, for this kind of worship is dead in the eyes of the true God.

9:22 Aaron blessed the people using his hand. Priests in the new covenant also bless the people with their hand, using a motion in the form of the cross, for they bless them in Christ's name.

9:23, 24 **The glory of the Lord appeared to all the people**, and **fire came out from the Lord**. Therefore, liturgical worship was not a dead worship, for the Lord's glory and fire were seen. Neither is liturgical worship in the new covenant dead. Only people are dead, if they are in sin. But if they are alive in Christ, liturgical worship as prescribed by the Church fills them with the Lord's glory and fire.

10:1, 2 Nadab and Abihu died because they offered **strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them**. Offerings not prescribed by the Lord are considered by Him to be worthy of death.

“Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the priests who are in the Church, those who, as I have shown, possess the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But it is also incumbent to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, looking upon them either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abihu” (Iren).

11:2-4 Lev 11:2–4, 47: At least two issues relate to the animals: the nature of animals and eating only clean animals. The nature of all animals is good in itself because the Creator is good. He did not create anything evil in itself. This also applies to man, whose nature is good in itself. As Gn 1:31 says, “Then God saw everything He made, and indeed, it was very good.”

The Lawgiver said that foods going into the stomach cannot defile a man; rather, the evil proceeding from his heart defiles him (Mk 7:15–23). He said this when the Law of Moses was still in effect. Why then did He declare through Moses that certain animals were clean and others were unclean, and only the clean ones were to be eaten? Whatever various answers may be given, one seems to stand out as especially important: the eating of clean animals forecasts the cleansing of both Jews and Gentiles in baptism to form them into one body, the Church.

Peter's vision in Acts 10:9–16 indicates the inclusion of Gentiles into the Church through baptism: “The earth, then, this is what the linen sheet denotes, and the wild animals in it are those among the Gentiles, and the command: ‘Kill and eat,’ denotes that Peter must go to them also; and the linen sheet being let down three times denotes baptism” (JohnChr).

12:1-3 Marriage, conception, and birth are honorable in every way: “Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled” (Heb 13:4). Since these things are true, in what sense do conception and birth relate to uncleanness in the Mosaic Law?

They were symbolic of the meaning of baptism. The water of baptism is the womb into which the old life of sins is buried, as indicated by the **seven days** (v. 2). The **eighth day** (v. 3) speaks of the renewal of man's nature in baptism by the Holy Spirit into the world to come. Circumcision on this day is typical of the cutting away of sins by the circumcision of Christ, effected in baptism (Col 2:11, 12).

13:2 Leprosy was the primary type, or symbol, of sin in the Old Testament. Sin does to the soul what leprosy does to the body. As leprosy defiles the body, so similarly, sin defiles the conscience with dead works.

13:3 A person with leprosy was pronounced unclean. Similarly, all sin is unclean in the eyes of God. “God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness” (1Th 4:7).

13:9, 10 A person with a **leprous infection** was **brought to the priest** for examination. This examination could only determine whether or not he had the disease of leprosy; the priest could not effect a cure. Christ, our Great High Priest, not only examines our uncleanness, but also provides the cure: “There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account” (Heb 4:13), and, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14).

13:46 Leprosy forced the leper into a way of life **outside the camp**. This way became a camp to itself. Similarly, the fallen world is a camp to itself, with its own way of life. This way of life is described as the “old man” (Rom 6:6). This old man was crucified with Christ in baptism, and the one baptized is raised up with Christ to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:3, 4). “Newness of life” is described in Eph 4:24 as “the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

13:52 Just a little spot of contamination on a garment necessarily caused the whole of the garment to be destroyed. Radical action had to be taken with respect to leprosy. The same is to be said of anything contaminated by sin. Jude, the Lord's brother, writes, “And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh” (Jude 22, 23). He seems to have the matter of leprosy in mind, but applies it to sin and its contagion.

14:3 The person desiring cleansing from his leprosy cannot come to the priest. The priest must go outside the camp to the one so diseased and sick. So too, Christ went outside the camp for us: “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate” (Heb 13:12).

14:6, 7 This was to be done for the one to be cleansed of leprosy. Leprosy may be what King David had in mind when he prayed, “Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I will be cleansed.” David was praying for purification from his sin. Perhaps he understood leprosy as a type of sin, as one possible explanation of the reference to the hyssop in Ps 50.

14:10 The cleansing of the leper—his restoration to fellowship with God and the people—was completed on the eighth day. On that day for the cleansed leper, many of the offerings previously prescribed in Leviticus were offered. Here again is a type of Christ—our perfect offering—who bore our infirmities and was raised from the dead on the eighth day. For the leper, Christ is the fulfillment of all that was done and offered on that day. Christ is the one who cleanses all mankind—if man is willing—from the leprosy of sin and all its effects.

14:48 Note that nonliving matter could be redeemed, for atonement could be made for it. Consider again the power of Christ's victory over sin: “the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom 8:21).

14:54-57 This summarizes chapters 13 and 14. Note here the critical issue in separating what was infected—person or object—from the rest of the people. Obviously this had to do with protecting the people from the disease.

Leprosy as a type of sin—and its noted consequences—must not escape us. There is good cause for being separated from those who live in willful sin: “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1Co 5:6). Clearly, if one chooses to get really close to sin, to tolerate or ignore it, and acts as if it isn't there, one may “catch” it. Though leprosy is not the most contagious of diseases, what a disease with which to gamble!

15:13 Lev 15:13, 14, 28, 29: Cleansing from emissions seven days after the cessation of the discharge came with the washing with water. On the eighth day, an offering was brought to the Lord. Here again was a type of the washing of water in baptism and the offering of Christ—raised from the dead on the eighth day. In Christ, there is cleansing. And in Christ, the curse of death is overcome. On the eighth day, He trampled down death by death, upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

15:25-30 In light of this passage, consider the account of the woman with the issue of blood, who, though unclean—but because of her faith in Christ—dared to touch the Lord as He allowed it (Mk 5:25–34).

15:31 The tabernacle was the abode of God. No impurity would be tolerated there. Similarly, we are cleansed of sin's impurity by the blood of Christ so as to worship God in the heavenly holy of holies.

16:1 The Day of Atonement was inaugurated, as the text says, after the deaths of the priests Nadab and Abihu (ch. 10). After the sin of these two sons of Aaron, the people had a great need to see God's provision for forgiveness displayed before them.

16:2 This description seems to be the reason Nadab and Abihu died.

16:3 Here begins the description of the annual Day of Atonement, the single most important day in the calendar of ancient Israel. Virtually every detail of this day was a type of the work of Christ and His atonement for our sins. It is rewarding to give careful attention to the specific details of this day.

16:4 Aaron was to thoroughly wash himself in water. Here was not only a type of baptism in general, but also of the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Jesus said to John the Baptist, “Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Mt 3:15). The true High Priest was preparing to go into the holy of holies for the sins of the whole world. He only is without sin, so it was not for His own sins that He was baptized, but for the uncleanness of the people for whom He would suffer.

16:5 Five animals were offered on this day, a bull for a sin offering for himself, a ram for a burnt offering, two male goats as a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. Each animal offered provided types of the work of Christ.

16:6 An offering must be made for the priest and his household before he could carry out his duties of the day. So too, the clergy of the Church should never assume they do not need cleansing, for they too—and their households—sin as do others. The role of the clergy is unique, but they are still sinners in need of a sacrifice. It is not only the people who confess themselves to be chief of sinners at every Divine Liturgy—the clergy do as well.

16:8 Both goats together are one sin offering. Aaron cast lots over the two goats. The one on which the lot fell was for the Lord, and was to be slain. The other would be the scapegoat, to be let go into the wilderness. It takes both goats to make clear as one picture what was happening.

Theodoret writes regarding these two goats, “I will however mention the sacrifice in which two goats were offered, the one being slain, and the other let go. In these two goats there is an anticipative image of the two natures of the Savior; in the one let go, of the impassible Godhead, and in the one slain, of the passible manhood.”

16:16 Blood from the young bull was sprinkled seven times on the east side of the mercy seat—the symbol of completion. This was to cleanse the holy of holies—to **make atonement** for the holy of holies itself, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel. Similarly, Christ sprinkled His own blood in the heavenly holy of holies so we might enter there in worship (Heb 9:23, 24).

16:21 The high priest laid his hands on the head of the live goat. In doing so, he laid the sins and transgressions of the sons of Israel on the head of that goat. The goat, an innocent victim, bore on itself all the iniquities of the people. The goat, taken by a designated person, was then sent off into the wilderness.

The picture is clear. As the goat goes into the wilderness, so do the sins and transgressions of the people—never to be seen again. This reminds us of the Psalmist's words, “As far as the east is from the west, / So He removes our transgressions from us” (Ps 102:12). This marvelous reality is part of the foundation of what the Orthodox priest says in the Sacrament of Confession: “And now, having no further care for the sins you have confessed, go in peace.”

16:27 The bull of the sin offering and the goat, the blood of which was taken into the holy of holies, both were taken outside the camp and burned. Another type of Christ: “For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach” (Heb 13:11–13).

16:33 The atonement granted this day to the people of Israel could picture only in a limited way—as is true of all types—what Christ would do in His suffering and death. This old covenant offering could not make the conscience of the worshiper perfect (Heb 9:8, 9), though it did cleanse from all sin.

But our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, entered the heavenly holy of holies, where He sprinkled His sacrificial blood to deal fully with our sins. Today is the Day of Atonement. Today is the eighth day—the day after which there are no more days. In the old covenant, the high priest went into the holy of holies once every year, and necessarily came back out immediately. Not so of Christ. He went into the heavenly holy of holies with His own blood to atone for our sins, and thus to reconcile us with God.

17:1-8 Why this strict law regarding the slaying of domestic animals? It was to prevent Israel from succumbing to the idolatry of the peoples around them—to keep them holy and separate from idolatry. It was quite common among ancient people to offer animal sacrifices to their idols. But Israel was a nation set apart for God alone. Her people were to be a holy people living in fellowship with the true and living God. Idolatry, more quickly than any other cause, would turn them away from God. There was and is but one true God, and He revealed Himself to Israel and gave them instruction regarding their relationship to Him.

Here also is a type of the uniqueness of Christ. At Matins, Orthodox Christians sing, "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." That revelation is Christ Himself. He alone is the atonement for our sins, reconciling us to God. He alone is the Savior. Israel was a type of the Church—the new people of God—and this type expresses how the Church is to be separate from the world.

17:7 Israel had a history of habitually straying into the worship of idols, often labeled by the prophets as spiritual fornication, showing their unfaithfulness to God.

Here is a type of the faithfulness Christians are to have to Christ. The Church is the Bride of Christ. Jesus is the Groom—so noted on Great and Holy Thursday—to whom the Church sings, “The Groom of the Church is fastened with nails . . .” To turn from the Groom to seek union or communion with anyone or anything else is spiritual fornication.

17:8-9 Any Israelite who refused to bring his sacrifice to the tabernacle of testimony to offer it there would bring about his own destruction. Likewise, anyone who refuses to worship the Word made flesh—for He tabernacled in the flesh—destroys himself. For we worship His holy body (AthanG).

17:11 Because of the supreme importance of blood in atonement for sin, it was imperative that blood be treated with unique respect. According to this passage, the life was in the blood. If blood was shed, a life was given, and the sacrifice was genuine. Not that blood has inherent power to forgive. Rather the blood, with its inherent life, is God's gift to mankind to make atonement for sin. The necessity for atonement was the sacrifice of the innocent life of an animal.

But what was important—lest Israel should become careless about atonement—was not only the blood of the innocent animals sacrificed, but that all animal blood be regarded with respect. All life was sacred and to be respected.

Of course, this understanding concerning blood in the old covenant was but a type of the blood of Christ, which initiated the new covenant. On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus said, “This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you” (Lk 22:20). St. Paul says, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph 1:7). Also St. John says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1Jn 1:7).

17:13-14 Game animals were another story. They could be killed and eaten anywhere, but still the blood was not to be eaten.

18:1-3 Israel was commanded not to live according to the way of life of Egypt and Canaan, nor to walk in their ordinances. The way of life in Egypt and Canaan was fallen, characterized by sinful passions, especially idolatry. The Scriptures describe this way of life as the “old man” (Rom 6:6), and for the Church, this way of life was crucified with Christ in baptism.

Nor was Israel to walk in their ordinances, for many of these were unjust and ungodly. Examples of these are given in vv. 19–30, for instance the perversion of homosexuality (v. 22) and sodomy (v. 23). In our modern era, laws are being passed favoring homosexuality and abortion. But laws of this kind are an abomination to God (v. 30).

18:4 Israel was to walk in the ordinances of the Mosaic Law. The Church, on the other hand, is to walk in the Law of Christ, a higher standard than the Mosaic (Rom 8:1–4).

18:5 Israel was to keep *all* the ordinances of the Law of Moses. In so doing they would attain to righ-teousness, but if they should offend in one point, they would be guilty of breaking the whole of it (Jam 2:10). There was no other way of attaining righteousness under this Law than by fulfilling the whole of it. However, they failed to attain the righteousness required by the Law (Rom 9:31), for such an attainment was an impossibility (Acts 15:10). Their failure required atonement for sins and reconciliation with God.

Christ atoned for their sins and those of the entire world. Through His death and Resurrection He made possible the attainment of righteousness by faith in Him. “Moses showed us the righteousness required by the Law, what kind it is. So what kind is it and in what does it consist? ‘The man who does these things shall live by them,’ Moses said. There was no other way of becoming righteous in the Law except by fulfilling the whole of it. But this was not possible for anyone, and therefore this righteousness failed them. . . . For that required the fulfillment of all things (for when you do all, then you shall live); but the righteousness of faith does not say this, but what does it say? ‘If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation’ (Rom 10:9, 10). . . . There is no long journey to go on, no seas to sail over, no mountains to pass, to get saved. But if you be not minded to cross so much as the threshold, you may even while you sit at home be saved. For ‘in your mouth and in your heart’ is the source of salvation” (JohnChr).

18:6-18 As with most of Leviticus, there are two levels of interpretation to this passage. First, there is the immediate meaning for the people of Israel. Second, there is the type presented in the matter at hand, to be fulfilled later. First then, there were the laws regarding unlawful sexual intercourse (**uncover nakedness**). The immediate meaning relates to family integrity—the thread on which family members are strung, as jewels, in the relationship of husband and wife as "one flesh" (Gn. 1:24). The laws set forth here were not arbitrary. They clearly reflected the essential created character of marriage and family relationships.

Secondly, at least two types are made clear in looking toward the new covenant. One is that Israel is understood as the wife of God and thus as a type of the Church—as the bride of Christ. The second is that the earthly husband and wife were also a type of Christ and the Church. The relationship between Christ and his people is a substantial union—a union of our human nature with His resurrected and glorified human nature. This is not merely a moral union, a kind of pleasant fellowship with Christ. Baptism into Christ produces a dynamic union of substance with Him. This relationship must be guarded and nurtured with the utmost care. The union must not be corrupted by adding to it that which is foreign. One cannot have a commitment to union with both God and the world and its attachments, as Christ said: "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24). Nothing should be introduced into the relationship of oneness that would in any way profane it or make it common.

19:1-3 The repeated formula, **You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy**, is of vital importance. First, this is the point of this whole Law. That God is holy does not mean He is a rule-keeper or enforcer. There is no legalism with God. Israel was to be what He is. His people were to be holy as He is. Rule-keeping was not the end in view; being like God was.

This is also the goal of the new covenant. However, in the new covenant things are seen more clearly, because Jesus Christ is the supreme definition of holiness. This huge difference in the understanding of the Law was the source of great conflict between the scribes and Pharisees and Jesus. He was holy. They were rule-keepers who had lost the Rule-giver, and thereby lost their holiness.

The expression, “I am the Lord,” “I am the Lord your God,” or “I am the Lord their God,” appears approximately fifty times in Leviticus. The “I Am” is of critical importance. It is the absolute foundation of the covenant treaty formula used here. Everything in the relationship between God and Israel depended on it. It identified the old covenant Maker. The “I Am” identified Him uniquely as God. At the burning bush, the Lord introduced Himself to Moses as the “I Am” (Ex 3:6, 14).

In Jn 8:58, the identity of the Speaker in Leviticus is made known to be Jesus, who says to the Jews, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” He is the Son and Word of God, one of the three Persons of the All-Holy Trinity.

19:18 The exhortation, **you shall love your neighbor as yourself**, here makes its first appearance in the Bible and its only appearance in the Old Testament. It is a summary of what was required in the Law of Moses.

In the time of Jesus, the religious Jews understood this statement to be crucial to understanding the Law. Lk 10:25–37 shows this. A lawyer questioned Jesus about the means of acquiring eternal life. Jesus asked him what was his reading of the Law. The lawyer replied, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself'" (v. 27). The lawyer further asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan, giving us an understanding of this passage in Leviticus.

20:1-23 The material in this chapter deals with penalties for sins approved by the Canaanites but which God considered abominable—human sacrifice, psychic practices, cursing of parents, unlawful sexual relationships, as well as other matters. Verse 23 gives us the key to understanding this: **You shall not walk in the ordinances of the nations I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them.**

20:2-5 Idolatry was the single greatest danger to the people of God. The first of the Ten Commandments is, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Idolatry was often the downfall of Israel.

20:3-7 God's **holy things** must not be profaned, for this profanes His name. With this in mind, we pray in the Lord's Prayer, “Hallowed by Thy name.” St. Cyprian writes, “After this, we say: ‘Hallowed be Thy name,’ not that we wish for God to be hallowed by our prayers, but to beseech Him that His name be hallowed in us. But by whom is God sanctified, since He Himself sanctifies? Well, because He says: ‘Be ye holy, even as I am holy,’ we ask and entreat, that we who were sanctified in baptism may continue in that which we have begun to be.”

20:9 Lev 20:9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 19, 27: The Law of Moses taught that man is only guilty before God by free choice, but not by nature. For man is good by nature; otherwise, we would be imputing guilt to God (Gn 1:31). Thus, man does not possess a sinful nature, for all sins are committed by personal choice. No one can claim he sins out of necessity. All sins therefore are contrary both to God and to nature. The Law also refuted the false notion that man is guilty before God because of Adam's sin. Adam was guilty of his own transgression, as is true of any and all.

20:24 The heart of the issue in all of these laws was the sanctification of the people of God, in distinction to those around them. Why? Because God is the Lord their God, their King. Israel was to be a theocratic kingdom—one ruled over by a gracious and loving God who knew perfectly what was best for His subjects. This is why Israel was to be so separate from all the kingdoms around her and why idolatry was punishable by death, for it was high treason against the kingdom of God.

20:25-26 The violations of God's law here were (a) against God, (b) against the nation—the theocracy, and (c) against the units that made up the theocracy, namely the family, which included marriage. The nation and the family were God-given, for people to live by and in. If they should turn from God's ways, the inhabitants would suffer greatly. These laws are contrary to the current direction of ideas and legislation regarding the family.

21:1 Jesus Christ holds the offices of prophet, priest, and king, at the same time and forever. The Old Testament is filled with types of Christ with respect to these three aspects of His ministry. In this chapter sundry rules for the Aaronic priesthood are given, along with instructions for the high priesthood. Types of Christ abound throughout, and the priest was a type of Him. Therefore, a higher standard was set for him than for the laity.

21:1-3 The defilement referred to here was the ceremonial defilement of a person resulting from contact with a dead body. The priest was permitted to touch the dead bodies only of certain of his immediate kin. The priest, as a type of Christ, must not be unduly affected by death, since Christ is the One who overcame death. Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb, but He is the One who overcame the death of Lazarus and who overcame death for all in His Resurrection.

21:14 The high priest was allowed to marry only a virgin, and she had to be from his own people—an Israelite woman. He serves as a significant type of Christ, who is the Groom of the Church. The Church is forever His virgin bride. Christ and the Church form the perfect marriage; thus the types in the Old Testament foreshadow that perfection.

21:17 To serve in the priesthood, one had to be free of physical defects. This was a type of the ultimate offerer, the sinless and spotless Jesus, who Himself is the sinless and spotless offering. Thus, the animal to be offered was to be without spot or blemish. The physical was a type and symbol of the spiritual, and both are important. And lest it be considered cruel or unfair that the deformed were not allowed **to offer the gifts of his God**, to serve at the altar, let it be understood, quite to the contrary, that hope is given here for all. The priesthood in the Church in the age to come will be open to all in Christ. No one will be deformed, for any deformed in this life will be made completely whole in the world to come. All will participate in the priesthood forever. “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Rev 1:5, 6).

22:1-16 Rules regarding the priests eating certain portions of some of the offerings may appear stringent to the casual reader. However, when the sacrifices mentioned here are recognized as types of Christ, the One who is the perfect sacrifice and makes Himself available to be eaten, these rules make perfect sense.

They offer significant insight into the work of Christ. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (Jn 6:53–56). This eating of the sacrifice is not to be done casually or carelessly. Christ is the life and salvation of the world. He is not to be partaken of in any profane manner.

22:17-33 More rules are given for the sacrifice. At every Divine Liturgy in the Church, the priest prays a prayer that includes the following words regarding Christ: “For You Yourself are He who offers and is offered, who accepts and is distributed, O Christ our God.” Jesus is not only the perfect priest—as the One who offers—but He is also the perfect sacrifice. Thus, the rules in Leviticus for qualifications of either priests or animals offered to God are important as types of Christ.

The animals offered were types of Christ as the once-for-all perfect sacrifice. John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). In these Levitical regulations, the people are being tutored ultimately to recognize the Messiah—the Christ—when He would come to be both the offerer and the offered. The rules also speak to the perfection of the sacrifice of Christ. He would be perfect and holy—separated to God alone.

23:1-4 The account that follows is not the entire Jewish calendar. These are the “fixed feasts,” where a convocation—a coming together of the people—was required. They focused attention on the Lord by means of the sanctification of time and life. Ex 31:13 says in this regard, “You shall direct the children of Israel, saying, ‘See to it that you keep My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know I am the Lord who sanctifies you.’”

23:5 Pascha (or Passover) sanctified Israel's time and life as a sign pointing them to the coming Incarnation of the Lord. In this feast they were to remember Him and what He did for them in delivering them from Egyptian bondage. But more importantly, it pointed them to His coming in the flesh. They were to know Him in the blood of a slain lamb, a sign pointing to Him as the Lamb of God. Yet when He became incarnate as this Lamb, they did not recognize their own Lord who had delivered them from Egypt (Jn 1:11).

Pascha also sanctifies the time and life of the Church each year, but not as a sign. For the Church is sanctified by the fulfillment of the sign. Great Lent, Holy Week, and Easter define this fulfillment, as the Church is sanctified by the death and Resurrection of Christ. Thus, spiritual life is deepened, and God's people come to know the Incarnate Lord more intimately.

23:15-21 The Feast of Pentecost also sanctified the time and life of Israel as a sign pointing to the coming of the Holy Spirit and the harvesting of the Church. It was precisely seven full Sabbaths (forty-nine days) plus one day after Pascha, and marked the completion of the grain harvest. Here, the offering was not a sheaf of grain, but rather baked loaves, signifying the Church.

Thus, Pentecost also sanctifies the time and life of the Church each year, but not as a sign. For Christ is the sheaf, the firstfruit. The loaves are the many from the harvest, those from Christ and in Christ—in the Church. In Jn 12:24 Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” This grain is the Church, harvested by the Holy Spirit. Hence, the ancient Feast of Pentecost prophetically prefigures the birth of the Church through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

At the same time, it also signifies the beginning of the end of the age. On the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ, the apostle Peter quoted the prophet Joel to explain what was taking place, “‘It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, / That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh’” (Acts 2:17). The gifts of the Spirit for the age of God's kingdom are given to the people of God while still living in this age, as a foretaste of the world to come.

23:39 There was a feast on the eighth day after Tabernacles began. It was the end date—the leave-taking of the Feast of Tabernacles. It completed the feasts of the seventh month as well. This final day was the consummation, or great high point, of the feast. It was the eighth day—the first day of the season of rest. The day itself was to be a day of complete rest; no work whatever was to be done. The planting, the cultivating, and the harvesting had all been accomplished. Now it was time to rest.

That eighth day was a type of the new creation—the day that never ends—the day “when all our labors and trials are over.” It is the day of the establishment of the eternal kingdom of God in its fullness. All is completed. All is renewed. All is at rest. The true New World has begun. It is the fulfillment of the work of Christ for us.

24:1-4 The pure oil was for the golden lampstand that stood in the holy place along with the table of the presence and the altar of incense. Only the priests were to be in the holy place to perform their duties by the light of this lampstand. The pure oil for the lampstand, however, was to be brought by the people. Thus, they and the priests were involved with this light.

Christ is the Light of the world, for He enlightens all. Twice Jesus said He was the light of the world—in Jn 8:12 and 9:5—but He also told His followers they, too, were the light of the world (Mt 5:13).

24:10-15 In the heat of passion, this man reviled and denounced the Lord. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt 12:34). He reviled the Lord God of Israel and died as the penalty. We must take this situation carefully and seriously to heart. The Lord God of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, has a name above every name (Php 2:9, 10). Reviling Him will lead one to much more than physical death. It will lead him to eternal death. Nevertheless, our age is witnessing more and more of this reviling of Jesus as Lord.

25:1 The land was to be left at rest every seventh year. Crops were not to be sown or cultivated. This was a reminder that “man shall not live by bread alone” (Dt 8:3; Mt 4:4).

The person who, without rest, pursues the temporal bread of this life will not pursue the eternal Bread of Life as he or she ought. Jesus taught us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” so as to remember that our toil alone does not give us bread. Only with the blessing of God do we partake of daily bread and the Bread of Life, which is eaten in the Eucharist. The land needs rest and man needs rest that he might pursue the true Bread.

25:8 The property a Jew possessed was not his own. It was God's land, given to the individual only as a stewardship (see 25:23). And to preserve this spirit, every fiftieth year the land reverted back to its original owners—rural houses returned to their original families, and people were freed from bondage into which for one reason or another they had come. In this way, no one family could amass great and permanent fortunes in the land, to be passed down from century to century. Everything and everyone belonged to God. The Year of Remission occurred after every seventh sabbatical year, or every fifty years.

The Year of Remission foreshadowed the ultimate fullness of God's kingdom. It was actually the eighth year after the seventh of the sevens, making it the first year of the new cycle. It looked forward to that ultimate "eighth year" after which there is no first again.

Here is the rich foreshadowing of the kingdom of God, wherein all are freed and there is no more bondage. No longer are there any poor or disenfranchised. All are free in Christ. Everyone and all things are at rest. "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God" (Heb 4:9). Some blessings of the coming kingdom are experienced in this age, but all these blessings will be available in the world to come, wherein all things are restored unto the ages of ages (Acts 3:19–21).

25:9 The Year of Remission began on the Day of Atonement when the priest came out of the holy of holies, having sprinkled the blood of the sin offering before the Lord. What a remarkable picture! Restoration and freedom began when atonement was made and the priest came out.

When Jesus our Great High Priest comes forth from the heavenly holy of holies and the last trumpet shall sound at His glorious second coming, then His own will have eternal restoration and freedom from any bondage. Even the earth and all creation shall be renewed. Rev 21:1, 5 says, “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. . . . Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’”

26:3 The Law of Moses could only promise blessings pertaining to the comforts of this present life. But the Law of Christ promises in the midst of sufferings on His behalf the blessings of eternal life in the kingdom of God (JohnCas).

27:1 The subject matter of this chapter is quite different from the rest of the book. It deals with voluntary vows made to God not called for in the Law. However, such vows were not prohibited. One could choose to make vows, and if he did, there were terms and conditions governing them.

There is likely little typological value in these vows. Further, no vows are called for in the new covenant. However, some choose to make vows to God. These are not forbidden, though it is important we not imagine that we curry grace with God by making them. Perhaps above all, we must be aware that if we should make a vow to God, we must follow through in keeping it: “When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; / For He has no pleasure in fools. / Pay what you have vowed. / Better not to vow than to vow and not pay” (Ecc 5:4, 5).

1:1 The Lord who conversed with Moses in the tabernacle was the Word and Son of God, for He was the Lawgiver. Moses, in turn, gave His laws to Israel. The tabernacle was a type of the flesh the Son assumed in the womb of the Mother of God when He became incarnate (Jn 1:14). After His Incarnation, He also conversed with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:4). This conversation on the Mount calls to mind the talks between the two in the tabernacle. Although the Jews claimed He taught and worked contrary to the Law (Jn 8:5, 6; 9:29), the presence of Moses with Him on the Mount refutes this charge.

1:2-3 The Lord commanded a census to be taken in Israel to draft an army for war. This census shows the militant nature of Israel in warfare. Israel was a type of the Church, “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16; see Rom 2:28, 29), and the Church is also militant. However, the warfare of the Church is spiritual and evangelistic in nature (Eph 6:10–20). The spiritual enemies are the sinful passions, death, and the devil. Evangelism is to bring as many as will come into the kingdom of God and is to continue up to the end, when the kingdom will be fully established (Mt 24:14).

1:47-49 The ministry of the Levites also shows the militant nature of Israel in worship, for they were Israel's “clergy.” All other Israelites were “laity.” However, both were to be militant in worship, for no one was excused from worshiping the true God. The Levites had their assigned responsibilities in the worship, as did the people. The various responsibilities of both are described in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The Church also has ordained clergy, and both clergy and laity are to be militant in worship, for no one is excused from worshiping the true God. The clergy have their assigned duties, and the laity as well. The various responsibilities of both are described throughout the Holy Tradition of the Church.

1:50 The Levites were ordained to **minister liturgically**, for divine worship is liturgical in nature; this liturgical nature is mentioned about forty-five times throughout Numbers. The word *liturgy* means "the work of the people." In Israel, this included the Levites and the twelve tribes, that is, all "the children of Israel" (v. 49), with the Levites having their special liturgical service in the tabernacle.

The worship of the Church is also liturgical in nature and includes both clergy and laity. The apostles were ministering liturgically in Acts 13:2 when the Holy Spirit spoke to them. The same word is used here as in the Book of Numbers. This same word is also used numerous times in Hebrews to describe the liturgical worship of the Church as the fulfillment of Israel's liturgical worship (Heb 1:7, 14; 8:2, 6; 9:21; 10:11).

1:53 The Lord was present in the midst of Israel's liturgical worship, as He is in the Divine Liturgy of His Holy Church. Spontaneity in worship has no biblical precedent.

2:2 The twelve tribes camped around the four sides of the tabernacle, facing it, in groups of three tribes; the Levites camped around the tabernacle proper (v. 17), for they were its caretakers and guards. So the Lord and His worship were to be the central focus of every Israelite's life. The Son of God became incarnate and is the central focus of the Church. Thus, at the end of the Great Litany, the Church prays, “Let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.”

2:3 The tribe of Judah camped **on the east side** of the tabernacle, and Christ would come from that tribe (Heb 7:14). The word *east* is a synonym of the word *orient*, from which the word *orientation* is derived. The prophet Zechariah prophesied that Christ would be called “the East” or “the Orient” (Zec 3:9). The prophet Malachi said He would rise up from the east, and thus, calls Him “the Sun of Righteousness” (Mal 4:2). Therefore, every Israelite was to orient his life around Christ, the Orient.

Likewise, every Church member is to orient his life around Christ; otherwise, he will become “disoriented.” The Church whenever possible worships toward the east, “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:2).

3:6-9 The tribe of Levi was presented to Aaron and his sons to **minister liturgically** with them. The service of the priests and the Levites was on behalf of the children of Israel. Aaron's sons were priests, but Aaron himself was the high priest. The other Levites assisted in the liturgical worship.

The liturgical service of the priests and Levites was a type of liturgical service in the Church. The high priest was a type of Christ, our Great High Priest and “the Shepherd and Overseer [Bishop] of our souls” (1Pt 2:25). The bishops are living icons of Christ, the high priests of the Church. Similarly, the priests in the Church are also icons of Christ and serve liturgically with the bishop under whom they are assigned as his spiritual sons.

The Levites served liturgically with Aaron and his sons, as their assistants. They were types of the deacons, who assist the bishop in the liturgical worship; and when the bishop is not present, they assist the priest.

3:11-13 Num 3:11–13, 40–51: The Lord ransomed the firstborn sons of Israel in Egypt with the blood of a lamb; therefore, the firstborn sons belonged to Him. Fourteen months later in the Wilderness of Sinai (1:1), He accepted the males in the tribe of Levi (a month old and above—22,000 in number) as a ransom payment for the firstborn of the twelve tribes. Thus an exchange took place in which the Levites became the Lord's liturgical ministers of the tabernacle. However, the census among the firstborn of the twelve tribes revealed the number of Israel's firstborn sons to be 22,373. Therefore, a ransom payment was owed to the Lord for this excess number of 373 of Israel's firstborn males. These males were required to ransom themselves by paying the Levites a redemption tax which totaled 1365 shekels (v. 50). This redemption tax became a tradition in Israel. The firstborn males were required to pay this tax in their hometowns.

Jesus' hometown in His adulthood was Capernaum. So on one occasion in Capernaum, Peter was asked if his teacher paid this tax (Mt 17:24–27). Peter replied, “Yes.” However, Jesus had no obligation to pay the tax because He is the Son of the King, the heavenly Father, and Jesus, too, is King. Kings exact tax payments from their subjects, not from their sons. Nevertheless, to avoid offense, Jesus told Peter to catch a fish, and it would have money in its mouth to pay the tax—not only for Himself, but also for Peter. For Peter, too, was a firstborn son. So this tax payment from the mouth of the fish demonstrated Jesus to be the Lord and King over creation and the eternal Son of the heavenly King, the Father (JohnChr). This also demonstrated it was the Son of God, the King Himself, who ordered the redemption tax to be paid when Israel was in the Wilderness of Sinai.

4:1 Num 4:1, 16, 29: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari were the sons of Levi (Ex 6:16). Their lineage, in turn, would be assigned as the liturgical ministers of the tabernacle. The Scripture refers to the tabernacle and its liturgical service of worship by various words, all of which show the temporal nature of this worship. These Scripture passages are as follows:

Ex 25:40 (also quoted in Heb 8:5): “See to it that you make [all things] according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” Heb 8:5: “[The priests] serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things.” Heb 9:23: “Therefore *it was* necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these.” Heb 9:9: “It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered.” Heb 9:24: “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Heb 10:1: “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come . . .” Heb 11:19: “. . . from which [Abraham] also received [Isaac] in a figurative sense.”

The various words therefore are “pattern,” “copy,” “shadow,” “figure,” and “symbol,” all of which carry the same meaning, namely, one level of reality that represents and is fulfilled in another and greater level. Therefore, the Old Testament liturgical service of worship was temporal in nature, and is fulfilled in the greater reality of the Church's liturgical worship. Liturgical worship in the Church is called “heaven on earth,” for it fulfills the types.

4:5 The **overshadowing veil** was a type of the life-giving flesh of Christ (Heb 10:20). For Christ is God in the flesh; therefore, His holy body and blood give eternal life to those joined in union and communion with Him. In the Divine Liturgy, the Church offers up the bread and wine of the offertory to Him, and He gives these back to the Church as His precious body and blood.

4:7 The **table of presentation** was located in the holy place of the tabernacle. Among its furnishings were the **bowls for pouring the drink-offerings** of wine (see 15:5, 7, 10) and the **perpetual loaves** of bread.

The bread and the wine on the table of presentation were types of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. (A *type* is one level of reality that represents and is fulfilled in another and greater level, which is called the *antitype*.) Thus, the bread and wine on the table of presentation represented and are fulfilled in Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist.

5:2-4 Leprosy was a type of sin. Jesus went **out of the camp** and became a leper on our behalf. He Himself was not a leper, for He knew no sin, but He took pity on us lepers and became a disgrace for our sakes.

5:7 Confession of wrongs to a neighbor must be accompanied by restitution. Zacchaeus went beyond this law and made restitution fourfold, plus he gave half his goods to the poor. Thus, he “bore fruits worthy of repentance” (Mt 3:8). So Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house” (Lk 19:9).

6:2 An **extraordinary vow** was a vow not required by the Law of Moses. It was strictly voluntary, and when such a vow was made, the one making it was held accountable to fulfill it (Ps 49:14; Ecc 5:4).

6:22-26 These verses describe the blessings by the priests upon the people: the purpose is to put the Lord's name on them. The blessing itself is contained in vv. 24–26. Bishops and priests in the Church also put the Lord's name on people when they bless them with their hands in the form of the cross.

7:2-5 Num 7:2–5, 84: The twelve rulers brought gifts, including sacrificial animals, to the Lord for the dedication of the altar of whole burnt offering. These gifts would be used in the **liturgical service** of the Levites in the tabernacle. In the new covenant liturgical service of worship, we are to offer our whole lives as whole burnt offerings to God. Rom 12:1, 2 describes this offering: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

8:6 Num 8:6, 7, 19: In the liturgical service of worship, the children of Israel could not draw near the holy things, for their bodies were not purified by the **water of purification**, as were the Levites. Under the new covenant, the Levites are the clergy of the Church who officiate at the altar. However, in the liturgical service of worship, both clergy and laity draw near the heavenly holy of holies by the blood of Jesus. The conditions for entering the heavenly holy of holies are “a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:22).

9:3 Pascha, or Passover, was to be kept **according to its rule and practice**. Its “rule and practice” refers to its liturgical order of service and worship. This was spelled out very carefully in the Law of Moses. In the Church, the rule and practice of Pascha is also carefully spelled out in Holy Tradition as the Church moves through its liturgical order of service and worship in Great Lent, Holy Week, and the Easter season.

9:6-9 The Law of Moses could not cover every situation that might arise regarding Pascha. For this law did not exist in a vacuum to itself. Rather, it was ever united to the Lawgiver, the Son of God, who speaks to His people. Similarly, the Holy Tradition of the Church cannot cover every situation that might arise. The Good Shepherd speaks to His Church, and those who have ears to hear follow Him (Jn 10:27).

9:21 When the cloud ascended from the tabernacle, Israel would break camp and move toward the promised land. Therefore, their liturgical worship was to be dynamic and not static. They had an objective to achieve. Psalms 120–133 are called “Odes of Ascent.” These odes reveal aspects of the dynamic and living nature of liturgical worship.

Similarly, the Lord ascended into heaven to teach the Church the dynamic and living nature of worship. For liturgical worship is like an ascent in which the worshipers draw near and enter the heavenly holy of holies. The final objective is “the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed).

10:10 The Son of God is the I Am, the Lord God of Israel (Jn 8:58; Ex 3:14). He is one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

10:29 Moses informed his brother-in-law of the purpose for **breaking camp**. It was to head **for the place the Lord spoke of**. This place was Canaan, the land of promise. For the Church, the land of promise is the kingdom of God, the fullness of which will be realized in the world to come. As the Church passes through this present world, she partakes of the kingdom to the extent of the grace she experiences and expresses. In this sense, the Church is God's kingdom in this world, and she will be His kingdom in the fullest sense in the new world.

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10:33-36 **Rise up, O Lord** was a foreshadowing of Christ's Resurrection, and **return, O Lord**, of His second coming.

11:1-3 This place was called **Burning** (v. 3) because the Lord hates grumbling, which is an expression of ingratitude. This was written to admonish us not to grumble, complain, and murmur about things we may not like (1Co 10:10, 11). Grumbling is one of the sins that undermines spiritual stability: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Co 10:12). We are to do all things without grumbling; otherwise, our lights will not shine in the midst of the fallen world (Php 2:14, 15).

11:4-34 This place was called **Graves of Lust** (v. 34) because the desires of the people were out of control (**hungered exceedingly**, v. 4). Thus, many of them died.

In itself, desire is a blameless passion. But if it is not controlled, it can go astray and become a sinful passion—for example, gluttony. Now the children of Israel and the Gentiles who came with them out of Egypt were grumbling about food, which, in turn, caused them to lose control of their desires. This resulted in gluttony (v. 32). Their belly became their god (Php 3:19). Grumbling and gluttony are an evil combination.

11:16 Num 11:16, 17, 24–29: This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of Pentecost.

11:17 Num 11:17, 25, 26, 29: **The Spirit** is the Holy Spirit, one of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity. Therefore, Moses believed in the Trinity, and those who claim him as a forefather should also embrace his faith.

12:5-7 The Lord who descended is the Son of God. He is over the house, whereas Moses was a faithful servant within His house (v. 7; Heb 3:1–6).

12:10 Miriam's contentious and bitter spirit caused her to become leprous. Leprosy was a type of sin, and sins, such as a contentious spirit, eat away at the soul.

13:1-3 The pre-incarnate Lord spoke to Moses and commanded that twelve spies, one leader from each tribe, be sent to spy out the land of Canaan, for the Word was the Commander and Moses the obedient servant. The Lord promised to give them this land, for the world belongs to Him and He gives it to whom He wills, when He wills, for as long as He wills. He is the sovereign Lord of all.

13:4-16 The names of twelve men are given, two of whom were Caleb (v. 6) and Hoshea (v. 8), whose name Moses changed to Joshua (v. 16). Caleb's name means “bold,” or “confident,” and Joshua's, “savior.” Both names together signify two aspects of faith—confident faith and saving faith. Both men knew the Lord, and their faith in Him was of both aspects.

13:17-25 The twelve men spied out the land for forty days (v. 25), all the way up to Rehob, near the Valley of Hamath (v. 21). In their journey, Hebron (v. 22) is singled out for notice. Here, in the Valley of Eshcol, the spies cut a cluster of grapes and named the place Valley of Eshcol—or “Cluster.” This cluster confirmed the Lord's word that the promised land was one of milk and honey.

This cluster of grapes was a type of the Mother of God, for God the Word derived His body and blood from her. Moreover, in the Eucharist, the wine of the grapes becomes, in a mystery, His body and blood. The Church's participation in this mystery is a foretaste of the land of promise—the world to come, the eternal kingdom of God.

13:26-33 The spies returned to Israel and showed them the fruit of a land flowing with milk and honey (vv. 26, 27). But there was a barrier—there were well-armed and strategically prepared people in the land: the Amalekites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, along with the descendants of Anak, who were giants (vv. 28, 29, 33). This problem overcame the seeing-is-believing kind of faith, as ten out of the twelve spies gave a bad-news report (vv. 30, 31). Yes, the land flowed with milk and honey, but using only human reason, they concluded that victory against such obstacles was impossible. Thus, their faulty reasoning and unnatural fear destroyed what little faith they possessed. But Joshua and Caleb possessed a bold and saving faith in the Lord, for their faith was beyond the seeing-is-believing kind. They saw Him who is invisible.

The various tribes of Gentiles listed here are types of the sinful passions, which at times seem impossible to overcome. But those possessing a boldly confident and saving faith will be zealous like Joshua and Caleb, knowing the Lord Jesus Christ is able to help them overcome their temptations and sins. Such faith propels them toward the land of promise—the world to come.

14:1-4 Unbelief produced vices in the congregation. They were depressed and melancholy (**cried** and **wept that night**, v. 1). They rebelled against their godly leadership (**against Moses and Aaron**, v. 2). They were cowards (**fall in war**, v. 3). Their thinking was irrational (**wives and children shall be plundered**; **return to Egypt**, v. 3). They made an irrational choice (**select a ruler and return to Egypt**, v. 4). Unbelief toward the Lord produces many vices—especially irrational choices, for unbelief is contrary to a rational mind.

14:6-9 But Joshua and Caleb were strong in faith, which produced virtues in them. They desired the land of promise (**extremely good land**, v. 7). They believed the Lord was with them in the fight (**bring us into this land**, v. 8). They stood against unbelief (**do not apostatize**, v. 9). They were willing to be martyrs (**stone them with stones**, v. 10). The Son of God stood with them (**appeared in the cloud**, v. 10).

14:11 The Lord asked two questions to show us His opposition to unbelief. Even the miracles He performed could not bring the people to faith. Neither did the miracles He performed after His Incarnation win them over (Jn 10:38). Nevertheless, out of His love for them, He gave them every opportunity to believe. Unbelief is a deep-seated evil.

14:12 Unbelief leads to death and self-destruction. For there is no remedy for unbelief. It ultimately led them to the loss of God's kingdom (Mt 21:43), as it does for all (Rom 11:22).

14:13-20 Moses' major concern was the Lord's name, for he loved Him with all his heart. He also loved his neighbor as himself, for he was also concerned for the people. The Lord revealed Moses' virtues as an example of true faith for all to see.

14:21 The earth will be part of the world to come, for it **shall be filled with the glory of the Lord**.

14:22-38 Just as unbelief kept the children of Israel from the land of promise, so it will keep us from the promise of the world to come if we fail to live by faith (Heb 3; 4).

14:39-45 Their confession of sin was empty, for they did not amend their ways. Their confession did not lead to obedience, for unbelief ruled them (**you transgress the word of the Lord**, v. 41).

15:1, 2 The Lord's word would not fail, for Israel would inherit the land of promise, but without the unbelievers. Even their unbelief could not nullify the promises of God (Rom 3:3, 4).

15:3-16 Once in the land of promise, Israel was to offer two additional sacrifices together with their whole burnt offerings (vv. 3–12). One was to consist of fine flour mixed with oil, and the other of wine as a drink offering.

The fine flour was a type of the bread in the Eucharist. And **fine** speaks of Christ's body as being pure. The fine flour, when mingled with oil, was a type of the Holy Spirit, who is called down at the epiclesis in the Divine Liturgy. The wine of the drink offering was a type of the blood of Christ in the Eucharist. These types were fulfilled by the Lord on Great and Holy Thursday when He established the Eucharist with His disciples.

In Israel, the same sacrificial laws governing the **native-born** Jews also applied to the **resident aliens**, who were Gentiles (vv. 13–16). This reveals the Eucharist in the new covenant would be both for Jews and Gentiles.

16:1, 2 Korah **rose up before Moses**. Scripture calls this “the rebellion of Korah” (Jude 11). He was a Levite, and therefore a member of the “clergy.” He also influenced two hundred fifty “laity,” who were **rulers of the congregation, chosen members of the council and men of note**. This was no small-time rebellion.

16:3-4 The rebels accused Moses and Aaron of self-exaltation, the very sin of which they themselves were guilty. Self-exaltation is vainglory, the root of all sins. Moses, on the other hand, fell on his face, for he was the most humble man in all the earth.

It is fine to be praised by another, but not by oneself: “Let your neighbor praise you, and not your own mouth, / A stranger, and not your own lips” (Pr 27:2). However, one is tested when praised by others: “But a man is tested by the mouth of those who praise him” (Pr 27:22). Korah, however, failed this test, for he “loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn 12:43).

16:22-24 Moses raised a crucial question before the Lord: **“If one man sinned, will the Lord's anger be on all the congregation?”** The Lord's answer was clear: **“Withdraw from around Korah's company.”** In other words, the Lord's answer was, “No.” Furthermore, Korah's sons were not guilty because of their father's sin, for they did not perish with him (26:11).

Moses' question, the Lord's answer, and the longevity of Korah's sons refute the false doctrine of original sin. This evil doctrine teaches that Adam's offspring (all mankind) are guilty before God because of their father's transgression. This teaching is false, because each man is guilty before God for his own transgressions.

17:2 **Strange fire** was unauthorized worship. Korah was a Levite but not a priest, and only priests of the Aaronic priesthood were authorized to offer worship on behalf of Israel. Nor were the two hundred fifty “laity” so authorized.

The priests and bishops of the Melchizedek priesthood in the Church are the only ones authorized to offer up the holy gifts in the Divine Liturgy on behalf of the Church. These holy gifts become the body and blood of Christ in a mystery.

17:3-5 The two hundred fifty copper censers were beaten into plates and sanctified by the altar of whole burnt offering to which they were attached. They were fastened there as **a sign** and **a memorial** for the children of Israel. A sign is a visible seal of some truth revealed in a memorial. In this case, the copper plates fastened to the altar were the sign, and the memorial was the truth revealed in the sign. Thus, the memorial in this sign was **that no outsider who is not of Aaron's seed should put incense before the Lord and be like Korah and his insurrection**.

Israel had a short memory, for the next day after the copper plates were fastened to the altar, they rebelled again (v. 6).

17:6-15 The high priest Aaron took his censer, put hot coals in it, threw incense on the coals, then censed the people. This action made atonement for them, and the plague ceased. Christ our Great High Priest offered His life-giving body on the cross (the hot coals from the altar). The smoke of incense ascends, and Christ the Great High Priest ascended into the heavenly holy of holies, and sprinkled the life-giving blood of His cross on the heavenly altar.

17:16-26 The Lord gave Israel another sign (v. 25) to cure their rebellion. Aaron's rod **sprouted and put forth buds, and had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds** (v. 23). These buds, blossoms, and almonds speak of life and fruits. The life-giving rod was a type of the life-giving cross.

19:1, 2 The Son of God, the Lord, spoke both to Moses and Aaron. He spoke of **the injunction of the law, whatever the Lord ordered**. Therefore, the Son of God and His law must always be seen as being connected. They should never be thought of as disconnected, which is legalism, the disconnection between the law and the Lawgiver.

19:9-17 The ashes of the burnt offering of purification were placed in a vessel, and running water was poured over them. Thus, the ashes and the water were mixed together, and this became water of purification, a type of the Sacrament of Baptism.

20:1-5 The Desert of Sin was characterized as **a place where nothing is sown, neither figs nor vines nor pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink** (v. 5). The people had the opportunity to respond in one of two ways: be thankful or be frustrated. They chose frustration.

20:11-12 Moses struck the rock in unbelief, and this action would keep him from leading Israel into the land of promise. It is unbelief to disobey the Lord's direction, for He told Moses to take the rod and speak to the rock (v. 8). However, he struck the rock twice. So he violated the type.

This rock represented the spiritual Rock, Christ Himself, for it was He who ordered Moses to speak to the rock (1Co 10:4). After His Incarnation, He would be smitten once, not twice, for the sins of the world (Rom 6:10). From His life-giving cross would come the waters of life, “springing up into everlasting life” (Jn 4:14).

20:13 This event in vv. 1–12 was called **the Water of Contention** for two reasons: first, because of Israel's scoffing, and second, because the Lord **was sanctified among them**. In spite of Israel's scoffing, Christ in His power gave them water to drink.

20:16 **His Angel** is the Word and Son of God, for it was He who **brought** Israel **up out of Egypt** with His almighty power.

20:28 Aaron's death revealed the weakness and temporary nature of the Aaronic priesthood, for it could not overcome death. But Christ destroyed death by His death; therefore, His priesthood continues unto ages of ages (Heb 7:23–25).

21:9 The people who looked on the copper serpent on the signal pole lived. They lived because the motionless copper serpent signaled that the power of the venom in them was now dead.

The serpent bit Adam in the Garden of Eden, and his venom eventually caused him to die physically and decay in the grave: “So all the days Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died” (Gn 5:5). Death also came into the world through him (Rom 5:12).

When Christ hung motionless on the cross (Jn 3:14), His dead body signaled the end of death's reign over man's body, for “He trampled down death by His death, upon those in the tombs bestowing life” (sung by the Church at Easter). The copper serpent “saved those who looked upon it, not because it lived, but because it was killed, and killed with it the powers that were subject to it, being destroyed as it deserved. And what is the fitting epitaph for it from us? ‘O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory’ (1Co 15:55). You are overthrown by the cross; you are slain by Him who is the Giver of life; you are without breath, dead, without motion, even though you keep the form of a serpent lifted up on high on a pole” (GrgTheo).

22:22-38 The **Angel** is the Word and Son of God. He warned Balaam to speak only what He told him to speak: **“Only the word I may speak to you, this you must be careful to speak”** (v. 35). Later, Balaam told Balak he could only speak **whatever word God may put in my mouth, this I must speak** (v. 38). Thus, Balaam called the Angel “God.”

22:22-27 The donkey knew his Master and Creator, for she saw Him. However, Balaam could not see Him because of his darkened heart. Likewise, when this Angel, who is the Word, became flesh, neither Israel nor the world at large knew Him (Jn 1:10, 11), but the donkey and the ox knew Him at His birth in the cave.

In the Christmas icon, the donkey stands nearest Christ in the cave, and next to it the ox, for they knew their Master and Creator, but Israel did not know Him, as Isaiah prophesied (Is 1:3, 4).

23:5 God the Word **put a word in Balaam's mouth**, just as He said He would in 22:35.

23:7 **The Spirit** is the Holy Spirit, and **God** is God the Father. The Holy Spirit spoke by the prophet Balaam ("the Holy Spirit . . . who spoke by the prophets"—Creed). Therefore, the Holy Trinity is revealed in vv. 5 and 7, for where One of the Persons is present, present also are the other Two.

23:10 Speaking by the Spirit of God, Balaam could wish the greatest possible good for himself, namely, for his soul to **die with the souls of the righteous**, for in this wish there is no fear of death. For he who dies in Christ is made a partaker of His righteousness in baptism. (AmbM)

24:2 Num 24:2, 3, 5–9, 17, 18: This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

24:7 The **Man** is the Word become flesh (Jn 1:14). He is true Man and true God. He became Man to bring man into His kingdom, if they willingly follow Him there.

24:9 In His burial, this Man was like a lion resting in a cave. Those who bless this Man are blessed, but those who curse Him bring a curse on themselves.

24:17 Christ is the **Star** (Mt 2:2) and the **Man** who rose from the dead (**rise out of Jacob** and **out of Israel**). The three wise men of the East knew this prophecy, and when they saw His star, they followed it to the cave where He was born.

24:25 Balaam taught Balak “to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols” (Rev 2:14; see Nm 31:16). Soon afterward, the Israelites killed Balaam with the sword when they killed the kings of Midian (31:8; Jos 13:22).

25:1, 2 Balaam counseled Israel through Balak to commit fornication and to worship idols (31:16; Rev 2:14). For he perceived the weakness in the souls of the Israelites. What was that weakness? Their souls were subject to their desires, rather than the opposite. For when desires control the soul, it easily falls into fornication and idolatry (JohnCas).

25:7-8 The spear speaks of baptism, which kills corrupt desires in those who walk in their newness of life. “When we are aware of the devil's attacks, we should repeat to ourselves the apostolic words: ‘As many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death’ (Rom 6:3). Now if we have been conformed to His death, sin henceforth in us is surely a corpse, pierced through by the spear of baptism, as that fornicator was thrust through by the zealous Phinehas” (GrgNy).

26:64-65 The first census of the men of war was 603,550 (1:46). From this massive number, only two survived to enter the land of promise! Why? Because they always went astray in their heart and did not know the Lord's ways (Ps 94:10; Heb 3:10). Their hearts were blinded by rebellion against the Lord, who said of them, **“They shall surely die in the desert.”** Therefore, we, too, are admonished, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Heb 3:12). This evil heart of unbelief is equated with the sin of rebellion, which is inexcusable.

27:5-7 The daughters of Zelophehad would have their share in the inheritance when Israel entered the land of promise. Therefore, Christ saw these faithful women as coequal with the men. They were not, so to speak, “second-class citizens” in His sight. Equality in Christ also holds true in the Church, for both men and women are “heirs together of the grace of life” (1Pt 3:7).

27:12 Moses would see the land of promise, but he could not possess it. But this was no great loss to him compared to his true vision. For he saw “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed; see Heb 11:26). He waited eagerly to possess this inheritance.

27:14 Moses' failure to sanctify the Lord at the Water of Contention did not disqualify him from his true inheritance. In spite of his sin, he was the most humble man on the earth, and humility is “the beginning and the end of salvation” (JohnChr).

27:16 Moses acknowledged Christ as **the God of the spirits of all flesh**, and therefore, so are the Father and the Holy Spirit. For the three Persons are one in essence and undivided.

27:17 Joshua was the new shepherd of Israel. Both he and Moses were types of Christ, "the great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb 13:20). For as they were over the house of Israel, so He is over the Church. However, there are multitudes without this Shepherd; therefore, He commanded us to pray that He "send out laborers into the harvest" (Mt 9:36–38).

27:18 **The Spirit** is the Holy Spirit. Truly, Moses believed the one God to be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

28:1-39 The Son of God spoke to Moses, and the things He spoke on this occasion cover chs. 28 and 29. These two chapters form a comprehensive, complete, and well-ordered arrangement of Israel's liturgical worship in any given calendar year. These liturgics, given in various places in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, are here brought together as one unified whole. And once Israel completed their conquest of Canaan, these could be put into effect.

Israel's liturgical worship existed for *the sanctification of the time and life* of every Israelite. It sanctified time and life, because it was arranged around the number seven. Its beginning point and center was in the seventh day of the week—the Sabbath day. And the number seven was regulated according to the divisions of time established at Creation (Gn 1–11)—into days, weeks, months, years, and periods of years.

Thus, the liturgical worship ascended from (1) the daily offerings (Ex 29:38–42; Nm 28:3–8), to (2) the weekly offerings (Ex 20:8–11; Lv 23:3; Nm 28:9, 10), to (3) the monthly offerings (Nm 28:11–15), to (4) the yearly offerings (Ex 12:1–20; 23:15, 16; 34:22; Lv 16:1–34; 23:1–44; Nm 28:16–29:38), to (5) the sabbatical year (Ex 23:10, 11; Lv 25:1–7), and eventually to (6) the Year of Remission (Lv 25:8–55; 27:17–25).

Israel's liturgical worship was designed to sanctify time and all life. This sanctification would make the offerings to be **a sweet aroma** to the Lord (28:2). For the Lord was well-pleased when the Israelites were sanctified to the extent possible under Old Testament worship.

28:2 When Israel offered what the Lord commanded, they were only returning to Him what was His in the first place. The same is true of our offerings in the Church. “When we make a return we give nothing of our own, but those things which we have before received from Christ, this being especially of His grace, that He should require, as from us, His own gifts. He bears witness to this in *Numbers* when He says: ‘My gifts, My presents, My burnt offerings, you shall take care to offer Me as a sweet aroma in my feasts.’ That is, those things you give Me are yours, as having received them from Me, but they are the gifts of God. Let us offer to the Lord every virtue, and that true holiness which is in Him, and in piety let us keep the feast to Him with those things He hallowed for us” (AthanG).

30:1 Moses' greatness lay in the fact that he passed on to Israel **everything** the Son of God—the Lord—commanded. For He was “over His own house,” whereas Moses was His faithful servant “in all His house” (Heb 3:5, 6). We also are in His house, “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end” (Heb 3:6).

31:8-16 Balaam had prophesied in the Lord's name (chs. 22–24), but he caused Israel to worship idols and commit fornication (25:1–3; Rev 2:14). He became a false prophet and in the end was killed for his actions, because he **despised the Lord's word** and taught Israel to do the same. He replaced love for the true God with love for money. His false love then led him to worship Baal and to commit fornication. As St. Paul said, “The love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil” (1Ti 6:10). Money in itself is not the root of all evil. The love of money is, for as the Lord said, “You cannot serve God and mammon [riches]” (Mt 6:24). The love of money is idolatry (Col 3:5).

Today, “many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1Jn 4:1). They “run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit” (Jude 11). “They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2Pt 2:15). Like Balaam, they have “eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children” (2Pt 2:14). They “secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction” (2Pt 2:1).

31:21-24 The Midianites were corrupted by the love of money, idolatry, and fornication; therefore, everything taken from them had to be purified either by fire or water. **Fire** speaks of the Holy Spirit, and **the water of purification** foreshadows the waters of baptism. For in the baptismal waters, the Holy Spirit cleanses us with His fire, and we are born anew in union with Christ in His death, burial, and Resurrection. The old man of covetousness, idolatry, and fornication is crucified with Christ, and the new man is renewed to live in virtue and holiness (Rom 6:3–5; Jn 3:3–5; Mt 3:11).

32:5-7 The armies of Israel secured the lands east of the Jordan, which were suitable for cattle. The sons of Reuben and Gad requested these lands as their inheritance, without the necessity of crossing the Jordan to help their brothers fight for theirs. So they appealed to Moses as the arbitrator and judge. But Moses called these sons “a body of sinful men” (v. 14). They coveted what they saw at the expense of their brothers. This covetous spirit eventually led them into idolatry and into captivity in Assyria (1Ch 5:25, 26).

A man from the crowd asked Jesus to make his brother divide the inheritance with him, but Jesus declined, because He did not come to be a judge or arbitrator like Moses. Then He went on to say to this man, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Lk 12:15). Jesus came to save the world, but we cannot be saved if we are covetous.

33:1 A stage was a particular place Israel camped during their forty-year journey from Egypt through the wilderness to Canaan. Thirty-eight stages are mentioned in this chapter. At the thirty-eighth stage, they “camped west of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho” (v. 48). From this location, they would soon cross over the Jordan for their conquest of Canaan, the land of promise. Life is a journey from this fallen world (Egypt and the wilderness) to the kingdom of God (the land of promise).

33:2 The Lord led Israel the entire way in their journey. He tested them with harsh experiences "to know what was in their heart" (Dt 8:2, 15; see also 29:4; 32:12, 16; Ps 76:21; 77:14, 52, 53; 106:7).

God's people are tested with harsh experiences, which bring out what is in the heart. These tests reveal whether we truly love God or not. If we pass them, they help prepare us for entrance into the kingdom of God (1Pt 1:3–7).

33:8 Many things that happened to Israel serve as types for us and for our instruction and learning (Rom 15:4; 1Co 10:6, 11). For example, Israel's passage through the Red Sea was a type of baptism (1Co 10:1, 2).

33:14 Israel was tested at Rephidim, but they abused Moses and tempted the Lord (Ex 17:1–7). They failed this test, which proved they did not love God. Someone may say, “I love God,” but testing will prove whether or not his statement is true.

34:6 The **Great Sea** is the Mediterranean Sea.

35:1-8 The tribe of Levi was to be supported by the twelve tribes. These gifts enumerated here would teach love to the twelve, for Levi served them in the liturgical service of the tabernacle. Therefore, it was only fitting the twelve should show loving support to Levi with money and possessions. On the other hand, their love would teach the Levites lowliness of mind, so their liturgical service might not puff up the Levites with arrogance, as being above “the laity.”

Likewise, in the New Testament, “the Lord commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” (1Co 9:14). The case regarding the Levites laid a foundation for this. For since the dignity of a teacher sometimes elates him, the necessity of requiring monetary aid from those to whom he ministers helps keep him humble. On the other hand, those who show this love to their teacher also learn to love others as well. Humility, love, and gentleness are engendered on both sides (JohnChr).

1:1 The statement, **these are the words**, refers to the words Moses spoke in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. They were spoken **in the desert** during the thirty-nine–year period after Israel left Egypt.

1:3 In the eleventh month of the fortieth year, Moses spoke the contents of Deuteronomy, “beyond the Jordan in the land of Moab” (v. 5). He spoke the words the Lord gave him to speak. **The Lord** is the Son of God, “who built the house” (Heb 3:3). Moses was “faithful in all His house as a servant,” but the Son is “over His own house” (Heb 3:5, 6).

1:5 In Deuteronomy, Moses **began to explain** the Law he had already given in the previous three books. The word *Deuteronomy* means “a second law.” The book contains no new set of laws. It is called “a second law” because it especially emphasizes the spirit of the Law, so as to stress the importance of Israel's obedience and thankfulness to God from the heart.

1:13 The chosen leaders were to be **wise, understanding, and knowledgeable**. These three traits should also characterize leaders in the Church: “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct” (Heb 13:7).

1:16-17 These leaders were to **judge righteously** by being impartial in their judgments. They were not to be partial to the first testimony they might hear. Impartial judgment means hearing all sides before judging the case. Judgment should be made with “wisdom, understanding, and knowledge” (v. 13); otherwise, the judgment made would be prejudiced.

St. Basil the Great made reference to v. 17 in writing to a certain bishop who had formed a prejudiced judgment against him: “But truly, you have suffered the fate of all who fail to inquire into the nature of the circumstances and into the truth. You showed partiality by forgetting the exhortation: ‘You shall not show partiality in judgment.’”

1:26-28 Israel disobeyed the Lord's word because they revolted in their heart and **murmured in** their **tents**. The Law was not the problem, nor the cause of their rebellion. An unbelieving heart was the cause (Heb 3:7–11, 19). They judged by outward appearance (**we saw the sons of giants there**), rather than by faith in the Lord and His word. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2Co 5:7).

1:29-33 Their unbelieving heart was not to be cowardly (**terrified or afraid**). The fear of God produces courage, but the generation that came out of Egypt feared what they saw—taller and physically stronger people, large fortified cities, and even sons of giants (v. 28). Yet the Lord provided abundant evidence to encourage their faith, such as **leading** them **with the fire by night and the cloud by day** (v. 33).

The fire and the cloud foreshadowed the Incarnation of the Son. For the cloud speaks of the Mother of God, and the fire of the Son conceived in her womb. The Church believes in the Incarnate Son and in His holy Mother. This faith is the rock on which the Church stands, and against which "the gates of Hades shall not prevail" (Mt 16:18).

1:41-45 The generation that came out of Egypt did not believe the Lord when He said to go up and take the land, nor did they believe Him when He said not to go up. They rejected enlightened faith, but accepted blind faith. Such is the deceitfulness of unbelief.

2:4 Esau was the twin brother of Jacob. Both were sons of Isaac, the son of Abraham. Therefore, the sons of Esau were called Israel's **brethren**. They were brethren according to the flesh.

Being brethren according to the flesh qualified neither the sons of Israel (Jacob) nor the sons of Esau to be the children of God. “For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham” (Rom 9:6, 7). Both Jacob and Esau were the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. But this did not mean they were the children of God.

On what basis are people the children of God? The basis is “the word of promise” (Rom 9:9). The promise was the word of faith given Abraham concerning the birth of Isaac, which word he believed, for he was strong in faith, giving glory to God (Rom 4). But those among the children of Israel or the children of Esau who rejected this faith would not be the children of God.

2:7 The generation that died in the desert had no excuse for not believing the Lord, nor did the new generation about to enter the land of promise. For the Lord blessed them over the forty-year period in spite of their unbelief. They **lacked nothing**.

God's gracious promise in the Gospel of Christ either saves people or makes them hard and stubborn. Yet this hardness and stubbornness is of their own free will, for He never forces anyone to respond in faith. But He does make them the offer of peace.

3:28 The name *Joshua* in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament was translated into the Greek language as *Jesus*. This was true in the Greek Old Testament as well as in the New. This name means, “The Lord is salvation.”

Thus, the Jesus or Joshua of the Old Testament was a type of Jesus in the New. He was a type of Jesus in that he **will cause them to inherit the land** of Canaan. But Joshua was unable to give Israel rest in their souls (Heb 4:8). However, the Lord Jesus said, “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light” (Mt 11:28–30). Therefore, the Lord Jesus *is salvation*.

4:2 This statement by Moses is a commandment regarding God's commandments—a warning not to **add to** or **take from** them. This commandment is a warning against the traditions of men. In themselves, traditions are good, but the traditions of men are those that contradict and nullify the teachings of Scripture. Isaiah prophesied about the Jews of Jesus' day, who would “teach as doctrines the commandments of men” (Is 29:13; Mt 15:1–9). Jesus called these “the tradition of men” (Mk 7:8). But the traditions handed down in the Church by Christ and the apostles are to be kept and honored (1Co 11:2; 2Th 2:15; 3:6).

4:5 God's commandments in the Old Testament were to be taught and acted upon. Moses acted upon them, then taught them to others. This is the proper order: first keep them, then teach them. Those taught are then responsible to do them, for learning but not doing contradicts the teachings themselves. The same order holds in the New Testament commandments. For in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord said that whoever “does and teaches” His commandments “shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:19). Therefore, “does and teaches” is the proper order.

4:6 He who “does and teaches” has **wisdom** and **understanding**, which will convert **the Gentiles** to the true God. To teach but not do would be hypocrisy in their sight, and rightly so.

4:7 God was **near to** Israel, which is proper to say in the relationship between the Creator and the creatures to whom He is near. But such a statement could never be made regarding the Son in relation to the Father. God is never said to be “near Him,” for as He said to the apostle Philip, “I am in the Father, and the Father in Me” (Jn 14:10). He is “in,” not “near to.” Therefore, the Son is not a creature (AthanG). Rather, he is “God of God” and “one in essence with the Father” (Creed). Both His words and His works proved this (Jn 14:11).

4:9 The children of Israel were to **diligently guard** their **soul**, lest their hearts should depart from the Lord's commandments. The generation that came out of Egypt let down their guard and fell into unbelief. Consequently, they died in the desert.

The Scripture says, “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb 4:7). The word “today” indicates that as long as we are alive, we have the hope of recovering from our fall (JohnChr).

4:12 Deut 4:12, 15–18: The divine nature has no form; only creatures have form. Therefore, no form was to be made by Israel as representing God's essence. To worship any form that supposedly depicted God's nature would be idolatry. But the nations that surrounded Israel worshiped forms as though they were God.

The Lord did instruct Israel to use certain forms in worship; however, these forms, such as those in the tabernacle, were not objects of worship. They did not depict the divine nature in any sense. Rather, they were honored as holy because they foreshadowed the Incarnation and the Church. Similarly, the Church uses images or icons in worship, but neither do these depict the divine nature. They are not objects of worship. Rather, they speak of the Incarnation and the angels and saints. The honor paid to these images passes to the ones honored.

4:13 The Ten Commandments were written on stone tablets. But now the Holy Spirit writes His commandments on the tablets of our hearts (2Co 3:1–3).

4:19 Nor was Israel to worship the forms in the heavens, such as **the sun, the moon, and the stars**. For the Lord **assigned** these **to all the nations under heaven** for their well-being. These things reveal the glory of God and “His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom 1:20). But the nations turned them into objects of worship, and thus fell away from the truth into all kinds of sin and corruption.

4:24 One meaning of the name **God** is “burning” (GrgTheo; JohnDm). Thus, He is called **a consuming fire** (see also Heb 12:29), and He burns up sin and corruption in the repentant. He cleanses them with His purifying fire (AthanG). He also gives them His water of life, which quenches their thirst that once burned with sins, but now yearns for Him and His kingdom (AmbM).

4:26 The witnesses in heaven are the holy angels (AthanG; JohnChr; GrgTheo).

4:35 There is only one God, because there is only one divine essence or nature, which is undivided. For **God** is a name indicating the divine essence (GrgTheo; JohnDm; AthanG). This undivided essence exists in three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Moses believed this, and so does the Church.

4:39 Since God **is in heaven above and on the earth beneath**, that is, in all creation, no other god could possibly exist. For He is everywhere present and fills all things. There is no room for another, because He is uncircumscribed. The true God exists outside creation, for nothing can contain Him; rather, He contains all things in Himself, and is present everywhere.

5:5 The Son of God on Mt. Sinai was “a consuming fire” (4:24; Heb 12:29). His divine fire purified Moses from all materialistic attachments; therefore, he was able to go up on the mountain in the midst of this fire. The children of Israel had no access to Him because they were materialistic; that is, they were attached to the physical objects of this world. But when the Son of God became incarnate, all Israelites had easy access to Him. He even ate and drank with sinners (Mt 9:10–13), for He was their friend (Mt 11:19). This contrast between Mt. Sinai and the Incarnation is described in Heb 12:18–29.

5:6-9 The divine names **Lord** and **God** relate to **I Am**, because this, too, is a divine name: “I AM the Existing One” (Ex 3:14). He is the eternal God, without beginning or end, the Only-begotten of the Father; “true God of true God” (Creed). Thus, Jesus said to the Jews, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn 8:58).

5:9 The statement, **repaying the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me**, is not universal in application, but is spoken about certain ones who came out of Egypt. For after they saw the Lord's signs and wonders in Egypt, they committed worse sins than their forefathers who saw none of these things (JohnChr).

5:12 The Law of Moses was given to the children of Israel to check their rebellious spirit and to threaten them with divine vengeance if they persisted: “knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless” (1Ti 1:9). But it was also given to lead them to Christ, “the end of the law” (Rom 10:4; Gal 3:24).

5:29 The Law was not the problem; Moses was not the problem. For he had a heart to fear the Lord and to guard His commandments. The problem among the children of Israel was a heart problem. Their heart was attached to this world, rather than to the Lord. This same problem persists in many today, but the door to the kingdom remains open to those who are willing to be detached from materialism and turn their hearts to Him (2Co 3:16).

6:4 “By Moses saying ‘one Lord’, we understand the simple, blessed and incomprehensible essence of God” (AthanG). Moses is not saying the one Lord is one solitary person (HilryP). Rather, he is saying He is one undivided essence or nature. For person and nature are not the same thing (JohnDm). The divine nature exists undividedly in three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Son is begotten before all time and ages from the essence of the Father, but His begetting does not divide the Father's essence. The Holy Spirit proceeds before all time and ages from the Father, but His procession does not divide the Father's essence. The Persons are distinct or different, but the essence is one and undivided. Therefore, we believe in the Holy Trinity, our one God and Lord.

6:12 Israel's attachment to this world often led them to forget the one true God and to go after other gods. We, too, need to guard our hearts, lest we do the same thing.

6:14 These **different gods** do not exist, although they are called gods (AthanG).

6:16 The **Temptation** refers to the incident in Ex 17 (see notes in that chapter).

6:23 The Lord **brought** them **out** of Egypt that He might **bring** them **in** to the land of promise. Similarly, He brings us out of our attachments to this world and into attachment to the kingdom of God.

7:1-3 The Lord would bring Israel into the land of promise by grace, which was His role in the covenant. Israel's role, in part, was to **make no covenant with them** (v. 2), nor to intermarry with them. It was within their power not to do these things. Therefore, God's grace does not cancel out free will. “And by this testimony we can clearly see what we ought to ascribe to free will, and what to the design and daily assistance of the Lord, that it belongs to divine grace to give us opportunities of salvation and prosperous undertakings and victory; but that it is ours to follow up the blessings God gives us with either earnestness or indifference” (JohnCas).

7:7-8 Since they were chosen because of God's love for them and His oath to their fathers, it is obvious they were not chosen because of their own deeds, but by the grace of God. Therefore, they had no basis for boasting in themselves, nor do we (Rom 4:1–8). (JohnChr)

7:8 “The Lord's ‘mighty hand’ is the Son” (AthanG). As the hand is of the same essence as its body, similarly the Son is the same in essence with the Father. Furthermore, as the Holy Fathers teach, things having the same might also have the same essence. Thus, since the Son's might is the same as the Father's, They are one in essence.

7:21-24 The **nations** speak of the sinful passions and how we are to war against them. We are to take them on one at a time by the grace of God, until we have gained the victory over all of them. “But when the main purpose of our heart has singled out one passion as the special object of its attack, we shall pray about it more earnestly, and with special anxiety and fervor shall entreat that we may be more especially on our guard against it and so succeed in gaining a speedy victory. For Moses himself in this passage teaches us that we should follow this plan in our conflicts and not trust in our own power” (JohnCas).

8:1 Under the Law of Moses, every commandment was to be kept if the people were to live and prosper in the land of promise. Great care was to be exercised in keeping them. How much more is this true under the Law of Christ in the New Testament. We are responsible through His grace to keep all His commandments.

8:2-5 The Lord dealt harshly with Israel in the desert as a test, for testing under pressure has a way of revealing what is in the heart. The test in each case reveals obedience or disobedience to His commandments. This revelation was not for the Lord's acquisition of knowledge, for He knows all things before they take place. Instead, it would let each of them know the condition of his own heart. All chastening is for our benefit, that we might partake of the Lord's holiness (Heb 12:5–11).

8:3 The Lord allowed them to go hungry in the desert and fed them with simple food: manna, of which they grew sick. Nevertheless, the Lord was teaching them the road of virtue, namely, that man's primary food is the word of God, and obedience to that word. But they failed to learn this lesson, and many of them died in the desert.

8:4 The clothes on their backs and the shoes on their feet never wore out during those forty years in the desert. This foreshadows the resurrection from the dead (AmbM). It also foreshadows “the life of the world to come” (Creed).

8:15 The **biting serpent and scorpion** speak of the devil and his angels, whom we are not to fear (JohnChr). For the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of living water, is with us (1Co 10:4).

8:17-18 We should never think that our free will and energy gained us victory over the spiritual enemy, for victory is only by the grace of God (JohnCas).

9:1-3 The **sons of Anak** were giants, and their physical stature speaks of the sinful passions that seek to wreak havoc in both soul and body. By the Lord's **consuming fire** we are able to overcome them. “For a servant of the Lord should be diligent and careful, yes, moreover, burning like a flame, so when by a zealous and burning spirit, he destroys all fleshly sin, he may be able to draw near to God, who, according to the expression of the saints, is called ‘a consuming fire’” (AthanG).

9:4-6 A **stiff-necked people** (v. 6) are those who claim their victories over the enemy were based on their own righteousness and upright heart. “To those who have their eyes opened and their ears ready to pay attention, does this not plainly say, ‘When your struggle with fleshly faults goes well for you, and you see you are free from the filth of them, and from the fashions of this world, do not be puffed up by the success of the conflict and victory and ascribe it to your own power and wisdom, nor fancy you gained the victory over spiritual wickedness and fleshly sins through your own exertions and energy, and free will’? For there is no doubt in all this you could not possibly have succeeded, unless you were fortified and protected by the help of the Lord” (JohnCas).

10:12-15 “God needs nothing we have to give Him, and this especially proves sincere love, when one who needs nothing and is not in any necessity, does everything for the sake of being loved by us. So when He bids you to love Him, He then most of all shows He loves you. For nothing secures our salvation more than loving Him” (JohnChr).

10:20 To serve the Lord means to worship Him. But how can we worship the Father if we, so to speak, sever the Son and the Holy Spirit from Him? “Well, how will you worship Him only, tell me, when you have severed Him from His intimate union with His own Only-begotten and His own Spirit? This worship is simply Jewish” (BasilG).

11:8-9 The reward for keeping all the Lord's commandments under the Law of Moses was prosperity in the land of Canaan. The Law was not given for the attainment of righteousness before God. The Law could not impart eternal life (Gal 3:21). It was merely a tutor or guardian until the coming of Christ, the Giver of Life, through whom we are made righteous before God (Gal 3:22–25). This righteousness is imparted in baptism (Gal 3:26–29).

12:11-12 After the Jews settled in their land, they were to go to the city chosen by God to offer their sacrifices; they were not to offer their sacrifices anywhere else. But after the coming of Christ, they were unable to do this, for Jerusalem was destroyed along with the temple. This destruction was proof enough that the Law had come to an end, for it was only a shadow of the kingdom to come (AthanG).

12:13-14 The whole burnt offering was a type of “the sacrifice of praise to God . . . giving thanks to His name” (Heb 13:15). “Now what is a spiritual whole burnt offering? It is ‘the sacrifice of praise.’ In what place do we offer it? In the Holy Spirit. Where have we learned this? From the Lord Himself in the words, ‘The true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.’ This place Jacob saw, and said: ‘The Lord is in this place.’ It follows that the Spirit is truly the place of the saints, and the saint is the proper place for the Spirit, offering himself as he does for the indwelling of God, and is called God's temple” (BasilG).

13:1-4 The truth does not allow room for human tradition to change it, either by addition or by subtraction. False prophets arise among the people of God, and the Lord permits this in order to allow our free will to operate and to show our love for God (JohnCas). For we are not robots in which the grace of God operates against the devil apart from synergy on our part.

14:1 The Scriptures speak of children in a twofold sense: one in which children are chosen to be children, as in this verse; and the other, in which children are the natural offspring of their parents, such as Isaac of Abraham, Jacob of Isaac, and the twelve patriarchs of Jacob. Which of these two senses relates to the Son of God? The second, for He is the natural Offspring of His Father, and therefore one in essence with Him (AthanG).

14:2 When men choose something for themselves, they choose the best. Similarly, God chooses the holy, for He first makes us holy; then we are to continue to be holy in our manner of life. For one is not saved by faith alone, but by faith plus a holy manner of life (JohnChr). Thus, we must add virtue to our faith (2Pt 1:5–11).

15:1-11 A remission of debts was to be granted to poor brothers in the land every seven years. Debts were to be dismissed and, so to speak, blotted out of the books. The Lord accepted this remission as an act toward Himself (**for the Lord your God**, v. 2), for He loves the poor. When He became incarnate, He was very poor, for He had “nowhere to lay *His* head” (Mt 8:20). By this He taught us not to be attached to money and possessions, and to show our love for the poor.

16:1 The **month of new corn** was a type of becoming new creatures in Christ (2Co 5:17), bearing the good fruits of virtue by casting away all hypocrisy, deceit, and arrogance, and putting on love for God and neighbor through the Holy Spirit (AthanG).

16:8 The seventh and final day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a Sabbath on which Israel was to do **no work** . . . **except what must be done for life**. Therefore, the Sabbath was not a total cessation of all work; work essential to life might be done.

Jesus cured a paralytic on the Sabbath, and this cure was obviously essential to his life. Yet the Jews accused Him of breaking the Sabbath, and even tried to kill Him (Jn 5:16). But these same Jews would take care of their animals on the Sabbath, even if one should fall into a ditch. So Jesus asked them, “Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Mt 12:11, 12). Furthermore, He also said, “The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mt 12:8), and “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mk 2:27).

16:10 On the Day of Pentecost, the bread of the firstfruits was offered before the Lord. This was a type of the preaching of the apostles to the Jews in the Book of Acts, when three thousand believed in the Lord. Thus, these Jews were consecrated to the Lord as the firstfruits of the Resurrection (JohnCas).

17:1 No animal was to be sacrificed **having any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the Lord your God**. These animals were a type of Christ, who “without blemish and without spot” redeemed us by His precious blood (1Pt 1:19). His precious blood applied to our hearts enables us to be offered to God “without blemish” (Eph 5:27). Through His precious blood we are able to live a holy life, but anyone who excuses sinful behavior or advocates such a lifestyle for others “is an abomination to the Lord.”

17:7-12 The statement, **“You shall put away their evil from among you,”** is quoted by St. Paul in 1Co 5:13 in relation to church discipline. This shows the close kinship between the old and new covenants, and one and the same Lord and Lawgiver (JohnChr). The punishments were different, but the objective was the same, namely, a holy people to the Lord.

18:15-16 The words of the people, **“Let us not hear again the voice of the Lord our God, nor let us see this great fire any more, lest we die,”** were spoken to Moses in Ex 20:19 at the giving of the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai. But Moses said nothing at this time about the coming of a Prophet like himself. Rather, his response to the people at that time was, “Be of good courage, for God is come to test you, that His fear may be among you, so you may not sin” (Ex 20:20). Thus, it was first necessary for them to be tested, so as to fear the Lord and not sin, for they were too dull of hearing to hear about another Prophet to come. However, they failed the test and died in the desert, because they would not obey the prophet Moses.

18:17 Forty years later Moses spoke to them of the prophecy concerning the Prophet to come. For at Mt. Sinai the Lord also spoke to him the words recorded in vv. 18–22. The new generation was now ready to hear this prophecy.

18:18 The Prophet to come would be like Moses, in that Moses' short-term prophecies came to pass; therefore, his long-term ones were to be believed. This was the mark of a true prophet (vv. 21, 22), and the same would be true of the Prophet to come.

The Prophet to come would speak all the Father commanded Him. This indicates He is the Word made flesh (Jn 1:14), for no other prophet, including Moses, would ever speak in such a manner. They were mere men, whereas the Prophet to come would be God in the flesh. Thus, the prophet Isaiah prophesied concerning this Prophet that the people would be “taught by God,” that is, by God in the flesh (Is 54:13; Jn 6:45).

18:19 The Prophet to come would speak in the Father's name, for no other prophet could speak in such a manner. Why? Because no other prophet could call the Father “My Father” (Jn 5:43; 10:25). Everyone else must address the Father as “Our Father” (Lord's Prayer), for the Son is the Father's Only-begotten. He is God of God and one in essence with the Father (Creed).

Therefore, the Father says He would judge anyone refusing to listen to His Prophet (**I will require it of him**). St. Peter interprets the words “will require” as meaning “utterly destroy” (Acts 3:22, 23). St. John Chrysostom also interprets “utterly destroy” as meaning the putting away of the Law of Moses: “Do you see how the Law itself showed how it is done away in Christ? For this Prophet, that is, Christ according to the flesh, whom Moses commanded them to hear, made to cease both Sabbath and circumcision and all other things.”

When Jesus multiplied the five loaves and the two fish to feed the five thousand men, the people said afterward, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” (Jn 6:14). A few minutes later these same people “complained about Him” (Jn 6:41) because of what He taught, and consequently deserted Him (Jn 6:66).

19:15-19 Based on this law, the false witnesses against Jesus should have been put to death, for they wanted Him to die (Mt 26:59–66).

20:8 This word concerning the **fearful and fainthearted** is spoken in a mystery concerning those to come under the new covenant, namely, that one cannot fight the Lord's battles with a double heart. For as Jam 1:8 says, “a double-minded man [is] unstable in all his ways.” One cannot, so to speak, have one foot in the world and one in the kingdom of God. “No one can serve two masters,” that is, “God and mammon” (Mt 6:24).

21:15 In the statement, **the firstborn son is of her**, the verb *is* literally means “come into existence.” In the fourth century, the heretics applied this verb to the Son of God, for they claimed He had a beginning of existence. But the birth of this son would be from parents who had a beginning of existence; therefore, their offspring would have a beginning. However, the Son of God is the Offspring of the Father, and He is without beginning; therefore, His Son, too, is without beginning. These heretics therefore condemned themselves by their false application of the verb in this verse (AthanG).

21:22-23 Under the Mosaic Law, there were two kinds of curses. One was the curse of capital punishment by hanging, and the other of being cursed for transgressing the Law (26:26).

The first applied to Christ when He redeemed us by hanging on the cross. St. Paul quoted v. 23 when he said, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)” (Gal 3:13). He was the Innocent One who took the place of us, who were the guilty.

However, the second curse in no way applies to Christ, for He never sinned, as St. Peter also said of Him by quoting Is 53:9: “Who committed no sin, / Nor was deceit found in His mouth” (1Pt 2:22). (JohnChr)

22:1-4 If a brother's young bull or donkey fallen on the road was to be helped, how much more should a man's soul be helped on the road to eternal life (JohnChr).

22:5 The dignity and distinction between male and female were not to be obscured, for in the beginning man was created male and female, and God blessed both (Gn 1:26, 27). To be male is not better than to be female, or vice versa, for God pronounced both “very good” (Gn 1:31). Therefore, a man should not try to be a woman, nor a woman a man.

22:6, 7 The dignity and protection of motherhood, even among birds, was to be maintained. As then, so now as well.

22:8 When a man builds a house, love of neighbor must be in his mind. For love of neighbor is the summary of the Law (Lv 19:18; Rom 13:9). Under the Law one was to love his neighbor “as himself.” Under Grace one is to love his neighbor more than himself, for Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (Jn 13:34). Jesus loved mankind more than Himself, and He even died for His enemies (Rom 5:6–8).

22:9-11 Each distinct thing God created has its own dignity, for God declared everything He made to be “very good” (Gn 1:31).

22:12 The commandment concerning tassels was first given in Nm 15:37–41. These were constant reminders to keep all the Lord's commandments. For the Israelites, as is true of all men, had a tendency to follow their own mind and will, rather than the will of God (Nm 15:39). The fault was not with the Law of Moses but with their own tendencies.

22:13-28 These laws were designed to protect both virginity and marriage, for both are “very good” in the eyes of God, for He created both (Gn 1:31).

23:4 The Ammonite and the Moabite speak of those heretics who employ subtle and deceitful arguments against the Blessed and Holy Trinity. For they pry into the Son's incomprehensible generation from the Father, and the Holy Spirit's incomprehensible procession from the Father. They try to explain the unexplainable, and twist the truth with their sophistry (GrgTheo).

23:7 There is no peaceful coexistence or good wishes for heretics or heresy.

23:20-21 Charging interest (usury) was a subtle form of greed, for it used the pretense of relieving a need to gain a profit. This was a subtle device to extort money from a poor brother in the name of doing him good. It relieved poverty to make a gain from poverty. It used another's need as an occasion to become wealthy (JohnChr).

24:1-4 These laws regarding divorce were given to protect the wife from being murdered by the husband, for hate leads to murder; and hardhearted husbands in Israel would kill the wives they hated. Another reason the laws were given was to prevent wife-swapping, which would have destroyed the sanctity of marriage. Therefore, divorce was allowed by the Lawgiver to prevent greater evils from occurring. For hardhearted husbands would not hesitate to murder and commit other atrocities if they thought it was to their advantage (JohnChr).

24:16 Parents could not be punished because of their children's sins, nor vice versa. The prophet Ezekiel also confirmed this: “The word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, what is the meaning of this proverb among the sons of Israel, which says: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, says the Lord, you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die” (Ezk 18:1–4). Therefore, each one is accountable for his own sins.

What then is the meaning of 5:9, “repaying the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me”? This was not meant as a universal saying. It only referred to the children of those who sinned in Egypt, and who committed the same sins as their fathers. Anyone who reads the Scriptures regarding Israel's deliverance from Egypt will find this to be true (JohnChr).

This understanding also refutes the doctrine of original sin, which claims that all mankind is guilty before God for Adam's sin. Adam was guilty for his own transgression. His transgression brought physical death upon all mankind, but not guilt before God (Rom 5:12). Each individual is accountable before God for his own sins.

25:4 The mystery hidden in this statement refers to teachers in the Church (1Ti 5:18; Lk 10:7). Those who labor like an ox in the field are worthy of receiving wages to meet their needs, for the ox worked very hard under great toil and stress. As St. John Chrysostom said concerning teachers in the Church, “Unless he is as the ox treading out the corn, and bearing the yoke, in spite of heat and thorns, and does not cease his labors until he carries the corn into the granary, he is not worthy.”

25:5-6 This law explains how Joseph (the foster father of Jesus) could have two fathers, as recorded in the two genealogies of Jesus. In Luke's record of the genealogy, Joseph's father was Heli (Lk 3:23). Heli was his legal father, for he died childless. Jacob, his brother by the same mother, raised up seed for him. This seed was Joseph, according to Matthew's genealogy (Mt 1:16). Thus, Jacob was Joseph's natural father (JohnDm).

25:17-19 Remember Amalek. Do not forget. For he is a coward who does not fear God, and he attacks from behind when you are tired and weary. He is the devil. But overcome him with the sign of the cross, and you will enjoy rest in the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom you will overcome this enemy, even in your weakest moments.

26:16-19 Israel promised to keep the Law of Moses **with all** their **heart and with all** their **soul**. This was a genuine possibility from the standpoint of the Law itself, but it was an impossibility when considering their heart and soul. They simply did not have the heart to follow through, for man's willpower alone could not fulfill the Law's requirements. Therefore, the fault for not keeping it made them guilty. Furthermore, the Law itself had an inherent weakness. It could not give them divine power to help their willpower fulfill it. So the Law pointed them to Christ as the solution to their dilemma, for He is “the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom 10:4). Those under the Law who believed in this “end” would be made complete by His Incarnation (Heb 11:39, 40).

27:5-8 Aspects of true worship are foreshadowed in these verses. Worship involves **an altar** (see Heb 13:10). There is no artificiality in genuine worship (**whole stones**), and silence is part of it (**shall not use an iron tool**—GrgTheo). In true worship, one's whole life should be committed to God (**whole burnt offerings**). In the Eucharist (**peace offerings**), we eat and drink Christ's precious body and blood, and are filled with joy **before the Lord**.

27:26 Under the Law, **cursed is every man who does not abide in all the words of this law to do them**. But under grace and truth (Jn 1:17), “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28), and, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us” (Gal 3:13). (JohnChr)

No one has ever continued in or kept the whole Law of Moses; therefore, we come under the guilt imposed by this curse. But Christ never transgressed the Law, and therefore could not come under such a curse. So He exchanged our curse for the one in 21:23. Since He was crucified on the cross, the curse of being hanged on a tree freed us from our curse for transgressing the Law. An innocent Man's death delivered us from the curse, for by dying He delivered us who were dying (JohnChr).

28:1-13 Every blessing promised to the obedient in vv. 3–13 relates to life in this present world, for the Law of Moses could not promise eternal life to anyone obeying it. The best it could offer was physical blessings in the land of Canaan. But it could not make one immortal, or righteous, or a child of God, or heir of the kingdom of God in the world to come. For these are spiritual blessings in Christ, as St. Paul said in Eph 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ” (JohnChr).

28:47 The Law of Moses cannot be blamed for Israel's failure to serve the Lord. The failure was traceable to the heart of those who did not obey Him **with joy and a good heart**. Nor were these thankful **for the abundance of everything**. However, under the new covenant, the faithful serve Him with thanksgiving, even in the midst of suffering and persecution, “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 5:20).

28:58 The beginning of faith is to fear the Lord (IsaacS).

28:66 This is a prophecy concerning the Crucifixion. On the cross, the Lord hung **before the eyes** of Israel, yet the nation did **not believe in** Him. They did not believe in their **Life**, for the cross is life-giving (AthanG). Whereas the Law of Moses cannot give eternal life, the cross does to those who believe. For Christ is God in the flesh; therefore, His death in the flesh gives eternal life to those who obey Him.

29:1-3 The children of Israel saw with their physical eyes the Lord's signs and great wonders He did for them in Egypt. However, they could not see them with the eyes and ears of their heart. Why then did He not give them such eyes and ears? Because they were unwilling to receive illumination. He was willing, but they were not. He would not commit Himself to them, because they would not commit themselves to Him.

29:4 Their clothes and shoes did not wear out during the forty-year period in the desert. This was a type of “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed; AmbM).

29:17-18 **Gall and bitterness** is likened to a root that springs up and defiles others. It begins when one flatters himself in the deceptions (**wanderings**) of his own heart. Bitterness of spirit results, and this causes one to “fall short of the grace of God” (Heb 12:15).

29:28 We gladly own whatever things the Lord is pleased to reveal to us in the Holy Scriptures. But we avoid prying into the **secret things** of the Lord, for this leads to heresies that destroy the soul. Questions are sometimes asked, “How can these things be? How is the Son begotten from the Father before all time and ages? How can the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father? What is the essence of God?” These and other questions of this kind are secrets only known by the Holy Trinity. Therefore, the Creed begins with, “I believe.”

30:11 **This commandment** is the commandment regarding the attainment of righteousness before God through faith. In vv. 11–14, Moses tells us how to become righteous in the eyes of God through faith. To do so **is not too burdensome**. But the multitude of commandments in the Law of Moses were “too burdensome” for the people to be able to become righteous in God's sight. As St. Peter said, “neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” them (Acts 15:10).

30:11-13 **Far off** means **in heaven** or **beyond the sea**. By describing "far off" in this manner, Moses shows how we attain righteousness before God through faith. We attain it by casting out the questions, **"Who will ascend into heaven for us?"** and **"Who will go over the sea for us?"** These questions are another way of asking, "How can these things be?" as Nicodemus asked Jesus (Jn 3:9). These questions raise supposed impossibilities based on human reasoning, but "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Lk 18:27), and, "Is anything impossible with God?" (Gn 18:14). How then are these questions based on human reasoning cast out? Moses gives the answer in v. 14.

30:14 The **word** is the word concerning the attainment of righteousness before God. It is the word that casts out human reasoning and the supposed impossibilities raised by it. This word is so **very near** a person that it is in one's very **mouth**, **heart**, and **hands**. One does not need to ascend to heaven to find it, nor cross the sea. It is God's word sown in a believing heart, confessed with the mouth, and worked out with the hands. It is righteousness through faith. It is the faith of Abraham, who cast out all human reasoning and the impossibilities raised by it, and left all to the power and glory of God (Rom 4:19–22).

In Rom 10:6–8, St. Paul refers to vv. 11–14, saying Moses commandment speaks of “the righteousness of faith” and “the word of faith.” He also shows it was the Lord Jesus Christ who made this faith possible (Rom 10:9, 10). “What does the phrase mean, ‘The word is near you’? It means, ‘It is easy.’ For in your heart and on your tongue is your salvation. There is no long journey to go on, no seas to sail over, no mountains to climb, to get saved. But if you have such a heart, you may even be saved while you sit at home. For ‘in your mouth and heart’ is the source of salvation. On another score, Paul also makes the word of faith easy, and says, ‘God raised Him from the dead.’ For just reflect upon the worthiness of the Worker, and you will no longer see any difficulty in the thing” (JohnChr).

31:6-8 These words inspired the words in Heb 13:5, 6, “*Let your* conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” The Lord will never forsake His people—a faithful and bold promise. Faithfulness and boldness on our part to believe Him will bring about contentment in us, and will deliver us from covetousness and the fear of man.

31:16-17 Why does the Lord say, **“I will forsake them,”** when He said in vv. 6–8 that He would not forsake them? Because it is customary in Scripture to call God's permission His action. He permits people to forsake Him because man has free will, and virtue is not forced (JohnDm).

32:4 God is faithful because He is trustworthy; we are faithful because we believe and obey Him (AthanG).

32:5 **Blameworthy children are not His** because they are God's children in name only. True children are blameless, because they are His children in substance as well as in name.

32:6-18 When the Scriptures wish to signify a son, it uses the term *beget*, rather than the terms *make* and *create* (AthanG). God the Father made man by bringing him from nonexistence into existence, but He begets him as a son by adoption. He adopts him through His Only-begotten Son and His Life-giving Spirit (Jn 1:12–14; Rom 8:14–16; Jam 1:18). But Moses warns God's children not to **abandon the God who begot** them, nor to **forget the God who nourished** them.

32:7 We **remember the days of old** and **consider the years of many generations** when we search the Scriptures tirelessly. Let us ask God the Father their meaning, and also the Holy Fathers of the Church (**your elders**). “Wherefore, let us knock at that very fair garden of the Scriptures, so fragrant and sweet and blooming, with its varied sounds of spiritual and divinely-inspired birds ringing all round our ears, laying hold of our hearts, comforting the mourner, pacifying the angry and filling him with joy everlasting, bearing us up to the Only-begotten Son and bringing us through Him to the Father of Lights. But let us not knock carelessly at the door of the Scriptures but rather zealously and constantly, lest knocking we grow weary. For thus it will be opened to us. If we read once or twice and do not understand what we read, let us not grow weary, but let us persist, let us talk much, let us inquire. ‘For ask your Father and He will tell you, and your elders and they will tell you.’ Let us draw from the fountain of the garden continual and pure waters springing up to eternal life. Here let us be in luxury, let us revel to the full, for the Scriptures possess inexhaustible grace. But if we are able to pluck anything profitable from outside sources, there is nothing to forbid that” (JohnDm).

32:12 Moses does not use the word **alone** to divide the Son and the Spirit from the Father. Rather, this word is said in relation to any **foreign god with them**, for the division is between the Lord and false gods (BasilG).

32:13 The **rock** speaks of Christ, and the **oil** of the Holy Spirit, and the **honey** of the spiritual food, for Christ gives us His Holy Spirit (1Co 10:3, 4; Rom 8:9).

32:17 To worship anything but the true God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is to worship demons (BasilG).

32:20 **Sons in whom is no faith** are children in name only, but true sons are children both in name and in substance. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1).

32:21 This is a prophecy concerning the Gentiles who would become God's children through faith in Christ, thus provoking the Jews to jealousy (Rom 10:19). The Speaker in this prophecy (vv. 20, 21) is the Word and Son of God (AthanG; HilryP).

32:30 This is a prophecy concerning warfare against heresy. Thus, **how could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight**? By using David's simple sling against Goliath's boastful arguments of logic. It is no detriment to use our simple and plain statements of truth against the falsehood of logicians. For the truth exhibits Goliath as a headless trunk. It is the task of truth not only to cut off the head of false logic, but also to show that it is indeed cut off (GrgNy).

32:39 This statement could be made not only by the Father, but also by the Son or the Holy Spirit. Each could say, **“There is no God besides Me.”** For the statement is made in contrast to false gods (AthanG; BasilG; HilryP). It is not a contrast between the Persons of the Holy Trinity, our one God.

32:43 This prophecy is quoted in Rom 15:10 and Heb 6:2, to show that both men and angels are to worship God Incarnate, the Son of God, for He is their Maker. Moses also worships Him.

32:49-50 Moses had no fear of death, but rejoiced to depart to be with the Lord (AthanG).

33:2 The Lord who appeared to Israel was the Son of God. He revealed Himself many times to the prophets throughout the Old Testament. Angels sometimes appeared with Him, as did the two angels in Gn 19:1.

33:3-4 The Son of God was the Lawgiver who gave Moses **His words**, and Moses, in turn, gave them to Israel.

33:5 The **Ruler** is the Lord Jesus Christ.

33:7 The **voice of Judah** is the Lord Jesus Christ, who visited His people.

33:9 Commitment to the Lord takes precedence over commitment to family (Mt 10:37–39; JohnChr; AmbM).

33:16 The **One revealed in the Bush** was the Son of God. In this revelation, He foreshadowed His coming Incarnation (JohnDm; HilryP; JohnChr; AthanG).

33:26 The **God of the Beloved** is the Lord Jesus Christ, and “the Beloved” is His Church.

33:29 A **people saved by the Lord** are those who call upon His name (Rom 10:12, 13). His name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

34:4 The Lord swore to give the land Moses saw to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as an inheritance. Yet they never received it, nor did Moses. Therefore, what is this land, and when will they receive it, and who is the **seed**? The seed is Christ and those who believe in Him (Gal 3:16). The **land** is “the world to come” (Creed; Rom 4:13). They, and those of like faith, will receive this world at “the resurrection of the dead” (Creed; Heb 11). The world to come is this present creation redeemed along with the children of God (Rom 8:21, 22).

34:9 The **Spirit of understanding** is the Holy Spirit, one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

34:10 There was no prophet in Israel like Moses, until the coming of Christ, *the* Prophet. He was like Moses, but Moses was not like Him, for Christ is God in the flesh. The Lord who sent Moses was the Son of God, who is the I AM (Ex 3). He sent Moses to Egypt to deliver Israel.

1:1 The name Joshua, which means, “the Lord is salvation,” is Yeshua in Hebrew, Iesous in Greek, and Jesus in English.

Joshua's original name was Hoshea, but Moses changed his name to Joshua (Nm 13:16). This name change was prophetic, for it made Joshua a type of Jesus Christ.

1:2 Moses, the lawgiver, could not bring Israel into the promised land, which shows that the Law of Moses cannot save the people. But Joshua brought them in, and in this he was a type of Jesus Christ, who brings His own into heaven through grace (JohnChr).

1:3-5 The enemy will be trampled under Joshua's feet. In a similar way, Christ will trample down sin, death, and the devil by His death and Resurrection.

1:6 The Lord who spoke to Joshua was the Son and Word of God. He told Joshua to **be strong and courageous** in the face of war and death. Therefore, when the Word became incarnate, how could He Himself fear death when He stood before Herod and Pilate? How could He who said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body” (Lk 12:4), and who said to Abraham, “Do not fear” (Gn 14:1; 26:24), fear the terror of death? No, He did not fear death, but destroyed it by His cross (AthanG).

1:10-11 As the scribes prepare the people to enter Canaan, St. John the Forerunner will precede Christ, declaring to the people, “Prepare the way of the LORD” (Is 40:3–5; Lk 3:4).

1:11 Christ will be **three days** in the tomb, thus opening the way to paradise, that the faithful might cross the sanctified waters of baptism and **possess** their inheritance of eternal life.

1:12-18 Two-and-a-half tribes will eventually return to settle on the east side of the Jordan, an area called Gilead (22:9). The faithful among them will become witnesses of the truth (22:34) to the Gentiles until Christ is revealed. All the faithful of the Church are called to be witnesses of the true faith in a foreign land.

2:1 Joshua spied out **the land**, which represents dispassion or purity of heart. To achieve this purity, one first leaves Egypt, which stands for the actual committing of sin. Then he crosses the Red Sea, which indicates detachment from material things. Thirdly, he dwells in the desert, which lies between the impulse to sin and the outward fulfillment of these impulses. Only then can he spy out the promised land of dispassion and then enter it to partake of the milk and honey (Ex 3:8), which refer to the spiritual riches of God's kingdom (ElPres).

2:3 The Holy Fathers agree that Rahab was a type of the Church, for by her hospitality and faith she secured salvation for herself and her family. She is also an ancestor of Christ (Mt 1:5).

2:11 Although Rahab was a prostitute, she was saved through repentance, which is how anyone gains salvation (CyrJer).

2:12-13 God's previous judgments on His enemies inspire fear in Rahab and her family, but theirs was a fear that produced repentance and faith, not hardened hearts. Jericho faced God's impending judgment, yet Rahab and her household were the only ones in Jericho who asked the Lord to **be merciful**.

2:13 Christ destroyed **death** by His death, to deliver mankind from death.

2:18 The **scarlet cord** was a type of the Lord's Passion, of His mystical blood which would redeem the world. Rahab understood something of this mystery; therefore, her repentance and faith saved her (AmbM).

3:1 Joshua began to rule in Israel when he crossed the Jordan River. Similarly, Jesus Christ began to preach the Gospel after He was baptized, for crossing the Jordan was a type of His Baptism, and thus of ours as well (CyrJer).

3:3 The **ark of the covenant** was a box overlaid with gold on all sides. On top of the ark was the mercy seat, overshadowed by the cherubim of glory. Inside the ark were the golden pot with the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablet of the Ten Commandments (see also Heb 9:4, 5). The ark was a type of the Ever-virgin Mary with Christ conceived in her holy womb. The articles inside the ark speak of Christ. Thus, God the Son became incarnate in Mary for our salvation, and therefore she is the Mother of God (the Theotokos).

3:16 The **waters stopped flowing** because the Lord changed the laws of nature to allow Israel to cross the Jordan. This crossing was a type of the sacraments, or mysteries, of the Church. For in the sacraments, the laws of nature are overcome to allow the faithful to partake of the Lord's salvation. In baptism, for instance, the water in the baptismal font becomes in a mystery the very Baptism of Christ, by which we attain the forgiveness of sins. Also, in the Eucharist, the bread and wine become in a mystery the very body and blood of Christ. In both cases, the laws of nature are overcome so as to bring about our salvation.

3:1-17 This passage is a picture of God's plan of salvation for the world. The **ark** prefigures Christ's conception in the holy womb of the Ever-virgin Mary. The **feet** of the priests in the **water** (v. 13) prefigure Christ's feet in the very same river at His Baptism (Mt 3:13), which will drive the powers of darkness out of creation (v. 10). Since Christ's Baptism is also our baptism, we are united to Him in the sanctified waters, and through Him are delivered from the powers of darkness (see also Acts 2:38; 26:18).

4:1-10 The **twelve stones** prefigure the twelve apostles of Christ (GrgNy). The Lord gave them the authority to baptize all nations in the name of the Holy Trinity (Mt 28:18–20).

4:14 The **nation of Israel feared** Joshua as long as he lived in her midst. Since they feared the type, how much more should we fear the One who fulfilled the type, namely, Jesus our Lord and God. Joshua eventually died, but the risen Lord lives among us forever.

4:19-24 The crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan by the children of Israel foreshadowed holy baptism, and the twelve stones speak of the twelve apostles of Christ. Christ's teachings are handed down in the Church through these apostles, to whom Christ gave the authority to baptize all nations. This apostolic teaching is the true faith, also known as the Orthodox faith.

5:2-8 Circumcision was given first to Abraham after he was declared righteous before God through faith in the promise of the Gospel (Gn 17:9–14). This was a sign for the Gentiles among whom he lived concerning the Gospel, which separated him and his household from them. The children born during Israel's sojourn in the desert had no need to be circumcised, because Israel did not live among the Gentiles during this time. But now Israel was again living among the Gentiles; therefore, Joshua instituted a second law of circumcision (JohnDm).

Circumcision was also a type of baptism. For as circumcision cut off a useless member of the body, so baptism cuts off sinful desires and pleasures from one's life through the cross. We also sign ourselves with the cross to express our faith; however, we do this not to separate ourselves from the unbelievers among whom we live, but to separate ourselves from an unholy manner of life. We thus direct our lives with holy desires and faithfulness (JohnDm).

Furthermore, Christ was circumcised to fulfill the Law of Moses; therefore, circumcision is now contrary to baptism, because it was done away in Christ. Moreover, when Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended on Him, the kingdom of God and the law of Christ were proclaimed from that time. Now we live a holy life through Him and before the world in which we live (JohnDm).

5:9 The **disgrace of Egypt** was the unholy life of sinful desires and pleasures the Egyptians lived, and the influence this life had on the Israelites who disobeyed the Lord.

5:10-12 **Manna** was a type of Christ as the bread of life. So was **the unleavened and new wheat**. We now eat this bread of life in the mystery of the Eucharist. This life is the divine life of God, which sets on fire those who partake of the bread in a proper manner. Those who do so leave the Eucharist breathing the fire of divine life, which is terrible to the devil and his angels (JohnChr).

5:13-15 The **chief captain,** whom tradition holds to be the Archangel Michael, will lead them to complete victory so they might possess the land. Joshua's vision surpasses that of Moses (Ex 3:1–10), who saw a burning bush on Mount Horeb yet hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. Here, in the Promised Land, Joshua actually sees the form of **a man**. Both of these visions will be fulfilled in the Man, Christ Jesus.

6:5-6 Israel, which prefigures the Church, has been made ready. Now **the people** must act in faith and obedience. The Lord Himself will bring down the walls, which speak of sin and death. He will destroy the enemies and lead the faithful to safely inhabit a world once held captive by darkness.

6:7-14 The **priests** with their sacred **trumpets** can be seen as representing the Old Testament prophets, who foretell the coming of Christ in Holy Scripture while the rest of the world waits in silence. They are Israel's spiritual leaders, called to uphold the law and bear witness to God's covenant promises until Christ appears.

6:14 Israel walked around the walls of Jericho for seven straight days. One of these had to be the Sabbath Day. Thus, the Israelites broke the Sabbath but were guiltless, for they obeyed Joshua (or Jesus) in doing a good thing. But when Jesus (the true Joshua) healed on the Sabbath, the Pharisees accused Him of breaking the Sabbath and wanted to kill Him. Then He said to them, “It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Mt 12:12).

6:22 **Rahab the harlot** was counted as righteous before God for one reason: namely, her hospitality, a demonstration of her genuine faith. But she received no praise for the rest of her behavior. Similarly, the publican was counted as righteous because of his humility, though he received no testimony for anything else. Therefore, one should not fall into despair over failures and shortcomings before God, but demonstrate in some way a genuine repentance and faith (GrgTheo).

6:24 Joshua, a type of Jesus Christ, saved Rahab the harlot because of her hospitality, which demonstrated a genuine faith. But the true Jesus said to the chief priests and elders who opposed Him, “tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you” (Mt 21:31). (CyrJer)

7:1-26 Like an infectious disease, the sin of Achan affected the entire community with death. It breached the walls of heavenly grace that surrounded the people at Jericho. But in a more sweeping way, Adam's transgression breached the grace of God and plunged the entire world into mortality (Rom 5:12).

7:6-15 Joshua and the elders intercede before the Lord on behalf of all the people, thus reversing their defeat. Similarly, Christ's humility and intercession will reverse the process of sin and death, but the people must respond by working with Him to purge evil from their midst.

7:14-18 Step by step, God reveals the source of sin. God's love is like a fire that consumes sin until only what is good remains. But without repentance, nothing good will remain.

7:20-21 To follow a man like Achan and to believe he made a right choice would be like using a blind man as a judge of color, or a deaf man as a music critic. For those whose spiritual discernment is crippled are truly blind or deaf, since they lack the basic ability to distinguish between the important and the trivial. Achan buried his spiritual discernment under the attraction of material things (**a beautiful, multicolored garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of fifty shekels of gold**), thus yielding to whatever happened to catch his fancy (Neilos). Achan's confession was not repentance. He only confessed because he got caught.

7:21 The love of money is an ancient vice, and in Ex 20:17, a law was given to check it: “You shall not covet” (AmbM).

7:24-26 Achan's death by stoning applies to all who will not heed Christ's words concerning Himself: “And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder” (Mt 21:44).

8:17-20 The **Lord** who spoke to Joshua was the Son of God (AmbM). Joshua's **spear** was a type of the cross, that weapon of peace through which Christ and His Church win in battle.

8:21-28 We should remember that all the inhabitants of Ai, and in fact all the inhabitants of the cities conquered by Joshua, were killed because none of them asked for mercy or desired to be saved. God always provides both the warning and the opportunity, but He will not force people to seek salvation.

9:3-8 Joshua and the people reaffirm their covenant with the Lord according to Moses' instructions (see Dt 27:1–8). Everything in this passage points to Christ, who will unite all people, both **resident aliens and those born among them** (v. 6), Jew and Gentile, sinner and saint.

9:5 The term **second law** is noteworthy, because Deuteronomy is not an additional law to the Law of Moses. Rather, it emphasizes the spiritual side of his law. In this sense, Christ is the “second” Law, for He will not only come after the “first” Law of Moses, He will also fulfill it (Mt 5:17).

9:9-21 Although Joshua made a mistake by not inquiring of the Lord before he made the covenant with the Gibeonites, nevertheless, his virtuous character is shown by his innocence in believing them (AmbM).

9:9-33 The Gibeonites are descendants of Noah's son, Canaan, about whom he prophesied in Gn 9:25, “Cursed be Canaan; / A servant of servants shall he be to his brothers” (JohnChr). These Canaanites prefigure the sinners and outcasts who will humble themselves before Christ and receive salvation. The torn and patched condition (v. 11) of the Gibeonites' belongings describes the state of the soul that seeks salvation in God.

10:6-10 The people of **Gibeon** sent word, and Joshua mustered **all his men of war** to **rescue** them and rout the enemy. So it is with all those who are held fast in the hands of the Lord. In the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, “And I shall give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (Jn 10:28).

10:11 Because the Gibeonites humbled themselves before the Lord, His judgment against their fleeing oppressors is even more fierce than it was against Jericho and Ai. The **hailstones** . . . **from heaven** speak of the Last Judgment.

10:12-13 The Word and Son of God caused **the sun** to **stand still**. He it was also who rebuked the sea, and on the cross caused the sun to be darkened (AthanG). So this passage would be fulfilled and even surpassed on the day of Christ's Crucifixion. On that day, He would show His Lordship over creation (Lk 23:45) as He stretched out His all-pure hands upon the cross, trampling down His enemies and bringing “salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps 73:12).

10:14 According to Ecc 1:5, “The sun rises, and the sun goes down.” Likewise, Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, appears sometimes as risen and sometimes as set. This depends on one's manner of life and spiritual status in the pursuit of virtue and search for spiritual knowledge. Blessed is a man like Joshua who keeps the true Sun from setting in himself throughout the whole day of this present life, not allowing this Sun to be blotted out by the dusk of sin and ignorance. By doing this, he will be able to defeat the deceitful demons who rise up against him (MaxCon).

11:6-9 The kings who warred against Israel represent the sinful passions that war against us. But the Lord Jesus Christ encourages us, as He did Joshua, **“Fear not before their presence.”** He also said, **“I will** . . . **put them to flight.”** Joshua and his army also warred against the kings in Canaan. Therefore, the Lord fights, and we fight against our passions. This spiritual war is called asceticism. Its purpose is to subdue the passions so that the God-endowed virtues within the soul may express themselves in a natural way.

11:20 As it was with Pharaoh in Moses' day, so it is with the kings in Joshua's day. Over time, their **hearts** had become so **hardened** by sinful passions they no longer had the possibility of repentance. Israel waited four hundred years from the time God promised the land to Abraham until they were able to possess it, because the sins of the Amorites were not yet complete (Gn 15:16). Even to this day, God in His longsuffering is withholding judgment on the earth until all mankind has had every opportunity to repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

11:23 The land of Canaan was a type of God's kingdom in the world to come, when **the land** will rest **from war**. But until then, one needs to guard his heart against his passions and “wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience” (1Ti 1:18, 19).

12:1 The **kings of the land** represent not only the sinful passions, but also the devil and his angels, who are the authors of these passions. These angels are called “principalities,” “powers,” “rulers of the darkness,” and “spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*” (Eph 6:12). But Christ the Conqueror, together with the faithful and the heavenly hosts, will prevail over them all. By the grace of Christ, those who **put to death** these kings will **inherit** the land of God's kingdom in the world to come. “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Rev 21:7).

13:1-7 Some of these cities will not come into Israel's possession until much later, and some will never become part of Israel's earthly kingdom. Yet again, this passage points to events far in the future, when Christ will be given the ends of the earth as His inheritance (Ps 2:8).

14:7-10 Caleb and Joshua preferred virtue rather than safety, but the other ten spies preferred safety to virtue (AmbM). The Lord Jesus Christ preferred our salvation rather than His own life, for He gladly gave Himself for us. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed to the Father and said, “Let this cup pass from Me” (Mt 26:39). By this request He showed He was fully Man, for He possessed the God-endowed desire for self-preservation in His human nature. But He also said, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.” In this He revealed the submission of His human will to His divine will within His one Person. Thus, His divine will was a higher law than the law of safety within His human will; therefore, He voluntarily and joyfully gave His human life for our sakes. The holy martyrs also preferred the divine will to their own safety.

15:13-19 The **sons of Anak** (v. 14) were known as Anakim, and they were giants in size (Dt 2:10, 11). Othniel was the nephew of Caleb and also had his spirit. Thus, he subdued the Anakim. He would also be the first to deliver Israel in the time of the Judges (Jdg 3:9), and therefore was a type of Christ. Achsah, his wife, was Caleb's daughter, and Caleb gave her the upper and lower **springs of water** (v. 19; see also Jdg 1:13–15). She was a type of the Church with its springs of water, the divine life of Christ. Therefore, through Christ and His life in the Church, one is able to fight against the giants of the passions and to live a God-honoring manner of life.

16:10 The Lord commanded Israel through Moses to utterly destroy all the inhabitants of the land and to show them no mercy (Dt 7:1, 2; Jos 9:24). But the tribe of Ephraim did not fully obey this command; therefore, **the Canaanites dwell among Ephraim to this day**. Similarly, when we show mercy to some of our sinful passions and allow them to operate within us, they eventually corrupt our obedience to Christ, as the Canaanites corrupted Ephraim. We are to show no mercy to these passions, but are to put them “to death” (Col 3:5).

17:14-18 Note how the tribe of **Joseph** refers to itself first in the plural (**us**) and then in the singular (**I, me**). Israel is one in belief, purpose, and worship, yet it is divided into twelve tribes, each of which receives its own inheritance. So the Church is one body, the body of Christ (Eph 1:22, 23); yet it is composed of **a great many people** of every nation, tongue, and tribe (Rev 5:9; 14:6).

18:1 Josh 18:1, 9, 10: Israel set up **the tabernacle** in **Shiloh**, where it remained for about four hundred years. Thus, Shiloh, located about twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem, was the capital of the nation during this time. The name Shiloh means “peace”; therefore, it was an appropriate place for the tabernacle, both of which speak of Christ the Lord. Joshua gained wisdom from Him (**before the Lord**, v. 10) that he might know how to divide the remaining land among seven tribes in a peaceable manner. We, too, need His peace to rule in our hearts so as to know how to live peaceably and wisely (Col 3:15).

19:9 Judah's **share** was **too much for them**; therefore, they shared their **inheritance** with **the children of Simeon**. So we must learn to share our abundance with those who need it. Similarly, we should not “forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb 13:16).

20:1-6 **Cities of refuge** were established to protect slayers who killed someone **involuntarily** (v. 3). They were protected from **the avenger of blood** until a judgment could be rendered in each case. This system of protection demonstrated the love and forbearance of God (Rom 2:4), who does not punish before judgment is rendered as to innocence or guilt. Thus, He provided a place of refuge. God also set forth Christ as a city of refuge where one is protected until he is proven innocent or guilty at the Day of Judgment, when He "will render to each one according to his deeds" (Rom 2:6).

21:46 Joshua put **the stone knives** (with which he had **circumcised** the sons of Israel born during the days of Israel's wanderings in the desert) in the town he built, **Timnath Serah**. The name of this town means “image of the sun.” Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, and we are to be “conformed to [His] image” (Rom 8:29; 2Co 3:18). The stone knives speak of holy baptism, by which “the sins of the flesh” are cut away (Col 2:11, 12).

22:1-9 The two-and-a-half tribes who go back to dwell on the east side of the Jordan are like the apostles, who will spread out to other lands after Pentecost and bring the gospel to the nations. **Be very careful to do the commandments** (v. 5) is a timeless admonition to all believers everywhere.

22:10-29 The misunderstanding between the tribes is not unlike the trouble that will arise between Christians over the keeping of Jewish law and the conversion of Gentile believers (see Acts 11:2; 15:1; Gal 2:12).

22:30-34 Because the leaders and the people listened and acted wisely, the altar by the Jordan, which had threatened to divide Israel, will now be a **witness** (v. 34) to their unity before all.

23:1-16 Consider the ways in which Joshua's address is fulfilled in Christ's high priestly prayer in Jn 17. For example: Joshua says, **“I am old”** (v. 2); Christ prays, “the hour has come” (Jn 17:1). Joshua says, **“you shall inherit their land** . . . **therefore** . . . **love the Lord”** (vv. 5, 11); Christ prays, “this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (Jn 17:3). Joshua says, **“I am going** . . . **not one word has failed”** (v. 14); Christ prays, “I have finished the work . . . none of them is lost” (Jn 17:4, 12).

24:1-15 Note the emphasis the Lord, through Joshua, is placing on being **led** out (v. 3) from among the idolatry and oppression on **the other side of the river** (v. 2), and on crossing over **the Jordan** (v. 11) to salvation. In other words, God is saying, “I have **delivered you** (v. 10) and given you a great inheritance so that you might worship Me in **righteousness** (v. 14). Your part has been, and is now, to follow Me. If you don't, you will destroy yourselves.” The Incarnate Christ will preach this same message, only He will tell the whole world.

24:14-15 God always intended for man to **serve Him** and to love Him freely; for accepting the salvation that is freely offered is the most natural thing for human beings, made in His image, to do. Joshua, having long ago chosen holiness, now declares the same for his **house**.

24:16-22 The people, immature and prone to idolatry, must continually be reminded to choose between serving **the Lord** or **other gods**. Here they declare they have chosen God; but they will soon turn away (v. 36). Joshua warns them that their hypocrisy is worse than not worshiping Him at all, for all blessings come from God, and refusing to accept them will be the very cause of their suffering.

24:23 To **make your heart straight toward the Lord God of Israel** means to return the soul to its natural state, as it was when the Lord made it. John the Baptist meant the same thing when he said, “Make His paths straight” (Mt 3:3). For if we abide as we have been made, we are in a state of virtue. When God made our soul, it was beautiful and exceedingly honest, but if we turn aside from our natural state to morally depraved thoughts, we shall be living in vice. Therefore, let us willingly return to the virtue endowed by God within our nature, for we have no need to leave our homes or cross the sea for the sake of God's kingdom, to find virtue outside ourselves. All we need is a willing heart, for the moral integrity of the soul consists in its spiritual part being in its natural state as it was created. If this is the case, the Lord will recognize His work as being the same as when He made it (AntEg).

24:25-27 The **large stone** is a type of Christ, who will be an everlasting **witness** of the **covenant** made between God and man **under** the **tree**, that is, the cross.

24:1-27 Joshua reminds the people of the Lord's faithfulness to Israel since **Abraham** (v. 3) and challenges their faith. Just as Israel's entire history to this point has led up to the covenant about to be established by Joshua (vv. 25–27), so Israel's history from that point forward will lead up to the new covenant that Christ will establish with His Church.

24:29 The Book of Joshua looks ahead to Christ's victory over His enemies and the salvation of the world.

24:33 The **bones of Joseph** (Gn 50:24, 25; Ex 13:19) are **buried . . . at Shechem**. Thus, God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph comes full circle and begins anew with the covenant established by Joshua (v. 25). All the Old Testament covenants, of course, will be completely fulfilled in Christ and His Church.

1:1, 2 Once Joshua died (recorded both in Jos 24:30–32 and Jdg 2:7–9), the question became, “Who will lead Israel in the fight against the Canaanites?” This represents the transition from the people under Joshua generally obeying God and experiencing victory to their lapsing into idolatry and disobedience under the judges. Judah is a reference to the tribe.

1:7 What I have done gives pause to remind us of the Last Judgment. Those who abuse others bring judgment on themselves.

1:11-15 As Othniel conquered the City of Letters (or Books) to win Achsah as his wife, so Christ the Incarnate Word will come to conquer the mind and heart of mankind with His Gospel to win His Bride, the Church.

1:21 Note the disobedience of Benjamin in contrast with the obedience of Judah and Simeon. If we do not secure victory over the enemies of sin and darkness in our lives, like the Jebusites they will remain to trouble us.

1:22-26 Bethel means “house of God.” Luz means “light,” and represents the light of Christ, which will spread to the Gentiles (Is 9:2).

1:27-36 This passage is a preview of much of the Book of Judges: the chronicle of a job half done. The tribes of Israel would enter into battle against their enemies, but not drive them out completely (v. 28).

2:1-22 Gilgal (v. 1) signifies God's covenant with Israel (see Jos 5:2–9). Just as He left the foreigners in the land of promise “that He might test Israel” (3:1), so God allows sin, suffering, and death to continue for a time in the world that He might test, strengthen, and draw the repentant soul to Himself. And as He raised up judges (v. 16) to deliver Israel, so He provides salvation in Christ for all who turn to Him. Those who continue in sin and would not listen (v. 17) fall into the hands of the enemy, but God delivers the faithful out of hardship (see note on 3Kg 22:23). This pattern will repeat itself: (1) God disciplines Israel for idolatry and disobedience; (2) Israel cries out in repentance for God's help; (3) God provides another judge for deliverance.

3:1-6 A list of enemy nations that remained in Canaan. Note that Israel intermarried with them and ultimately served their gods (v. 6).

3:7 They forgot the Lord: Without constant remembrance of the Lord in all thoughts, words, and deeds, man allows himself to become most vulnerable to the deceptions and accusations of the enemy. Of the Eucharist, Jesus said to do this “in remembrance of Me” (1Co 11:25).

3:9 The word savior is a synonym for “judge.”

3:10-11 The Spirit of the Lord strengthens Othniel, and there is peace for forty years. Similarly, Christ strengthens His Church and His people through baptism, sealed by the Holy Spirit. Those who look to the Lord God will gain victory over this fallen world.

3:12-13 Moab is east of the Jordan near the Dead Sea. Ammon and Amalek were neighboring tribes, historically at odds with Israel. The City of Palms is Jericho.

3:20 The upper summer chamber is a well-ventilated room on the flat roof.

4:1-3 Israel did evil, was oppressed, and cried out to the Lord. Sin brings all men under the heavy yoke of oppression and hardship—but this can also result in repentance. After twenty years Israel finally cried out to God for relief.

4:4 St. Ambrose comments on the story of Deborah, Barak, and Jael: "And so according to history, that the minds of women might be stirred up, a woman became: a judge, a woman who set all in order; a woman who prophesied; a woman who triumphed; and joining in battle array, taught men to war under a woman's counsel. But in a mystery, it is the battle of faith and the victory of the Church." Deborah is one of three prophetesses mentioned in the Old Testament, the other two being Miriam (Ex 15:20) and Huldah (2Kg 22:14).

4:9 Deborah prophesied victory, but warned Barak not to take credit, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.

5:1-31 As was often the custom after Israel's victories, a song or psalm (v. 3) was sung, recalling the details of the conflict. This is the lengthiest and most elaborate of the Old Testament victory songs, but perhaps the most famous is Moses' song in Ex 15:1–18 celebrating deliverance from Egypt.

5:7 Just as Deborah was a mother . . . in Israel, so Mary, Mother of God, is also mother of the Church. They both sang songs of praise to the Lord (see Lk 1:46–55).

5:9 A great tribute to the leaders and the volunteers who freely sacrifice in service to Israel. In the Divine Liturgy we likewise give thanks to God “for those who serve and those who sing.” For the people of God, the leaders and the laity, are called to work together, never independently.

5:28 A touching look at the mother of a fallen warrior—in this case an enemy of God's people.

5:31 One of a multitude of biblical passages contrasting the destiny of the enemies of the Lord will those desiring Him.

6:1, 2 The Midianites are nomadic people who oppressed Israel for seven years.

6:3-8 Israel cried out to the Lord (v. 6) after seven years of ongoing invasion of the Midianites, particularly at the time of harvest (v. 4). The Lord sent them a prophet (v. 8), reminding them of His covenant with Israel (Ex 20:1).

6:11 St. Ambrose sees the terebinth tree as a type of the cross, the winepress as the Church, the wheat as the saints. He writes, “For these elect, as though trained with the rod of truth (Rev 19:15), laying aside the old man together with his deeds, are gathered in the Church as in a winepress . . . for from her wells forth the juice of the heavenly vine.” Gideon prefigures Christ as a deliverer of those in bondage.

6:15 I am the smallest: Gideon's humility reflects the Christlike character of those who love God (5:31), for His “strength is made perfect in weakness” (2Co 12:9).

6:18 I am tells us this is the One who spoke to Moses (Ex 20:2). I will wait echoes words recorded by the prophet Isaiah (Is 30:18).

6:19-27 St. Ambrose writes that Gideon's sacrifices foreshadow the Incarnation. “The meat of the kid refers to sins of deed, the broth to the enticements of desire. . . . That the Angel then stretched forth His staff and touched the rock from which fire went out, shows that the flesh of the Lord, being filled with the Divine Spirit, would burn away all the sins of human frailty.”

6:25-26 St. Ambrose writes that by sacrificing the two bulls, Gideon “showed that after the coming of the Lord all Gentile sacrifices should be done away, and that only the sacrifice of the Lord's Passion should be offered for the redemption of the people. For that second bull was, in a type, Christ, in whom, as Isaiah said, dwelt the fullness of the seven gifts of the Spirit.”

6:32 Jerubbaal means “May Baal plead.” This was Gideon's new nickname, but he did not give honor to Baal (see 7:1).

6:36-38 The hymns of the Orthodox Church reveal the dewy fleece as symbolic of Mary conceiving the Son of God in her womb. On the Feast of the Annunciation we sing, “He shall come down as rain upon the fleece.” In the first Nativity Canon we hear, “As dew upon the fleece, You have descended into the womb of the Virgin, O Christ.”

The word translated fleece usually means “clippings of grass”; here, it is clippings of wool. Gideon put out the fleece, asking God to send dew on the fleece only, not on the ground. Why? So Gideon would know it was God's intention to save Israel by my hand (v. 37). Thus, there is meaning beyond the miracle itself: the dew is the Son of God; the fleece is Mary; the result is the Incarnation, through which Israel—and all men—can be saved.

7:2-8 Gideon originally gathered about 32,000 volunteers (v. 3) to encamp opposite the Midianites and the Amalekites. But the Lord knows men's hearts. In victory, He did not want Israel to credit themselves. God demonstrates His commitment to victory for our sake, while also making clear that His strength does not lie in numbers—a total of only three hundred men (v. 7) in three units—but in His own power.

7:15 Gideon worshiped before the promise had been fulfilled, and prepared himself to act in obedience to the Lord without first needing a sign from Him.

7:24-25 Earlier in Judges, God's army was satisfied with partial victories (1:27–34) and paid the consequences. Here and in the next chapter, Gideon makes sure the conquest is complete—a sure lesson for those who seek victory over sin.

8:1-3 The men of Ephraim had been excluded from the battle. Gideon showed the wisdom of not arguing in the face of their anger; instead he encouraged them tactfully, based on their own accomplishments (Rom 12:3–6).

8:4-9 The men of Succoth (v. 5) and Penuel (v. 8) refused to give bread to Gideon's men, questioning his victory over Midian. Their refusal to help God's servant was costly (see Mt 25:41–46).

8:10 The name Zebah means “slaughter, sacrifice,” a name given to create a sense of great fear. But here, it foreshadows his destiny. Before Gideon, the servant of the Lord, Zebah became the one slaughtered.

8:13-17 The men of Succoth (v. 5) and Penuel (v. 8) refused to give bread to Gideon's men, questioning his victory over Midian. Their refusal to help God's servant was costly (see Mt 25:41–46).

8:14 Gideon would not kill haphazardly. The covenant was broken and due punishment was to be exacted, but he killed only those directly involved.

8:16 There can be consequences if one chooses to break a covenant. Here the promised punishment is fulfilled.

8:23 Gideon refused their offer, though later his son Abimelech would try to keep his father's house in power.

8:27 Gideon's idea of making an ephod, a priestly vestment, and a memorial in his hometown, commemorating his victory, became a thorn. The lesson: it is unwise for God's people to unduly celebrate a victory over enemies.

9:1 Jerubbaal is Gideon (see note at 6:32).

9:1-5 Soon after Gideon died, the crafty Abimelech, his son by a concubine, with help from the men of Shechem, murdered seventy of his father's legitimate heirs. Only Jotham escaped.

9:7 Mount Gerizim, previously used for the offering of blessings (Dt 11:29), is now used by Jotham to pronounce a parable of warning and a curse to the people.

9:8 These words speak to the mockery of kingship not anointed by God.

9:25 These robberies kept the king from collecting taxes from traveling merchants.

9:26-57 The punishment of which Jotham warned fell on Abimelech (v. 56). Those who live apart from the guidance of God face ultimate destruction.

9:37 Elonmaonenim can be translated “terebinth tree of the diviners.”

9:46 Bethelberith means “the house of Berith,” a temple of a local deity (see also v. 50).

10:1-7 Tola saved (judged) Israel, and Jair helped sustain the forty-five years of peace Israel enjoyed. But Israel fell into idolatry and evil again, and the Lord, for their sake, delivered them into the hands of the Philistines, later to be invaded by the Ammonites (v. 7). The false gods Israel served included Ashtoreth of Sidon (3Kg 11:5, 33), Baal-peor and Chemosh of Moab (Nm 21:29; 25:3; 3Kg 11:7, 33), Melek (Molech, Milcom) of Ammon (Lv 18:21; 3Kg 11:5, 7, 33), and Dagon and Beelzebub, gods of the Philistines (16:23; 1Kg 5:2–7; 4Kg 1:2–3). Molech was particularly known as a god requiring human sacrifice (Lv 18:21; 20:2–5; 2Kg 23:10; Jer 32:35).

10:11-16 A powerful account of God extending not judgment but mercy to sinners. His soul was grieved (see Gn 6:6; Mk 14:34).

11:1-3 Not being the son of Gilead's wife or even a concubine, Jephthah is thrown out of his home as the son of another woman in violation of the law regarding the fatherless (Dt 10:18; 14:29; 16:11; 24:17).

11:10 Mizpah was the place where Jacob and Laban made a covenant (Gn 31:44–49). This shows the elders of Gilead took seriously Jephthah's appointment to lead them.

11:11-27 A debate between Jephthah's messengers and the sons of Ammon over a three-hundred-year-old land dispute (v. 25). It is not resolved (v. 27), and a war will result.

11:28 The Spirit of the Lord descended on Jephthah to do battle against Ammon, making him one of the few Old Testament heroes indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

11:38-39 Jephthah's daughter was an inspiration to the women of Israel, showing her zealous obedience to the Lord in life and in death.

12:1, 2 Again (see notes at 8:1–3) the men of Ephraim are bypassed in battle, this time against the sons of Ammon. Jephthah asks, “Where were you when we needed you against the Ammonites?” (see 10:9). Ephraim has no answer, and war ensues.

12:5-6 The men of Gilead give a language test to the Ephraimites, and they fail. The word stachys here is Greek for the Hebrew “shibboleth”; both mean “ear of corn.” It was the “sh” sound the Ephraimites could not pronounce.

13:1 Despite God's continued faithfulness, the sons of Israel still apostatize, a pattern repeated throughout the Book of Judges.

13:3 After forty years of bondage for Israel, God made known His plans through His Angel to deliver Israel by means of a special son born to a barren woman—as also happened with Sarah (Gn 16:1), Rebekah (Gn 25:21), Hannah (1Kg 1:2–28), and Elizabeth (Lk 1:7).

13:4-7 Nazirite is derived from the Hebrew nazir, “consecrated,” “dedicated.” The one making a Nazirite vow (see Nm 6:2; Am 2:11, 12; 1Kg 1:11; Lk 1:15) refrains from strong drink, eating unclean things, and cutting the hair.

13:5 Samson was a Nazirite unto God from the womb, as were the prophet Samuel (1Kg 1:11) and John the Baptist (Lk 1:15). Samson would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines, a work carried further by Samuel, Saul, and King David.

13:25 Not only does the Angel of the Lord prophesy Samson's birth and calling, but the Spirit of the Lord attends his life.

14:1-5 Samson's desire to marry a woman of the Philistines bore ill fruit. The woman was more faithful to her own people than to him (see vv. 15–18).

14:5-9 St. Ephraim the Syrian writes that Christ, prefigured in Samson, also “tore the lion, an image of death . . . and caused to go forth from his bitterness the sweetness of life for men.”

14:18 As with many riddles, once the answer was given it was obvious (Ps 19:10; 118:103; Pr 30:30).

15:1-3 I will do mischief among them (v. 3) signals the beginning of the back-and-forth revenge in this chapter of “an eye for an eye” (see Ex 21:23–25). Samson finally prevails over the Philistines.

15:18-19 For all Samson's strength, he nearly died of thirst. Jesus said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (Jn 7:37). Even the strong are utterly dependent on God, who by a miracle provided water.

16:2-3 Since the gate of the city was locked by night, the Gazites assumed all was well until dawn. Samson awoke at midnight, tore down the doors, and carried them to Hebron—a distance of over thirty miles.

16:4 Alsorech is the valley of Sorek. Delilah, though we are not told, presumably was a Philistine. Samson's love for her for a time proved stronger than his call from God to deliver Israel (13:5), and brought him down (16:15–17).

16:23-30 St. Irenaeus writes on this passage: “The lad who guided Samson by the hand (v. 26) typifies John the Baptist, who showed to the people the faith in Christ. And the house in which they were assembled signifies the world, in which dwell the various heathen and unbelieving nations, offering sacrifice to the idols. Moreover, the two pillars are the two covenants. Samson leaning himself upon the pillars indicates this: that the people, when instructed, recognized the mystery of Christ.”

16:25 The phrase let him play before us likely refers to their request that he do tricks only a strong man could do.

17:1-6 Through the mother of Micah we see that the overall importance of the tabernacle and the Law of God it upheld was almost forgotten at this point in time. This is confirmed by the words everyone did what was right in his own eyes (v. 6). The impression is reinforced by the mother having a carved and molten image or idol (v. 4), as well as by Micah, who stole from his own mother, anointing one of his own sons as priest and clothing him with an ephod (v. 5), believing his own home was a house of God.

17:7-13 The young Levite gives indication of the diminished state of the tribe of Levi. It was scattered, no longer centered in the tabernacle, and likely not keeping the rule of worship, including the sacrifices and offerings.

18:1, 2 The tribe of Dan was unsuccessful in controlling its inheritance. So five spies went out to search for a place to settle. The reference to no king indicates Dan no longer honored the Lord as their King. They went off on their own to take land, even if they had to steal it from other tribes of Israel.

18:3 The spies recognized the voice of the priest. Perhaps they knew the young Levite from Bethlehem (17:1) or recognized his dialect.

18:5 The use of the word God instead of Lord shows awareness of the covenant—and their violation of it.

18:6 Without the Lord's guiding Spirit, Micah's priest was an easy target, unaware of the looming dangers.

18:11 The six hundred men shows the military weakness of the family of Dan.

18:19-20 The priest was not forced or coerced. He was glad to be moving on to a larger assignment.

18:26 The thief Micah had been outdone by the greater thieves of Dan.

18:31 No longer obeying the covenant or having contact with God's people, they set up for themselves their own experimental worship.

19:1 The people of Israel had fallen far in these days when there was no king. There was sexual perversion (19:22–28). The commandments of the Law were forgotten or overlooked (17:6; 21:25). Their leadership was failing.

19:2 To “play the harlot” or take a concubine was an expression typically used to paint a prophetic picture of people following false gods, often Baal, whose followers often became involved in extreme sexual misconduct (Hos 4:1–6; Jer 3:1, 8; Ezk 16:41; 23:44).

19:4 The people of Israel, even in apostasy, still believed they had sacred obligations toward anyone they considered their guest.

19:11 This city of the Jebusites was not considered part and parcel of Israel, and yet a person from Israel might find safety here.

19:22-23 The sons of lawlessness in the Hebrew text is “sons of Belial,” which means “worthless men” (see 2Co 6:15, and Rom 1:26–27). This gruesome account is similar to that of Lot and the men of Sodom (Gn 19:1–4).

19:24-30 So vile were homosexual acts in this culture, the concubine was offered. The woman met an obscene death, a tragic breach of the covenant. The twelve pieces of her remains were likely sent, one each, to the twelve tribes of Israel.

20:1-3 The children of Israel came together as one man to stand before the Lord. They gathered at Mizpah, “a place of watching” (1Kg 7:5, 16; 10:17). The purpose of the gathering was to confront the wicked deed of rape and murder (19:25–28).

20:8-11 The verdict was by council, unanimous, and they carried out their decision in unity.

20:12-13 The Benjamites were offered the opportunity to turn over the sons of lawlessness in order to avoid war and to put away the evil from Israel (Dt 17:12), but they refused.

20:18 They traveled to Bethel (Gn 28:19–22) to inquire of God because the ark of the covenant had been moved there (v. 27).

20:26 This second defeat awakened the sons of Israel. All now came to the central sanctuary at Bethel to weep, worship God, and seek His mercy. They prayed, fasted, and wept because of their two costly losses at the hands of Benjamin.

20:28 The Lord repeats His earlier answer, but this upcoming third battle came with a promise of victory. Even so, “the battle was fierce” (v. 34). Despite God's promises of victory to us, Jesus warns, “in the world you will have tribulation” (Jn 16:33).

20:48 For about four months, Israel carried out against Benjamin the things God declared should be done to the Canaanites (Dt 7:2; 20:16–18)—for Benjamin had become like the Canaanites. It was prescribed punishment for violating the covenant and rejecting God's authority in Israel.

21:3 Even in the face of victory, the Israelites wept that one tribe should be missing, that is, Benjamin. Even toward their opponents in war, they retained that loyalty of covenant.

21:6, 7 With Israel's victory came their desire to have mercy and restore those who escaped to the Rock of Rimmon (20:47).

21:8-24 Those of Jabesh Gilead failed to answer the call against Benjamin, and the congregation directed Israel to strike them down. Only the virgins were spared as a way to restore the tribe. Further, the Benjamite men were allowed to take wives from among the daughters of Shiloh.

21:25 This daunting statement reveals that the problems in Israel still went unsolved.

1:1-5 **Moab** was an enemy of Israel, and the Jews were forbidden to have dealings with the Moabites (Dt 23:3–6). Even in time of **famine**, one is to trust in the Lord rather than flee to the enemy. Elimelech, whose name means “My God is King,” has forsaken God and left the covenant community. He exemplifies the faithless Jews, and he died without leaving offspring in Israel.

1:6 Naomi, representing the faithful Jews who will accept redemption in Christ, **returned from the country of Moab** to receive the Lord's **bread** (see Jn 6:48). The notion of arising from a state of sin and returning to a loving Father is echoed in Christ's parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11–32).

1:11 Naomi's question, **“Why do you desire to go with me?”** is intended not to prevent them from following her to the Lord, but to challenge their sincerity (see Jn 6:26, 27).

1:12 Childbearing was seen as necessary to perpetuate one's life beyond death, and is symbolic of eternal life. Naomi had grown **too old** for childbearing.

1:14-15 Orpah had declared her intention to follow Naomi to the Lord (v. 10), but being confronted with the realities of that life, she returns to **her people** and **her gods** (see Jn 6:66). Her kiss is metaphorically a kiss of betrayal. By contrast, Ruth **followed her**, forsaking all she knew and accepting the Lord. In doing so, Ruth prefigures the Gentile Church and all who would be saved.

1:19 The separation between Jew and Gentile would one day be abolished in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:14). The unbreakable alliance of Naomi and Ruth as **the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem** prefigures that day.

1:20-21 Lamenting in Bethlehem over the loss of her children in Moab, Naomi prefigures Rachel, who would later lament over the loss of her children to Babylon (Jer 31:15) and over the children slain by Herod (Mt 2:16–18). See 4:11.

1:22 **The beginning of barley harvest** was in April. It would have occurred at about the time of the Passover, and thus of the crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. Jesus Himself refers to the new covenant as a time of harvest (Mt 9:37, 38; Jn 4:35). Ruth is accepted at this time, showing that the Gentiles would be received into the Church.

2:1 Boaz prefigures Christ. Here he is introduced as a relative of both a faithless Jew (Elimelech) and, through marriage, a faithful one (Naomi). Boaz also had Gentile ancestry, for his mother was Rahab (Mt 1:5).

2:2 In humble acceptance of her position as foreigner, Ruth is willing to glean the Jews' leftover grain. The New Testament reminds all Gentile believers to imitate her humility (Rom 11:19–21; Eph 2:11, 12).

2:8-10 Like the Canaanite woman in Mt 15:21–28, Ruth acknowledges that she does not deserve Boaz's **favor** because she is a **stranger.** Like Christ, Boaz blesses her with his favor and protection.

2:14 Ruth is rewarded for her dedication by an invitation to eat with Boaz. This meal prefigures the eucharistic Supper.

2:15-16 In Christ, Gentiles are grafted to the tree of salvation (see Rom 11), and they share equally in the reception of grace. Here Boaz issues an order to his servants ensuring that Ruth, a Gentile, is given equal treatment and an equal share of grain. There is a significant difference between the Masoretic Text and the LXX in v. 16. The former has Boaz merely instruct his servants to let extra grain fall from their bundles, distorting the underlying meaning of his order.

2:20 Naomi blesses Boaz with words applicable to Christ.

2:22 A call to remain in the community of faith. To wander **in another field** is to go beyond the protection of Boaz and to be subject to all manner of danger (see vv. 8, 9).

3:3 As Ruth must **wash and anoint** herself and put on a new **garment** for her encounter with Boaz, believers are washed in baptism, anointed in chrismation, and clothed in the garment of salvation in their encounter with Christ.

3:4 Where Boaz **lies down**, Ruth will **lie down** with him, and Boaz will instruct her. Likewise, as Christ was buried, the believer is also buried with Him in baptism, and thus learns how to live (Rom 6:3–11).

3:9 **Take your maidservant under your wing:** Ruth declares her desire to be accepted as wife by Boaz, and prophesies the acceptance of the Gentiles by Christ.

3:10 Boaz blesses Ruth because she **did not go after young men**, which is to say she did not pursue the cares and fleeting security of this world.

3:12-13 The **kinsman** is Ruth's **relative** who is unwilling to redeem her (4:1–6). This unnamed man represents the Old Testament Law, which was incapable of redeeming mankind. Boaz will allow this kinsman the first opportunity to redeem Ruth; if he will not do it, Boaz himself will. For in Jewish tradition, the brother or closest relative marries his deceased brother's widow (Dt 25:5–10). In the same way, God Himself redeemed His people when the Law had failed.

3:15 The gift **of barley** is a sign of his promise to redeem Ruth. The number **six** indicates an incomplete action, which would be completed only when the promise was fulfilled. See 4:15.

4:3-6 Because of sin, the Law led to death and lacked the power to bestow life. This is illustrated when the unnamed **relative** is willing to accept **the field** from the dead man Elimelech, but he is not willing to **take** Ruth, the ancestor of Christ.

4:6 The unnamed kinsman unwittingly speaks the truth when he acknowledges that marrying Ruth would **ruin** his **inheritance.**

4:7-8 The passing of a **sandal** represented the transfer of responsibility. In the case of the unnamed **close relative** passing his sandal to **Boaz**, we see the passing of the Law and the advent of redemption in Christ.

4:11 As Naomi was like Rachel in her grief (1:20, 21), Ruth will be **like Rachel** in her building up of Israel. The praise of Boaz is reminiscent of the exaltation of the messianic groom in Psalm 44.

4:12-15 **The seed which the Lord will give you from this young woman** initially refers to their son Obed and to the prominent figure of King David. More importantly, it declares the coming of Christ, who is the true **restorer of life**.

4:15 The number **seven** indicates a complete action, and shows that Ruth fulfills in herself the promise of Boaz. See 3:15.

1:1 **Elkanah** means “God created.”

[1:2](#) **Hannah** means “graciousness.” In the Old Testament, barrenness was a sign that God had withdrawn His blessing.

1:3 Since the time of Joshua, Shiloh had been the political and religious center for the people of Israel. The tabernacle and the ark of the covenant were kept there until David conquered Jerusalem, making that city the new place of Israel's worship.

1:7 Rather than containing the grief over her barrenness, Hannah expresses her heart to the Lord through fasting and tears.

1:9 The word **temple** is used rather than “tabernacle,” although this was the movable tabernacle built under the leadership of Moses. The word “temple” suggests a more permanent structure that people came to in order to worship God.

1:11 **Lowly state** is the same phrase the Virgin Mary prays in Lk 1:48. Hannah's promise to God is that her child would fulfill the Nazirite vow, which was a type of ancient ascetic vow found first in Nm 6. In every instance of this vow in Scripture, it is prescribed before birth—for Samson, Samuel, and probably John the Baptist (Lk 1:13–15).

1:13 St. Cyprian sees the praying Hannah as a type of the Church pouring her heart out in prayer silently and modestly, “within the very recesses of her heart . . . with manifest faith.”

1:16 Hannah defends herself to Eli against being a daughter of corruption. Drunkenness and sexual immorality were common hallmarks of pagan Canaanite worship.

1:17 The priest recognizes Hannah's humility and gives her his blessing.

1:18 This is a great display of Hannah's faith, in that she trusts in God's answer before receiving it.

1:20 **Samuel** means “the name is God (godly)” or “the descendant of God,” a name suggesting he was a child given from God.

1:22 Hannah is a type of Mary, as Samuel is a type of Christ, because as St. Cyprian states, “Samuel [was born] not according to the order of generation, but according to the mercy and promise of God.”

1:28 Hannah is not only fulfilling her promise, but her words are prophetic of Samuel's life of service to God.

2:1 The prayer of Hannah has become a beloved hymn of the Church and is one of the biblical odes. This prayer has been used in the Matins service, and is the basis for many of the Church's hymns. There are also many similarities between this prayer and the prayer of Mary in Lk 1:46–55. The word **horn** had become a symbol for strength, honor, and power.

2:3 We must **boast** in nothing, since nothing is our own (Cyprian).

2:5 **Were made empty** means literally “to be made less” or “inferior.” Those who were once full and satisfied are now beginning to be emptied. St. Augustine sees this whole verse as a prophecy of the decline of Israel and the rise of the Gentile Church.

2:6 This verse foreshadows the resurrection and is likely a picture of the Lord's own descent into Hades and His Resurrection. Aphrahat uses this passage among many to demonstrate that the belief in the resurrection existed even in the Old Testament.

2:9 It is God who ultimately fills the heart with prayer.

2:11 Samuel did not merely help Eli with the menial tasks of the tabernacle, but actually participated in the liturgical worship of God.

2:21 God blessed Hannah with five more children because of her faithfulness and obedience.

2:27-29 The prophet condemns Eli because he excuses the conduct of his sons (3:13). The prophet declares Eli has honored his sons more than he has honored God. Even pious parents can be passive in the raising of their children: a warning to all who desire godly offspring.

2:35 Lactantius states, “And since Christ was the builder of this great and eternal temple, He must also have an everlasting priesthood in it; and there can be no approach to the shrine of the temple, and to the sight of God, except through Him who built the temple.”

3:1 God's word had become very **precious** because of the absence of a clear, concise, and distinct vision from Him.

3:7 Samuel had not yet become a prophet, because this was the first time God had allowed Himself to be known by him.

3:13-14 God reveals to Samuel what he had already revealed to Eli through another man of God, confirming Samuel as a true prophet of the Lord.

3:18 Eli accepts God's judgment even though it means his destruction. Despite the judgment, Eli still did nothing to correct his sons' behavior.

3:19-20 Samuel was confirmed as God's prophet not merely because he heard God's voice, but because he was willing to proclaim God's word even when it was unpleasant or uncomfortable.

4:1 The word **Philistines** is not used only to describe Israel's enemies; it is also a more generic term designating “foreigner” or “Gentile.”

4:3-4 The people did not realize that their defeat came from the hand of God. But rather than discovering why God allowed them to be defeated and repenting of their unfaithfulness, they think that having the ark with them will ensure that God is with them.

4:7-10 The Philistines were afraid of the presence of the ark, but conducted themselves **like men** and handed Israel a stunning defeat.

4:18 The loss of the ark and his sons brought the loss of Eli's own life.

5:2 Dagon was the chief god of the Canaanites and was referred to as the father of Baal in Canaanite mythology. Dagon was represented by a figure that had the torso and head of a man, but the body of a fish. The name Dagon is derived from a word meaning “little fish.” The house or temple is mentioned later in 1Mc 10:83, 84.

5:4 The destruction of their idol was a sign to the Philistines that the God of Israel could not be possessed and subjected to their pagan beliefs.

5:8 The Philistine government was a loose confederacy of five cities, each ruled by a type of warlord. Each city was considered a seat of power. The fives cities were Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza (6:17). They were sometimes referred to as the Philistine Pentapolis.

5:11 The Philistines had moved the ark to three of their five cities, hoping that eventually it would be subjected by a local deity.

6:1 God will not be manipulated by man. To attempt to do so brings curse rather than blessing.

6:2-12 The Philistines devised a test to see whether the God of Israel was truly the source of their tribulation. The cows should have naturally come home to their offspring rather than walking away toward the land of Israel. Yet God had promised to remain with His people, and He guided the ark back to Israel.

6:14 The people's natural response to the return of God's presence was to worship God with sacrifices. The focus of the worship was not on the ark, but on the presence of God that the ark contained. In the Church, the ark is understood typologically as the person of the Virgin Mary. Honoring the Theotokos as the Mother of God who bore the Savior of our souls draws the heart to worship Him, together with His Father and the Holy Spirit.

6:19 Once again, the people begin mishandling that which is holy by trying to investigate that which is improper to man.

7:2 The ark was not brought back to Shiloh, where it had been abused by the sons of Eli, but was taken to a new place, where the people of Israel kept their eye firmly fixed upon it so it might not depart again.

7:3 Throughout the period of the Judges and Kings, the problem of idolatry continued to plague Israel. Samuel was not asking for a partial commitment to God, but for the people to completely remove any trace of idolatry from their lives and serve God only.

7:6 Samuel's act of pouring water as an offering to the Lord is a type of baptism, and a symbol of the cleansing that people needed as they repented over their attitude toward God and His holy objects.

7:8 Samuel had proven himself a committed intercessor for the people, and they relied on him once again to pray on their behalf.

7:9-13 The Philistines are a type of sin and its dominion over those who do not follow the Lord with all their heart. When God's people are far from Him, sin reigns over them. Yet when they draw near to God and cry out for mercy and forgiveness, He delivers them from the enemy.

8:1-5 Unfortunately, Samuel did not learn a lesson from Eli in rearing his own children. Just as Eli's children departed from the ways of God, so did Samuel's sons. It was the wickedness of these judges, Samuel's sons, that prompted the people to ask for a king to rule over them.

8:7 God tells Samuel that their rejection of him as judge is a rejection of God Himself; yet God will answer their cry for a king.

8:9-18 God is willing to give the people what they want, but He warns them of the dangers of a monarchy. These warnings which Samuel gave the people were fulfilled during the days of the good king, Solomon. Solomon taxed the people heavily so that he might build the temple.

9:9 The ministry of prophet includes the ability to see into the future, as well as to read the hearts of men.

10:1-10 Saul's anointing as king by Samuel is a type of the Sacrament of Chrismation. The anointing brought with it the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his life, giving Saul **another heart** (v. 9).

10:9 The Spirit of God always brings transformation wherever He is present.

11:11-15 Saul's initial act as king was to defend the defenseless against cruel oppressors. Even in this early battle he displays his military genius, and also the mercy he has on those who initially rejected his kingship. The people of Jabesh were forever indebted to him, and even after his slide into apostasy, they were the only people willing to care for his remains after his death.

12:1-5 Before Samuel begins exhorting the people, he seeks their support. The people proclaim his innocence in the face of his humility and willingness to repent for any wrongdoing. He then calls on the Lord and Saul, His anointed, as witnesses to his uprightness.

12:6-25 Samuel's sermon expounds on the grace and deliverance of God in the life of Israel. Though a king in Israel was a concession from God, Samuel encourages them that the monarchy will work if both they and the king continue in God's righteousness.

13:13 Hilary of Poitiers sees David's commendation by God as a man **after His own heart** as a glimpse into the prophetic ministry of David. Although David lived under the Mosaic Law, he prophetically grasped the fullness of the Gospel fulfilled ultimately in Christ.

15:11 Melito of Sardis calls the repentance of the Lord a “change of His procedure” with man. Tertullian views God's **regret** as a judgment against the character of Saul rather than as a self-incriminating repentance of wrongdoing. Augustine clarifies this even further by explaining that God's repentance does not negate His foreknowledge, but is a change in how man expects God to act. In this sense, God is always acting in ways contrary to man's expectations.

15:17-22 John Cassian uses this example of Saul's undoing to promote the need for discernment and discretion in the spiritual life. Watchfulness over one's own soul protects against all manner of evil and undoing. Gregory the Great also uses this example of Saul as a warning against human pride.

15:22 Irenaeus points out that God did not command sacrifices for His own benefit, but for the benefit of man, in order to train him in righteousness and obedience.

15:24-26 Saul seems to repent, yet God does not accept his confession as He did that of David after David's sin. St. Augustine notes that mere outward confession of sin is not what God desires, but an inward change of heart. One only has to look at the lives of Saul and David to see that one truly repented and the other did not.

15:35 Jerome and John Cassian both note that godly men have wept over the sins of others. Jerome states, “Good men have always sorrowed for the sins of others. Samuel of old lamented for Saul because he neglected to treat the ulcers of pride with the balm of penitence.” Rather than rejoicing in the failures of others, godly sorrow is in order.

16:7 According to Cyprian, God's judgment will not be merely of outward appearances, but will penetrate much deeper into the heart of man: He sees the heart and mind of every person, and He will judge not only our deeds, but even our words and thoughts.

17:4 Goliath is over nine feet tall.

17:4-33 This familiar story reminds us of the courage in men's hearts when their faith is placed completely in God. Goliath taunts David, but David's faith becomes evident when he does not cower under the threats, but instead warns Goliath with the hand of God. The armor he rejected represents the strength of man; David chose the armor of God (see Eph 6:10–17).

18:6-12 David had been a comforting force in Saul's life; but now Saul sees him as a threat to his power. Saul seeks to kill David by sending him into battle against a thousand Philistines, but David's success threatens Saul all the more.

19:1-17 Saul, unable to kill David indirectly, commands his servants and even his own son Jonathan to murder him. His deceit continues as he lies to his own son about saving David's life.

19:18-24 Saul again tries to kill David after he flees to the presence of Samuel. Saul's messengers come to capture David, as does Saul himself, but they are overwhelmed by the presence of God among Samuel and the prophets. God's miraculous presence does not redeem Saul.

20:17 Jonathan expresses the greatest level of love one person can express for another. He is willing to die so David might live. Jesus displayed such love for all mankind, and calls for such love from His disciples (Jn 15:13).

21:1-6 Only the priests were allowed to eat the holy bread; the uneaten portions were offered as a sacrifice to God. Jesus refers to this story when confronting the Pharisees about their own legalistic attitude toward the Sabbath—which held firmly to the externals, yet rejected the inner mercy and compassion of the Law (see Mt 12:1–8). In this passage, the priest has compassion on David and his men, but out of holy fear he questions their righteousness and purity before he permits them to partake of this bread reserved for priests. The bread of the Presence was a prefiguration of the bread of the Eucharist, the body of Christ. Just as David was required to be holy, each Christian approaching Communion must be prepared through prayer, fasting, and confession. Indeed, the holy things are for the holy.

21:12-16 Although David knows he is anointed and will one day be king, he realizes it is not yet God's time and goes to extreme measures to stay anonymous.

22:20-23 Saul has just ordered the priests to be killed, and David gives refuge to the last survivor of the priestly massacre.

23:9 The **ephod** was a garment worn by the priests whenever they approached the altar in order to intercede with God. David trusted the priest to give him a sure answer from the Lord.

24:7-8 Saul had become a tyrannical leader, obsessed with killing the man of God David. Saul had threatened to kill his own son and had massacred over 300 priests. Despite Saul's sin, David still honored him as the Lord's anointed and spared him. A lesson hard to learn: throughout the history of the Church, there have been ungodly leaders, but true saints have taken up David's example, refusing to come against God's anointed. Instead, they trusted God to vindicate them.

24:17-23 In praising David's attitude of a servant, Gregory the Great notes he was more upright in servitude than when he came to his kingdom (v. 18). As a servant, he feared to smite his adversary. When he was king, through lasciviousness, he willfully put to death a devoted soldier (2Kg 11:17).

25:3 Nabal means “fool,” which describes his behavior. This passage shows the contrast between the wisdom of Abigail and the folly of Nabal.

25:22-34 John Cassian takes this story of David as an example of how compassion can overtake our own strong determination. David allowed compassion to alter his vengeful oath.

26:12 David again has an opportunity to kill Saul, but he refuses to lay a hand on the Lord's anointed (see note at 24:7, 8). God put the camp into a deep sleep so David could escape unharmed. Saul has one more chance to repent, yet he squanders this opportunity with mere words and no actions.

27:1 David's statements display his conviction that Saul will not repent, regardless of his remorseful posturing.

27:8-12 Although David was living in exile among the Philistines, he still defended and expanded the borders of his native land. Despite his circumstances, he never forgot his calling to uphold and protect the people of God, and he did not let outward events thwart this mission.

28:7-25 This passage created great controversy among the Fathers of the Church. In fact, at least three distinct interpretations can be found.

1. The woman called Samuel forth from the dead (Justin Martyr, Origen, Ambrose, and Augustine).

2. Whether it was Samuel or a demon, it appeared at God's bidding and not by some magic of the woman (Chrysostom, Theodoret).

3. The entity was a demon who deceived Saul and gave him a false prophecy (Tertullian, Hippolytus, Ephrem the Syrian, Evagrius, Basil, Jerome, Ambrosiaster, & Gregory of Nyssa).

The third interpretation seems to be held by the greatest number of Fathers, and Gregory of Nyssa wrote a specific treatise on the subject. He defends this view by citing the impassible chasm in the Lazarus parable (Lk 16:26). The apparition appeared only to the woman; she told Saul whom it resembled. The Greek word translated **medium** in this passage is literally the word for “ventriloquist.” Also, Saul had been plagued by evil spirits for years and was easily deceived by them.

29:9 Even an unbelieving Philistine was able to recognize the godly character of David.

30:7 Once again David trusts in the intercession of the priest before God, that he may follow God's will rather than his own. What a contrast between his use of the ephod and Saul's use of the medium! David approached God with humility through the means He had established. Saul sought to manipulate his future through the powers of darkness.

30:21-25 David displays his generosity and compassion for the weak by sharing the spoils with all the people—the strong and weak alike.

31:4-6 In this passage, the ultimate deception of the witch is made manifest. The prophecy given was that Saul and his sons would die. After seeing the death of his sons, Saul may have despaired, deceived by the words of the prophecy.

1:1-12 David learns of Saul's death after his return to **Ziklag** from defeating the **Amalekites**. Torn clothing and earth upon the head of the messenger are a sign of mourning. The man is an Amalekite who claims to have killed the wounded **Saul** at his request. He brings both Saul's **crown** and his **bracelet** (v. 10) to David. There were either two stories concerning the death of Saul, or else this man seeks David's favor by “confessing” to Saul's death (see 1Kg 31:1–6).

1:13-16 David turns upon the messenger, rebukes him for killing the Lord's **anointed**, and orders his execution.

1:17-27 The Lamentation, vv. 19–27, lauds both Saul and Jonathan.

2:1-3 David seems able to **inquire** directly **of the Lord**, as no mention is made of the ephod or other means of discernment, such as Urim and Thummim. The Lord instructs David to go **to Hebron**.

2:4 David is **anointed** by the elders of Judah as their king in Hebron. They also report Saul's burial.

2:5-7 David commends the burial of Saul as something right, inasmuch as he, too, was the **Lord's anointed**. He uses this as the opportunity to invite the people of Jabesh Gilead to accept his kingship over **Judah**.

2:8-10 However, a rival kingdom is established by **Abner**, Saul's commander-in-chief. **Ishbosheth**, Saul's son, reigns two years over Israel, but not over Judah.

2:11 David's reign over Judah is seven and one-half years.

2:12-32 A contest is staged between twelve Benjamites loyal to Abner and Ishbosheth, and twelve men loyal to David, led by Joab. This results in a blood feud.

3:1-5 **War** continues between the houses of David and Saul, though David's house grows **continually stronger**. Thus, also the emphasis on the number of sons begotten by him at Hebron and the listing of the wives who bore them, underscoring the political alliances that are growing.

3:6-21 After a dispute with Ishbosheth over the accusation of having taken Saul's **concubine, Rizpah** (Respha), **Abner** is indignant. He goes to seek a league with David. David agrees, on condition that his wife **Michal** be returned to him (v. 13; see 1Kg 25:44). The effect would be to restore his relationship to the house of Saul.

3:22-30 **Joab** returns from a raid to hear of the league between **David** and **Abner**. He is suspicious of Abner's motives: the blood feud has continued. He slays Abner exactly as **Asahel** was slain, stabbed in the loins. Since Joab has breached the peace proclaimed between Abner and the house of David, David declares that **the blood of Abner** will be a curse upon the house of Joab. Otherwise the word of the king would be worthless in future alliances.

3:31-39 The general mourning for Abner underscores David's guiltlessness in his death. A comparison is made to **the death of Nabal**, who had deserved his fate.

4:1-12 Hearing of the death of Abner, two of Saul's captains, **Baanah** and **Rechab**, slay **Mephibosheth**. But David is not impressed with their treachery, though they try to impress him with their deeds. He reminds them of what he did to the messenger who reported Saul's death. (Note: There are two men named Mephibosheth in this chapter. The one who is killed is Saul's son. The other is Jonathan's son (4:4), Saul's grandson.)

Once again, the constant theme of not touching the Lord's anointed is reasserted by David. It bolsters his position as king as well as showing respect for the house of Saul and the anointing the Lord gave him.

5:1-5 David is anointed king **over all Israel**. His kingship is now accepted by Israel as well as **Judah**. His total reign will be forty years: seven (and one-half) from Hebron over Judah, and thirty-three over Judah and Israel. He became king over Judah at age thirty.

5:6-10 David comes to take the **stronghold** of Jerusalem, a fortress so easy to defend that **the lame and the blind** withstand him. Hence, they are to be destroyed when the city is taken.

5:11-12 **Hiram's** building David's house is a sign of diplomatic recognition by the **king of Tyre**.

5:13-17 This list of wives and concubines further details the establishing of David's dynasty. A number have been taken **from Jerusalem**, thus further cementing his control. Note the naming of **Solomon** in this list, as well as **Nathan**, who is the ancestor of Christ in Luke's genealogy (see Lk 3:31). Matthew lists Solomon as Christ's ancestor (Mt 1:6).

5:18-20 **The Philistines** mount another attack against the Hebrews, this time with **David** as king over all Israel and Judah. **David inquires of the Lord** as to His battle strategy each time.

5:21-25 The Philistines leave their idols behind because of the rout. David's removal of them underscores the victory of God over the Philistines' **gods**. God instructs David to wait until He Himself has joined the battle. The victory is so extensive because David has obeyed God's commands in this matter.

6:1-5 The **ark** is now to be brought up to Jerusalem from Gibeon (see 1Ch 13:1–14). It has been in the care of Eleazar (see 1Kg 7:1). This will help unify Judah and Israel by establishing Jerusalem as the primary sanctuary.

6:6-11 Contact with the holy was fatal. When **Uzzah placed his hand on the ark** to steady it, he died. David is fearful lest the ark enter Jerusalem. Instead, it is placed in the house of **Obed-Edom** (Abedarra), a Philistine loyal to David, for three months. Obed-Edom means literally, "servant of Edom" (see 1Ch 3:13, 14). His house and all his possessions are blessed by the presence of the ark.

6:12-19 Having seen that the ark has brought blessing to the house of a Philistine, David is willing to have it enter Jerusalem after all (see 1Ch 15:25–29). Greeting the ark with dancing is perhaps an import from Canaanite practices. A **tabernacle** (“tent of meeting”) is pitched for the ark in Jerusalem. The distribution of the offering, and thus the blessing associated with it, is made from **Dan to Beersheba** (v. 19), the geographical boundaries of Israel at the height of David's rule.

6:20-23 David returns to bring the blessing into his home, only to be reproached by Michal, who is childless. Thus, there is no continuation of Saul's lineage by means of their marriage.

7:1-3 David has united the tribes under his kingship, established Jerusalem as his capital, and lives in a **house** paneled with **cedar.** The ark, though now brought up to the city, remains in the tabernacle he pitched for it, **a tent**. He seeks advice from **Nathan** the prophet, who instructs him to build a temple for the ark.

7:4-17 In a dream, God informs Nathan that David is not to build the temple. His descendant, Solomon, will build it. This serves to remind Nathan and David that God Himself is in charge and will issue the instructions. Indeed, God Himself will establish the throne and house and kingdom forever (see v. 23; Ps 88:28ff: Is 55:3).

7:18-29 Having received divine intervention, David speaks of God's love towards his house and his family, and is humbled by it. The house to be established forever will not be one established by human hands, the earthly temple, but the One established through David's seed. This is a prophecy of Christ, the Messiah of Israel.

8:1, 2 Having consolidated his power, David now exercises this strength against both the **Philistines** and **Moab**, the latter becoming a vassal-state. It was not uncommon for a portion of a conquered people to be executed, as David does with Moab, so as to exert his strength.

8:3-12 David expands his territory to the **Euphrates**, subjugating **Hadadezer** and ultimately drawing **Syria** into the fight. A garrison is stationed near **Damascus**, possibly to guarantee trading rights, so another state is secured. **Toi, king of Hamath**, an enemy of Hadadezer, seeks to secure his favor with David by gifts of metal vessels.

8:13-17 **David made himself a name** expanding his presence and his territory. This expansion is blessed and ordained by God, and David reigns over all Israel. **Joab** serves as commander of the armies and **Jehoshaphat** as the official **recorder**, the highest civil office. **Zadok**, first mentioned here, becomes head of the legitimate line of priests. The text should probably read “Abiathar, son of Ahimelech” (see 1Kg 22:20).

9:1-13 This chapter reflects the abiding love that David had for **Jonathan. Mephibosheth** is his sole survivor, but lame in both feet. He is brought to David's court, cared for by Ziba, Saul's servant, and fed **at David's table**, as though he were one of David's sons. David, a type of Christ, extends grace to one disabled, and invites him to dine—a picture of God's love extended to those crippled by sin, restoring them in the Eucharist.

10:1-5 The Ammonite king **Nahash** dies. Since Saul had defeated the Ammonites at Jabesh Gilead (see 1Kg 11:1–11), it was wise that David send his emissaries to his son **Hanun,** son of Nahash.

10:6-8 The Ammonites hire men from four Syrian principalities, the two mentioned previously in 8:3–7 as well as from Amalek and Istob, into a confederation against David.

10:9-14 Joab's successful strategy is to divide his forces into two and attack with both simultaneously.

10:15-19 The resulting victory for David leaves the Syrians afraid to help the Ammonites in the future.

11:1 This prologue sets the stage for the story of David's adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. The king should be leading the armies and commanders into **battle**, but David has stayed behind.

11:2-5 The roofs of the houses were typically flat and allowed a cool place to relax in the evening. David spies Bathsheba bathing atop her house and is smitten by her beauty. He has her brought to him for the express purpose of adultery. Bathsheba conceives and sends David word of her pregnancy.

11:6-13 David calls for **Uriah**, Bathsheba's husband, to be brought home from battle so that he will have intercourse with his wife, hoping to cover his own sin in this fashion. Uriah, however, refuses to have intercourse with Bathsheba, as soldiers in battle were prohibited from doing so (see Lv 15:18; 1Kg 21:5) “To wash one's feet” is a comprehensive euphemism, but intercourse is implied.

11:14-21 His first plan having failed, David arranges for Uriah to be sent forth to the front lines for battle and then to retreat from behind him, virtually ensuring his death. David's second plan to conceal his adultery has succeeded through Uriah's murder on the battlefield.

11:22-25 Joab sends a **messenger** to tell David his progress in **battle**. Fearing David's anger, Joab instructs the man to hold back the fact that Uriah has been killed until the end of the report. Joab is correct in his suspicions.

11:26-27 Hearing of the death of her husband, Bathsheba mourns. Following the **mourning** period, David takes her as his wife and she gives birth to a son. It is clear David's actions were **evil** in God's sight.

12:1-6 It is the Lord Himself who sends **Nathan the prophet** to rebuke David for his sins of adultery and murder. David listens to Nathan's parable and then pronounces the sentence on his own head.

12:7-14 Nathan then prophesies to David, **you are the man** in the parable. There will be a twofold punishment: warfare from without all the rest of David's days, and rebellion from within. Additionally, the child born to Bathsheba will die.

12:15-23 The **child** falls **ill** and dies after seven days. During the illness, David fasts and lies upon the ground, entreating God to spare the child (v. 22). Once the child dies, David washes and clothes himself properly and goes into the house of the Lord to worship. David has confounded the elders of Israel by reversing the usual customs of mourning. Out of his contrition for these sins comes David's greatest psalm of repentance, Ps 50, which is recited daily in Orthodox devotional practice.

12:24-25 **David** comforts **Bathsheba**, who then conceives another child, **Solomon**, also called **Jedidiah,** “beloved of Yahweh.” This name is used only here.

12:26-28 Joab has taken the capital city of the Ammonites, **Rabbah** (modern Amman, Jordan). But it is a token capture. David is invited to go forth and take it in person, and does so. He takes the crown of **Melchol**, the Ammonite god, as part of the spoils, and puts the Ammonites under forced labor.

13:1 Nathan's prophecy of strife and struggle in David's house (12:10) begins to unfold with incest, fratricide, and rebellion. David's family and the kingdom will be afflicted for the rest of his days—and beyond—because of his sins of adultery and murder. The unholy conduct of leaders, as well as of parents, produces unholiness in the nation or the family. The sins of a father or mother can thus be visited upon their descendants. For those in spiritual leadership, this can be the case for their spiritual children (see 1Ti 3; Rev 2:18ff).

13:1-6 God's punishment of David for his sins (12:7) now begins to unfold. David's son **Amnon** falls in love with his half-sister **Tamar**. She is the full sister of **Absalom**. **Jonadab**, their cousin, advises Amnon to **pretend to be ill** in order to have Tamar come and cook for him.

13:7-14 Tamar refuses Amnon's advances, although she suggests that marriage would be possible, should he ask the king. Instead, he rapes her.

13:15 Completely revolted by his own deeds, Amnon sends Tamar away.

13:18-19 The variegated **robe** was worn by **virgins**. It is the same type of robe as described in Ps 44:13, 14, a psalm typifying the Virgin Mary. Tamar observes the mourning tradition for the loss of her virginity by placing ashes **on her head** and rending the garment. Absalom cautions her to remain quiet as he shelters her in his house.

13:21-29 Although **David** is grieved by his son's action, he does nothing. **Amnon** is the heir. **Absalom** bides his time, seeking to avenge his sister's rape. His vengeance takes place **after two years** at sheep-shearing (see 1Kg 25:2–4). Amnon is killed and all his brethren flee.

13:30-33 The first reports to David have him believing that Absalom has killed all of his sons. Interestingly, it is **Jonadab**, the cousin who had helped Amnon in his plot to seduce Tamar, who tells the king that **only Amnon is dead**.

13:34-36 **Absalom** flees with a band of men, while the sons of David return to Jerusalem and a general mourning takes place for Amnon.

13:37-39 **Geshur** is the home of Absalom's mother. He stays there three years until the king's grief over Amnon has abated.

14:1-3 **Joab** is aware the king has softened in his heart toward **Absalom**. He sends a woman of **Tekoa** to act the part of a widow before David to effect a reconciliation between the king and his son.

14:4-17 The woman's story of a blood feud between her sons parallels David's (see Nm 35:19–21 re the law of blood revenge). She presses the king to absolve this blood feud, which he does, indicative of the king's power as judge.

14:18-20 David is suspicious that **Joab** is somehow involved in her telling the tale.

14:21-24 **Absalom** is recalled from his exile by David through Joab, but not allowed to live in the palace or **see the king's face.**

14:25-27 Absalom is described as handsome, with a full head of long **hair**, which he had cut **every year**. Absalom's daughter, **Tamar**, is named here, unusual in Hebrew genealogies, because she will marry **Rehoboam**, her cousin, the **son of Solomon** and future king.

14:28-33 **Absalom** resents his restrictions, unable to obtain an audience with his father the king after two years. **Joab** even refuses to come at his request until Absalom has Joab's barley **field** set **on fire** to force his presence. At last, Absalom is called to his father's court, where he does obeisance to him and is **kissed** by the king, a sign of reconciliation.

15:1-6 **Absalom** plays on the disaffection of those seeking judgment from the king who could get no audience. The implication is that David has begun to neglect his duties as judge.

15:7-12 After four years (the LXX has “forty”), Absalom is ready for open revolt. He uses the excuse of having made a **vow** that needs to be fulfilled and goes **to Hebron**. The paying or fulfilling of vows was looked upon as a sacred obligation. Thus, David does not stand in his son's way. The irony is, Absalom claims that this vow had been made in hope of his restoration to Jerusalem.

15:13-16 The messenger's news, although perhaps exaggerated, disturbs **David** enough to cause him to **flee** the city. The departure is described in great detail. Ten concubines (v. 16) are left behind (see 16:21).

15:18 A review of the foreign troops loyal to David (see 8:18; 1Kg 30:14).

15:19-14 A chronicle of personal encounters with David, indicating those on whom he could still depend for support. The notable exception will be Shimei, 16:5–8.

15:19-23 David's despair is obvious. He tells **Ittai** to **return and remain with the king**, Absalom. He has only recently been joined to Israel. Ittai confesses his loyalty to David. The **Brook Kidron** is only a short way from the city (v. 23).

15:24-29 **Zadok** and **the Levites** are following the king with **the ark**. David sends them back for two reasons: The ark is not to leave Jerusalem, and they are to act as spies for David.

15:30-37 David is distraught at the defection of **Ahithophel**. He hears this news as he weeps and prays on the Mount of Olives, seeking God's will. Compare this with Christ weeping on the Mount of Olives, knowing full well God's will, as His betrayer approaches (Mk 14:32–35).

16:1-4 **Ziba**, Mephibosheth's **servant** (see 9:1ff), comes to meet David with a large quantity of food for him. Upon learning that his master has remained in the city in the hope that the uprising will restore the kingdom of his father, Jonathan, David responds by giving Ziba all of Mephibosheth's property.

16:5-14 As David continues in retreat, **Shimei** of the house of Saul comes out **cursing** the king and throwing **stones** at him for Saul's death. For Shimei, the revolt is happening because David has reigned in the place of Saul. David refuses to let his men take action, seeing God working in Shimei's rebuke that he might benefit from it. He reflects that as his own son has rebelled against him, how much more might one of the tribe of **Benjamin**, Saul's tribe.

16:15-19 **Hushai** has returned to Jerusalem offering **Absalom** feigned obeisance, according to David's plan. When Absalom questions him, Hushai replies that this is only right because **the Lord**, this **people**, and all **Israel** have chosen him king.

16:20-23 **Ahithophel** counsels **Absalom** to have intercourse with the ten **concubines** his father has left behind as a symbol of his conquest.

17:1-4 Ahithophel's next plan involves a sneak attack on the **weary**, retreating **David** with the intent to kill only him and return the rest of the people back to Jerusalem.

17:5-14 **Hushai** is able to counter this plan, arguing that David is a great warrior, who perhaps even now lies in wait to attack Absalom's implicitly inferior forces. Rather, Absalom should seek as many men as possible to take with him. Hushai assures him that all of Israel, **from Dan to Beersheba**, is with him. The effect of this maneuver will be to allow David time. Absalom heeds Hushai's advice.

17:15-22 **Hushai** reports to **Zadok and Abiathar** what has transpired. The detail of the sequence of events of the maid and the messengers suggests an eyewitness account. David is forewarned and able to escape.

17:23 Ahithophel's suicide, a rarity in the Old Testament, is a strategic loss for Absalom.

17:24-29 David goes to **Mahanaim**, once the home of Ishbosheth, and is welcomed by Israelites and non-Israelites alike. **Absalom** leaves for **Gilead**.

18:1-5 David divides his forces into three companies, commanded by **Joab**, **Abishai**, and **Ittai**. The king heeds their request that he not go into battle with them, and he commands them to spare Absalom's life.

18:6-8 **The thicket of Ephraim** is described as a rough, boulder-strewn woods, thick with trees.

18:9-18 Despite the king's order (v. 5), **Joab** takes it into his own hands to kill **Absalom** as he is suspended in the **boughs of a great oak tree**.

18:19-23 **Ahimaaz** wishes to run and tell David, but **Joab** discourages him from bringing bad news to the king. Instead, he sends **Hushai**, the foreigner and friend of the king. Unable to restrain Ahimaaz further, Joab relents and Ahimaaz outruns Hushai.

18:28-30 **Ahimaaz** tells the king only about the battle victory.

18:31-33 **Hushai** is left to tell the king of Absalom's death.

19:1 David's lament is the most poignant in all the Old Testament writings: Would God I had died for you, **Absalom my son, my son**! It reveals David's deep love for his son in spite of his treachery and rebellion.

19:3-9 David's grief for his son delays his return to **the city**, though **the people** begin returning on their own. **Joab** is politically and militarily astute. He implores David to return for the sake of his kingship. David sits in the gate, but Israel has fled to its tents. The tension between Judah and Israel is quite evident once more.

19:10-15 **Israel** evidences a willingness to have **David** as king once more, though they have been in rebellion. By giving **Amasa** the post of **commander of the army**, David seeks not only to cement an alliance with the northern tribes but to repay Joab for his killing of Absalom. This is the post Amasa held under Absalom.

19:16-23 **Shimei** rushes to curry favor with the king (see 16:5–14), helping ferry the king's household **across the River Jordan** along with **Ziba**. He begs for the king's forgiveness, and the king seems to forgive him. David admits he is not sure if he is king again over Israel.

19:25-30 **Mephibosheth** comes to see David once he has returned to Jerusalem. He is unwashed and unshaven, as though in mourning. When David asks him why he did not flee with him, Mephibosheth says that his servant, Ziba, had deceived him (see 16:1–4). Who was lying? David seems to give Mephibosheth the benefit of the doubt. Ziba had certainly sought to benefit from having taken possession of Saul's property.

19:32-38 **Barzillai** of Gilead, **eighty years old**, has previously supported David in **Mahanaim** (see 17:27–29) and is a representative of the tribes across Jordan. David offers to care for him in Jerusalem in return for his aid. Barzillai prefers to return to his city, by the tomb of his **father and mother**, but asks that David care for his servant (possibly his son) **Chimham**.

19:41-43 Tension between Judah and Israel mounts. The accusation, **“We have ten shares in the king; therefore we are first over you,”** reflects the fact Judah was a latecomer to the confederacy, as well as that the northern tribes were more numerous. At this point, Judah prevails.

20:1, 2 **Every man to your tents, O Israel** (see 3Kg 12:16) is the rallying cry of the northern tribes at various times in Israel's history, reflecting the independence of nomadic life. There is not merely animosity between Benjamin and Judah, the houses of Saul and David, but between Judah and all the northern tribes.

20:3 **David** takes care not to have his **concubines** defiled again, nor does he resort to them himself (see 16:21–22).

20:4-10 David summons **Amasa**, the new commander, to muster troops of **Judah** within **three days**. But Amasa delays, and this concerns David, lest **Sheba** do **more harm than Absalom.**

20:11-13 **Joab** resumes leadership of David's cause.

20:14-22 The search for Sheba leads them to a walled city, **Abel and Beth Maachah**. Siege is laid against it, meaning it would be destroyed along with its inhabitants. **A wise woman** entreats Joab to spare the city, a mother city, implying that villages were dependent on it. The siege is lifted and Joab returns to Jerusalem.

20:23-26 Officials in David's court (see commentary on 8:13–17). **Adoram** is also Adoniram, under Solomon (see 3Kg 4:6). **Ira**, possibly the Ithrite of 23:38, serves as David's private or personal priest.

21:1 There follow several accounts which are appendices, set at various times during David's reign. Together they comprise chapters 21–24.

21:1-14 The three-year **famine** is interpreted as God's punishment, for Saul had violated an oath made to those in Gibeon. However, Saul's actions (vv. 1–3) are unknown otherwise. The famine would have happened during the early part of David's reign. To eliminate the blood-guilt, David allows for seven of Saul's descendants to be hanged. He spares Jonathan's son, **Mephibosheth**, instead delivering two of Saul's sons (one also named Mephibosheth) and five of his grandsons, sons of Michal.

21:15-22 Again, this is set in the early years of David's kingship, when he was **still at war**, perhaps either 5:18–21 or 5:22–26. Regarding **giants**, see Gn 14:5. **The lamp of Israel** (v. 17) refers to the royal lineage (see 14:7).

22:1-5 Except for minor differences, this chapter is identical to Ps 17.

23:1-7 The theme is common to wisdom literature: the righteous prosper and the ungodly perish. God has made an **everlasting covenant** (v. 5) with David (see ch. 7).

23:8-12 These three men form a special band (see 1Ch 11:11–14).

23:13-17 The **three** here are perhaps the same as in vv. 8–12.

23:18-39 The **thirty** is a round number (v. 24). The text says there are **thirty-seven** (v. 39).

24:1-9 Despite the protestations of **Joab**, **David** decides to take a census of the people. According to the narrator, the Lord has **incited** David to do this. However, in 1Ch 21:1, it is Satan who has done this. Certainly, the Lord can use the devil to do His bidding. Joab might be concerned about using a census to levy taxes on the people.

24:10-17 **Gad** the prophet (see 1Kg 22:5; 1Ch 21:9ff; 2Ch 29:25) gives David a choice of one of three penalties for taking the census: (1) **three years of famine**; (2) **three months** of flight from **enemies**; (3) **three days of death** in the land. David chooses the third, and a plague afflicts Israel **from Dan to Beersheba**. At the point of the destruction of Jerusalem, God says **enough**! David beseeches the angel to afflict him and his **father's house**, but not his **sheep**, the flock of Israel.

24:18-25 Gad instructs David to set up an **altar** and offer sacrifice. The purchase of **the threshing-floor of Orna the Jebusite** and the **oxen** begins the offering of sacrifices in Jerusalem. This story is intended to reflect the origin of **sacrifices** there. **Solomon later** will use the threshing-floor as the site for his temple (see 1Ch 22:1; 2Ch 3:1).

David's court history is concluded in chapters 1 and 2 of 3 Kingdoms.

1:1 As to the historical timeline of the kings of Israel, this account picks up from 2Kg 20:22. **King David** was seventy years old here, shortly before his death (see 2Kg 5:4).

1:5 **Adonijah**, David's oldest living son, **exalted himself** to **be king,** but his father should have rebuked him. Jesus also exalted Himself as God and King, and as coequal with the Father (Jn 5:23; Mt 27:11), yet His Father did not rebuke Him (AthanG). Quite to the contrary, He said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17). Moreover, although Adonijah refused to humble himself before David, who was a type of Christ, we should humble ourselves before our God and King. If we do, He will “exalt us in due time” (1Pt 5:6).

1:11 3Kingd 1:11, 14, 22: Once again, **Nathan** the prophet speaks the truth to the house of **David** (see 2Kg 12:1–15). Sometimes “speaking the truth in love” (Eph 4:15) costs a friendship, but for Nathan it cemented a lifelong relationship with **the king**.

1:15-21 **Bathsheba bowed** to her husband **the king**. A beautiful insight into respect for authority. Rather than coming with demands, she simply reviewed what the king had sworn, underscoring the importance of his successor: **the eyes of all Israel are on you** (v. 20). Her request was granted.

1:49 The “reign” of **Adonijah** was short-lived. Not only did his guests head home, so did he (v. 53). Indeed, self-exaltation is short-lived, for “whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Mt 23:12).

2:3-4 The continual reign of kings in Israel was conditional on their obedience to **the Law of Moses**. Disobedience would eventually lead to the collapse of the kingly throne when a Jew would **fail to sit on the throne**. This failure occurred when Herod the Great sat on the throne, for he was not a Jew, but a Gentile from Edom (or Idumea). According to the prophecy of Gn 49:10, the presence of a Gentile king on the throne of Judah would indicate the presence of Christ in Judea. Indeed, “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king” (Mt 2:1). The name “Shiloh” in the prophecy means “peace,” for Jesus Christ is the peace that unites and reconciles Jews and Gentiles in one body, the Church (Eph 2:14).

2:20 Bathsheba's petition was not a **small** one, as she intimated; thus Solomon did not go back on his word to fulfill her request. It was not a small one because Christ the King was to come through Solomon, and not Adonijah (Mt 1:6). So this petition was a threat against the coming of the promised Messiah.

2:27 No prophecy of Scripture can fail to be fulfilled. 1Kg 2:31 prophesied the end of the priestly **house of Eli**. It came to an end about 150 years after that, for **Abiathar** was the last priest from Eli's house. Therefore, we should pay close attention to prophecies yet to be fulfilled, especially concerning the Second Coming of Christ.

2:32 Joab took vengeance into his own hands when he killed **Abner** and **Amasa** (2Kg 3:27; 20:9, 10). By doing this, Joab destroyed himself, for the one who exacts his own vengeance becomes worse than the one on whom he takes vengeance (JohnChr). "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom 12:19; see also Lv 19:18; Dt 32:35). The vengeance taken on Joab by Solomon was at the Lord's direction, but we should avoid taking our own vengeance at all costs.

2:36 **Discernment** is the crown of the virtues and a fruit of **wisdom**. Wisdom is Christ Himself, for He gave Solomon his wisdom (1Co 1:24).

2:46-49 **David** the prophet prophesied the death of **Shimei**; therefore, the vengeance taken on him by **Solomon** was also at the Lord's direction.

2:59 This is a prophecy regarding the eternal reign and rule of Christ over His kingdom, for the promise God gave **David** was established in the Son of David.

2:64 **Thermae** means “hot baths.”

3:1-3 This passage speaks prophetically to our times. Solomon loved the Lord, yet because there was **no house built—**no temple—the king and his subjects burned incense on the high places, that is, to false gods. Today, there are those who say they love Christ but stay outside the Church, and their destiny is to lapse into error.

3:4 **The Lord** who **appeared to Solomon** was the Son of God, for He is the Word of God the Father.

3:9-13 **Solomon** did not ask for **long life**, or **riches**, or **the life of** his **enemies**, for such things are of this world; therefore, God readily heard his prayer (JohnChr). Rather, he asked for virtues such as **understanding** and **judgment**, which belong to the crown of the virtues. These virtues enable one to “discern both good and evil” (Heb 5:13, 14).

3:27 Wisdom and justice go together, for there cannot be one without the other (AmbM).

5:11 The Mosaic Law commanded the sons of Israel not to marry foreign women (Ex 34:16; Dt 7:1–4). This commandment also prophesied the ultimate result of such marriages—namely, that these women would turn these sons to idolatry. **Solomon** transgressed the commandment by marrying **the daughter of Pharaoh**, and she, along with his many other foreign wives, ultimately turned his heart away from the Lord to serve other gods (ch. 11). Thus, disobedience to a seemingly minor commandment made him guilty of breaking the whole Law (Jam 2:10). Regardless of how wise a leader may be, all kingdoms in this world are only temporary, and will end because of some weakness in the leadership. Only the kingdom of Christ will endure forever.

5:29 It took **three years** to prepare **the stones** and **the trees** for building the temple. Similarly, the Lord spent three years preparing His apostles and people to form His Church.

6:2 **The house** was a type of the Church. The **foundation** stones speak of the twelve apostles, and Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone (Eph 2:19, 20).

6:5 The completion of **the house** was according to **every word** and **mandate** of the king. Likewise, the completion of the Church is based on “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). His people live by these words.

6:11 **The temple** was **built** with **stones finished at the quarry**. When they brought them to the temple site, they fit. Speaking of the Church, St. Paul writes, “the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:21). Similarly, “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house” (1Pt 2:5). Christ Himself fashions these stones and brings them together.

6:19-21 The **temple** was made beautiful not as a show of riches, but because the Lord dwelled there (8:25; 9:3). St. Paul calls the Church “a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2:22).

6:22-36 Just as there were holy images in **the temple**, so in the churches from the earliest days, there were images or icons of Christ and His saints. We must not confuse the warning against idol worship (Ex 20:4, 5) with the presence of holy images in the Church and in the temple.

7:1, 2 As **Hiram** was filled with skill, wisdom, and understanding to offer his **bronze work** in the temple, so also the Holy Spirit gives His gifts to the Church for the “edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12).

8:1-11 The ark was a type of Mary, the Mother of God, and the tablets of the covenant within the ark were a type of Christ. For He was conceived in her holy womb by the Holy Spirit. In this conception, He took His life-giving flesh from her. His holy flesh is life-giving because He united it to His Divine Nature within His one Person. In baptism, we are united to His life-giving flesh in His death and Resurrection, and in the Eucharist we partake of His life-giving body and blood.

8:1 3Kingd 8:1, 3–7, 9–11: This passage is read on November 20 at Vespers for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple.

8:20-52 The New Testament counterpart of Solomon's prayer is the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ in Jn 17, before His Passion, presenting the Church to His Father.

8:25 Solomon asked, **But will God indeed dwell with men on earth**? He answered in the negative only in relation to temples made with hands. However, the positive answer relates to the Incarnation, for God the Son was made flesh for our salvation: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14).

8:39-41 Does God **hear** the prayer of those not of His people when they come and pray in the **temple**? The answer is clear here, as it is in Acts 10:2–4, when the Lord hears the prayers of the not-yet-baptized Cornelius.

8:56 As he blesses the people, Solomon borrows from the promise in Dt 31:6, which is also repeated in Heb 13:5: **May He not leave us nor forsake us**.

8:64 The temple, open for worship, found the people **eating, drinking, and rejoicing before the Lord**. After the day of Pentecost, the people were again "in the temple," eating their food "with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:46).

9:1-9 **The Lord** who **appeared to Solomon** was the Son and Word of God. This was His second appearance to him. (The first appearance was in 3:4–13.) In this second appearance, He gave Solomon a twofold message. First He gave an assurance: **I have done for you everything in your prayer** (v. 3). Everything the king asked for was given. But secondly came a warning: **If you or your sons turn from Me** (v. 6), **I will cast from My sight this house** (v. 7). While we come “boldly to the throne of grace” (Heb 4:16), we also confess, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31). When we proclaim God's promises, we must also proclaim His warnings.

10:1-13 The coming of **the queen of Sheba** is a pinnacle for the children of Israel as the chosen people of God. This account illustrates perfectly what God had intended for Israel: to be a shining light among the nations, to draw all the surrounding heathen nations to itself for conversion, because of the manifestation of the righteousness and wisdom of God (see Gn 12:2; Ps 2:8). Sheba was a tribe of northern Arabs, descendants of Abraham (Gn 25:3), who had raided property owned by Job's son (Job 1:15). The queen challenged Solomon with **hard questions** and received satisfactory answers. She could see **the Lord** loved Israel, and she and Solomon exchanged numerous gifts.

10:23 All the stunning gold utensils and appointments described in this chapter were made possible from **the outcome of the trading** which **Solomon** carried on.

10:24 A **tribute** is a tax.

11:1-7 Solomon's downfall was his love for **women**. He had twice as many **wives** as **concubines**, many of them likely political marriages. God had clearly warned Israel not to intermarry with foreign women (Ex 34:16; Dt 7:1–4) for just the reason that defeated Solomon: he turned after **their idols**. At the height of his reign, he fell into **evil in the sight of the Lord** (v. 7).

11:10-12 In His displeasure, **the Lord** divided **the kingdom**, leaving **Solomon** with **one tribe**, Judah, later joined by Benjamin. These two tribes were commonly called the south or southern kingdom.

11:13 Two old enemies of Israel, **Hadad** of Edom and **Rezon** of Damascus, rose up **against Solomon.**

11:27-29 The prophet **Ahijah** tore his garment **into twelve pieces** for the twelve **tribes** of Israel. Jeroboam would receive **ten** (the northern kingdom). Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor, would receive **two** (the southern kingdom).

11:30-31 Solomon's idolatry divided his **kingdom** because the worship of false gods destroys unity. However, the southern kingdom was left for the sake of the Incarnation, for David's true Son would reign forever over His own unified kingdom.

12:5-7 The elders advised **Rehoboam** to **be a servant** to the **people**, but he **rejected** their counsel (v. 12) and accepted that of **the young men** (v. 13). This acceptance divided his kingdom, for Rehoboam would rather be a dictator than a servant. However, when Jesus the King took the form of a servant (Php 2:7), He taught us that the one who governs must be as one who serves (Lk 22:26). Godly service unites, for genuine humility characterizes the kingdom of God.

12:14 The Holy Spirit, “who spoke by the prophets” (Creed), **spoke** by the prophet **Ahijah**.

12:20 The **word of God** is the Son and Word of the Father, who spoke to **the man of God**. The prophet **Shemaiah** calls Him “the Lord” in v. 22, for He is one in essence and coequal with the Father.

12:23 The numbers here contradict those given in 14:1. According to some scholars, this was likely due to the error of a copyist.

12:24 In 11:23, Jeroboam's **mother** was said to be “a widow,” but here she is said to be **a prostitute**. Apparently she was both.

12:30 **The word of the Lord** was with the prophet **Ahijah**. “The word” is the Son, and “the Lord” is the Father. Therefore, what is said by the prophet is from both the Father and the Son.

12:49 In 11:35, the Lord promised Jeroboam his kingdom would endure if he rejected idolatry and obeyed the Lord's commandments, as David had done. But Jeroboam **deliberated** and came to the wrong judgment. He feared the ten tribes would “return to the house of David” (v. 47). Deceived by his reasoning, he then rejected the Lord's promise and set up idolatrous worship. But unlike him, let us meditate and deliberate day and night in the Lord's commandments, and let us keep them so as to prosper (Ps 1).

13:6 **Jeroboam** humbled himself before **the man of God** and begged him to intercede before **the Lord** on his behalf. So the Lord honored his humility and **restored** his hand. Salvation begins and ends with humility (JohnChr), but Jeroboam's humility was short-lived; for he failed to worship the very Lord who showed him such mercy.

13:7-25 **The man of God** could not be enticed by the king's **reward**, because the Lord's commandment was clear that he was not to dine in that place, nor return **the way he came**. But the word of the old prophet clearly contradicted the Lord's commandment (v. 18). Deceived by this word, he followed the old prophet home (v. 19). His disobedience would cost him his life (vv. 22–25). This was an example of Heb 12:6: “For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives” (JohnCas). He was chastened so as not to “be condemned with the world” (1Co 11:32). However, Jeroboam, knowing all this, “did not turn from his evil way” (v. 32); thus he was condemned with the world.

14:1 The Lord chose **to place His name** in the city of **Jerusalem** (see also 8:14, 42; 11:33), where He first established His Church at Pentecost. The name He established there in the Church was that of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the name into which we are baptized (Mt 28:18–20).

14:2-4 **Rehoboam** and other kings like him in Judah and in Israel built other **places** of worship because they did not respect the Lord's name, which He established in Jerusalem. They were disobedient conspirators. They did not know the true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

14:10 **Rehoboam and Jeroboam** never knew peace, only **war**, for they did not know and obey the Author of peace, the Lord God of Israel.

15:3 David's heart was **perfect toward the Lord his God** because his heart was characterized by repentance when he sinned (Ps 50), and because he did everything the Lord commanded him (v. 5). However, Abijam's **heart was not perfect** toward the Lord his God because he was neither repentant toward Him nor obedient to Him.

15:28 The Lord who **spoke by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite** is the Holy Spirit.

16:7 3Kingd 16:7, 12, 42: **The Lord** who **spoke** by the prophets **Jehu** and **Joshua** is again the Holy Spirit.

16:24 **Omri** built **Samaria**, and eventually Gentiles inhabited the area and intermarried with the Jews. When Jesus lived in Palestine, Samaria was located between Judea and Galilee, but the Jews of Judea and Galilee would “have no dealings with Samaritans” (Jn 4:9). But Jesus did, for He revealed Himself as the Christ to the woman at the well (Jn 4:25, 26), and His story about the Good Samaritan is now very famous (Lk 10).

16:42 The Holy Spirit spoke by the prophet **Joshua** and warned against rebuilding the city of **Jericho** (Jos 6:16). Whoever would rebuild the city would lose his oldest and **youngest** sons. In Hiel's case, it was his sons **Abiram** and **Segub**. Thus we see Hiel's folly in disobeying the prophecy of Scripture (see also 2Pt 1:20, 21).

17:1 When prophets like **Elijah** prophesied, they did so in the Lord's name, for the Lord revealed the prophecy to them. However, when Jesus prophesied, He said, “I say to you,” for He Himself is the Lord who revealed Himself to the Old Testament prophets.

17:2-5 **The word** is the Word and Son of God. It was He who commanded **the ravens**, and it was He whom **Elijah** obeyed. It was He with whom Elijah and Moses appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:4).

17:10-11 **Elijah** was very poor, but he made others rich, “for it is better to be rich for others than for oneself” (AmbM). While Elijah became poor to make the **widow** rich, Jesus became poor for the sake of many (2Co 8:9).

17:12-13 **The woman** was threatened not only by poverty but by death itself, not only for herself but also for her **son**. But her faith in the Lord would overcome both (JohnChr).

17:14-16 **The woman** was greater in hospitality than Father Abraham. For he ran to his herd to fetch a calf and provided from his wealth. But this woman had nowhere to run to provide for the prophet (JohnChr). Neither the **flour** nor the **oil** ran out, because the Lord multiplied these things for **the woman** and **her children**. So too, when this same Lord multiplied the fish and the loaves, the multitude should have connected this with what He did for the widow (Mt 14; 15).

17:20 **Elijah** did not command the child to return from the dead. Rather, he **cried out to the Lord** to restore him. This same Lord also demonstrated His power over death after He became incarnate, especially when He trampled down death by His death and Resurrection (1Co 15:54, 55).

17:21 Elijah in a mystery **stretched himself** over **the child three times**, for the number three is a sacred number. It points to the Blessed and Holy Trinity and to the death, burial, and Resurrection of Christ. We are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and we are united to Christ in His death, burial and Resurrection.

18:1-12 **The word** is the Son of God, and **the Spirit** is the Holy Spirit. **The Lord** (v. 12) is the Father, for the Word is the Word of the Father, and the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father. Moreover, the Word is a Person, as indicated by the pronoun **I**, for the Word says, **I will send rain on the earth**; and this statement indicates the Word's divinity. Then too, “the Spirit” is a Person, which is indicated by the phrase, **shall carry you**.

18:2 **So Elijah went**, for he obeyed the Word and Son of God. Also after “the Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14), Elijah appeared with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:3).

18:3-12 The beginning point of wisdom in any person is the fear of the Lord (Ps 110:10; Pr 1:7). Obadiah **feared the Lord** from his youth, and he learned to fear the Lord **greatly**. Thus, he was well experienced in the Lord, and he feared the Lord more than he feared Ahab and Jezebel, which is shown by his hiding a hundred of the Lord's prophets (v. 4).

18:7 Obadiah's fear of the Lord is also shown by his deep respect for the prophet Elijah. We, too, show this same respect when we venerate his icon and the icon of the Transfiguration. Many Orthodox churches are named after St. Elijah, also known as St. Elias.

18:12-14 Obadiah is not showing cowardice when he says, “But he will kill me.” For he risked his life when he hid the hundred prophets of the Lord. Rather, his statement shows we should not put ourselves in harm's way needlessly. This was also true of the Lord Jesus: “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him” (Jn 7:1).

18:15-16 Both Elijah and Obadiah were brave and courageous in the Lord. Elijah had no fear of appearing in the presence of Ahab, because he always stood in the presence of One greater than Ahab, namely, “the Lord of hosts.” “For he was always eager to make himself fit to appear before God with a pure heart, and to submit to His will, and His will alone” (AthanG). Obadiah as well had no fear of telling Ahab that Elijah wanted to see him. Their courage is one of the four general virtues that produce all the other virtues.

18:17-18 **Elijah** and **Ahab** obviously present two contradictory judgments. Which one was actually **troubling Israel**? It was time to settle things. For which is the true God in the eyes of Israel, **the Lord** or Baal? Was Elijah the true prophet, or were the 850 prophets of Baal? The answers would soon become evident (vv. 20–40).

18:19-20 The 450 prophets were called **prophets of shame** because of their anger and wrath. For their worship was filled with passion (v. 28). But Elijah was free from this shame. “Let us free ourselves of this demon [of wrath]. At its first beginning, let us quench it. Let us put the sign of the cross on our breast, as it were a curb. Wrath is a shameless dog, but let it learn to hear the law of Christ” (JohnChr).

18:21 **The people** were indecisive about the true God, and their double-mindedness was destroying their souls. Is the true God **Baal** or **the Lord**? Baal was the name of a presiding deity in a community of deities; therefore, the worship of Baal included that of many gods. But if the presiding deity were overcome, so would all the rest be. The people would soon discover anew that the Lord is the one true God.

18:30-39 **Fire** and **water** are obviously opposed to one another. So if **the Lord** makes them operate in harmony and friendly cooperation, He is clearly the true **God**. The water filled the furrow, then the fire fell from heaven. In all this, Elijah proclaimed Christian baptism. “Now in this, by that marvelous sacrifice, Elijah clearly proclaimed to us the sacramental rite of Baptism that would be instituted by Christ. For the fire was kindled by water, poured out three times upon the sacrifice. Thus, it is clearly shown that where the mystic water is, there is the kindling, warm, and fiery Spirit of God, who burns up impurity, and illuminates the faithful” (GrgNy).

19:4 Elijah was not attached to this transient **life**, for his vision was life in the world to come. “Holy men have often lamented their lengthy dwelling here” (AmbM). St. Paul also longed to depart to be with Christ (Php 1:21–24).

19:10 **The children of Israel** forsook **the Lord** because an angry and wrathful temper took hold of them, for God cannot be known in that kind of disposition. He can only be known in and through the virtues, such as gentleness.

19:11-12 The Holy Spirit (**a great and powerful wind)** manifests His grace in a variety of ways in prayer. In some He “rends the mountains” of sinful passions and “shatters the rocks” of hardened hearts. In others He is like “an earthquake,” which is an inward sense of jubilation or exultation. Yet again in others, He is a nonmaterial fire. Finally, in others He is “a gentle breeze,” which occurs when Christ comes to dwell in the heart, as St. Paul said in Eph 3:17 (GrgSinai).

19:13 The Son of God (**a Voice**) came to Elijah, who called Him “the Lord Almighty” (v. 14) and “the Lord” (v. 15) Elijah was obedient to Him (v. 19).

19:18 Although God's promises were made to the whole nation of **Israel**, only a remnant of **seven thousand** were saved in Elijah's day. St. Paul calls these “a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom 11:2–5). The apostle also points out that election is based on foreknowledge (Rom 8:29; 11:2), for the Lord knows ahead of time those who are worthy. “By saying ‘election,’ Paul showed their approval, and by saying ‘grace,’ he showed the gift of God” (JohnChr).

20:3 **Naboth** was a man of discernment, righteousness, courage, and self-control; therefore, he rejected Ahab's request.

20:4 **Ahab's spirit was disturbed** because his desire to purchase Naboth's vineyard was frustrated. His frustrated desire produced anger and depression in him, and ultimately murder, for he lacked those virtues seen in Naboth.

20:20 Ahab sold himself to do evil, which he committed by his own free will, for he was not forced to sin by any necessity imposed on him by his human nature. Truly, like Ahab, we sell ourselves to commit sins by our own free choice, as St. Paul points out in Rom 7:14.

20:25 Nor did Ahab's **wife Jezebel** force Ahab to sin, although she **led him astray**. For Ahab followed his wife's advice because he willed it of his own free choice. In this choice, he was like Adam of old, who ate from the forbidden tree because he was deceived by Eve.

21:1-3 **The son of Hadad the king of Syria** was an icon of covetousness: **Your silver and your gold are mine; your wives and your children are mine**; therefore, the Lord was opposed to him. But only the Lord can deliver us from king covetousness (v. 13). Covetousness is one of the sinful passions that defiles a person (Mk 7:22, 23). In another place, Jesus warns, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Lk 12:15).

21:23 **The king of Syria** was an icon of a heretic, for his servants convinced him, saying, **The God of Israel is a god of the mountains, and not a god of the valleys**. For they believed God was circumscribed, and therefore limited and contained within creation. To refute this reasoning, the Lord delivered Israel from the king (v. 28). Thus, the Lord is at war with heresy because it opposes the salvation of mankind. He circumscribes His creation, yet He is present within it, seeking to save the lost. For although He is uncontained by creation, He became incarnate to save it.

22:10 **The king of Israel** and **the king of Judah** were sitting on their thrones, but the Lord was also sitting on His throne, reigning over the affairs of men (v. 19). All the host of heaven were also around His throne. The Lord then sent “a deceiving spirit” (v. 22) to deceive Ahab through all his false prophets. But there was only one true prophet among them, Micaiah. Likewise, throughout Church history there have been many false prophets and a few true ones: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1Jn 4:1). Since biblical times, the true prophets are the Holy Fathers of the Church, who have handed down the true teachings of the Holy Scriptures to us.

1:3-4 The prophet **Elijah** teaches us that God can step into the lives and condition of His people any time He pleases.

1:8 The outward appearance and spirit of Elijah are recognizable in John the Baptist, “the second Elijah” (Mt 3:4).

1:9-15 “Two princes and a hundred who were with them were burned, because they approached the mountain on which Elijah was sitting, who ascended in a chariot of fire to heaven. . . . Accordingly, beloved, the righteous shall be tried by the fire, like gold and silver and goodly stones, and the wicked shall be burned in the fire like straw and reed and stubble, and the fire shall have power upon them and they shall be burned” (AphP).

1:10 Elijah's word brought the consuming fire **down from heaven,** the same consuming fire made known in Nm 11:1 and spoken of by the apostles (Lk 9:54).

2:1 As Enoch (Gn 5:24) was translated to **heaven** without experiencing his own death, so too was Elijah—thus making known to us that God alone has the keys of life, death, and the grave.

2:6 The **Jordan** River is a type of baptism, a crossing over from this fallen world to our promised inheritance—life in the world to come. Christ fulfills this promise through His Incarnation and His baptism (Mk 1:9).

2:1-8 The name **Gilgal** speaks of faith and hope in God as opposed to faith in the fallen world. This is where Joshua's men, in obedience and love of God, were circumcised to cut themselves off from this earthly realm. Gilgal literally means “a rolling,” for the Lord had rolled away Israel's reproach in Egypt (Jos 5:9). Thus, Elijah leaves the place of rolling, Gilgal, and in zeal and faith enters into Bethel, the “house of God”—the heavenly realm.

2:8-14 Moses foreshadowed baptism when he parted the Red Sea (Ex 14:16–23). Joshua parted the River Jordan with the ark of the covenant (Jos 3:13–17), and so did Elijah and Elisha when they struck the River Jordan with Elijah's mantle. “O how great is the virtue of the Saints! Not only their words; not only their bodies, but even their very garments are always esteemed venerable by the whole creation. The sheepskin of this man divided the Jordan!” (JohnChr).

2:11 The manner of Elijah being **separated** from Elisha shows the power and authority of God. “Because Elijah restrained the desire of the body, he withheld rain from the adulterous; because he kept his body under control, he withheld dew from the whoremongers, who let their fountains be loosely poured out. Because the hidden fire of the lust of the body did not rule in him, to him the fire from on high was obedient. And since he subdued on the earth the lust of the flesh, he went up there where holiness dwells and is at peace” (EphS).

2:12 **He saw Elijah no more**: Like Elijah, Moses also disappeared, for “no one knows his grave to this day” (Dt 34:6). The ministries or offices of Moses and Elijah, representing the law and the prophets of God, are fulfilled in Christ (Mt 17:3).

2:13 “For Elijah left a sheepskin [**mantle**] to his disciple, but the Son of God ascending left to us His own flesh! Elijah indeed, cast off his mantle, before he went up; but Christ left it behind for our sakes; and yet retained it when He ascended. Let us not then be cast down. Let us not lament, nor fear the difficulty of the times, for He who did not refuse to pour out His blood for all, and has suffered us to partake of His flesh and of His blood again, what will He refuse to do for our safety?” (JohnChr).

2:15 The sons of the prophets show proper reverence in the presence of the holy prophet Elisha, a foreshadowing of apostolic succession.

2:19-22 As the Lord **healed** the waters of Jericho with salt, so the incarnate Christ brings renewal to all of creation.

2:23-25 Like Elisha before the youths, Christ will also be mocked (Lk 18:32). “For what is, ‘Go up!’? ‘Crucify Him! Crucify Him!’ For childhood is set before us to imitate humility, and . . . to beware of foolishness” (Aur).

3:18 What is impossible for us is **easy** for **the Lord** (Lk 1:37).

4:1-44 In this chapter, Elisha experiences the double portion of Elijah's spirit (2:9) in performing five miracles: multiplying the poor widow's oil (vv. 1–7); providing a son to the good Shunammite in her old age (vv. 8–17); raising the lifeless child to life (vv. 18–27); healing the death in the pottage (vv. 38–41); and feeding a hundred men with twenty small loaves (vv. 42–44).

4:1-7 This account demonstrates the wondrous acts of Christ's charity made manifest through those faithful to Him and in whom His goodness is magnified (see also Mt 14:20; 18:25).

4:11-17 This account of a miraculous birth to one who has found favor with God helps prepare the nation Israel for the coming miraculous birth of the Savior from one also favored by God (Lk 1:30). “For, because no one would easily have believed that a virgin could bear a child, barren women first did so, then such as were not only barren, but aged also . . . to prepare the way for belief in the Virgin's travail” (JohnChr).

4:29-31 Elisha's **staff**, which failed to raise the child, is like the law. Neither of them, apart from the Word, can save mankind.

4:32-35 Here displayed is the power of fervent prayer from the heart of one who loves God and his neighbor (Mt 6:6). It is this same power that is given to Christ's apostles (Acts 20:10).

4:37 See Heb 11:35.

4:42-44 This is similar to Christ's miracle of the **loaves of barley** found in Jn 6:9–14.

5:1 Regarding **Naaman** the stranger (Gentile) from Syria, see Lk 4:27.

5:10-11 “Elisha did not so much as see Naaman for though he perceived that Naaman was offended at his not coming out and touching him—observing the strictness of the law—he abides at home, and sends Naaman to the River Jordan to wash. Whereas the Lord—to signify that He heals not as a servant but as absolute master—doth also touch (Mt 8:2, 3). For His hand did not take on the uncleanness of the leprosy, but instead the leprous body was rendered clean and renewed by His holy hand. For as we know, He came not to heal bodies only, but also to lead the soul unto self-control” (JohnChr).

5:14 “It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [it served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord” (Iren).

5:15-19 See Jn 9, and compare Naaman's experience to that of the blind man.

5:1-27 “Yes, and yet again his disciple Elisha, when Naaman the Syrian, who was diseased with leprosy, had come to him as a suppliant, cleanses the sick man by washing him in the Jordan, clearly indicating what should come, both by the use of water generally, and by the dipping in the river in particular. For Jordan alone of rivers, receiving in itself the first-fruits of sanctification and benediction, conveyed in its channel to the whole world, as it were from some fount in the type afforded by itself, the grace of Baptism. These then are indications in deed and act of regeneration by Baptism” (GrgNy).

5:27 “Though he took not by violence, yet he did a wrong; for to get money by deceit is a wrong” (JohnChr).

6:1-7 The sons of the prophets were humble and impoverished, indicated by the borrowed ax.

6:4-7 St. John Chrysostom indicates the water was a type of baptismal water, the ax head a type of one who is baptized, and the stick, a type of the cross. We who were drowning like iron in sin and death rise to new life in baptism through the cross of Jesus Christ and begin a journey to heaven.

6:6 “This event is an indication of the fact that when the holy soul of Christ descended [to Hades], many souls ascended and were seen in their bodies. For just as the wood, the lighter body, was submerged in the water, so the iron, the heavier one, floated. Thus, when the Word of God became one with flesh, by a physical and hypostatic union, the heavy and terrestrial body, having been rendered immortal, was borne up into heaven by the divine nature, after the resurrection” (Iren).

6:8-23 The Syrian king believed wrongly that the power of his earthly kingdom could contain and control the prophet of God.

6:17 Through the intercession of the prophet (Heb 1:14), **the eyes** of his newly tested servant, whose faith was yet easily shaken, became **opened** to the divine presence surrounding him. In the Divine Liturgy, immediately before the Gospel, we pray, “Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your Gospel teaching.” St. Ambrose writes that Elisha's servant saw “numberless hosts of angels.”

7:1, 2 In the midst of man's unbelief, the Lord brings a promise of deliverance. Those who doubt God's power and authority will witness the fulfillment of the promise given, but will not participate in it. The prophecy comes to pass in 7:18–20.

7:15-16 The **word of the Lord** proves true and lasting, while the kingdoms of this fallen world pass away (Mt 24:35; 1Co 1:9; 1Th 5:24; 1Pt 1:25).

8:1-6 By following the warning of the Lord through **Elisha**, the Shunammite **woman** and her household were not only protected from danger, but their place was kept intact for **seven years.** This passage may not be in chronological order, for **Gehazi** had been stricken with leprosy earlier (5:27).

8:11 As did His prophets, the Lord Himself wept tears over the lost condition of His people (Lk 19:41).

8:12-19 **Hazael** freely wills to fulfill Elisha's prophecy, because his heart is evil. But God will use this evil for good by oppressing Israel to curb their sins (v. 19), so they might not completely **destroy** themselves (13:22).

9:1-3 **Jehu** is made **king over Israel** to cleanse the land and prepare it for restoration. He will avenge God's prophets (v. 7) and righteous Naboth (v. 26), kill the evil kings of Judah and Israel (vv. 24, 27), fulfill Elijah's prophecy against Jezebel (vv. 30–37; see 3Kg 20:23) and Ahab (10:17; see 3Kg 20:21), and destroy Baal from Israel (10:28).

11:1-20 **Jehosheba** hides young **Joash** in the house of the Lord until he can take his place as the leader of his people (v. 12). So, too, Miriam hid Moses (Ex 2:3); Rahab hid the spies (Josh 2:4); and Joseph and Mary hid the Christ-Child in Egypt (Mt 2:13) until the proper time.

12:2-3 While under the guidance of the priest **Jehoiada**, who made a covenant with the Lord (11:17), Joash **did what was right** before God. And though persuaded not to remove **the high places,** he did order the repair of the house of the Lord and did so with trust and honor (v. 15; Mt 24:45).

13:5 A savior was given by the Lord to renew and recreate what was before (Lk 1:11), because **Israel** called out to Him.

13:21 There are those who struggle with the idea of keeping relics of saints, doubting they have any special significance. Here, the bones of a departed saint bring a dead man back to life. St. Cyril comments, “Is a dead man raised to life on touching the bones of Elisha, and is it not much easier for the Maker of mankind to be raised by the power of the Father? Well then, He truly rose, and after He had risen was seen again of the disciples . . . are you still incredulous in regard to His Resurrection?” (See also Jn 5:25, 28, 29.)

14:8 The idiom **look one another in the face** means going to battle, as shown by 14:11, 12.

14:26-27 Though **Israel** had turned from the Lord and become **bitter**, nonetheless He kept His promise to never **blot** them out. Similarly, the Lord has promised His Church, “I am with you always” (Mt 28:20).

15:1-5 **Uzziah**, contemporary of the prophet Isaiah (Is 6:1), was arrogant in his self-rule and brought upon himself the wrath of the Lord, who struck him with leprosy.

15:20 **Menahem** is an evil king who uses **money** as a means to keep the enemy from striking; but Israel's destruction is imminent. In contrast, the Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous King, gives Himself as a ransom to save mankind (Mt 20:28), thereby crushing the head of His enemy, Satan.

15:30 Through **conspiracy** and murder, **Hoshea** fulfilled his desire to become king over Israel (9:14; 11:1, 14; 12:21; 14:19; 15:10, 25). He was the last king to reign in Israel.

16:1-20 **Ahaz** the **king of Judah** would openly turn his back on both God and Israel in order to form an alliance with a known enemy of God and His people, the **king of Assyria** (v. 7). He took treasure from the house of the Lord (v. 8) and compromised its altar and its priest (vv. 14, 15).

17:1-23 Israel's destruction was at hand, with Assyria being the final enemy power. The kings and the people long ago had freely given themselves over to idolatry and sin (v. 17). The generations that passed from the first king of the divided Israel (3Kg 12:23–31) to Hoshea, the last (17:6), are a testimony to the long-suffering mercy of God, who held off judgment until this time. The Jews knew the pathway to the one true God, but secretly they forsook Him, choosing to walk apart from His **statutes** (v. 13), disobey Him (v. 14), and turn to idolatry (v. 6).

17:24-41 The Gentile nations—the Assyrians and others—though idolaters, still came to **fear the Lord** (v. 28).

18:1-8 **Hezekiah** is the first **king** since David to keep the Lord's **commandments** (v. 6), to restore right worship for the people, and to honor Him as True God. Even so, he was unable to prevent the captivity foretold to him in his later days (20:18), accepting it with trust in the Lord.

18:4 The spiritual reality of **the bronze serpent** made by Moses (Nm 21:9) is lost and its meaning worthless.

18:7 The Lord was with Hezekiah, for in faith He waited on the Lord and the promise of His Incarnation (Mt 1:22, 23).

18:13-19 This account is also recorded in Isaiah 36:1–39:8.

18:16 Hezekiah's priority is not the temple **gold** but the preservation of the remnant in Judah (19:4).

18:28-35 Rabshakeh's words are those of a false prophet and a blasphemer (see 19:6). He accuses King Hezekiah of the deceit he himself practices, and tempts the people with false promises that twist the promises of God. Well does Isaiah describe Assyria's role in the history of Israel (Is 10:5–14).

18:36 The command echoes Isaiah's prophecy, “He opened not His mouth” (Is 53:7).

19:1-7 **Hezekiah** is a humble man who calls on **the Lord** and seeks His direction by way of His prophets. The Lord turned back the immediate threat of the enemy (v. 7).

19:19 See Ps 82:18.

19:31 Isaiah's prophecy regarding the **remnant** will find its fulfillment and completion in the Incarnation of the Word of God and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2).

20:1-6 The Lord overturns His words spoken to **Hezekiah** by **Isaiah** because of Hezekiah's prayers and heartfelt tears. “What can be clearer than this proof that out of consideration for mercy and goodness the Lord would rather break His word, and instead of the prearranged limit of death, extend the life of him who prayed, for fifteen years, rather than be found inexorable because of His unchangeable decree?” (JohnCas).

20:11 Here the Lord, to answer the prayer of **Isaiah** for the sake of Hezekiah, overcomes the laws of nature by turning back time (v. 11), as measured on the sun **dial**.

20:12-21 When the heart “is estranged from the business of self-examination, it does not even consider the losses it is suffering, or know how great they are. For neither did Hezekiah believe himself to be sinning when he showed his treasures to the strangers. When in heart we transgress, what we are doing within ourselves is hidden from men. Yet in the eyes of the Judge, we sin” (GrgGt).

21:1, 2 As long as **Manasseh** was “free” to live according to his passions, he remained in bondage to them. But when the Lord allowed him to be taken into captivity, he found repentance and was restored to his kingdom (2Ch 33:13). “Now if, considering the magnitude of his own iniquities, he had despaired of restoration and repentance, he would have missed all which he afterwards obtained. But as it was, looking to the boundlessness of God's tender mercy instead of the enormity of his transgressions, and having broken in sunder the bonds of the devil, he rose up and contended with him, and finished the good course” (Dion).

21:3 Here, **all the host of heaven** is not the saints and the angels to which this phrase usually refers. Rather, these are the fallen hosts, as is clear in 23:5.

22:1, 2 **Josiah** is a model for all who seek through repentance and obedience to God to be cleansed, renewed, and restored. By not turning **aside to the right** or **to the left**, Josiah stayed in the center of God's will, not attempting to test the outer limits of His love and grace.

22:11-13 When Josiah **heard the words of the Book of Law**, he immediately realized his kingdom had strayed from God, and took steps to bring reform. According to St. Paul, “the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ” (Gal 3:24), “for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20).

23:1-3 How do we bring renewal to God's people? **The King** Josiah began by exposing them to the hearing and learning of God's word. He **gathered to himself all the elders** and **all the people,** for both the leaders and the laity must live by God's revelation.

23:4-9 A second step in renewal is to **bring out of the temple** . . . **all the articles made for Baal**. Following the Lord includes both hearing and obeying His word and intentionally rejecting darkness.

23:16-20 Josiah fulfills a prophecy **spoken** by a prophet of the Lord more than three hundred years earlier (3Kg 13:2, 3).

23:21-25 “Love faith. For by his devotion and faith Josiah won great love for himself from his enemies. For he celebrated the Lord's Passover . . . as no one had done it before him. As then in zeal, he was superior to those who went before him. So do you, my sons, show zeal for God. Let zeal for God search you through, and devour you, so that each one of you may say, ‘The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up’” (AmbM).

23:26-37 Even though Josiah was Judah's most righteous king (v. 25), the kings who succeeded him lapsed back into evil. In Israel of old, as in the Church today, the work of renewal is never finished. True and lasting peace and righteousness will come only through the reign of Christ in His everlasting kingdom.

24:1 The **Chaldeans** are the people of the south of **Babylon**.

24:10-17 The totality of the siege of **Jerusalem** is remarkable. The king and his family and court are imprisoned (v. 12), the temple and the **king's house** are dismantled (v. 13), and the army is in **captivity** (v. 14).

24:18 **Zedekiah**, the new **king** of Judah, was more like a prince or regent, serving under his father.

25:1-7 The physical **siege** of **Jerusalem** is completed, and the king is blinded and removed to **Babylon**.

25:8-17 Once the city is captured, the temple, **the house of the Lord**, is cleaned out and laid bare. In Jerusalem **every house was burned**. The tall **pillars** of the temple were torn down. The **capital** (v. 17) is the top or dome of the pillar.

25:27-30 Even after the murder of Gedaliah (25:25), the book ends on a note of hope. **Jehoiachin** is freed **from prison** and given a measure of freedom as God's people remain in exile.

1:1-44 The first nine chapters of this book are genealogies. They run from **Adam** to **Noah** (1:1–4); Noah to **Abraham** (1:5–15); **Abraham** to **Jacob** or Israel (1:16–22); **Israel** to **David** (2:1–15); and from the sons of David through the sons of **Solomon** (3:1–24). Then follow the genealogies of the twelve tribes (4:1–8:40); of the remnant who will return to Jerusalem after the captivity (9:1–24); and of **Saul** (9:35–44). Genealogies are hidden treasures which should not be passed over, for they serve to remind us of two all-encompassing truths: (1) the reality of our inheritance from Adam: that we live, suffer, have children, and die. We cannot save ourselves (Rom 5:14), and need a Savior; and (2) that God created us in His image, He loves His creation, and He is endlessly interacting in history in order to restore creation to Himself.

1:1-4 In these verses **Adam** and **Noah** typify Christ, the “Beginning and *the* End” (Rev 22:13). Adam, the first man, brought death into the world; but Christ's death will destroy death (1Co 15:45–47). By faith Noah built the ark and saved his household from the flood (Heb 11:7); likewise Christ will build His Church, beginning with His twelve apostles, through which He will bring all who are baptized into new and eternal life.

1:10-15 **Nimrod:** See Gn 10:8–12. The genealogy from **Shem** to **Abraham**, like that from Adam to Noah (vv. 1–4), again points to Christ, “the First and the Last” (Rev 22:13). Like Christ, Shem, Noah's youngest, is first because of his humility (see Gn 9:24–27); and Abram, because of his faith, will become Abraham (v. 15), the “father of us all” (Rom 4:16).

2:3 The genealogy of **Judah** establishes King David's ancestry (v. 15). Christ's genealogy in the New Testament books of Matthew and Luke will complete David's royal lineage by showing Him to be both Son of God and Son of Man (see Mt 1:3–6; Lk 3:31–33).

3:1-9 Note that the sons of David born in **Hebron** (vv. 1–4) are listed separately from his sons born in **Jerusalem** (vv. 5–9). Since Abraham and Sarah lived and were buried there (Gn 25:10), Hebron can be seen as a type of the old covenant, Jerusalem a type of the new, heavenly city. Thus, just as David's long reign in Jerusalem surpassed his shorter reign in Hebron, and just as **Solomon** surpassed **Absalom** (2Kg 18:15–18), so Christ's eternal reign with His Church, the “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22), will surpass the old covenant under Abraham.

3:10-24 The genealogy of the sons of **Solomon**. Note how the lineage is given in few words, compared to the listing of the kings of Edom (1:43–54), where each king “died,” and another “reigned in his place.” In spite of personal faults, Christ's royal ancestors point directly to Him.

4:1-23 The genealogy of **Judah** is the first given from the twelve tribes of Israel, as Jacob's promise was on Judah's head (Gn 49:8–12). Christ, the Son of God, will be born from Judah's line.

4:9, 10 The story of **Jabez** affirms the message hidden in the surrounding genealogies: God gives grace to the humble and humbles the proud (1Pt 5:5) in order to save man from pain (sin, suffering, and death).

5:1-24 **Reuben**, **Gad**, and the half-tribe of **Manasseh** inhabited **Gilead** (vv. 9, 10) on the east side of the Jordan (later called Decapolis). These will be among the first people to receive the gospel (Mt 4:25; Mk 5:20).

5:2 The phrase **from him came a ruler** confirms that the promise made to Judah by his father Jacob (Gn 49:8–10) came to pass in King David.

5:25-26 The faithful must be vigilant and continue to trust in God. It is when we think we can stand on our own through God's blessing in the past that the enemy is able to bring us down.

6:1-38 The priests who offer sacrifices are directly descended from **Levi** and **Aaron** through **Eleazar**. Aaron's other sons, Nadab and Abihu, died because of their sins (Lv 10:1–3; Ex 3:2); and Ithamar's line was cut off because of the sins of Eli's sons (1Kg 3:10–14). Just as Judah's line is fulfilled in Christ the King, so the Levitical line is fulfilled in Christ, the “High Priest” (Heb 8:1).

6:16-33 Those descended from Levi but not through Aaron are listed. The prophet **Samuel** (v. 13) and the musicians (vv. 16, 17) are from this lineage (v. 13). This Old Testament picture continues in the Church today. The priests serve at the altar. But all the faithful together form a “royal priesthood” in service to the Church.

6:39-66 Just as the rest of the tribes must give part of their inheritance to the Levites, so the faithful today are called to give of themselves to the work of the Lord.

7:1-40 The genealogies of **Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh,** and **Asher** include the numbers of men fit for battle, while the genealogy of **Ephraim** ends with **Joshua** (v. 27), the greatest warrior of all.

7:20-29 **Ephraim** receives new hope when his **wife** conceives after his other sons are tragically murdered. Ephraim, Joseph's second son, is seen as a type of the new covenant in Christ (see Gn 41:51–52). Note that **Joshua**, the Old Testament's powerful type of Christ, comes from Ephraim's line (v. 27).

8:1-40 A more detailed genealogy of **Benjamin** is given, probably because **Saul** comes from this line (v. 33).

9:1, 2 The phrase **those to whom permission had been given** almost certainly deals with those who returned after the exile (Neh 11). Thus, the genealogies of Israel from Adam until Ezra's time are completed, and the stage is set to start anew with an overview of the history of Judah, beginning with the death of Saul.

9:17-27 Just as the gatekeepers stood guard at the doors of the tabernacle, so we in the Church are called to guard the truth of our faith and to keep watch over the living temples of our souls.

10:1-13 The genealogy ends, and the history of Israel continues with a brief description of Saul's defeat and death at the hands of the Philistines. The Philistines think they have won the victory against Israel by displaying Saul's head in their idolatrous temple. Similarly, when Christ descends into hell, the devil will think he has won when in fact he has lost.

11:1-9 Recognizing David as the true deliverer and king, the people witness him **anointed king.** This event is described as being **according to the word of the Lord,** showing that they are at last choosing the better way.

11:4-9 These events foreshadow the establishment of the Church of Christ, which is “Mount Zion . . . the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22).

11:9, 10 David **grew ever stronger** because he was not alone: the Lord Almighty and his **mighty men** were **with him**.

11:15-19 In this account, **David** represents all mankind. The powers of darkness, represented by the **Philistines**, hold the world captive. David's **longing** is like the thirsty soul that cries out for God. As always, **water** symbolizes baptism from death into life through the “living water,” that is, the Holy Spirit whom Christ sends (Jn 7:37–39).

11:20-29 David's **mighty warriors** are earthly types of the angelic hosts, who lead the battle against the powers of darkness (Dan 4:35).

12:1 David's soldiers, **helpers in the war,** symbolize the Church in battle, a force against which the gates of hell “shall not prevail” (Mt 16:18; see also Eph 6:10–18).

12:39 Israel had **a loyal heart** to **make David king**. The same is true among the faithful in the Church, as the apostle Paul writes, “having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind” (Php 2:2).

12:41 **Issachar, Zebulun,** and **Naphtali** refer to the areas where the light of Christ is revealed to those “who walked in darkness” (Is 9:1, 2).

13:1-8 In the Orthodox Church, the **ark of God** is seen as a type of the Virgin Mary, also called the Theotokos, the God-bearer, because she gave birth to the Son of God. Just as David and the people honor the ark with **singing**, so Christ and His Church honor the Mother of God with hymns of love and devotion: “More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you!” On the Feast Day of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, the faithful sing, “As you are a living temple of God, let no impure hand touch you, O Theotokos!”

14:11 Here is a foreshadowing of baptism. David is remembering the cave of Adullam, where “the three broke through the camp of the Philistines” and brought him a drink of water (11:15–19).

14:13-17 The encircling of the pear trees is a powerful image, revealing to believers that angelic hosts are real, tangible forces who win the **battle** even before the earthly conflict has begun.

15:1, 2 The **ark** is carried to the **City of David** in the manner prescribed by Moses: on the shoulders of the **Levites** (Nm 4:11–15), who symbolize holiness. Because of her holy obedience, the Virgin Mary will become the living fulfillment of the ark. She will be the temple of Christ, who will be conceived in her. The Levitical priests prefigure the Christian clergy, who are ordained to **minister**, or serve, at the altar while the faithful worship the Holy Trinity.

15:25 **Obed-Edom** (lit. “red”) is symbolic of humanity enslaved to the flesh under the old covenant, but set free when **joy**, Christ Himself, enters the world.

15:26 The number **seven** in the Scriptures usually emphasizes the completion of the old and the beginning of the new.

15:27-29 Like **David dancing** before the ark, which contains the covenant, the unborn John the Baptist will leap for joy in the presence of Mary, whose womb will contain Christ Himself (Lk 1:41). Compare **Michal**, who **despised** David for his celebration before the Lord, to Herodias and her daughter, who danced before Herod despising the truth, and had John beheaded (Mt 14:3–12).

16:1-42 The worship described in this chapter bears many striking parallels to the Divine Liturgy; as St. Paul writes, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things” (Eph 5:19, 20). Christ's eternal sacrifice fulfills the **burnt offerings**; and David's blessing, along with the **bread**, prefigures the Eucharist. The musical instruments are fulfilled in the Church in the voices of the faithful, enabled in Christ to worship with clean hearts.

17:1-24 Just as the temple will not be built until David dies and Solomon is anointed king, so the Church will not be established until Christ our King ascends into heaven and sends the all-wise Holy Spirit. God's promises to David will never be completely fulfilled in the earthly Israel; but all of them will be fulfilled in the holy Church, the new Israel.

17:16 **You have loved me forever**: Although he may not fully comprehend it, David's prayer foreshadows God's promise of eternal life in Christ (Jn 3:16).

18:1-17 David attacks and subdues his enemies, expanding his kingdom and amassing wealth to be used in preparation for the building of the temple.

19:1-6 David's **messengers** were **shaved** at the hands of the unbelieving Ammonites, foreshadowing not only Christ's humiliation at the hands of the Gentile soldiers, who mocked Him, stripped Him, and divided His garments (Mt 27:27–35), but also the sufferings of His apostles and saints.

20:2-3 David, who in the previous chapter showed kindness to the **people of Ammon** and was rejected, ends up wearing their king's **crown**. Christ's crown of victory is the crown of thorns (Mt 27:29), given by those to whom He extended divine kindness.

20:4-8 The lesson that God “exalts the humble with salvation” (Ps 149:4) continues when Goliath's offspring, the last of whom was even bigger than Goliath (v. 6), are killed. David's great deed as a youth, accomplished with a mere sling and a stone (1Kg 17:40–50), is surpassed by his followers.

21:2 **Beersheba to Dan** means all of Israel from south to north.

21:9-13 David's **three** options can be seen as metaphors for the choices available to sinful man: (1) **famine**: man may choose spiritual starvation; (2) defeat: man may choose to remain captive to sin, suffering, and death; or (3) **the sword of the Lord**: man may decide that death with hope in God's **mercies** is better than death with no hope at all. David's choice shows that he has once again placed his hope in God.

21:14 Under the Law, death is the just sentence for all mankind (Rom 6:23); however, **seventy thousand**, a number suggesting completion, indicates hope that the Law will be overruled and death will end. Ambrose of Milan writes of this Hope, which is Christ Himself, “He who when He could take vengeance, chose instead to be sacrificed.”

21:15-16 **The Lord** . . . **relented** because His love overrules the law of death. At **Jerusalem**, the Lord Jesus also said “**It is enough**” to His disciples concerning the use of the **sword** (v. 16) for vengeance (Lk 22:38). The **threshing floor** represents Calvary, the place where Christ will trample down sin, suffering, and death once for all.

21:18-25 Just as David in obedience pays the **full price**, so the incarnate Christ will offer himself in order to end death. His death and Resurrection will create the conditions for man to receive forgiveness of sins, to die to himself, and to be raised up to newness of life.

21:26 **Fire from heaven** prefigures both Pentecost (Acts 2:3) and the Eucharist. In all three, the **offering** rises, and the Holy Spirit descends.

22:1-5 God's plan for **David** is to make preparations for the building of **a house for the Lord** under Solomon (chs. 17; 29).

22:8-10 David, a man of **great wars**, is a type of humanity under the Law, for God uses the law to subdue men and bring them to Christ (Gal 3:24, 25). Solomon, a **man of rest**, prefigures Jesus Christ, who is both Son of Man (David) and Son of God. The **house for My name** prefigures the Church, in which Christ's **throne**, the hearts of the faithful, will be established **forever**.

23:1-4 The **Levites** who will serve in the temple are **numbered** and their genealogy listed through v. 23.

23:30 The worshipers stood morning and evening before **the Lord**. Continuing this tradition, many Orthodox faithful throughout the world **stand** every day at Matins and Vespers, and during the other services.

24:1, 2 See text and note at 6:1–31.

25:1-31 The list of those who use their musical talents to serve the Lord fills an entire chapter. (See text and note at 16:1–42.)

26:1-32 Just as gatekeepers in David's time were needed to protect the temple and its treasury, so the faithful must constantly stand guard to keep the temple of their souls safe from the passions of the flesh.

27:1-34 These men can be seen as a type of the twelve apostles who follow Jesus. Note that the men are numbered in twelves and multiples of twelve. Even Judas is prefigured in **Ahithophel** and **Joab**, (v. 34), both of whom betray their king.

28:6 Just as David lays the groundwork for the work **Solomon** is to carry out, so the old covenant under the Law prepares the world for the new covenant in Christ. Like Solomon, Christ is both David's **son** and the Son of God. Having revealed God as Father, He will make Himself the very cornerstone of the **house** of God.

28:11-19 **The dedicated things** (v. 12): The articles used in worship and presented to Solomon represent Holy Tradition, beginning with the pattern for worship given to Moses (Ex 25:40), which was given **in writing** (v. 19) as Holy Scripture, and is fulfilled in the Church even to this day.

28:20 The Lord spoke these exact words to Joshua just before Israel crossed over the Jordan into the Promised Land (Jos 1:9). Joshua and Solomon are both types of Christ.

28:21 Like those who are appointed to serve Solomon, Christ's faithful followers will be with Him in **service**, using their talents to carry out His will.

29:1 God sometimes chooses the **young and inexperienced** (see 1Ti 4:12) to carry out the work of building his temple.

29:6-9 The worship described here foreshadows Orthodox Christian worship, where the faithful will offer themselves **willingly** and with **their whole heart**.

29:10-12 David's praises bear a striking resemblance to the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9–13). Under the old covenant, David cannot see the Trinity fully, for the Trinity has not yet been revealed. In Christ's Church, the faithful will be able to worship the Triune God “in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24).

29:14 At one point in the Divine Liturgy, the deacon elevates the holy gifts while the bishop or presbyter speaks words very similar to David's: “Your own of Your own we offer unto You, in behalf of all and for all.”

29:15 The faithful are still **strangers** and **sojourners** on this earth, but are now in Christ, who has given us strength to run “the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1–3).

29:21 **A thousand** is often a sign of **abundance**.

29:22 **Ate** and **drank** prefigures Communion, for the culmination of worship is partaking of the Holy Eucharist.

29:23-25 When Solomon was first made king, he prefigured Christ's entrance into Jerusalem. Now, **upon the throne**, he foreshadows the second and glorious coming of Christ.

1:1-17 Like Solomon, Christ will be **established** and **magnified** (v. 1); and like the king before the old **altar** (vv. 3–6), Christ will break bread with His disciples for the last time on earth (Lk 24:33–42). He will impart to them His own **wisdom** and **understanding** (v. 10; Lk 24:45). He will bear **witness** (v. 13) to them of His divinity. Then, He will ascend (Lk 24:50–53) into the heavenly **Jerusalem** (v. 13; Heb 12:22), bringing all creation with Him.

2:14 The **wheat, barley, oil**, and **wine** foreshadow the Eucharist.

2:16 The **foreigners** are types of the faithful from every nation who will be brought into the Church.

3:1 **Threshing floor**: See text and notes on 1Ch 21.

3:5-14 Neither in Israel nor in the Church was the second of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:4) ever viewed as prohibiting images in worship. The warning is against false images or idols—like the golden calf. The **carved** (v. 7) and woven (v. 14) icons in the temple foreshadow icons in the Orthodox Church. Under the old covenant, all images in the temple are earthly except the **cherubim** (v. 7; see Is 37:6; Heb 9:5), which signify God's inconceivable majesty. When Christ brings heaven and earth together in His Church, the things of heaven are more clearly depicted. Until Christ comes again, icons will be used in worship as windows into heaven, for as St. Paul writes, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face” (1Co 13:12).

3:8 Christ will fulfill **the most holy place** when He brings earth to heaven.

4:2-6 Christ, who is called the "**lily** of the valleys" (v. 5; SS 2:1), is also the **sea of bronze**; and the Holy Spirit is represented by the water. All who are cleansed in the basins or lavers of baptism have identified themselves with Christ's death, and have been raised up in Him into newness of life; partaking indeed of "living water" (Jn 4:10), they have "put on Christ" (Gal 3:27).

4:7-8 The **lampstands** and the **bowls** symbolize Christ and His Church. In the old tabernacle, there was one laver and one lampstand with six bowls (Ex 25:31–39); now there are **ten** of each and **one hundred golden bowls**. This signifies the “great quantity” (v. 18) of blessings in Christ's kingdom.

5:1 Solomon's **finished** work on the temple will be fulfilled in Christ.

5:2-13 This passage foreshadows the falling asleep of the Theotokos, the Mother of God: “The Ark of God departed from Mount Zion for the heavenly country, borne on the shoulders of the apostles. Angels overshadowed it with their wings, accompanying it, together with the whole assembly of the Church. . . . So is it now with the dwelling-place of the true ark, no longer of the testimony, but the very substance of God the Word. The new Solomon, the Prince of peace, the Creator of all things in the heavens and on the earth, assembled together today the supporters of the new covenant, that is the apostles, with all the people of the saints in Jerusalem, brought in her soul through angels to the true Holy of Holies” (JohnDm).

5:13 **As one**: In His High Priestly Prayer, the Lord prays for the faithful, “that they all may be one in Us” (Jn 17:21). Hence at Divine Liturgy the faithful pray, “And grant us with one mouth and one heart to glorify and praise Your all-honorable and majestic Name.”

5:13-2 The **glory of the Lord** represents the divine nature of Christ, which is joined to His human nature, **the house** or temple of His body, in the Incarnation.

6:2 Just as Solomon **built a house**, so Jesus proclaimed, “I will build My church” (Mt 16:18).

7:1 **Fire came down from heaven:** this foreshadows Pentecost (see 3Kg 18:30–38; 1Ch 21:26).

7:3 Here, and throughout the history of Israel and the Church, God's people **worshiped and praised** Him liturgically.

7:5 Solomon's huge **sacrifice** in the **house** symbolizes the power of the cross to save not only the Jews, but all humanity through the Church.

7:14-16 God's promise is to **hear from heaven** the prayers of His people.

9:17 Solomon's **throne** is a type of the Virgin Mary. “Thou art the royal Throne which angels surround, seeing upon it their very King and Lord” (JohnDm). “She is not merely a companion but she also stands at God's right hand, for where Christ sat in the heavens, that is, at the ‘right hand of majesty’ (Heb 1:3), there too she also takes her stand, having ascended now from earth into the heavens. Not merely does she love and is loved in return more than every other, according to the very laws of nature, but she is truly His Throne, and wherever the King sits, there His Throne is set also. And Isaiah beheld this Throne amidst the choir of cherubim and called it ‘high’ and ‘exalted’ (Is 6:1)” (GrgPal).

9:18 The **six steps** symbolize the completeness of Christ's work in overcoming the flesh.

9:19 The **lions** symbolize the apostles, saints, and martyrs.

9:22-28 Christ's heavenly kingdom is foreshadowed in Solomon's earthly kingdom.

10:1-11 Rehoboam's foolishness was used by the Lord for His purposes (v. 15).

11:1-4 God allowed the schism between **Judah** and **Israel** so that He might gather together and strengthen all those in Israel whose heart was set towards Him (16:9).

11:13-17 Those with right worship were **rejected** (v. 14) by Jeroboam because they served and worshipped God according to the traditions established by God through **their fathers** (v. 16). St. Paul speaks of the importance of holding steadfastly to “the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2Th 2:15).

12:1 Note that **Rehoboam** and **all Israel** turned away from God (v. 1), but Judah is not mentioned (see v. 12).

12:5-8 Although the people forsook God, after **they repented** He did not destroy them, but rather allowed them to be brought under servitude by the enemy (v. 8). Only Christ, who alone is **righteous** (v. 6), will be able to bring complete deliverance to all who humble themselves before Him.

12:9-12 The **gold shields** are now **bronze**, a symbol of how the proud glory of Solomon's kingdom has been reduced by sin in just one generation.

13:4-20 **Abijah** testifies that those who **keep the command of the Lord** (v. 11) are those who hold fast against the enemy, and do not cease to worship God according to the ways and traditions of those who came before. True worship of God will be realized in the Church, for as Christ says, “the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (Jn 4:23).

13:5 **A covenant of salt**: Salt is a symbol of an indissoluble covenant (see note on Lv 2:13).

14:7-10 **Asa** was outnumbered by the Ethiopians almost two to one, but he knew the Lord could give him victory **with the many or with the few**.

15:2 From the time Adam first walked the earth (Gn 2:16, 17), God has been laying out the conditions for salvation: He will be **found** by all who **seek Him**.

15:3 In Israel and in the Church, the **teaching** ministry of the **priest** is of utmost importance (see Eph 4:11). Without it, the people will not know **the true God**.

15:7 The prophet admonishes Asa to **be strong** in the Lord, for His “strength is made perfect in weakness” (2Co 12:9).

15:8-15 The **great numbers** represent those who seek God **with all their heart** and **soul**, for they will find **rest** (v. 15) in Him, just as He promised, in the “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22), which is His body, the Church.

16:1-10 **Asa** holds a valuable lesson for all believers. After trusting in the Lord for a decisive victory over **the Ethiopians** (14:7–10), he now seeks victory over Syria by taking **silver and gold** from the temple to buy off the Syrian king. “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal 3:3).

17:1-19 **Jehoshaphat**, like his father **Asa** (15:1–19), starts out well. He resists **Israel**, which is steeped in idolatry, and he **took delight in the Lord.** But he forms an alliance with King Ahab (18:1). This will lead to tragic consequences that will almost destroy the Davidic line (4Kg 11:1).

18:1-3 Assuming that ethnic rather than spiritual ties make the people one, **Jehoshaphat** allies Judah with Israel.

18:4 Though he doesn't seem to realize the depth of idolatry and darkness that has overtaken Israel, Jehoshaphat's conscience is sending up warning flags that will later save his life (v. 31).

19:1-3 “When we are unwarily joined in friendship with the wicked, we are bound in their sins. . . . Those who are at peace are to be admonished not to be afraid of disturbing their temporal peace, if they break forth into words of rebuke. And again they are to be admonished to keep inwardly with undiminished love the same peace which in their external relations they disturb by their reproving voice” (GrgGt).

19:4-11 God helped and saved **Jehoshaphat** because even though he acted foolishly, he has also shown he wants to do what is **good** (v. 11). Jehoshaphat finds mercy and forgiveness in God, who then inspires him to spearhead a spiritual revival in Judah.

20:3 Earlier, **Jehoshaphat** allied himself with evil because his pride had blinded him (18:1); but now he has learned to put his trust in God.

20:10-12 **The sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir** represent the powers of darkness, which are being allowed by God to remain in the world until the Last Judgment. These enemies bring hardships to men in order that through them God might strengthen the faithful and humble the proud. As the Lord Jesus says, “in the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33).

20:15-22 **The Lord is with you** (v. 17): This is the key to **salvation** (see Eph 6:13). For the faithful, every spiritual **battle** has already been won by God the Father in His Son through the Holy Spirit.

21:1-20 The account of **Jehoram** serves to warn the Jews, and indeed all men, not to reject God's calling.

21:8-10 **Edom** revolts under Jehoram. Under Jehoshaphat, whose heart was towards God, Edom was kept under control (4Kg 3:12). **Libnah**, which means “white tree,” is a Levitical city in Judah (Jos 21:13). Its revolt against Jehoram reveals how holiness is repelled by the presence of evil.

21:18-20 The tragic demise of a sinful man.

22:1-9 Ahaziah's is yet another story of a life without God.

22:10-12 As a usurper of power, **Athaliah** reigned six years but receives only brief mention.

22:11-12 **Joash** was raised up in the **house of God** under the influence of the priests, and thus escaped the evil influence of his parents. In a similar way, God intends for righteousness in the heart to grow and mature within the Church.

23:1-11 **Jehoiada** the priest and those who help him are obedient to God, though evil around them would seem to be insurmountable. In the end, they prevail.

23:12-15 **Athaliah** is overthrown. Once again, Holy Scripture portrays the enemy being defeated by trickery, reminding us the devil is unfaithful even to his own.

24:1-27 **Joash** was faithful to the Lord until the priest **Jehoiada** died. The passage suggests that Joash relied on the faith of Jehoiada, but did not make that faith his own.

25:1-4 **Amaziah** . . . **did what was right** insofar as he followed the letter of the law (v. 4), but he did not love the ways of the Lord **with a loyal heart**. Note how he spares the children of those who killed his father, according to Dt 24:16, yet sets a bad example for his own son Uzziah, who, like his father, will one day lift up his heart in pride (26:16).

25:11-14 **Amaziah** falls into sins of greed, murder and idolatry. He believes he has defeated the Edomites, when in fact, their false gods have defeated him and taken his disloyal heart captive.

26:1-23 **Uzziah . . . did what was right** by following the commandments, and **he sought the Lord** with the help of the prophet. But like his father before him, he turned away from God, and he was stricken with leprosy. He was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah (Is 6:1).

27:1-9 Prophecy is restored under **Jotham**, for Isaiah receives his heavenly vision at the beginning of his reign (see Is 6:1). Though the king was righteous, **the people acted corruptly**. The phrase **he did not enter the temple** most likely means he did not enter there to burn incense as his father had wrongly done (26:16–20).

28:1-27 **Ahaz** and the people of Judah have allowed themselves to be taken spiritually captive by their own sins (v. 19; Is 5:13). Therefore, in order to deter their blasphemy, **God delivered** them physically into the hands of the kings of **Syria** and **Israel** (v. 5).

28:9-15 Righteous men from **Samaria** treat the **captives** of **Judah** with kindness. Note the striking parallels in this passage (see v. 15) to the story that Jesus told of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30–37).

29:1-11 **Hezekiah** prefigures Christ, who **opened the doors** (v. 3) to heaven, gathered the faithful, and set the captives free (see 4Kg 18:1–8).

29:12-30 The **Levites** (v. 12) and **priests** (v. 16) prefigure the apostles and evangelists, who will restore right worship under Christ's leadership. The **Brook Kidron** (v. 16) is a type of baptism, which will **sanctify** (v. 17) the faithful.

29:34 The desire of **the Levites** to be sanctified exceeds that of **the priests**, showing that it is the state of the heart, not the office held, which determines true holiness.

29:36 **God had prepared the people**: Christ warns His followers to watch, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—lest coming **suddenly**, he find you sleeping (Mk 13:35, 36; see also Mal 3:1).

30:1-21 Because Judah had fallen deeply into sin, the first week of the **Passover** feast was not kept to the letter of the law (vv. 3, 17–19). Yet God heard Hezekiah's prayer, gave the people **singleness of heart** (v. 12), and healed them (v. 20). Hezekiah prefigures Christ, who will do the same for all who follow Him with contrite hearts in the midst of a broken world.

30:23-27 **Great joy**: The second seven days of the feast foreshadow Pentecost.

31:1-1 After the feasting comes the work. The events described in this chapter will be fulfilled by the faithful of the Church, who have been hard at work since Pentecost, each called to his or her appointed task according to his or her abilities, performing deeds of **faithfulness** (32:1) in service to the Lord.

32:24-33 Hezekiah's sickness, the **sign** he was given, his subsequent sin, and his repentance are discussed at length in 4Kg 20 and Is 38:1–39:8.

33:1-20 **Manasseh** is a king who began as evil and ended as good.

33:13 Manasseh **prayed to Him**. “The Lord God for a while punished him that was addicted to idols, and had slain many innocent persons; and yet He received him when he repented, and forgave him his offenses, and restored him to his kingdom. For He not only forgives the penitent, but reinstates them in their former dignity” (JohnChr).

“Now if, looking to the magnitude of his own iniquities, he had despaired of restoration and repentance, he would have missed all which he afterwards obtained: but as it was, looking to the boundlessness of God's tender mercy instead of the enormity of his transgressions, and having broken in sunder the bonds of the devil, he rose up and contended with him, and finished the good course” (Dion).

34:1-13 True reform has to do with both the purging of what is false and evil (vv. 3–7) and the repairing of what is true and good (vv. 8–13). **Josiah** did both.

34:14-28 **The Book of the Law** here discovered is likely the whole Pentateuch, and it is unclear where it had been. Significantly, when parts of it were read to the king, his **heart was turned** and he **humbled** himself before the Lord (v. 27). The Scriptures are indeed “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2Ti 3:16).

34:29-33 Not only does the **king** attend to the reading of the **Book of the Covenant**, but he makes sure **the priests and the Levites and all the people** hear it as well. As a result, the hearers make a commitment to **follow the Lord**.

35:1-6 That **Josiah** kept the **Passover** shows not only his obedience to the Lord, but also his solidarity with the **instruction of David** (v. 4) and the writings of **Moses** (v. 6). This is a veritable rebirth of faith for the people.

35:28 The Jews **mourned for Josiah** because their righteous king was a victim of the finality of death under the old covenant. But Christ will fulfill the old covenant of death with a new covenant of love, forgiveness, and eternal life.

36:1-6 Judah's downfall is imminent with the brief ascension of the evil King **Jehoahaz** to the throne.

36:7-16 The **Pharaoh** of Egypt establishes the evil king **Jehoiakim** as ruler of Judah. He is then **carried off to Babylon** (v. 14) by King **Nebuchadnezzar** and briefly replaced by his son **Jehoiachin**.

36:22-29 God's judgment on Judah is justified, for **the priests and the people** have gone beyond the point of no return and will not repent (see 4Kg 25:8–21). **Seventy years** (v. 29) is the approximate time of the exile in Babylon (see also Jer 25:9–12; 27:6–8; 29:10; Lv 26:34–43).

36:30-31 These verses parallel the opening verses of Ezra. Although he is a Gentile, **Cyrus** is called by God to look after His people.

1:1-31 The **Passover** under **Josiah** and the account of his death (vv. 26–31). Josiah was the last king of Judah to seek truth (v. 21). As such, he is a figure of Christ, who is the embodiment of truth (Jn 14:6). From Exodus 12 we learn that the Feast of the Passover is an OT type of the NT paschal feast (1Co 10:23–26), in which the Church celebrates the death and Resurrection of Christ.

2:1-4 Just as Josiah was the last Jewish king to seek the truth of God, so **Cyrus** was the first Gentile king to find truth in the **Lord of Israel**. And just as God used Cyrus, a Gentile king of Persia, to rebuild the physical temple and set the Jews free, so He will use Christ, King of the Jews, to build His Church and set the Gentiles free.

3:1, 2 This **great banquet** is also an icon of creation, which is itself a symbol of Christ's work in His Incarnation. The Feast of Passover described in 1 Ezra also images the heavenly banquet (Rev 19:7–9), and both are experienced today in the Holy Eucharist. As the psalmist writes, “But God is our King before the ages; / He worked salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps 73:12).

3:4-5 These **three young men** who **speak** as one are, like the three men at the trees of Mamre (Gn 18:2), another OT symbol of the Holy Trinity. Their role as the king's **bodyguards** illustrates the way in which the unknowable, inconceivable God reveals Himself in His creation as Triune.

3:6 **Purple** denotes royalty and equality with the king (see note on Est 6:6–9); the **gold cups** symbolize Christ's cup of salvation; **sleep in a gold bed** foreshadows His rest in the tomb; the **chariot**—like Elijah's chariot of fire (3Kg 2:11)—foreshadows the Ascension; the **linen** head covering points both to the OT priesthood and to the linen in which Christ's body was wrapped (Jn 20:7); and the **necklace** symbolizes virtue (Pr 3:3, 22; 6:21; SS 1:10; see also Dan 5:7).

3:7 Christ is the personification of **wisdom**. He sits next to the Father and is called His Son, His **kinsman**.

3:10-12 **Wine**, the **king**, and **women**, which prevail, and **the truth**, which **conquers**, are all illustrations of the divine attributes of God revealed in Christ and His Church. As these are explained to the king's court by the three bodyguards (3:15–4:41), so Christ, full of the Holy Spirit and in obedience to the Father, will reveal the three Persons of the Godhead when He is manifest to the world.

3:17-24 **The strength of wine** symbolizes the “new wine” of the new covenant (Mt 9:15–17): the Holy Spirit uniting with and dwelling within men. St. Paul writes, “And do not be drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18).

4:1-12 The **second** man's speech about the **king** illustrates the manner in which God revealed Himself to man under the old covenant. He was known as **their master** (v. 3), a God who is to be obeyed by **his people and his army** (v. 10). The phrase **one man** (v. 7) is notable because the God of Israel is "One God," who did not reveal Himself as Trinity until the advent of Christ.

4:13 **The third**, named **Zerubbabel**, is the only one of the three bodyguards who is named. He is of Christ's lineage (Mt 1:12), a leader in the rebuilding of the temple, and a figure of Christ.

4:14-15 **Women** prevail, for women fulfill man's purpose. God intended for men and women to be united in love, just as Christ and His Church are united in love (Eph 5:22, 23). Thus, as Zerubbabel describes women, we see Christ describing His relationship with His Bride.

4:16-17 **Vineyards** and **wine** (v. 16) symbolize the Eucharist, and **clothing** (v. 17) points to being clothed with Christ in baptism. As woman is the **glory** of **man** (1Co 11:7**)**, so the Church is the glory of Christ (Eph 5:21).

4:20 This is a paraphrase of Gn 2:24. According to St. Paul, the union of **man** and **wife** in marriage is an image of Christ and His Church (Eph 5:30–32; see note at 4:14, 15).

4:29-31 The **concubine** is often an OT figure of fallen humanity. She has received God's **crown**, that is His divine image and likeness, **on her own** head in creation (Gn 1:26). On the other hand, she has **struck the king**—indeed, killed him—**that she might be reconciled with him**, that is, with Christ.

4:33-34 God and man **looked at one another** when Christ revealed Himself in **truth** to **men**.

4:35-40 Note especially the striking resemblance between this passage concerning **truth** and St. Paul's discourse on love (1Co 13). This passage is quoted extensively by the Fathers.

4:41 Echoing the voices of **all the people** in the king's court, the faithful sing at the end of the Divine Liturgy, “We have found the true faith, worshiping the undivided Trinity, who has saved us!”

4:42 **Ask what you will**: As the Father gives all things to the Son, so Christ gives all things to those who ask according to His will (Mt 21:22; Jn 14:14; 1Jn 5:15).

4:43-45 The request of **Zerubbabel**, echoed in the prayer of the repentant thief (Lk 23:42), reveals the will of God for the world: **rebuild Jerusalem**, that is, “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22). **Send back all the vessels** (v. 44) and **rebuild the temple** (v. 45) in a spiritual sense means to restore holiness in the hearts of men, which have been **laid waste** by sin.

6:1-15 This passage chronicles the completion of the temple under the leadership of Haggai and Zechariah. The building of the earthly temple is a type of our deification—becoming like God by His grace (1Co 6:19).

8:1-7 **Ezra** was one appointed by God to study and know **the Law of Moses** (v. 3), that he might teach it to others.

8:65-67 The law reveals the truth about the sins of the people, and transgression of the law is punishable by death (8:24).

8:68-92 **Ezra** is seen to be a man of prayer who repents for the sins of the people. Seeing his piety (v. 89), the leaders call a fast, and the people begin to repent and pray with one voice, for without repentance there can be no **mercy** (v. 75) and no salvation. Thus, as through one man's prayers Israel is saved, so through Christ's prayer (see Jn 17) the world is saved and the law fulfilled.

9:3-4 This was a compulsory gathering where the people would listen to Ezra's exhortation (v. 7).

9:6-15 The cold **weather** prompts the people to request that dealing with the problem of **foreign wives** (v. 9) be handled in the local settlements.

9:42 **Ezra** read **the law** from a **judgment seat**, a place of authority erected for him (see 3:14).

9:55 That the hearers of the law **were inspired by the words** of the Scriptures brings to mind the response of the disciples (“Did not our heart burn within us?”) as the Lord Jesus Christ opened to them the Holy Scriptures (Lk 24:32).

1:1 **The word of the Lord** came in fulfillment of Jer 29:10.

1:3 **He is the God . . . in Jerusalem**: Deities were generally seen as belonging to a specific location, yet this statement is also prophetic in that it points as well to the New Jerusalem, the eternal city over which God reigns and in which all nations will dwell (Rev 21).

1:1-4 The kings of the earth, who receive authority from **the Lord** (Jn 19:11; Rom 13:1–7), are used by God to fulfill His plan.

1:5 Unlike the exodus from Egypt, in which all Jews fled bondage, only those Jews **whose spirits God stirred up** fled from Babylon. Because life had become relatively comfortable, many were content to forsake **Jerusalem** and live under foreign rule.

1:7-11 The return of the sacred **vessels** was to furnish the temple. The water **basins** and wine **bowls** look ahead to the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.

2:1 **Judea** was a province of **Babylon**. Though most of the people taken in the Babylonian Captivity had died in Babylon, still there was an effort by their descendants to return **every man into his city** of Judea.

2:63 This command prefigures the New Testament Eucharist, of which none may partake without the presence of the bishop or his **priest**. The **Lights and Perfections** are the Urim and Thummim, part of the high priest's vestments used to discern God's will.

2:68-70 Freewill offerings **for the house of God** are an indication of faithfulness and show that worship was a high priority for the Jews who had returned.

3:1 The people assembling **as one person** is fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:1) and in the Church when we assemble in unity for the Eucharist as the one Body of Christ.

3:2-6 Just as the **burnt offerings** of the Jews were offered on **the altar** at all the Jewish festivals, so in the Church, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is commemorated at the Eucharist throughout the liturgical year. Notice the priorities these faithful Jews had in their restoration project. First, they established their worship (v. 6). Second, they built their temple (6:1). Last, they rebuilt the city.

3:7 Starting with Abraham (Gn 14:18–20), the tradition of God's people for giving **money** to the Lord is to give a tithe (Mal 3:8–12) plus freewill offerings. This is how the temple was built, and also how the Church is built.

3:8-11 The young **Levites** together with **the sons of Judah** begin to lay **the foundation** for the temple. This is fulfilled through Jesus Christ and His apostles in the building of the Church (Mt 21:42; 1Co 3:9–17; Eph 2:19–22).

3:12-13 The beginning of the temple restoration was a time of bright sadness. Some **wept with a loud voice** while others were **shouting** for **joy**. The sadness was over the loss of the **first temple**—Solomon's glorious temple—and the memory of the sin that led to its downfall. The joy was in the hope of the completion of the temple's **foundation**.

4:1-5 “He who is not with Me is against Me,” said Christ (Mt 12:30), and the neighbors of the Jews turned quickly against their efforts to **rebuild** God's **house**. When we serve the Lord, we can be almost certain to meet opposition.

4:12-16 The claim that the work of God is rebellion and **harmful to kings** whom God Himself has established is a standard ploy of Satan in his attempts to destroy God's obedient ones (Est 3:8, 9). This culminates in the charge that would be leveled against Christ Himself (Jn 19:12).

4:17-24 The discontinued work under **Artaxerxes** is reminiscent of the temporary captivity of Israel in Egypt when a new king arose who did not know the goodness of the people of God (Ex 1:8).

5:1, 2 **The prophets of God** constantly speak of the restoration of the **house of God**, just as the prophets throughout the Old Testament collectively point to the Resurrection of Christ. In this way, the restoration of the temple is itself a type of Christ (Jn 2:19–22).

5:5 Unless He allows it, the purpose of God cannot be stopped by earthly authorities or by the devil (Mt 16:18).

5:7-17 The appeal to **search** the **king's treasure house** to find the king's **decree** parallels the Church's readiness to search the Scriptures (Jn 5:39; Acts 17:11). Appealing to the Scriptures is how Jesus and His apostles demonstrated His genuine claim to be the Christ, the incarnate Son of God (Lk 24:27; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:28). Interestingly, the appeal to the Scriptures was also one of the ways Jesus' enemies tried to malign Him (Mt 4:6; Jn 7:52). In both cases, the reliability and authority of what has been written, accepted, and handed down as Holy Scripture is unquestioned.

6:1-3 The **decree** of **Darius** affirms the authority of the earlier **decree** by **King Cyrus.** In the same way, within the Church, the traditions of the faith and true doctrine are reaffirmed in every generation (2Th 2:15).

6:8-10 God's **house** will be built at the expense of even His enemies, for His glory, in order that **they may offer sacrifices** to God for the benefit of all the people. At each Divine Liturgy we re-present the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ “on behalf of all and for all.”

6:14 The earthly kings and **Zechariah** fulfill the prophecies of **Haggai**.

6:15 The restoration of the temple on **the third day** of this **month** certainly suggests the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day (Jn 2:19–22).

6:19-21 The unity at **the Passover** meal between **the children of Israel** and those who would **seek the Lord** from the **nations** points forward to the Eucharist, to which all people, both Jew and Gentile, are called.

7:1 **After these things**: Over one hundred years elapsed between the events of ch. 6 and those of ch. 7.

7:10 Ezra's journey and mission were the product of a faithful **heart**. His process was to (1) **seek the Law**, (2) **do it**, and (3) **teach** it. Though the Jews had protection and economic security in Babylon, **Ezra** led many to a future that was uncertain by earthly standards, but divinely protected. In the same way, Christian believers are called to escape the fleeting security of this world in order to build up the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Mk 8:34–38; 10:28–31).

7:12 **Artaxerxes**, using the title **king of kings**, becomes a picture of Christ, sending Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem. The Lord would later send His apostles to build the Church. Just as Artaxerxes gave all **the articles** needed (vv. 15–22), so Christ provides the grace of the Holy Spirit and His power to His disciples (Acts 1:8).

7:25-26 **Ezra** is commanded by **the king** to appoint **magistrates and judges** to determine the people's obedience to **the law of . . . God,** just as Peter and the other apostles would be given authority to bind and loose the sins of the people (Mt 16:19; Jn 20:23). Ezra is further commanded to **teach** the uninformed, just as the apostles would be commanded to do (Mt 28:18–20).

7:27-28 Ezra is **encouraged** by the way a pagan king would expend his resources **to beautify the house of the Lord**. If an unbeliever has enough faith to build the Lord's house, all the more is the believer called to offer of himself or herself to build up the Church of Jesus Christ!

8:16-18 Ezra recruits **men of understanding** and **servants** in order that a proper sacrifice may be offered, for the worship was the highest priority of the returning Jews (3:2–6).

8:21-23 A **fast** by the faithful has tremendous power in helping to discern **the right way** of God, and in securing **His power** against the enemy (Est 4:16; Joel 2:12–17; Mt 17:17–21).

8:28-29 When a priest is ordained in the Orthodox Church, the bishop hands him a precious vessel called a *diskos*, on which is a portion of the eucharistic bread, and he is sent behind the altar. He is charged by the bishop to **watch and keep** the sacrament in holiness until the day he gives account for his priesthood before the throne of Christ.

9:1, 2 Mixed marriages had not always been prohibited (e.g., Boaz and Ruth), but were now seen as detrimental to the purity of the Jewish people. St. Paul warns, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2Co 6:14). The imagery of marriage is one of faithfulness between God and His people. Marriage between a Jew and a practicing pagan was seen as a serious violation of that faithfulness, as shown by Ezra's reaction and subsequent solution of putting away all pagan wives (10:3).

9:7 Defeat by the enemy was seen as being the result of sin. God had warned the Jews not to be led astray by foreign wives or they would face quick destruction (Dt 7:3, 4).

9:8 Here is the Gospel in foretaste. **Grace has been shown** to undeserving people (Rom 5:8).

9:11-12 This specific commandment has a source outside the Scriptures. It is not found in the Law of Moses, which warns not against taking a foreign wife per se, but against marrying a foreigner who will not convert from idols to the Lord (Dt 7:3, 4). This latter situation is what Ezra was facing (v. 14).

10:1-4 Repentance is more than confession of sin and even **weeping** over it. It is also taking the necessary steps to **put away** the sin.

10:10 Unlike a one-time sin for which a person might readily repent, taking **pagan wives** is making a way of life in opposition to God. For the Jew and for the Christian, it is a complete and utter compromise with the world.

10:19 The **ram** as a **trespass offering** prefigures Christ, who will take away the deepest sins and guilt of man.

1:1 **Nehemiah** means “comforted of God.” **Shushan** is Susa, a provincial capital in Persia, its most prominent city and winter residence of King Artaxerxes (Est 1:2). **Chislev** is late November/early December. **The twentieth year** is that of the reign of Artaxerxes I, dating this account at 445 BC.

1:2 **Hanani**, a presumed blood brother of Nehemiah, is later made ruler of Jerusalem (7:2). He accompanies some **men from Judah** on an 800-mile journey to Persia to tell Nehemiah the status of (a) the survivors of **the captivity** now back in Judah and (b) the city of **Jerusalem**.

1:3 The returned exiles are in **great distress,** for the **wall** and **gates** of **Jerusalem** are destroyed. Addressing these two problems—the wall and the gates—is key to understanding the Book of Nehemiah.

1:4 Nehemiah, as would Christ (Mt 23:37), laments prayerfully for the people of Jerusalem, acknowledging they were guilty of sin and disobedience. Moreover, though a layman, he stands with the prophets in interceding with God for the sake of the chosen people and striving to renew the people's obedience to the Law. Throughout Scripture, **fasting and praying** go together. For Orthodox Christians, the Church offers additional services of worship and intercession during seasons of fasting, especially Lent and Advent.

1:5-11 **No indeed** is Nehemiah's way of saying, “I'm not putting up with the damaged state of the walls and gates of Jerusalem.” Nehemiah's prayer reflects his devotion to the words of Scripture. The phrase **great and awesome God** is from Dt 7:21. Verses 8 and 9 quote Dt 30:1–5. **This man** . . . **the king** is Artaxerxes I, under whom Nehemiah held the office of **cupbearer** (v. 11). He it is who would grant Nehemiah's request to return to Jerusalem (2:6–8).

2:1 In ancient times, a ruler's demise was often brought about through the poisoning of his food or **wine**. So before **King Artaxerxes** was served, Nehemiah would first sample his food and drink. Typically, a cupbearer was in the king's presence more than any of his other subjects and often was held in high confidence. On this day, **no one else was present** but his queen (v. 6).

2:3 **May the king live forever!** was the common way to greet a king (see Dan 2:4; 5:10; 6:7, 22), in the same spirit as greeting the bishop with “Many years to you, O Master,” or, “Master, bless.”

2:4 Nehemiah continues in prayer, silently and in brief, to **the God of Heaven,** for Artaxerxes had decreed that Jerusalem not be rebuilt unless by his order (2:19).

2:5 Nehemiah moves from intercessor to mediator. It was crucial for him both to be prayerful and to act.

2:7-8 Sensing there would be opposition, Nehemiah asks for **letters** to give him **safe passage** and **timber** to complete the work of rebuilding **the wall** and **the gates** of Jerusalem. **The good hand of God** had touched the heart of **the king**, who came to understand the benefits of a loyal Jewish ally in Judah.

2:10 **Sanballat** and **Tobiah**, together with Geshem the Arab (v. 19), will be Nehemiah's constant detractors throughout the rebuilding of the wall. According to an ancient papyrus, Sanballat later became governor of Samaria.

2:11-16 Jesus warned His servants to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Mt 10:16). Being a man of wisdom, Nehemiah secretly inspects the **wall of Jerusalem** by **night** (v. 13). Not even **the sentries** knew what he was up to (v. 16).

2:17-18 **I said to them:** With the survey completed and the mission now clear, Nehemiah calls together the officials of Jerusalem and the workers (v. 16). Here he moves from mediator (2:5) to motivator: **Let us rise up and let us build** (v. 18).

2:19-20 Whenever God's will is being carried out, expect the critics to step forward. Jesus had the scribes and Pharisees, St. Paul had Demas and Alexander the coppersmith (2Ti 4:9–15), and Nehemiah had **Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem,** who **laughed** at the project. The prophet, not arguing, said, **“God . . . will . . . prosper us”** (see Ex 14:14; 1Th 5:24).

3:1-32 The work to rebuild Jerusalem and restore Israel within the land God promised to their ancestors begins at once. The laborers are a veritable “Who's Who” of Jerusalem and the surrounding communities. They include **the high priest** and **the priests** (v. 1), and the **men of Jericho** (v. 2), who are likely returned exiles from that city. The **Tekoites** (v. 5), from Amos' hometown of Tekoa (Am 1:1), did repair work (**their nobles** probably sided with Sanballat), along with the sons of other **district** leaders (vv. 12, 14, 16) and some **Levites** (v. 17)—the cooperation is stunning. **The Nethinim** (v. 26) are a group or order of temple servants. Even the **merchants** took part (v. 32).

3:36 Nehemiah's response to those openly opposed to God's will is not anger but prayer, that God will bring vengeance against them (see Gn 12:1–3; Jos 1:5; Dt 32:35; Rom 12:19).

4:1-3 Not only verbal ridicule, but here also armed conspiracy becomes a tool of those opposed to God.

4:7-8 A wonderful picture of synergy—working together with God. Nehemiah strategically **positioned men** to fight, while promising **the people** that **God** will **fight** for them.

4:10 **Judah** is the people in general. Note how **half** played offense, doing the work, and **half** played defense, protecting the project.

4:13-15 As with these workers, we often need to endure sacrifice and discomfort not only to complete God's work but also to sustain over time the project God gives us to do (12:27, 28).

5:1-5 The **great outcry** was over **grain** shortages (vv. 2, 3), having to borrow **money** to pay **the king's tax** (v. 4), and having to sell **children** into **slavery** (v. 5).

5:7-11 **After serious thought** shows yet another facet of Nehemiah's brilliant leadership. Not acting impulsively, he prays, plans, and thinks things through before issuing his rebuke. **Usury**, the charging of interest, is permitted, but not when both parties are Jews (Ex 22–25; Lv 25:35–38). This rebuke, including the touchy issue of slavery (v. 8), worked. The **nobles and rulers** were speechless.

5:14-15 Typically the **governor** lived at taxpayer expense, but not Nehemiah. **Because of the fear of God** he provided for himself, as did St. Paul hundreds of years later (1Co 9:1–18), setting a servant example for others.

5:19 Those with a sincere faith in **God** who act with righteous motives may seek a blessing from Him (Dt 28:1–14; Mk 10:29, 30).

6:1, 2 **The plain of Ono** is near Judah's border with Samaria, a two-day journey. In meeting there Nehemiah would not only risk his own life, but would jeopardize the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

6:5 Having previously failed to thwart him, Sanballat delivers an **open letter** to Jerusalem to discredit Nehemiah and through rumor bring dissension among the faithful.

6:7 **The king** who would get this report is the King of Persia, Artaxerxes (2:1).

6:9 With great leaders, the more people say the job **will not be done**, the greater the leaders' resolve becomes. With God's help, Nehemiah's **hands** only get stronger!

6:10-12 **Shemaiah,** an apparent prophet whom Tobiah and Sanballat **had hired** (v. 12), was revealed as a false prophet, for his words were in disobedience to God. The reference to Noadiah (v. 14) indicates others had been hired as well.

6:15-16 The **enemies** lost out and God's will prevailed as **the wall was finished** in just **fifty-two days**—less than two months! **Disheartened**, even Sanballat and Tobiah were forced to admit the **work was done by . . . God.**

6:17-19 Though defeated, the well-connected **Tobiah** continued his **letters** of assault. Jesus called this kind wolves “in sheep's clothing” (Mt 7:15).

7:1-3 With the wall rebuilt, Nehemiah, as governor, appoints his **brother Hanani,** who **feared God**, as ruler of **Jerusalem**. **Hananiah** became the **leader of the citadel** (or fortress). This helped ensure the safety and well-being of Jerusalem.

7:6-73 This list of names confirms the remnant Jews who, due to their faithfulness to God and steadfast obedience to the Mosaic Law, were allowed to return to Jerusalem.

8:1 The public proclamation of the Scriptures—the reading and preaching of the Word of God—is essential to the evangelical mission of the Church. The sacrifices were offered only in the temple, but here the message of **the Book** is heard in **the open square**.

8:2 This **assembly** gathered on **the first day of the seventh month** because it was the Feast of Trumpets, or Jewish New Year.

8:5 **All the people stood up** for the reading of the Scriptures. To this day in the Orthodox Church the people stand for the reading of the Gospel.

8:6 **They bowed their heads**: A symbol of humility and reverence in worship.

8:7-8 The foundations of apostolic ministry are found in helping **the people to understand** the Scriptures and in building them up in the knowledge of the Lord. (See Acts 2:37–39; 8:30, 31.)

8:10 True feasting includes caring for the poor (see Est 9:21), **those for whom nothing is prepared**.

8:14-17 Living **in booths** is a reminder that the faithful are but sojourners in this world, moving toward a true home in God's kingdom (see Lv 34–42).

8:18 The assembly **on the eighth day** points us to the Kingdom of heaven. In the Church, the seven-day week reflects God's creation and work in this world, while the eighth day is the day without end, the day beyond this world when all is fulfilled.

9:1-3 Having heard the word of God, the faithful are convicted of **their sins** and moved to repentance, **fasting**, confession, and prayer. Note they **confessed** not privately, but in the midst of those **assembled** together (see Jam 5:16).

9:6-38 The prayer of Ezra follows the classic biblical pattern of praise, remembrance of God's works, and petition. This same pattern is followed in the eucharistic prayers of the Divine Liturgy.

9:38 The **sure covenant**, recorded in ch. 10, is a pledge to “not neglect the house of our God” (see 10:39).

10:1 **Those who sealed** (signed) this covenant to protect God's house were the priests (v. 8). Later (vv. 29, 30) the covenant was accepted by the people. This prefigures the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, affirmed by the apostles and accepted by the Church.

10:29 The **curse** was an agreement to accept punishment on oneself if the **oath** was broken.

10:39 The oath or covenant is summed up in the words, **we will not neglect the house of our God.**

11:1, 2 The majority sent **to dwell in other cities** could be seen to prefigure the apostles being sent out to evangelize the nations. These may also be understood to image those called to live faithfully in this world, while the **blessed** minority remaining in Jerusalem signify men and women who can accept the monastic life of serving God in separation from this world.

11:3-21 These inhabitants of Jerusalem are grouped as follows: the laypeople (vv. 3–9); priests (vv. 10–14); Levites (vv. 15–17); and gatekeepers (v. 18). In the Church, there is also a great variety of God's servants (1Co 12:4–6).

12:28-37 A description of antiphonal singing, which is still the traditional way the Psalms are sung during the Orthodox Liturgy in many countries of the world. The **two thanksgiving choirs** that went to meet each other **in the house of God** (v. 37) prefigure the two covenants which are united in Jesus Christ. In this way, the choirs also serve as a type of the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ. The two choirs can also be understood as the departed faithful (the Church triumphant) and the living faithful (the Church militant) being united in the Kingdom of heaven.

12:41-44 As in the temple, so in the Church, faithful servants of God are **appointed** to assume responsibility for detailed tasks.

13:1-31 This could be called “the chapter of hard choices.” Nehemiah reminds his readers that it is better to be pure than popular. (a) After hearing the Scriptures read, the people gained the courage to separate the heathen, **the mixed multitude** (v. 3), from the congregation of **Israel** (vv. 1–3). (b) Nehemiah **tossed . . . all the household goods of Tobiah** (v. 8) out of his rooms in the temple. Why did **Eliashib the priest** (v. 4) move him in? In 13:28, we find that Eliashib has family ties to Sanballat, the co-conspirator to stop the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (vv. 4–9). (c) Nehemiah put **the Levites and the singers** (v. 10) back on the payroll. He confronted the **rulers** of the temple and **set them in their place** (v. 11). (d) The people of Judah had secularized **the Sabbath** (v. 15), making it a day of commerce and not a day of rest. Nehemiah makes an unveiled threat to **the merchants** (vv. 20, 21) and appoints guards **to sanctify the Sabbath day** (v. 22). (e) Finally, Nehemiah put a stop to Israelites marrying pagans (vv. 23–27).

13:30 This verse could be Nehemiah's epitaph: **I cleansed them of every pagan thing.**

1:1 **Tobit** means “the Lord is good.”

1:2 **Thisbe** is in modern-day Lebanon (ancient Phoenicia), north of the Sea of Galilee. **Naphtali** (v. 1) **was led captive** to Assyria under the predecessor of **Shalmaneser** (4Kg 15:29).

1:3 **Nineveh** is on the east bank of the Tigris River, which is in ancient Babylon and modern-day northern Iraq. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria.

1:6-8 Tobit reminds us to be faithful to the Lord even when it is inconvenient. The **everlasting ordinance** (v. 6) is recorded in Dt 12:11–14.

1:9 **Anna** means “grace.”

1:10-11 **The bread of the Gentiles** is described in Dt 14:3–21 as unclean food for the people of God.

1:14 **Media** was an area south of the Caspian Sea, part of modern-day Iran.

1:17 Not to **bury** the **dead** was seen as a curse, the ultimate in disrespect (4Kg 9:10; Jer 8:2; see also 2:3–8).

1:22 **Ahikar**, the **nephew** of Tobit, carries the name of a hero popular in ancient literature. He becomes **second** in command under the new king.

2:1 The Jewish **Feast of Pentecost** (lit. “fifty”) comes **seven weeks** or fifty days after Passover. These events are fulfilled (1) in the death, burial, and Resurrection of “Christ our Passover” (1Co 5:7) and (2) at the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

2:6 See Amos 8:10.

2:11 Some scholars speculate Anna was a weaver.

2:14 Anna reproaches Tobit, suggesting his **acts of charity** and his **righteous deeds** have failed him. This is similar to the rebuke by Job's wife (Job 2:9).

3:2 Having had his own works judged (2:14), Tobit confesses it is the **Lord** who is **righteous**, as are His **works**.

3:6 In his pain, Tobit asks that he might **die** and **enter into the eternal place.**

3:7 **Ecbatana** is the capital of **Media** (see note at 1:14).

3:8 **Asmodeus** means “the destroyer.” Jesus said of Satan, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (Jn 10:10).

3:11 **Blessed are You, O Lord**: These are the opening words of numerous Jewish and Christian prayers. Many services in the Orthodox Church begin with, “Blessed is the Kingdom” or “Blessed is our God.”

3:16-17 God answered **the prayer of both** Tobit and Sarah, sending the Archangel Raphael (meaning “God heals”) **to heal them**.

4:5 A father could not give a **son** better counsel.

4:7 The word **almsgiving** is used repeatedly throughout the Book of Tobit. It simply means to give of oneself above and beyond what is due (see also 4:16).

4:12 In Jewish tradition, to **take a foreign woman** as a **wife** was seen as an offense to God (Ezra 10:2).

4:20 Tobias is sent by his father to **Gabael** in Rages (near modern-day Teheran, Iran) to retrieve ten talents of silver held by him for safekeeping. Tobit even has the receipt! (See 5:3.)

5:3-6 **Raphael** is hired to accompany **Tobias** on his journey to Rages. But the archangel identifies himself as Azarias (meaning “God helps”), a relative of Tobit (5:13).

5:17 **May His angel journey with you**: Tobit is unaware that his request has already been granted (see also 5:22). Tobias's **dog** goes with them, and commentators puzzle over its significance.

6:1-9 **The fish** not only provided food (v. 5), but its liver and heart (v. 7) were set aside to cast out a demon (v. 8). **Gall** is bile used as a medicine; it would later bring a cure to Tobit's eight years of blindness (11:11–14).

6:13 **According to the rule of Moses** is likely a reference to Nm 36:8 (though there is no mention there of a **death** penalty), in which it is stated that a daughter with an **inheritance** must marry within her father's tribe.

6:14-15 Tobias is concerned that Sarah's first **seven husbands** all died on their wedding night. He knows his death, as the only child, would bring **grief and sorrow** to his parents.

6:16-18 **The angel** appeals both to (1) **the words** of Tobit to **take a wife** from their tribe (Naphtali) and (2) **to the merciful God** who will cause the demon to flee (see Jam 4:7).

7:3-6 Though **Raguel** and Edna knew of **Tobit**, it appears they did not know of **Tobias**.

7:10-13 **Raguel** is honest about the fate of Sarah's **seven** previous husbands, but blesses **Tobias** to **receive her**.

8:2-4 The **demon** is exorcized both by the **incense** and by prayers to **the Lord**. The psalmist connects these two actions when he writes, “Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense” (Ps 140:2).

8:6 See Gn 2:18.

8:7 Though they are young, Tobias prays that he and his bride will **grow old together**. In the Orthodox wedding service, the priest prays over the bridal pair: “Grant them to lead an upright and blameless life even unto a ripe old age.”

8:10-14 During the night **Raguel rose up** and **dug a grave** for **Tobias**, fearing he **may have died**. This was not the case.

8:15-17 **Raguel** is careful to bless **God** for His **abundant mercy** in sparing Tobias' **life**.

8:19-21 Normally a **wedding feast** lasted seven days (see 11:18). **Raguel** also contributes **half** of his possessions as his gift.

9:1-6 **Tobias** entrusts **Raphael** to find **Gabael** and **bring him** and **the silver** to the **wedding feast**. Likewise, at the end of the ages, the hosts of heaven will call the faithful to “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9).

10:1-7 The extended **fourteen days of the wedding feast** (v. 7) cause friction between **Tobit** and Anna because Tobias has not returned home. They try to hush each other up (vv. 6, 7).

10:8-10 **Raguel** wants the newlyweds to **stay** even longer, but **Tobias** prevails. They depart with a blessing.

10:13 Edna's request to **see your children from my daughter Sarah** is echoed by the Orthodox priest at the crowning service, praying that the wedded couple will “see your children's children.”

11:1-3 **Raphael** and **Tobias** decide to leave Sarah at the city gate of **Nineveh** see (11:16) and **run ahead** to meet the worried parents.

11:11-12 Following Raphael's instructions (11:7), Tobias **dabbed the gall on the eyes of his father**. Tobit was healed of his blindness.

11:16-17 Tobit did four things en route to **the gate of Nineveh** which are instructive for all fathers, and for all believers: (1) he **rejoiced**, as St. Paul so often encouraged the Philippians to do; (2) he **blessed God** for his son's new bride; (3) he publicly **gave thanks** for his restored eyesight; and (4) he **blessed** his family. God loves a grateful servant.

12:1-5 Note the spirit of generosity in **Tobit** and **Tobias**. Whereas many modern believers hesitate to return even ten percent to God, these men offered God's servant **half of everything** they **brought**!

12:8-9 The Archangel Raphael's exhortation is remarkably similar to one section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 6, Jesus spoke of **fasting** (6:16–18), **almsgiving** (6:1–4), **prayer** (6:5–13), and **righteousness** (6:33).

12:12-14 Raphael's ministry to Tobit's family is that of a guardian angel. Note he carries Sarah's **prayer before the Holy One**, he is **present** with those he serves, and he is **sent** by **God** to bring healing. “Angel” means “messenger.”

12:15 **Raphael** reveals himself to Tobit and Tobias as **one of seven holy angels** who appear **before the glory of the Holy One** (see Rev 1:4). These seven are also called archangels. The names of four of them are revealed: Raphael, Gabriel (Dan 9:21; Lk 1:19, 26–38), Michael (Dan 10:21; Jude 9) and Uriel (2 Esdras 4:1).

12:20 Raphael is **ascending** to **God** to appear “before His throne” (Rev 1:4).

13:1 As with many Old Testament prayers, the **prayer** of **Tobit** resembles many of the psalms.

13:2 **Blessed is** the **kingdom** is how we begin the Sunday worship of the Church.

13:3 **The nations** are the Gentile nations where God's **children** are **scattered**.

13:6 This promise is repeated to Israel throughout the Old Testament.

13:11 **His tabernacle** is the temple in Jerusalem.

13:13 The author of Tobit understands that one day **many Gentiles** will come to **the King of heaven** and that **generations of generations** of them will **worship** in what will be called the One Holy Church (see Jn 1:12).

13:17-18 This passage also has in view the New **Jerusalem** (see Rev 21:1–3, 10, 11).

14:4 Scholars agree that **Nineveh** was **overthrown** in 612 BC. **Jonah** warned of the fall (Jon 3:3, 4) and Nahum, in his book, records it.

14:5 The temple will be rebuilt, **but not as it was before**. The second temple, not as glorious, was completed in approximately 515 BC (see Hag 1:1–15).

14:10 **Ahikar**: See 1:21.

14:11 **Almsgiving** and **righteousness**: See 12:8, 9.

1:1 This opening verse is anachronistic in that the father of **Nebuchadnezzar**, Nebopalassar, destroyed Nineveh in about 607 BC.

1:2-5 These verses are a parenthetical description of the massive fortifications of **Ecbatana**, which in turn implies the great power of **Arphaxad,** with whom **Nebuchadnezzar waged war** (v. 5).

1:6 The **sons of Chaldea** are the central power of the alliance that defeats the great army of Arphaxad (1:13). The irony is that these “sons” will prove powerless before a “daughter of the Hebrews” (10:12). **The Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Hydaspes** (a river in India) alludes to a large territory ruled by Artaxerxes (see Est 1:1).

1:10 From **Ethiopia** to the Hydaspes (v. 6) gives the full breadth of Nebuchadnezzar's proclaimed authority.

1:11 Building on 1:6, the author here introduces the supreme irony of this story: “the lord of all the earth” (**Nebuchadnezzar**) (2:5) will be shown **as but one man,** and “men confident in their strength” (2:5) will be sent away **empty-handed and dishonored.**

1:12 **The borders of the two seas** is parallel to the “boundaries of Ethiopia” (1:10). Great rivers are sometimes called seas in ancient Hebrew literature.

1:15 **The mountains of Ragau** are some two hundred miles east of Ecbatana and away from the direction of attack; thus **Arphaxad** was **captured** while fleeing from defeat.

1:16 They **returned** to Nineveh.

2:1 The **first month** is Nisan (March–April) and the **twenty-second day** is the day after the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the Hebrew calendar.

2:5 The titles **the great king** and **lord of all the earth** are further claims of divinity by Nebuchadnezzar (see Jos 3:11; Ps 47:3).

2:7 **Prepare the earth and water** “after the manner of the kings of Persia to whom earth and water were ceremonially given by custom as acknowledgment that they were lords of land and sea” (Herodotus 6:48, 49). This may be an indication of surrender.

2:8-9 Just as Christ “descended into the lower parts of the earth” (Eph 4:9) to defeat the enemy of His people, the **captives**, so Judith will descend to the valley to defeat the enemy of her people (10:10).

2:12 It is not Nebuchadnezzar's **hand** that will be decisive in the end, but Judith's (8:33; 13:14).

2:17 The Pharisee-like piety of the author is demonstrated here by his inclusion of only clean animals as part of the **food supply** of the Assyrians, who were notable for their unclean preferences (Hos 9:3).

2:20-21 The **journey** here covers some three hundred miles in only three days, an impossible accomplishment given the size of the army and its composition. This hyperbole, along with the simile, **like a swarm of locusts** (v. 20), calls to mind the dramatic words of another prophet (Joel 2:4, 5).

2:24 The region intended here is uncertain, but perhaps it refers to Upper **Mesopotamia** towards Ararat and Lake Van.

2:26 These are the Ishmaelite **Midianites** (Gn 37:27, 28), who were nomads of the desert northeast of the Jordan valley (Jdg 6:33; 7:25).

2:27 **The time of the wheat harvest** would have been about June, a short span of only three months for such an expansive campaign.

3:6 For their surrender, the people of **the seacoast** are given favorable treatment, though their traditions and gods will be put down (3:8).

3:7 These **garlands** would have been crowns of leaves or flowers (see WSol 2:8) with **dancing and timbrels** in the fashion of Jephthah's daughter (Jdg 11:33).

3:8 To **cut down their sacred groves** strips them of their gods, thereby asserting the supremacy of Nebuchadnezzar over the land and the people.

3:9 **Ridge** is literally “saw,” which suggests a serrated horizon (see 1Kg 14:4, 5). Also **Esdraelon,** a valley, “saws” the mountain range of **Judea** in two.

4:4 **Samaria** was returned to Judea by Demetrius I Soter (reigned 162–150 BC; see 1Mc 10:30, 38) and annexed by John Hyrcanus in 107 BC. Its inclusion here as part of Judea suggests this story was written sometime during the reign of John Hyrcanus (135–104 BC).

4:6 **Bethulia** and **Betomesthaim** are unknown places and appear only in Judith. Bethulia is a word-play on Bethuel (a city of Simeon). Both are consistent with our Simeonite heroine (see 9:2) and the Assyrian messengers who bring this assault on Israel (see 1:11; Is 37:24). Betomesthaim (Hebrew: Beth-Moutemah) means “house of enmity” and is likely a scornful allusion to the city of Samaria.

4:11 Casting **ashes on their heads** is a sign of contrition and lamentation.

4:14 **Served** here is a liturgical term (see also Lk 1:23, “service”; Acts 13:2, “ministered”; Heb 8:6, “ministry”). St. Clement writes, “We ought to do all those things the Master has ordered us to perform at the appointed times. He has commanded sacrifices and services to be performed. . . . Thus, to the high priest has been appointed his proper services, to the priests, their own place assigned, upon the Levites their proper duties imposed; and the layman is bound by the rules for laymen.” We see here in Judith the oft-repeated practice of God's people gathering together in worship and prayer to seek divine mercy and grace.

5:1 These **barricades** consisted of camouflaged pits containing sharply pointed stakes meant to lame horses or impale infantry.

5:3-4 **Canaan** is used here in its archaic sense (see Gn 10:15–19) and includes **all those dwelling in the west** (v. 4).

5:5-21 The Protomartyr Stephen gave an account (Acts 7) similar to this.

5:6, 7 **The Chaldeans** were a Semitic people (Gn 10:21–31) who settled the area just north of the Persian Gulf (Gn 10:30). Ur of the Chaldeans (Gn 11:27, 28) was just outside of **Mesopotamia** (Greek for “between the rivers”) just south of the Euphrates River. The Chaldean city of Ur was the site of a major temple of the moon-god Sin. Such was the Chaldean penchant for worshiping the heavens, and the name became a proverbial term for astrologers (see Dan 2:2).

5:8 **Had come to know** is an active-voice verb in Greek: knowing God requires that we diligently seek Him (Pr 8:17; Heb 11:6). Abraham came to know **the God of heaven** by looking beyond the heavens to seek his Creator. He thereby received the true inheritance (Heb 11:8–10, 16). That the Chaldeans **cast them out** we find only at this place in Scripture, and in Jewish tradition.

6:2 The mention of **mercenaries** is an allusion to Is 28:1.

6:9 Holofernes is now exalting himself as equal with King Nebuchadnezzar, and even with God Himself.

6:15 Since **Uzziah** is **of the tribe of Simeon,** as is Judith (11:2), apparently we are meant to understand the entire city as being of Simeon, a noted avenger of Israel (Gn 34:25–27; 49:5).

6:21 This **feast** would have been a solemn occasion in order to call on **the God of Israel** (see Joel 1:14; 2:15–17).

7:3 Knowing the locations of **Dothan** and **Esdraelon**, the description given here points to the entire valley of Jezreel being occupied by the allies (7:1).

7:6 The point of bringing forth **all his cavalry** against **the Israelites**, who had no such forces, is to intimidate them.

7:11 Ironically, the **one man** who **will fall** is Holofernes himself (13:4–8).

7:20-21 Their **water containers** would be those which were usually filled at the now inaccessible springs. **The cisterns** went dry, leaving the people with **rationed** water.

7:24-32 These verses form the foil of faithlessness against which the faith of Judith will stand.

8:1 A genealogy such as this establishes one as a legitimate member of a community, in this case **Israel**. It is significant the author leaves out Judith's tribal affiliation. The message is to all Israel and not only to one person, city, or tribe.

8:5 **A tent . . . on the rooftop** provided Judith with solitude from the daily activities of a household (see Pr 21:8).

8:6 Judith's fasting **every day of her widowhood** does not mean she practiced complete abstinence. Rather, according to Jewish tradition, she would have abstained from morning until evening, eating a meal only after sundown.

8:10 Judith wisely calls the **elders of the city** to her home to avoid publicly shaming them for their unwise decision.

8:17 This is the crux of the author's message in this book.

8:32 **Hear me** means, “Give heed to what I have said.” Judith's speech here is the foundation for her decisions that follow.

9:1 That Judith **uncovered the sackcloth** in which she was clothed after the elders had left (8:36) demonstrates her true humility: she did not present herself with a sad countenance.

9:2 See Gn 34 for the account of this tragic incident.

9:12 **Heaven, earth,** and **waters** comprise the visible world and thereby express the full scope of the rule of the **Creator** and **King.**

9:13 Judith wisely understands that the intent of the enemy is the removal of the religion of Israel.

9:14 This is the purpose for Judith's story.

10:2 Judith **arose** from being **prostrated** in prayer (9:1).

10:4 This short list of feminine **jewelry** is comparable to the longer list in Is 3:16–23.

10:7-8 This passage brings to mind the words of Pr 31:28.

10:9 Judith **bowed down to God** before them, for in such veneration "God is honored, as a king is honored through the honor given to a beloved servant. They are honored as servants in attendance upon their Master, as valued friends, but not as the king" (JohnDm).

10:12 Judith identifies herself as **a daughter of the Hebrews** since foreigners commonly identified Israelites as Hebrews (see 1Kg 4:6; Acts 6:1).

10:21 Holofernes' **canopy,** worthy of a great king (see Est 1:6 and SS 3:7, 9, 10), reveals his inflated opinion of himself.

11:4 Although **no one will harm** Judith, she will be the destruction of Holofernes (9:13).

11:5-8 In considering the deceitful flattery of Judith's words, the author is following an ancient standard of morality: there are no rights for an alien enemy (Dt 23:3–6). Christ, however, has called us to a more perfect way: “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Mt 5:44).

11:6 Judith's words are deliberately ambiguous. Holofernes pridefully understands **my lord** to refer to himself, but Judith is actually saying, “my Lord shall not fail in His pursuits.”

11:17 **Night and day** reflects the ancient method of reckoning time in which a new day begins at sunset (Gn 1:5).

11:23 There is betrayal in Holofernes' vow, **your God will be my God**, because he acknowledges **King Nebuchadnezzar** as god (3:8; 6:2).

12:2 Judith's polite but firm refusal to **eat** from the table of Gentiles is akin to the piety later found among the Pharisees (Gal 2:12).

12:5 **The morning watch** is from about two a.m. until dawn.

12:7 That Judith **washed in the water from the spring** was ceremonial, not merely practical. Jewish places of prayer were usually located near water (Ps 136:1; Ezk 1:3; Acts 16:13).

12:10 **The officers** were excluded so as to limit the feast to a private household affair.

12:12 Passions (in this case, lust) can affect moral judgment to the point that evil is considered good (Is 5:18–23). Holofernes is so enmeshed in his passion he considers it a disgrace **if we do not seduce her.**

12:14 Again, Judith's words are deliberately ambiguous (see 11:6, note). Bagoas understands **my lord** to refer to Holofernes, but Judith means “my Lord.”

12:15 Holofernes' intent upon Judith had been made plain by **the lambskins**. They were used for bedding, not to **recline on** to eat a meal.

12:16 **Ravished** does not mean filled with joy. Rather, it here indicates a violent seizing of one's senses which results in senselessness, even insanity.

13:2-3 Holofernes' being **unconscious from the wine** explains why **Bagoas** unquestioningly accepts Judith's words that **she would go out to pray**. Of course, she was preparing for her unhindered departure.

13:4-5 Judith prayer was **said in her heart** to keep this final petition for blessing between herself and the Lord and away from prying ears.

13:6, 7 Holofernes' **sword** and Judith's plea **O Lord . . . strengthen me** brings to mind Ps 36:15, 17, 39.

13:13 Her return was **incredible** to them because, in their weakness of faith, they thought her departure had meant her certain death.

13:14 **Praise God** contains an allusion to the etymology of the name Judith, which means “Jewess” or “praise” (see Gn 49:8).

13:15 That **Holofernes** died **by the hand of a woman** emphasizes the shame associated with his being so weak as to have succumbed to such a death.

13:16 Judith here offers evidence that her act was consistent with God's will.

13:18-20 This blessing is a prototype of the blessing and veneration the Church gives to the Theotokos.

14:1 This public display of the **head** (or body) of a fallen enemy leader was done to reveal his disgrace (Dt 21:22, 23).

14:5 The canopy (13:15) is a single witness to the identity of the head. **Achior** is a former ally of Holofernes who provides confirmation of the identity of the head.

14:10 For an Ammonite to be **membered with the house of Israel** is in contradiction to the law (Dt 23:4, 5). So also is the salvation of all Gentiles.

15:8 They would have greeted her with words similar to St. Paul's salutation to the Thessalonians, “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all” (2Th 3:16), a typical Jewish greeting.

15:13 The **songs of praise** would likely have included the Psalms of Ascent (120–134).

16:2 This verse alludes to Ps 17:48.

16:3 **The mountains of the north** was the typical path of advance against Israel by the kingdoms of the east in order to avoid a march across the Arabian desert.

16:5-6 See Is 57:13.

16:6 **The Titans' sons** are likely Goliath and his kin (2Kg 21:18–22).

16:10 **The Persians** and **the Medes** are a reminder that this story is set in the time after the return from captivity.

16:14 This verse is a paraphrase of Ps 32:6.

16:19 In imitation of Abraham (Gn 14:22, 23), and Elisha (4Kg 5:16), **Judith** took nothing for herself, but **dedicated all the property** to the Lord.

16:22 Judith maintained her widowhood until the end of her life, a common practice in Israel (Lk 2:36, 37) and in the Church (1Co 7:8, 39, 40; 1Ti 5:5). The phrase **was buried with his people** is indicative of the Hebrew practice of burying succeeding generations of the family in a common grave site (Gn 49:29).

1:1a-1r These verses occur only in the Greek LXX manuscripts and appear there as an addition to the Book of Esther.

1:1d-1j The **dream** (which is interpreted in 10:1-3k) prepares Mordecai for the test he will face and reveals that God is behind the course of human events.

1:1m-1r This plot, recounted in 2:21–23, serves to describe the animosity between Haman and Mordecai.

1:1-6 **Artaxerxes** is imperfect, passionate, and self-indulgent. Nevertheless, by virtue of his office and by reigning over many nations, he functions as a figure for God. The dignity of an earthly office is not diminished by the failings of the person holding it (see Jn 11:51; Acts 23:1–5).

1:7 The various cups were likely plunder from conquered nations.

1:12 Queen Vashti's refusal to attend the king's festival, being preoccupied with her own, serves as a warning to those who see themselves as followers of the King but whose heart is self-centered, as in Christ's parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1–14; Lk 14:15–24).

1:16 As with **Queen Vashti**, our actions may have consequences that go far beyond ourselves.

1:22 Note that the king's decree was distributed to all people **according to their own language**, so that all could understand and follow. This is why in the Orthodox Church throughout the world it is imperative that the gospel be preached (Acts 2:4–11) and the liturgy be celebrated (1Co 14:1–25) in the language spoken by the people (see also 3:12).

2:1 **After these words**: The events in this chapter take place about four years after those in ch. 1 (compare 1:3 with 2:16). A war against Greece, in which Persia was soundly defeated, took place during this span of time.

2:7 Mordecai's relation to **Esther** is that of both guardian and husband, a necessary social and legal arrangement and not unusual at the time. This would also be the relationship between Joseph and the Virgin Mary. In this situation, there was no sexual relationship, as demonstrated by Esther's virginity.

2:12 The **twelve months** were **days of preparation** and training. If these are the preparations to visit an earthly king, all the more should the faithful prepare to meet Christ the King through prayer, fasting, and confession as we encounter Him in the services of the Church.

2:18 **Granted a release** indicates a national holiday and a remission of taxes (see 10:1). The coronation **banquet** of **seven days** for a new queen would raise morale after the defeat in war.

2:20 Though in a pagan palace, **Esther did not change her manner of life** nor cease to **fear God**. God calls us to faithfulness in whatever situation He places us.

2:23 The **good will of Mordecai** was recorded, but not yet rewarded. Faithfulness to God is never forgotten by the Lord, even if it appears to go unnoticed (Heb 6:10). The true reward is glorification, not in this life, but in the Kingdom to come (Heb 11:39, 40).

3:1-9 The extreme animosity between **Haman** and **Mordecai** quite possibly is rooted in an old tribal feud. Mordecai was a Benjamite (1:1a). According to the Hebrew text, Haman was a descendant of Agag, whose nation was utterly destroyed by King Saul (1Kg 15:8), also a Benjamite. Haman sees the situation as an opportune time not only to destroy Mordecai, but to vengefully **destroy all the Jews** (v. 6).

3:7 **The month of Adar** was eleven months away. Delays occur frequently in this book, giving time for the divine plan of God to unfold.

3:8 **They disregard the king's laws**: Haman's accusation against the Jews is the same as the authorities' accusation would be against Jesus (Lk 6:6, 7) and His followers (Acts 6:11–14).

3:13a-13g These verses do not occur in the Hebrew manuscripts, but only in the Greek LXX, and are considered by many to be an addition to the Book of Esther. The demonic pride of Haman is evident in **the letter**. As author of the letter (v. 12), Haman attempts to glorify himself in the name of the king, while slandering the people of God.

4:1-3 **Mordecai** is consistently seen by the fathers as a Christ-figure (see 8:12m, where he is referred to as “deliverer and constant benefactor” to the Jews). Consistent with this typology, Mordecai leaves the courtyard of the king, removes his fine garments, and goes out among his people to share in their sufferings (see Php 2:5–7).

4:4 In Esther's attempt to help Mordecai, she tries to **take his sackcloth away** and give him new **garments**, but **he would not accept them**. This is fulfilled when Peter would try to dissuade Jesus from accepting the Cross (Mt 16:22). Because His mission was to completely identify with His people, Jesus also would not be dissuaded.

4:13-14 God's plan of salvation involves the cooperation of His people. If someone God calls is unwilling to cooperate, two things will happen: (1) God will find willing participants **elsewhere**, for God's plan can never be thwarted; and (2) those who were not willing **will perish** with the unfaithful (see Mt 21:41). Mordecai's question, **who knows whether it is for this occasion you reign as queen?** is a call to all believers to courageously discern the will of God for their particular moment in life in order to fulfill God's plan. Note Mordecai's unswerving trust in God in spite of the seemingly hopeless circumstances.

4:15-17 Esther's fast and her courageous act of mercy for her people reveal her resolve and her character. This fast of Esther and the whole community marks the turning point in the events of the story and the beginning of the downfall of Haman.

4:17a-17x These verses do not occur in the Hebrew manuscripts.

4:17a-17h Mordecai's prayer, not included in the Hebrew text, follows a classic pattern of praise, remembrance of God's works, and petition.

4:17e One of the devil's unsuccessful temptations of the Lord was to try to lure Christ to **bow down** before him (Mt 4:9, 10).

4:17j-17x The prayer of **Queen Esther** includes repentance on behalf of the people and rejection of the glories of this world. Faithful Jews realized that inevitably, the evils inflicted on their nation resulted from their abandoning God's way. Their difficulty was overcome only through genuine repentance.

5:1 Esther comes forth from her chamber **on the third day**, giving a resurrectional tone to her subsequent victory over Haman.

5:2 **Appealing to the all-seeing God and Savior**: Esther's apparel is appropriate not only for the king, but for her Almighty King and God. Thus, we understand there is appropriate dress for coming before the Lord in worship. Likewise, our baptismal garment is given by the Lord and is the only garment worthy of the King's palace (see Mt 22:11–14).

5:3 Esther's **heart shrank with fear** because the lives of her people were at stake. St. Paul admitted to the people of Corinth, “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling” (1Co 2:3).

5:11 **Up to half my kingdom**: A figure of speech. This royal courtesy magnifies the generosity of **the king** and gives opportunity for the petitioner to appear modest when the actual request is made (see Mk 6:23).

5:12 Esther's request is most noble—she asks to be permitted to serve the king. This stands in contrast to Vashti, who prepared a banquet for herself and those who would serve her (1:9).

5:16 The delay until **tomorrow** allows events to unfold in which the Lord will not only save the Jews, but will bring down Haman (see note at 3:7).

5:17-21 Haman's pride will not allow him to be content. His rage towards another person prevents him from continuing in all the blessings from the king.

5:22 **Hanged on the tree**: A gallows tree was used for various means of public execution, including hanging, impaling, and public display of a corpse. This was the Persian precursor to Roman crucifixion. **Fifty cubits** is approximately 75 feet (23 meters), and indicates Haman's intention to put Mordecai to death with extreme humiliation.

6:1 **The Lord made it difficult for the king to sleep**: The fathers understand this verse to show that it is the Lord who directs the plan of salvation, even through unbelievers.

6:6-9 Haman unwittingly defines the honor of his enemy. The honor of being clothed with **the royal robe the king wears** makes the recipient, Mordecai, share in the royalty of the king himself, just as Christ fully shares in the divinity of the Father (see also Is 63:1–5).

6:11 This is Mordecai's second journey through the city. The first journey was in sackcloth and ashes (4:1), but this one is in glory and honor.

7:1 Not everything we need must be gained immediately! In this case a crucial deadline is approaching, but **the queen** is patient, awaiting the right time to gain the desired result, literally the salvation of her people.

7:4 **Accuser** (lit. “devil”): The unambiguous identity of Haman.

7:9, 10 St. Jerome writes, “Haman was burned in the fire of his own kindling.”

8:5-8 With **Haman** executed and Mordecai and Esther delivered, there is still an edict in force for the destruction of **the Jews** throughout the **kingdom**. Esther asks the king to **revoke** the death sentence against them. However, an order of a Persian king was irrevocable (see 1:19). Such an order can, however, be superseded with a new decree (v. 8), which is actually to the Jews' advantage. If the first decree could have been revoked, the Jews would have been saved, but their enemies would also have lived on to persecute them another day. This new decree makes possible the final destruction of these enemies.

8:12a-12k This section is in the Greek LXX text; it does not appear in the Hebrew manuscripts.

8:12c **They undertake to plot against their own benefactors**: To plot against the Jews, from whom the Savior of the world would come, is to plot against hope for oneself. The same can be said of persecutors of the Church, where the Savior dwells.

8:12r This new decree gives royal authority to the Jews to destroy those under Haman's influence and those who would destroy the Jews (see Eph 6:12).

8:12s Est 8:12s, 12t: Victory is already assumed, and **deliverance** will be received by both the Jews and the **well-inclined Persians**.

8:16 **And there was light and gladness**: This recalls the prophetic dream of Mordecai (1:1j).

8:17 **Gentiles were circumcised**: It is remarkable how much power of persuasion there is in the works of God!

9:1-16 What is done in secret is shouted from the housetops (Lk 12:3). Haman's plot was made in secret, but now **the bodies** of his **sons** are exposed (v. 13) as was his secret plot (see also Lk 8:17).

9:19 It is often noted that the Hebrew version of Esther never mentions the name of God. Since the story was copied and **sent** to **the Jews, both near and far**, the name of God would inevitably be omitted, for this name was too sacred to write. It follows that the account Mordecai wrote **in a book** would not necessarily be worded the same as letters that were widely circulated. Furthermore, with the help of Mordecai, Esther wrote down her own account of the events (v. 30). Thus, there were at least three distinct accounts of this story.

9:25 **These days were called Purim—on account of the lots (because in their language they are called *pur*)**: In 3:7, Haman casts lots to determine the day for the Jews to be massacred. The word *pur* is not a Hebrew word in origin. It comes from the Persian or Assyrian and means *lot*. Thus, it was Haman's lot that established the date for the great Jewish celebration of Purim, which commemorates the deliverance recorded in this book.

10:3a-3k Mordecai interprets his dream recorded in the introduction to ch. 1. This dream was likely on his mind continually as the circumstances unfolded, for **not one detail of them has failed** (v. 36).

10:3k This indicates the source of the Greek translation of this passage. **The fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy** would date the translation of this passage from Hebrew to Greek around the year 114 BC.

1:1 **Alexander** is Alexander the Great.

1:8-9 According to the historian Josephus, Alexander's generals divided his empire into several dynastic houses: Ptolemy in Egypt, Seleucis in Babylon, Lysimachus in Hellespont, Cassander in Macedonia, and Antigonus in Asia.

1:11-15 Those **sons of Israel** who wanted to introduce Greek culture into Jewish life were called Hellenists. They sought to overthrow the legitimate high priest Onias III and succeeded in having one of their own, Onias' brother Jason, appointed high priest by Antiochus IV (2Mc 4). Jason **built a gymnasium** where young Jews competed alongside the Greeks. Many Jewish men underwent painful operations to hide their circumcision.

1:16-19 **Antiochus** IV campaigned against **Ptolemy** IV (reigned 180–145 BC) in **Egypt** from 170 to 168 BC.

1:20-24 **Antiochus** entered Jerusalem, pillaging the temple to pay his war debts.

1:29-35 Apollonius the Mysarch, a commander of Mysian mercenaries, erected a **citadel** (v. 33) known as the Acra (lit. “Acropolis”) on the temple mount, just north of the temple itself, where he installed a Phrygian named Philip as governor (Josephus).

1:41-53 Antiochus **the king** abandoned his dream of rebuilding Alexander's kingdom for the more modest goal of consolidating his own empire. He decreed that the Jews were to abandon their religion (v. 42) because it was considered politically disruptive. Any Jew who refused to sacrifice to the Greek gods on behalf of the emperor (vv. 44–49) was tortured and killed (v. 50).

1:54 Inside the temple, Antiochus erected the **abomination of desolation** (Dan 9:27), either a statue of Zeus sculpted in the likeness of the emperor or some cultic stones. Until that time, the temple had been the focal point of the Jewish nation and faith. Jews made three pilgrimages there each year, at the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

1:62-64 **Unclean** food involved the sacrifice of swine to Zeus. Josephus the historian notes that while the Jews were being persecuted, their Samaritan neighbors lied to Antiochus, calling themselves a colony of Medes and Persians, not Jews. He reports they even went so far as to have their temple on Mount Gerizim dedicated to Jupiter Hellenius.

2:1-5 **Mattathias** of the House of Hashmon fled the Hellenizing evils of Jerusalem with his **five sons** (later known as the Hasmoneans). They moved to **Modein**, a rural town seventeen miles northwest of Jerusalem. It was common for Jews of the time to have both a Jewish and a Greek name. **Judas** was also **called Maccabeus**, hence the family was called “the Maccabees.”

2:15-18 The king's officers sought to induce Mattathias to **sacrifice** first. They reasoned that the others **from Israel** would surely follow his lead.

2:24-26 Elsewhere in Israel, Jews had either been compliant or faced death willingly (1:63), so it is very possible **Mattathias** and his allies surprised and overcame a small troop of Antiochus' soldiers. Their sense of security as an occupying force may have made them careless; and they certainly did not expect a rebellion from the “docile” Jews.

2:27-28 **Mattathias** and **his sons fled** to a retreat in the Gophna **mountains**, located in southern Samaria. In this way, they avoided the jurisdiction of the Seleucid commander of Judea and could remain unmolested for a time.

2:32-38 It was forbidden for Jews to fight on the **Sabbath** (Ex 31:12–18), and Antiochus' soldiers took full advantage of this fact (v. 38).

2:39-41 **Mattathias** and the Jews realized they would be slaughtered if they chose not to defend themselves **on the Sabbath**. In a truly radical statement for their day, the Maccabees foreshadowed Jesus' words, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mk 2:27).

2:42-48 The **Hasideans** were Jews who strictly upheld **the law**. Together with **Mattathias** they began cleansing Israel of impurity, attacking both **Gentiles** and Jewish traitors.

2:65-68 Mattathias designated his son **Judas Maccabeus** as his military successor. Judas had likely developed a natural instinct for guerrilla warfare while hunting and herding in the Judean hill country.

3:32-41 **Lysias** sent three generals (v. 38) to camp at **Emmaus** (v. 40—today's Imwas, next to Latrum) where they could send out spies to avoid Judah's traps.

3:42-44 In addition to his hand-picked soldiers, **Judas** operated a large militia system, whereby men could be called from their everyday tasks through an intricate network of runners. These “spies” also kept him informed as to **the words of the king** and the whereabouts of the Seleucid army.

4:8-11 Beyond his military prowess, **Judas** was the spiritual leader of his people as well.

4:52-59 **Judas** and his followers **celebrated** the first Festival of Rededication, which the historian Josephus calls the “Festival of Lights.” The celebration lasted **eight days**, beginning on the **twenty-fifth** of **Chislev** (December). Today the festival is called Hanukkah (lit. “dedication”) and is celebrated with the lighting of the Hanukkah lamp. According to the Babylonian Talmud, the Hasmoneans found only one undefiled container of oil left in **the temple**. Miraculously, it lasted for **eight full days**.

5:1-8 **Judas** and company marched out to rescue those Jews under heavy persecution by the Seleucid sympathizers in **Judea**. For consolidation purposes, Judas waged war on the Idumeans at **Acrabattene**, the **sons of Baean**, the Amalekites under **Timothy**, and the people of **Jazer**.

5:28-34 **Judas** encountered Timothy again, **struck** him **a great blow**, and captured his **engines of war**. Later, Judah used the siege equipment to tackle the Acra fortress.

5:55-62 **Joseph** and **Azariah** failed because **they did not belong**, nor were they divinely sanctioned members of the Hasmonean family (v. 62). Instead of following God's appointed leaders, they proudly sought their own glorification (v. 57).

6:1-4 **Antiochus** tried to steal the famed **temple** treasures of the Alexandrians but was thwarted by the men of **Elymais**, the part of Elam not controlled by the Seleucids. He was after his hero **Alexander** the Great's armor, said to be housed in the temple.

6:34-37 Lysias chose **elephants** not only for their innate ability as fighters, but for use in frightening the Jews, who had not encountered them before. In v. 35, **phalanxes** are heavily armed troops marching in close array, and **coats of mail** refers to flexible armor consisting of a mesh of interlinked metal rings used defensively in battle.

6:43-46 **Eleazar** bravely tried to kill Antiochus and overcome the Jews' fear of **the elephants**.

6:53 Some of the Jewish forces remaining in **Judea** barely held out for lack of **food**. God had commanded them to leave the earth fallow every **seventh year** (Ex 23:10, 11), so they had little surplus.

7:1-4 **Demetrius** I (reigned 162–150 BC), **the son of** emperor **Seleucus** IV (assassinated by Antiochus IV), was sent to **Rome** under the Treaty of Apamea and kept there by the Senate after they repeatedly refused to let him return home (Polybius). He escaped to the Syrian coast with the help of Polybius and his friend Menyllus, an envoy of Ptolemy VI Philometer of Egypt. Once in Tripolis, Demetrius set himself up as the true Seleucid emperor (Josephus).

7:5 High priest **Alcimus** was accepted by the Hasidic Jews for his Aaronic background and elected by Demetrius (or possibly earlier by Lysias) for his Hellenistic sympathies.

7:23 **Judas** refused to recognize a high priest appointed by Demetrius.

7:26-49 **Nicanor** was one of those who had escaped from Rome with Demetrius (Josephus). His death occurred on the **thirteenth day of Adar** (v. 49; roughly March) in 161 BC and is still observed as the Day of Nicanor.

8:1-16 Polybius (c. 160 BC) claimed that by his time **the Romans** had cleared the people of **Gaul** (Celtic migrants) from the Po valley up to the Alps. Rome then assumed the domain of Alexander the Great following their victory over **Philip** of Macedonia (v. 5) at Cynoscephalae in 197 BC, and his son **Perseus** at Pydna in 168 BC. Under Scipio, the Romans took **Spain** from the Carthaginians after the Second Punic War (202 BC) and the final defeat of Hannibal.

9:28-30 The Jews elected **Jonathan** as their new military leader in 159 BC. When **Bacchides** found out about the election, he tried to have Jonathan assassinated (v. 32). When that failed, he marched after the Jews on the Sabbath, thinking that he would take them by surprise (v. 34).

9:35-42 One of the remaining brothers, **John**, was killed by the **sons of Jambri**, apparently a local tribe, while journeying to the Nabateans in the Transjordan (Josephus).

9:54 **The wall of the inner court** of the temple had multiple functions. First, it separated the priests from the laity. Secondly, it divided the men from the women. Lastly and most importantly, it kept Gentiles from entering the sacred areas of the temple.

9:71 **Bacchides** finally realized that the Maccabees were the controlling force in Judean politics, so he made peace with them.

10:84 **Dagon** (lit. “a fish”) was one of the gods of the Philistines, a seafaring people, and was represented by a man's torso with the tail of a fish. Dagon had two temples mentioned in the Bible, one at Gaza (Jdg 16:21–30) and one at Ashdod (1Kg 5:5; 1Ch 10:10).

10:88-89 **Alexander** recognized **Jonathan** as an equal—a far cry from the Jews' rebel days in the Gophna hills.

11:67-74 **The foreign army** was from a conglomerate of tribes trying to take advantage of the struggle **Jonathan** faced against Demetrius.

13:1-11 The last of the original Maccabees, **Simon** was elected to take Jonathan's place as military and spiritual leader of Judea.

13:12-19 When **Simon** learned that **Jonathan** was still alive—they had thought he was dead—and being held captive, he negotiated with **Trypho**, who double-crossed him.

13:22 A providential **snow** storm stopped **Trypho** short of crushing the Maccabees.

13:23-30 **Jonathan** was killed at **Bascama** in 142 BC (Josephus). **Simon** recovered the body and buried it at **Modein** with the rest of their family.

13:31-32 **Trypho** was the first **king** not of the Seleucid house. According to Josephus, Trypho had his physicians tell the public **Antiochus** had died during surgery while they were trying to remove “a stone.”

13:42 Historians consider **Simon** the first **ruler** of the Hasmonean dynasty. After years of warfare, **the Jews** were finally freed from the yoke of the Seleucids.

13:43-53 **Simon** defeated **Gazara** and set up his son, **John**, as **commander** of forces (v. 53) and as high priest (16:24) from 134–104 BC. The citadel garrison, half starved, also gave in to Simon, who entered triumphantly (vv. 49, 50). This fortress was the final Seleucid stronghold, and its overthrow symbolized the hard-won freedom of the Jewish people.

14:26 The **bronze tablets** served as a national declaration of independence for the Jewish nation and as a kind of constitution for the Hasmonean government.

16:1-3 **John** was the third son of **Simon**. He reigned from 134–104 BC.

16:21 Ptolemy tried to kill **John** as well, but John's informers reached him first.

16:23-24 Later, after Antiochus besieged Jerusalem, he and John struck a treaty of peace. During the siege, Antiochus became known as “the pious” when he halted the war with the Jews for seven days and sent two adorned bulls into the city during the Feast of Tabernacles (Josephus).

1:1 Greek letters normally began with **greetings**, and Jewish letters began with the word **peace**. Though written entirely in Greek, 2 Maccabees employs both words. This is a letter from Jews in **Jerusalem** to Jews in **Egypt** concerning the celebration of Hanukkah.

1:7 The date refers to the year 143 BC (see 1Mc 10:67).

1:9 The true **Feast of Tabernacles** (or Booths) was an autumn event wherein water and wine were added to altar sacrifices commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egypt and then finding a homeland given by God. The feast commemorating Judas Maccabeus's restoration of the temple (10:3) is joined to that one. Today the feast is called Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights. During this feast torches were lit in the temple, and around them the people sang and danced. It was the feast (see Jn 7:2) at which Jesus stood and said, “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12). The date identified is 124 BC.

1:10 The section that follows (1:11–2:18) is a second letter from the Jews in Jerusalem to the Jewish **teacher** and scholar **Aristobulus**, who lived **in Egypt**.

1:13 **Nanea** is a pagan goddess, probably Aphrodite.

1:16 The author sees justice in divine retribution (3:27, 28; 9:28; 15:32, 33; see also 9:2 and 1Mc 6:1–4).

1:18 It is noteworthy that an eighth day was added to this celebration (see Neh 8:13–18). This section of 2 Maccabees is referring to the feast of Hanukkah, which celebrates fire and light (see note at 1:9).

1:20 The **liquid** is probably naphtha. Regardless, the story of **the fire** does not appear in **Nehemiah**, but in the rabbinical writings there is an account of a miracle wherein a small amount of oil burned for an extended period.

1:21 The prophet **Nehemiah** was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem that had been destroyed by fire (Neh 2:11–18).

1:24 This begins **the prayer** of Nehemiah (1:24–2:18). See also Neh 1:5–11.

2:1 These **records** are unknown today.

2:5 According to 3Kg 8:4, Solomon brought **the ark** as well as **the tabernacle** (or the tent) and its contents to Jerusalem. Afterward, there is no further mention of the tent in Scripture. There is a tradition in which **Jeremiah** took the ark from Jerusalem and hid it when the temple was destroyed in 587 BC.

2:10 The two incidents are recorded in Lv 9:23, 24 and 2Ch 7:1.

2:19-23 2 Maccabees is a shortened version of **five books** of Jewish history written by **Jason of Cyrene** (v. 23), which have been lost. This section explains the purpose of the book.

2:29-32 An apologetic for the **brevity of narrative** (v. 31) or short summary of Jason's five books (2:19–23) by the author.

3:1 **Onias III** was **high priest** before 175 BC. He is mentioned in WSir 50:1.

3:2 Throughout the book, **the place** is **the temple**.

3:3 **Seleucus IV** ruled from 187–175 BC. The events of 3:1–4:6 take place under his reign. During this period, there is a complicated political struggle involving Egypt and Syria and the family of the high priest.

3:5 Another famous **son of Tarsus** is the Apostle Paul (Acts 11:25, 26).

3:18 Onias probably had withheld tax money, and the time of relative peace was drawing to an end. The entire city was being pulled into the turmoil.

3:20 The people **stretched out their hands** to pray. Perhaps the earliest account of the lifting of hands for intercession is in Moses' role in Israel's victory over Amalek (Ex 17:8–13). St. Paul instructs the Church to pray “lifting up holy hands” (1Ti 2:8).

3:25 The scene calls to mind the **rider** in Rev 6:2.

3:26 This is reminiscent of the **two** angels in dazzling apparel in Lk 24:4 and Acts 1:10.

3:34 The angel in Acts 5:19, 20 gives similar instructions.

4:7 **Seleucus** is replaced by **Antiochus**, who rules from 175–164 BC. **Epiphanes** means “god is manifest.”

4:8 A **talent** is a weight, here in **silver,** equal to approximately 3000 shekels, or about $385.

4:10 The **Greek way of life** included the worship of pagan gods.

4:12 This particular **Greek cap** is linked to the Greek god Hermes.

4:13 **Jason** no longer kept the Mosaic Law, but instead **foreign customs**. Ethnic tradition must never take precedence over apostolic tradition in the Church.

4:17 God gave the Law to Moses, and for a Jew not to obey **divine laws** was **ungodly**, equivalent to apostasy.

4:22 **Phoenicia** is on the Mediterranean coastline just north of modern-day Beirut, Lebanon. The ancient ruins of this kingdom still exist there.

4:26 Evil divides. It picks allies only for the moment and is **undermined** when pride causes new rifts. Thus, Jesus warns, “Every city or house divided against itself will not stand” (Mt 12:25).

4:33 In ancient days **a safe place** was provided for people in certain religious sites. This particular haven is a pagan temple dedicated to Greek gods. **Daphne** was a suburb outside of **Antioch**, Syria.

4:38 Being **stripped** before being put **to death** added to the humiliation.

5:2 **Forty days** is a biblical number of completion or fullness. The Flood lasted forty days and nights (Gn 7:12); Jonah declared Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days (Jon 3:4).

5:6 One is reminded of Herod's destruction of the innocent children **without mercy** at the time of the birth of Jesus (Mt 2:16–18).

5:11 **The city** here is Jerusalem.

5:15-20 **Antiochus** was permitted by God to carry out this insane desecration of **the most holy temple** because of the sins of the people. It was not just because Antiochus was bent on destruction, but because **the Lord** allowed it for the good of His people (vv. 17, 18).

5:19 Because **the Lord** chose **the nation** Israel, **the place** (the temple) was located there.

5:25 **Jews** did not **work** or **take up arms** on **the Sabbath**.

6:2-5 A pagan statue or **altar** (v. 5) was erected in the **temple in Jerusalem** and a sexual fertility cult was instituted. In addition, swine and other **unfitting things** (v. 4) were sacrificed in the temple.

6:7 **Dionysus** is the pagan god of wine who rules over a celebration of drunkenness.

6:11 This is another example of the Jews **piously** keeping **the seventh day**, the Sabbath. In the same spirit, Christians are urged to assemble for worship (Heb 10:25).

6:12-16 This short treatise on divine **discipline** is very similar to the teaching, “whom **the Lord** loves He chastens,” in Heb 12:5–11. (See also Is 54:7, 8.)

6:24-31 **Eleazar** is willing to die for God's **holy laws** (v. 28). This is a mystery to the pagan-minded, who only see blind fanaticism in the righteous. St. Paul explains why unbelievers do not understand (1Co 2:14).

7:1 Like 6:18–31, ch. 7 bears a likeness to the early Christian accounts of the deaths of martyrs for Christ. The details of each death serve to portray the depths of faith in the story of the **seven brothers** and **their mother**. St. Cyprian, in a letter designed to strengthen one who was on the verge of martyrdom, wrote extensively of the martyrdom of each of these seven men and their mother.

7:6 Shortly before his death, **Moses** sings to Israel in Dt 32. The quote here is from Dt 32:36.

7:9 **The King of the world** is the Son of God, who is the source of resurrection and eternal life for those who follow His commandments.

7:14 In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus speaks of two paths for the resurrected: eternal life for those who have done good and condemnation for those who have done evil (Jn 5:29).

7:20 A basic hymn and prayer of the Orthodox Church is “Memory Eternal”—that the righteous departed will be kept in God's **memory** for all eternity. The **mother** and the seven brothers bring to mind the fullness of God's mercy and love.

7:22 It is the Spirit of God who gives **breath and life** to all people who come into the world (see Gn 2:7).

7:24-31 The tactics of **Antiochus** were often used by executioners to tempt Christian martyrs to reject Christ.

7:28 That God created the universe **out of nothing** is a fundamental teaching of the Holy Scriptures (Gn 1:1; also see Heb 11:3).

7:29 The mother clearly confesses the bodily resurrection from the dead.

7:37-38 While condemning King Antiochus' actions, the youngest brother also hopes that he will eventually repent and **confess that He alone is God**.

8:1-7 The lowest point of the book has been reached, and now the people of Israel begin to revolt against the Gentiles under the leadership of **Judas Maccabeus**.

8:16 The revolt gains momentum and the early successes attract **six thousand** Jews, who form an army in order to enter full-scale warfare against the **Gentiles**.

8:23 The outmanned army of Jews with its **watchword** is not unlike the army of the Emperor Constantine, who fought in the name of Christ to defeat a superior foe in the early fourth century.

8:26-27 Even in the heat of battle, keeping **the Sabbath** took precedence over all else.

9:8 There is a song of peace in Isaiah wherein no one but the Lord can **weigh the high mountains** (Is 40:12); but Antiochus is so absorbed in **superhuman arrogance** he is seen as making himself equal to God (see 9:12).

9:9 Note that Herod was inflicted with a similar condition (Acts 12:23).

9:11-18 Antiochus' repentance is a classic case of too little too late. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31).

10:5 **The twenty-fifth** of **Chislev** on the Hebrew calendar corresponds with December 25, bringing to mind the coming of the Son of God in the flesh for the **purification** of mankind.

10:6 **The Feast of Tabernacles** is a September Jewish feast, mentioned in Lv 23:43 as the Feast of Booths, when the Jews would live in booths constructed out of palm branches.

10:7 The scene is reminiscent of Palm Sunday (Jn 12:13).

10:10 **Antiochus Eupator** inherits the kingdom in 9:25. He is a young boy who reigns for only two years before being murdered (see 14:1, 2; 1Mc 7:34).

10:29 See Rev 9:17.

10:38 The Jews begin (10:16) and end their task in prayer.

11:3 It was a pagan Greek practice to sell the **high priesthood** annually in order to raise money for the government.

11:8 See 3:25.

11:16 The name of Judas Maccabeus is conspicuous in its absence from these **letters**, an obvious snub by **Lysias**.

11:21 December, 164 BC.

12:2 **Timothy**: See 8:30–33.

12:8 **Jamnia** is just south of Joppa.

12:15 See Jos 6:1–21.

12:22 A **manifestation** of God, **who sees all things**.

12:31 This is a wheat harvest feast celebrated seven weeks after Passover when **men** were required to be present in **Jerusalem**.

12:32 **Pentecost** is used here as another name for the Feast of Weeks.

12:40 These **tokens** are pagan charms that are idolatrous to **the Jews**.

12:42 This is a clear statement that the righteous Jews **prayed** for the departed so that **the sin they had committed** might be **blotted out**.

12:43-44 It is hope in the **resurrection** of the **departed** that forms the basis for prayers for them. In Christ all are alive. The power of these verses clearly indicates the depth of belief the Jews had in both the resurrection and the power of prayer for those gone before us to their rest.

12:45 Judas Maccabeus leads the Jews in praying for the release of their compatriots who had sinned.

13:4 **The King of kings** is the Eternal Son and Word of God (see Rev 19:13, 16).

13:12 To pray in a prostrate position was a sign of great need to be freed from acts of sacrilege (see 3:15; 10:4). The fact that they made **prostrations for three days** and then arose reminds us of the third-day resurrection of Jesus Christ.

14:1 This is about the year 161 BC. The invaders kill both **Antiochus** and **Lysias** (see 1Mc 7:2–4).

14:4 By offering the **crown of gold** Alcimus concedes that **Demetrius** is the new king, and the **palm branch** is an emblem of his victory. Our Lord is offered palm branches in Jerusalem emblematic of His Kingship (Jn 12:13).

14:6-10 The parallels between Alcimus and Judas Iscariot are noteworthy. Alcimus attempts to destroy **Judas Maccabeus** as Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus.

14:15 Sprinkling **earth** on the head is a sign of humility and a recognition of God the Creator (see Gn 3:19 and also Jos 7:6).

14:33 Since the Jews had recent memory of the cult of **Dionysus,** this **oath** would have had profound impact (see 6:7).

14:35-36 This petition reflects the traditional patterns of Jewish liturgical prayer.

15:1 **Nicanor** was aware the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath.

15:2 These **Jews** were conscripted into Nicanor's army and wished to keep the **Sabbath** (see Ex 20:8–11).

15:12 **Onias** is the **high priest** recorded in 3:1–4:1.

15:14 The Jews believed departed saints like **Jeremiah** were alive before the general resurrection. This is clearly revealed in the New Testament when Moses and Elijah appear with Christ on Mt. Tabor (Mt 17:1–4).

15:18 The Jews' **main concern** is to protect the **temple** (see 14:33).

15:22 See 4Kg 19:35.

15:26 One of the **prayers** the Jews may have used in battle is Ps 68, the verses of which the Orthodox Church uses to begin Paschal Matins, Liturgy, and Vespers. They announce Christ's defeat of death and the devil.

15:30 This is **Nicanor's** right **arm**, which he used to point at the temple sanctuary and threaten to level the altar and erect a shrine to Dionysus (see 14:33; 15:32).

15:39 **Delights the ears** indicates this work was meant to be read aloud.

1:1 **Philopator** is Ptolemy IV (see 3:12). The battle **near Raphia** is dated by most at 217 BC. **Arsinoe** was the sister of Philopator, who married her and later had her murdered.

1:2 **Theodotus** had led the Egyptian army into Syria.

1:4 **Antiochus** III ruled Syria in the years 223–187 BC.

1:9 **The Almighty God** can also be rendered “God Most High” (1:16; see also 4:16) or even “the Greatest God.” **The place** is a reference in late Jewish antiquity to the temple (v. 10) at **Jerusalem**.

1:10-11 **Inner sanctuary** is a reference to the holy of holies. For a Gentile to enter this area would ritually defile it and be a great offense against God. Israel and especially the priests would be held accountable.

1:12 Evidently, Ptolemy thought the Jews were making up **the law** to keep him out. They **read** him the law to try to convince him (Ex 30:10; Lv 16:2, 11, 12, 15, 34). The king feels slighted and sees the high priest as beneath him.

1:13 **The other shrines** are various places in the temple.

1:16 The response of the Jews to Ptolemy's plan is telling. **The priests**, caring nothing for appearance, immediately supplicate **God Most High** for help, and do so loudly with **cries and tears**. The priests were **fully vested** for sacrifice and thanksgiving; sackcloth and ashes were for penitence.

1:17 This is an activity repeated in 2Mc 3:20–30.

1:20 **Mothers and nurses** caring for infants left them to entreat God for protection from Ptolemy's sin.

1:22-23 **Aggressive citizens** is likely a reference to young men filled with zeal for the Lord and the traditions **of their fathers**. They were **barely restrained** by the older and wiser men who prevailed over them. The older men convinced the younger to join in **prayer** instead, knowing their uncontrolled fervor would result in the slaughter of all present.

1:25 **The elders** were Ptolemy's guides in the temple as well as his advisors.

1:27 Even those accompanying **the king** now joined together in prayer to God.

1:28 The cacophony is so intense that it seems even the temple **walls** themselves rebel against such blasphemous action.

2:1 **Simon** was the son of Onias II and **high priest** from 219–196 BC. According to Sirach, he was a great spiritual leader of the Jews who repaired and fortified the temple at Jerusalem (WSir 50:1–21). His **prayer** follows Jewish tradition, beginning with praise and doxology, glorifying God as the ruler of the universe. Then follows a commemoration, calling to remembrance God's past mighty deeds on behalf of His people. A fervent petition for divine favor and action punctuates its closure.

2:2 References to God as **King of the heavens** include Dan 4:37; 1Ez 4:46, 58; Jdt 9:12; Tb 13:7, 11.

2:5 **Sodom**: See Gn 13:13; Dt 29:23; WSol 10:6–8; 2Ez 2:8; Lk 17:29; 2Pt 2:6; Jude 1:7.

2:6 **Punishment on . . . Pharaoh**: See Ex 5–12; Rom 9:17.

2:7 **The sea**: See Ex 14:21–28.

2:9 **Chose this city**: Jerusalem is specifically mentioned throughout the Old Testament as having been the city God has chosen for His **name** (see 3Kg 8:44, 48; 11:32, 36; 14:21; 4Kg 23:27; 2Ch 6:34, 38; 12:13; WSir 49:6).

2:13 Simon does not excuse the Israelites' responsibility for their current situation, but rather acknowledges their plight is the result of their **manifold sins**. Israel is **lying in helplessness** if they face Ptolemy without God's help.

2:15 **The heaven of the heavens** is a superlative indicating the true **dwelling place** of God is beyond the temple, in the highest of all heights, the most heavenly heaven.

2:16 **Your glory** is a reference to the *shekinah*, or the manifest glory of God to Israel, who dwells in the tabernacle and the temple, showing His presence among the people. For Christians, the manifest glory of God to Israel is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who before His Incarnation made Himself present among the Israelites (Ex 24:16, 17; 40:34, 35; Lv 9:23; 2Ch 5:14; 7:1–3).

2:18 The final indignity to a defeated people was to destroy their houses of worship.

2:22 Ptolemy, because of his arrogance before God, **shook** and became as **powerless** as the idols of vanity (see also 2Mc 3:27–29 for God's similar treatment of Heliodorus).

2:24 Ptolemy slinks away, humiliated but unrepentant.

2:25 Returning **to Egypt** only served to strengthen Ptolemy's resolve to get revenge on the Hebrews.

2:28 The battle lines are drawn in this unseen warfare. **The Jews** must not worship their God, and everyone in Alexandria must **sacrifice** to Dionysus. (For a similar battle of powers, see Dan 3.) The **census** is of slaves and **servant** classes, seemingly unique to Alexandria. The Jews are effectively becoming the property of the state.

2:29 **Those registered** are those who willingly comply. They will **be branded**, and this mark of allegiance will be permanent. Some people in ancient times would mark or brand themselves with the **symbol** of their god, here the **ivy leaf**. St. John predicts a similar mark of the beast (Rev 13:16, 17) in the end times.

2:31 Worshipping the one true God was fine, but not if it involved suffering.

2:32 Like Jacob, who struggled with God and **prevailed** (though he did not “win” the fight with the angel), the Jews are prevailing because they will not **abandon their faith**. They also **paid** bribes **to save their lives**.

2:33 These dissenters have not only denounced their God, but are considered **betrayers** to the whole **nation** of Jews.

3:1 **King** Ptolemy IV was well known for his profanity and **rage**.

3:2 The **pretext** for destroying **the Jewish nation** will be their alleged oppression of others—which is also an excuse set forth by those opposing Christians today.

3:8 The **Greeks** in Egypt understood that if the Jews, who had done nothing wrong, have fallen under **tyranny**, surely no one else is safe either. They act honorably to defend the Jews and aid them.

3:11 **King** Ptolemy IV is living off his father's political and material capital and reveling in it.

3:12-29 The king's anger and spite are clear from the self-justifying style of the letter.

3:21 For many years, Jews had been **entrusted** with positions of authority, influence, and management in **Alexandrian** society because they were trustworthy and honest fulfillers of their duty. Many faithfully manned the fortresses that guarded Ptolemy's kingdom (see 6:25).

3:23 **Citizenship** in Alexandria could not be purchased, as could later Roman citizenship, but instead was granted as a royal favor.

3:25 The king is calling for the destruction of fathers.

3:27 Now genocide is being advocated, and Ptolemy expects the cooperation of his people.

3:30 Rather than putting forth an exact copy of the actual letter, the author states this is a paraphrase, containing **the manner** and tone of the original letter.

4:1 A **public** ceremony was held in Ptolemy's typical style, allowing inhabitants to drink heavily and revile **the Jews**.

4:4 Death and the great fragility of human life carries a spiritual, emotional, and psychological **uncertainty** for men (WSir 7:36).

4:5 The easiest Jews to identify and arrest would be the elders **with gray hair**, who were to be led away first.

4:7-8 The Jews cannot even protect their newlyweds from seizure and arrest, a terrible disgrace. The whole scene gives the impression of incredible despair.

4:11 **Schedia** is a small peninsula not far from Alexandria, about three miles. There are so many Jews, they must be interred in the enormous **hippodrome** or stadium at the east gate of Alexandria.

4:13 Up until now, the Jews of Alexandria have been **spared** such shameful treatment.

4:14 Such an unusual command can only demonstrate Ptolemy's irrational rage at the Jews. Recall that at the time of the Nativity of Christ, the Jews were called to be registered and enrolled, each with his own tribe (Lk 2:1–4).

4:15 **Forty days**: A traditional time of preparation, mentioned with great frequency and rich symbolism in Holy Scripture.

4:17-18 The job was too big to complete. This failure was due to God's providence (4:21).

5:1 War **elephants** usually were associated closely with their trainers, and watching over this group would be the master trainer, **Hermon**.

5:2 **Five hundred** elephants would ensure that not one Jew in the hippodrome would escape a frightful death. Ancient war elephants were specimens of extraordinary size and power. They were used not only for battle, but also as beasts of burden. **Wine** in ancient times was thick and potent, like a syrup, which was mixed with water to give it a drinkable consistency. **Frankincense** was a medical remedy for poisoning. To keep the elephants healthy, Ptolemy ordered that they be given this antidote to the wine so they might not later suffer the effects of inebriation.

5:7 References to **God** as **Father** exist several times in the Old Testament (2:21; Ps 88:26; Tb 13:4; WSol 2:16; WSir 23:4; 2Ez 1:29).

5:11 According to WSir 31:20, healthful sleep depends on moderate eating. This **deep sleep** is a godsend for the Jews and a blessing for Ptolemy.

5:13 Their execution should have taken place in the morning.

5:14 This would be 4:30 p.m. **The king** has slept away the entire day.

5:20 **Phalaris** was the ruler of sixth-century BC Agrigentum. His **savagery** and cruelty were legendary. **The godless Jews** were those who did not sacrifice to the official gods of Greek or Roman cities. They were considered atheists by the locals.

5:22 Ptolemy's friends are preparing to revile those whom the king clearly wants destroyed in order to gain his favor.

5:24 Even the **pitiful sight** of a horrific death is still entertainment for pagans of the ancient world.

5:27-30 Through riotous feasting, Ptolemy is not only still drunk, but he cannot recall his former commands. **The king** is exhibiting more than his characteristic impulsiveness. **God** is at work, first bringing the king sleep and now removing his memory of his vicious orders.

5:31 The king himself declares the Jews **innocent**. He has not forgotten the loyalty they have shown as faithful citizens of Egypt for generations.

5:34 Ptolemy's drinking **friends** have no desire to stay and bear the brunt of his anger. The party is over, and **one by one** they take leave.

5:35 Someone reports to **the Jews** what is happening. They give praise to **God**.

5:36 The king has sobered up enough to begin the whole cycle of revelry **as before**.

5:39-41 Finally, the royal family **administrators** speak up, warning that the city is in chaos. These episodes of Ptolemy's are riling up **the growing crowds**.

5:43 Ptolemy is now adding his characteristic promises to utterly destroy his enemies. It borders on royal hyperbole because he never fulfills his threats.

5:50-51 The Jews have bade each other farewell (v. 49), but still call on the Lord for **help** even against all odds and cry out for **mercy**. In the Gospels, there are seven instances of someone calling on Jesus for mercy (Mt 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30, 31; Mk 10:47, 48; Lk 17:13; 18:38, 39). In every case, they receive it.

6:1 The name **Eleazar** means “God has helped.” His prayer follows the pattern of Simon's earlier prayer (see notes on 2:1–20).

6:2-5 Eleazar likens Israel to that portion of the sacrifices which was set aside for Aaron and his sons (the priests) as their perpetual due from Israel (Lv 7:34, 35; Nm 18:8–18). The Jews have become the inheritance of the Lord (Ps 27:9; 32:12; Is 19:25). More than a chosen nation, they have been set apart for holiness. **Sennacherib** (v. 5) was the king of Assyria during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah. The episode noted is the occasion when, at the supplication of Israel, God sent an angel who in one night slew 185,000 of Sennacherib's forces, sending him home to Nineveh in humiliation and defeat. He was assassinated shortly afterwards (4Kg 18:13; 19:35–37; WSir 48:18–21).

6:6 Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (their pagan names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) are the **three** young men in the fiery furnace recorded in Dan 3.

6:7 The deliverance of the Prophet **Daniel** here is a type of the Resurrection.

6:8 **Jonah** is well known as a typological prophecy of the Resurrection of Christ. For the Lord, upon His Resurrection, was given back to His people, His disciples, His kin, and His mother.

6:15 The statement **You are with us** (Is 8:10) is of such importance that it is repeated at Great Compline services. The ultimate experience of this reality is Immanuel, “God with us,” our Lord Jesus Christ.

6:18 **Almighty** in Greek is *pantocrator*. In Orthodox theology the title Pantocrator is reserved for Christ, the Ruler of all Creation. **Manifested** in Greek is *epifanas*, from which we get the English word “epiphany.” The heavenly **doors** open to reveal **angels** or heavenly mysteries. These angelic powers are usually arrayed for battle. They terrify the enemy and strike with impunity those adversaries God sent the angels to destroy (see 2Mc 3:25, 26; 10:29, 30).

6:21 The fate intended for the Jews has been visited upon their enemies, just as it was with Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea.

6:23 A great number of Ptolemy's armed men were slain. Ptolemy has repented of attacking the innocent Jews, not of his cruel and arbitrary behavior.

6:26 They **differed** in that they worship only the one true God.

6:31 The Jews are being given the seat of honor at feasts in honor of their deliverance.

6:32 **Ode of their fathers**: Undoubtedly a psalm or the song of the three young men in the fiery furnace (Dan 3:23–91). This would have become a regular feature in Jewish liturgical practice. How much more appropriate at such a celebration—and everyone would know the words!

6:35 See Col 3:16; Jam 5:13.

6:38 The number **forty** represents a period of preparation, exercise, and readiness. Here the Jews were waiting for their salvation. In light of this pattern, both Advent (Nativity fast) and Great Lent (Paschal fast) are periods of forty days, in preparation respectively for the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6:41 Unlike the previous **letter** (3:12–29), which was paraphrased in content and tone, the author states that this letter has been **copied**.

7:2 The **children** are Ptolemy's family and friends at court. Ptolemy had only one child and heir.

7:3 Though changed, Ptolemy still does not take full responsibility for his own actions, perhaps in order to make his previous royal order not seem ridiculous.

7:5 **The Scythians** were infamous for their savagery and brutality.

7:9 **God the most High**: Another ancient way of referring to the God of Israel, and one frequently used in localities where non-Jews abound (see Gn 14:19–22; Dan 3:26; Mk 5:7; Lk 8:28; Acts 16:17).

7:10 While living under Gentile dominion, **the Jews** had to ask permission of **the king** to enforce their own laws with regard to putting someone to death (see Jn 18:31).

7:13 **Alleluia** is the Greco-Roman version of the Hebrew *hallelujah*, meaning “praise the Lord.” Even after aggrandizing the king, the Jews give praise to God for all that He in His power has accomplished on their behalf.

7:14 The Jews now seek out, **punish**, and publicly humiliate the apostate Jews who dared to receive the branding mark of Dionysus (see note at 2:29).

7:17 The coastal city of **Ptolemais**, southwest of modern-day Cairo, was an easily defensible harbor on the Egyptian coast and a popular anchorage for the Alexandrian fleet. (There were many cities named Ptolemais, one near Thebes in Egypt and even one in Israel, the modern city of Akko on the Mediterranean Sea, on the north coast of the Bay of Haifa.)

7:20 **A column**: A common commemorative to memorialize a military victory or other exceptionally significant event.

7:22 In their absence, their possessions were plundered. No one expected them to be **reclaimed**. This was unprecedented.

1:1 The Man in Ps 1 is the Lord Jesus Christ (JohnChr, AmbM, Eust, CyrAl, Aug, and Cass). Thus, the Incarnation sets the tone of Psalms, and in the Psalms the Incarnate Lord teaches His Church how to pray. This is why Psalms is the prayer book of the Church.

Ps 1 presents how Jesus lived His life in this world by showing the contrast between His godly life and the life of the ungodly. The Church, then, is to follow His example: His behavior in relation to the ungodly (v. 1); His zeal for the truth (v. 2); and His holy and virtuous life (v. 3).

2:1 **The Lord** in Ps 2 is God the Father, and Jesus is called **His anointed** (v. 2), which means “His Christ.” Jesus is also called **King** (v. 6), which is declared by the Father's eternal **decree**. Jesus is King without beginning and without end, and He is King **over His holy hill of Zion**, which is the Church. Jesus is also the **Son** of God the Father (v. 7), for He was **begotten** from the Father outside of time and “before all worlds” (Creed). He was also begotten in these last times by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, “for us men and for our salvation” (Creed). Then again, He was begotten in the sense of His Resurrection from the dead (Acts 13:32, 33). But Jesus is also the King over **the nations** (v. 8), which in due time, He will **shatter like a potter's vessel** (v. 9) when He restores heaven and earth, and reigns eternally with His saints in “the world to come” (Creed). Therefore, the rulers of the nations are called to serve this King, or they will be judged; but **blessed are all who trust in Him** (v. 12).

3:1 The historical account in Ps 3 is that of King David fleeing from his son, Absalom (2Kg 15–18). But prophetically, Ps 3 is speaking of Jesus as the Son of David according to the flesh (Mt 1:1; Rom 1:3). Thus, Jesus is praying to the **Lord**, who is God the Father (vv. 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9). And the **many** . . . **who rise up against me** (v. 2) are the fallen angels, of whom Absalom and his army were a type. These angels, which number **ten thousands** (v. 7), always lie in their denial of man's salvation through Christ (v. 3). But just as Jesus always rejected their lies (vv. 4–9), so He is teaching His Church to do the same.

4:1 Ps 4 emphasizes **the End** (vv. 1, 2). Christ "*is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4), and He is "the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End" (Rev 1:8). He exhorts people not to be **slow of heart**, and not to **love vain things**, nor to **seek after lies** (v. 3). Rather, they should realize that **the Lord**, who is the Father, has made His **Holy One**, who is Christ, to be **wondrous** (v. 4) in His death and Resurrection (v. 9).

5:1 Ps 5 is similar to Ps 4, again emphasizing **the End** (v. 1). Christ is the End **concerning the inheritance** (v. 1), which is the Church and the world to come (Creed). For Christ and His inheritance are the end to which God's eternal purpose is moving (Eph 3:11). And in His prayer to the Father, whom He calls **Lord** and **King** and **God** (vv. 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13), He is teaching the Church how to pray and worship in her morning prayers (v. 4) as she travels through this present lawless world (vv. 5–13).

6:1 Ps 6 teaches the Church the spirit of humility the faithful should have when they pray, “Lord, have mercy,” for this petition is repeated again and again in the services of worship. This spirit of humility is characterized by (1) a request for mercy, rather than a stern reproof and discipline because of our sins (v. 1); (2) a recognition of the weakness and frailty of our mortal nature (vv. 3, 4); (3) a request for deliverance and salvation (vv. 5, 6); (4) a contrite spirit, characterized by tears and the need for help with respect to sinful passions (vv. 7, 8); and (5) a firm stand against the fallen angels and the Lord's needed help in this warfare (vv. 9–11).

7:1 The historical background of Ps 7 is Absalom's rebellion against his father, King David. This history is found in 2Kg 14–18. King David and his army prefigure Christ and the Church, whereas Absalom and his army represent the devil and his angels.

Thus, Ps 7 teaches the Church how to pray in this warfare: (1) The faithful place their hope in God for deliverance from the enemy, that is the devil, called **a lion** (v. 3; see also 1Pt 5:8). (2) Personal virtue in the Church is essential for successful warfare against this enemy (vv. 4–17). (3) The credit for any victory achieved goes to the Lord (v. 18).

8:1 Ps 8 speaks of the Incarnate Lord: (1) His name is **wondrous** . . . **in all the earth**, and He is **exalted far beyond the heavens** (v. 2; see also Php 2:9–11). (2) He brings forth praise from His humble people, who are likened to little children (v. 3; see also Mt 18:1–4; 21:15, 16). (3) He is the Creator of the universe (v. 4; see also Heb 1:10–12). (4) He remembered man and his mortal nature, for example, his fall into death and decay in the grave, and thus, became incarnate to redeem him from death and to **crown him with glory and honor** (vv. 5–9; see also Heb 2:6–10). (5) Because of the things mentioned above, the incarnate Lord's name is wondrous in all the earth.

9:1 At Ps 9 the numerical divergence begins between the Septuagint (LXX) and the Masoretic Text. In the LXX, Ps 9 and 10 are combined.

Ps 9 is **concerning the hidden things of the Son**. Now this Son is the Only-begotten Son of the Father, and He is the judge of all mankind. As the Creed says, “He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.” And at **the End**, that is, in the coming judgment, He shall reveal “hidden things.” Thus, the theme of judgment runs throughout the psalm (vv. 5, 8, 9, 17, 20, 26, and 39), and things now hidden will be revealed, some of which are prophesied by David in this psalm. For example, all the deeds of the ungodly will be remembered, exposed and judged (vv. 32–35), for everything will be brought into the light. However, the godly now give thanks to the Lord with a repentant and grateful heart (vv. 1, 2), for they know the Lord will reign over His kingdom forever (v. 37). For His “kingdom shall have no end” (Creed).

10:1 Ps 10 shows what it means for the Church to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 1), for He is **the End**. (1) Trusting in the Lord overcomes cowardice (**Flee to the mountains like a sparrow**, v. 1). (2) Trusting in the Lord overcomes the devil and his angels (vv. 2, 3; see also Eph 6:16). (3) Trusting in the Lord makes the Church a dwelling place of God (v. 4a; see also 1Co 3:16, 17; Eph 2:21, 22). (4) Trusting in the Lord keeps one poor in spirit (v. 4b; see also Mt 5:3). (5) Trusting in the Lord helps one love virtue and hate vice (vv. 5–7; see also Heb 1:9; 1Pt 3:10–12).

11:1 Ps 11 presents a contrast between the godly who live in light of Christ (**the End**, v. 1) and the **eighth** day (v. 1), that is, “the coming of Christ, the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed); and the ungodly, who **walk in a circle** (v. 9), that is, who live only within the confined vision of their seven days each week. And as the godly journey through this present world, (1) they pray for deliverance from the ungodliness around them (vv. 2, 3); (2) they ask the Lord to destroy the ungodly attitudes and behavior around them (vv. 4, 5); and (3) they groan to the Lord in the midst of their suffering (v. 6a). And because of their prayers and groaning in this way, the Lord, through His Resurrection (**I will arise**, v. 6), (1) boldly establishes them **in salvation** (v. 6); (2) purifies them in virtue with His words (v. 7); (3) guards and preserves them from the ungodly generation (v. 8); and (4) through His Ascension (**exaltation**, v. 9b), highly exalts His godly ones (v. 9b; see also Php 2:9–11; Eph 2:6, 7).

12:1 Ps 12 teaches the Church how to attain to an exceedingly joyful heart in singing to the Lord (v. 6b), who is **the End** (v. 1): (1) by godly sorrow and repentance over sins committed, lest the devil and sinful passions (**my enemy**) be victorious (vv. 3, 5; see also 2Co 7:10); (2) by petitioning the Lord to enlighten the eyes of the heart, lest the **sleep in death** overtake one (v. 4; see also Eph 1:18; 5:14); and (3) by hoping in the Lord's mercy (v. 6a).

13:1 Ps 13 describes both Jews and Gentiles who say in their hearts, **“There is no God”** (v. 1; see also Rom 3:9–18). For although they may claim to know God, nevertheless, they are actually denying He exists, because of (1) their total involvement in a state of moral depravity (vv. 1, 3); (2) their refusal to seek God (v. 2); (3) their persecution of God's righteous people (vv. 4–6); and (4) their denial of the Incarnate God, the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 7).

14:1 Ps 14 teaches the Church the transfigured life the faithful are to live (v. 1), as they “look for the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed). They are (1) to be holy inwardly and outwardly (v. 2); and (2) to love their neighbor (vv. 3–5). And those who live this way **shall never be shaken** (v. 6), either in this world or in the world to come.

15:1 Ps 15, similar to Ps 14, teaches the Church the transfigured life in the Person of God Incarnate, who assumed the weakness of mortal flesh (but without sin) for the sake of the **inheritance** (vv. 5, 6), which is “the world to come” (Creed). And as Man, He interceded to the Father on behalf of the Church, (1) to preserve those who hope in the Father (v. 1, 2); (2) to magnify His will in them amid the fallen world (vv. 3, 4); (3) to enlighten them (v. 7); (4) that they should keep their eyes on the Father (v. 8); (5) that they should hope in the resurrection from the dead, because the soul of Jesus was not left in Hades, nor did His body decay in the grave, and therefore, they should not fear death (vv. 9, 10; see also Acts 2:25–31; 13:35–37); for He was raised from the dead for the sake of their life (v. 11) “in the world to come” (Creed).

16:1 Ps 16 was prayed by the Lord Jesus to the Father, to teach the Church to pray righteously and **not with deceitful lips** (v. 1); for the Lord **gives ear** to those praying in truth (vv. 1, 6). And we (1) see things the way the Lord sees them (v. 2); (2) pass the test in the furnace of obedience to the Lord's words (vv. 3–5); (3) hope in the Lord in the face of adversity (v. 7); (4) experience protection from enemies, such as the devil and his angels (vv. 8–14); and (5) are satisfied by beholding the Lord's face, that is, His glory (v. 15).

17:1 Ps 17 is set in the historical background of David's deliverance from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul (1Kg 19–31). However, this psalm is forecasting and **magnifying the salvation** (v. 51) of the Father's King, who is called Christ (**His anointed**) and **David**, for He is the Son of David. The seed of the Son of David is the Church.

Man's enemies were death and the decay of the body in the grave, Hades, and the devil. And these held man in great fear and dread and in bondage to sinful passions (vv. 1–6; see also Heb 2:14, 15). But in His Incarnation, Christ **descended** from **heaven** (v. 10) and destroyed these enemies (vv. 7–16), and brought everything into the light (v. 29; see also 2Ti 1:10). He ascended on high and called the Gentiles (vv. 17–50).

18:1 Ps 18 reveals God the Word (**the End**, v. 1) becoming Man in the womb of the most holy Mother of God. For on His Nativity, all creation bore witness to **the glory of God** revealed in His Incarnation (vv. 1–5). And in His birth from the womb of the Virgin, He was likened to the sun rising from the east, to a bridegroom coming from his chamber, and to a strong man ready to run a race, to bring salvation to the world (vv. 6–15).

19:1 Ps 19 is a royal psalm, for it is a prophecy made on behalf of Jesus Christ the **King** (v. 10), who is **the End** (v. 1). Also, v. 7 identifies Jesus as God's Christ (**His anointed**) and as **His right hand**. For the name “Christ” shows the Father anointed the human nature of Jesus with the Holy Spirit (see Heb 1:9; Lk 1:35; Is 61:1); and the names “right hand” and “King” show Jesus is one in essence with the Father and coequal with Him.

This prophecy is first a prayer to the Father, who is called **the Lord** and **the God of Jacob** (v. 2). Numerous petitions are made on Christ's behalf (vv. 2–5), one of which regards His death and Resurrection (vv. 4, 7; see also Heb 5:7). Secondly, the prophecy reveals the response of the Church to His salvation (vv. 6–10), one element of which is great joy (v. 6).

20:1 Ps 20 is also a royal psalm, because it is a prophecy of the King's triumphal Ascension, in which He is also **the End**.

The Father is identified as the **Lord** (vv. 2, 8) and as **the Most High** (v. 8); and the King is also called **the Lord** (v. 10), who is **exalted** (v. 14) in His Ascension, as well as the Father's **hand** and **right hand** (v. 9). In being called by these names, Jesus is shown to be one in essence and coequal with the Father.

Jesus asked the Father to raise Him from the dead and to enthrone Him at His right hand for the sake of our salvation (vv. 1–8; see also Heb 5:7–9). And in His death, Resurrection and Ascension, He destroyed all the enemies, namely, the devil and his angels (vv. 9–13). So, in response to all the Lord's **mighty deeds**, the Church sings and praises Him (v. 14).

21:1 Ps 21 is a prophecy of the Lord's death and Resurrection, and of His Church. Thus, this psalm may be outlined as follows: (1) the Resurrection (v. 1); (2) the Crucifixion (vv. 2–22); (3) the Church (vv. 23–33).

(1) Christ is **the End**, and He was resurrected early **in the morning** (v. 1; see also Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1). (2) The New Testament quotes several verses from this psalm in relation to the Crucifixion: for example, v. 2, quoted in Mt 27:46 and Mk 15:34; v. 9, quoted in Mt 27:43; and v. 19, quoted in Mt 27:35. (3) The New Testament also quotes v. 23 in Heb 2:12, referring to the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church” (Creed).

22:1 Ps 22 is the Church speaking about the Lord Jesus (vv. 1–3) and to the Lord Jesus (vv. 4–6). In speaking about the Lord, the Church (the sheep; see also Jn 10:1–5) identifies Him as **my shepherd** (v. 1; see also Jn 10:14), thus indicating a close relationship with Him. And in this relationship of Shepherd and sheep, the Church lacks nothing, for example, the **green pastures** of kingdom life (v. 2; see also Jn 10:10); the **still waters** of baptism (v. 2; see also Jn 3:5); and the conversion of the soul to **the paths of righteousness** (v. 3; see also Jn 10:3, 4, 7). And in speaking to the Lord, the Church is grateful to Him (1) for deliverance from the fear of death (v. 4; see also Heb 2:14, 15); (2) for the Eucharist (v. 5; see also Lk 22:14–20); and (3) for a lifetime of mercy (v. 6; see also Lk 1:50, 54).

23:1 Ps 23 is a prophecy of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (**the first day of the week**, v. 1; see also Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1).

His Resurrection proves (1) He is the Creator of the world, which He owns (vv. 1, 2); (2) He is worthy to ascend on high as the Forerunner of the Church (vv. 3–6; see also Heb 6:19, 20; 7:26; 9:24); (3) He is the King of glory, who destroyed death and Hades (vv. 7–10; see also Rev 1:18; 4:8–11).

24:1 Ps 24 is a priestly intercession by the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of His Church, which is the Israel of God (v. 22; see also Gal 6:16). He identifies Himself as **only-begotten and poor** (v. 16), for He was the Virgin Mary's only Child, and He was born into poverty. And although He was hated unjustly (v. 19), nevertheless, He established the New Testament (**His covenant**, vv. 10, 14). So in His New Testament, He intercedes for the Church in prayer, and by **lifting up** His soul to the Father (v. 1), He also lifts up the Church to Him in priestly intercession (see also Heb 7:25). And because of His intercession, the Church is taught the ways of the Father (vv. 2–21).

25:1 Ps 25 is a priestly intercession of Jesus Christ to the Father at the heavenly **altar** (v. 6; see also Heb 7:25) on behalf of His **churches** (v. 12). And since this Priest is innocent (Heb 7:26), He intercedes on behalf of His churches, so they, too, will be innocent through God's merciful redemption (v. 11), as they worship around His altar (vv. 1–11).

26:1 Ps 26 is a prophecy concerning baptism, which is a declaration of **war** (v. 3) against the devil and his angels. This war is declared by the Church in the prayers at the reception of catechumens. In this psalm, these fallen angels are called **the wicked** (v. 2), **my enemies** (vv. 2, 6, 11), **an army** (v. 3), and **unjust witnesses** (v. 12). And in this war, St. Paul describes them as "principalities," "powers," "the rulers of the darkness of this age," "spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*" (Eph 6:12).

Therefore, in baptism, the Lord Jesus Christ becomes **my light**, **my savior**, and my **defender** in relation to this war (v. 1). And with the Lord's help, these enemies are overcome in battle (**weakened and fell**, v. 2). So as a result, the fruit borne in the Church is freedom from the fear of death (**my heart shall not be afraid**, v. 3; see also Heb 2:14, 15); a strong relationship with the Lord (vv. 4–12); and an earnest expectation for **the land of the living** (vv. 13, 14), which is "the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come" (Creed).

27:1 Ps 27 is a prophecy concerning the death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the **inheritance** He won for Himself (v. 9), which is the Church. Thus, in His death on the cross, Jesus destroyed death and Hades (**the pit**), for He is God the Word, to whom the Father was not **silent** (v. 1). And on the cross, the Lord's outstretched hands were **lifted up** toward the Father's **holy temple** (v. 2), which is the inheritance. Also, His death destroyed the devil and his angels (vv. 3–5). Therefore, **blessed is** God the Father (v. 6) for raising Christ (**His anointed**, v. 8) from the dead (**my flesh revived**, v. 7), and for **protecting the salvation** of His people (v. 8), and also for shepherding them in this world and resurrecting them into the world to come (**forever**, v. 9; see also Creed).

28:1 Ps 28 is a prophecy concerning the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River, celebrated in the services of Theophany (Epiphany). Both words, *epiphany* and *theophany*, mean “manifestation” or “revelation,” and *theophany* has the additional meaning, “revelation of God.” The God who is revealed in Christ's Baptism is God the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus this event also reveals that Jesus Christ (the Son) is one of the Trinity.

Ps 28 reveals the Father as **the voice** speaking from heaven at Jesus' Baptism (vv. 3–5, 7–9; see also Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22). It also reveals the Son (**His beloved**, v. 6) and the Holy Spirit (**fiery flames**, v. 7; see also canticles four and five of Compline in the Forefeast of Theophany). **Unicorns** (v. 6) are often symbols of purity.

29:1 Ps 29 speaks of the Resurrection of Christ, who is **the End** (v. 1), and together with Him, the resurrection of the Church. Man's dilemma is the death and decay of his body in the grave (v. 10) and the dwelling of his soul in Hades (v. 4). As a result, these **enemies rejoiced over** him (v. 2), and his life was filled with **weeping** (v. 6), **trouble** (v. 8), **lamentation** and **sackcloth** (v. 12), and **sadness** (v. 13). But through Christ's Resurrection (**lifted me up**, v. 2), (1) the Church will be **healed** (v. 3), that is, the body will be raised in **beauty and power** (v. 8) to immortal life **forever** (vv. 7, 13) at “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed); (2) the souls of the righteous in Hades were brought out from there at His Resurrection (v. 4); and (3) the Church is filled with **praises** (vv. 5, 13), thanksgiving (vv. 5, 13), **great joy** (v. 6), **dancing** and **gladness** (v. 12).

30:1 Ps 30 is a revelation (**ecstasy**, vv. 1, 23) of Christ (**the End**, v. 1) in relation to the extreme **humiliation** (v. 8) He suffered before the Father on the cross for mankind. For example, v. 6 is quoted by Him as His last words to the Father on the cross just before He died (Lk 23:46). Verses 2–23 describe this humiliation, and vv. 24, 25 emphasize the fruit His humiliation bears in the Church, e.g., love for the Father. And v. 24 also speaks of those who **act with great arrogance**, that is, who reject the Lord's extreme humiliation with their extreme arrogance.

31:1 Ps 31 is a prophecy concerning enlightenment (**understanding**, vv. 1, 8), which is fulfilled in the Sacrament of Baptism. For this sacrament is known as the Sacrament of Enlightenment, in which sins are **forgiven** (vv. 1, 5). And on the Day of Pentecost, St. Peter urged those listening to “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Thus, the Creed also says, “I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.”

Verses 1, 2 emphasize the blessings of baptism; vv. 3–7, the responsibility of the one baptized; and vv. 8–11, Christ's response to the faithfulness of the one baptized. This explains why Ps 31 is read when the newly baptized are brought up out of the water and given their white garments.

32:1 Ps 32 is a prophecy revealing the Trinity as the Creator of the world. **The Lord** refers to the Father (vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 20, and 22). **The Word of the Lord** is the Son of the Father (vv. 4 and 6), and the Holy Spirit is **the breath of His mouth** (v. 6). Therefore, the Father created the world through His Son and His Spirit, who are His coequals. And v. 9 reveals that the Father spoke and commanded the words in Gn 1, and the Son and the Holy Spirit fulfilled that which was commanded.

Therefore, the saints (**righteous ones**) worship the Trinity (vv. 1–3) as the Creator of the world (vv. 4–17), and they hope in the Trinity to raise them from the dead in the world to come (vv. 18–22; see also Creed).

33:1 Ps 33 is a prophecy teaching how Holy Communion (v. 9) is to be received in the Church: (1) with a gentle spirit (v. 3); (2) as a sojourner in the world (v. 5); (3) with a poor, broken, and humble spirit (vv. 7, 19); (4) with the fear of God (vv. 8, 10, 12); (5) with hope in the world to come (vv. 9, 23); (6) with clean lips and a peaceful heart (vv. 13–17; see also 1Pt 3:10–12).

34:1 Ps 34 is a prophecy regarding the Lord's sufferings and death on the cross in Holy Week. For example, v. 11 refers to the false witnesses at the Lord's trial. He endured these things on behalf of and with His Church in mind (**My only-begotten**, v. 17; **the great church** and **a mighty people**, v. 18). And His people **greatly rejoice** and magnify Him (v. 27) because of what He did for them.

35:1 Ps 35 reveals the right and wrong uses of free will and the fruits that result in either case. First, it shows that sin or evil is an action of man's free will (**says within himself**, v. 2; **acts deceitfully**, **lest He discover**, v. 3; **is unwilling**, v. 4; **devises**, **sets himself**, and **does not abhor**, v. 5). Therefore, sin or evil is not a part of human essence or nature, for God created human nature good in itself. Sinning is altogether the wrong use of free will, and the most dangerous wrong use is **arrogance**, which often comes against the saints (v. 12). But such a wrong use ultimately brings down the lawless (**fall there** and **unable to stand**, v. 13).

Second, this psalm reveals the proper use of free will, which is to seek out and **hope** (v. 8) for God's **mercy** (vv. 6, 11), His **truth** (v. 6), His **righteousness** (vv. 7, 11), and His **judgments** (v. 7). Also with free will, **the upright in heart** (v. 11) may **be intoxicated** by drinking **the abundant water** (v. 9) that flows from **the fountain** and by **seeing the light** which is **in light** (v. 10). The fountain is the Father, and the Son is the water, the light, and the life that goes forth from this fountain. Those who willingly drink of this water in baptism, and who see this light, partake of life and light (see also Jn 1:4), and also become **intoxicated** with the Holy Spirit (**the fatness**, v. 9; see also Jn 7:37–39; Acts 2:13–17; Eph 5:18).

36:1 Ps 36 shows why the martyrs were willing to die (v. 32): they were "looking for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come" (Creed). The world to come is the theme throughout this psalm (vv. 3, 9, 11, 18, 22, 27, 28, 29, 34, 39, 40). Prior to their martyrdom, the martyrs lived a godly life in light of the new world (vv. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 37). Therefore, they are the best examples to encourage God's people to live the Christian life in the same anticipation of the world to come. But the ungodly shall not inherit that world (vv. 2, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 22, 28, 34, 35, 36, 38).

37:1 Ps 37 reveals the great love of Christ for mankind in His sufferings and death on the cross, especially v. 18: **For I am ready for wounds, and my pain is continually with me**. And although He was “separate from sinners” (Heb 7:26) and “knew no sin” (2Co 5:21), yet out of His great compassion for sinners, He prays this prayer in a relative sense as though He were one of them. Thus, He takes the place of sinners as one of them, and intercedes to the Father for their salvation in the midst of His sufferings and death on the cross.

38:1 Ps 38 reminds the Church of its pilgrim status in the present world (**a sojourner** and **a stranger**, v. 13; see also 1Pt 1:1). For God's people are “to look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed). For Christ is **the End** (v. 1). Meanwhile, (1) the **tongue** is to be kept from sinning (vv. 2, 3); (2) the **heart** is to be on fire with **meditation** on the things of God (v. 4); (3) man, **made** by God (v. 10), is to grow in divine knowledge, so as not to **lack** (v. 5) or be **deadened** (v. 3) by **transgressions** (vv. 9, 12). Rather, he is to **revive** before he **departs** in death (**no longer here**, v. 14). A **handbreadth** (v. 6) is an ancient unit of measure of about 4–1/2 inches, here used to show the brief span of our lives.

39:1 Ps 39 is a prophecy of the Incarnation (vv. 7–9; see also Heb 10:5–7). In His Incarnation, the Lord assumed a mortal body (v. 7) and a rational soul. But here the body is emphasized, because man's body is mortal and subject to death and decay in the grave (**a miserable pit**, v. 3). So by His death in the body, Christ destroyed death, and by His Resurrection (**brought me up** and **a rock**, v. 3), He overcame the decay that held man's body in the grave. He was able to do all this because of the two wills in His one Person. For He **willed** (v. 9) by His human will and energy. And the phrase **Your will** (v. 9) shows that He possessed within Himself the same will and energy as God the Father, because He is “one in essence” with Him (Creed). Therefore, by means of His two wills and energies, He destroyed death and decay, and put **a new song** in the mouth of the Church (v. 4).

40:1 Ps 40 is a prophecy of Christ (**the End**) and of His death and Resurrection, which brings healing to the Church (**from sickness to wholeness**, v. 4, and **heal my soul**, v. 5). When the Lord Jesus says, **for I have sinned against You** (v. 5), He is taking our part, although He Himself is sinless (**innocence**, v. 13; see also Heb 7:25, 26).

Verse 10 speaks of the betrayal by Judas (see also Jn 13:18); vv. 6, 9 of Christ's sufferings and death; and vv. 2, 3, 11–14 of His Resurrection.

41:1 Ps 41 speaks of Christ (**the End**, v. 1) and His Baptism in the Jordan (**from the land of the Jordan and Hermon**, v. 7). His Baptism is celebrated in the Church as the Feast of Theophany. It is **celebrated** as **a festival** with **great joy and praise** (v. 5). His Baptism in the Jordan is our salvation (vv. 6, 12), which produces (1) a longing and thirst for union and communion with God (vv. 2, 3); (2) tears of joy in the midst of suffering (vv. 4–6, 10–12); and (3) enlightenment (**understanding**, v. 1) concerning the unsearchable riches of Christ (vv. 8, 9; see also Rom 11:33; Eph 3:8).

42:1 Ps 42 is a prayer of Christ on behalf of His Church for enlightenment in the midst of the ungodly (**an unholy nation**, v. 1; **my enemy afflicts me**, v. 2). For He Himself is **light** and **truth** (v. 3), who was **sent** into the world in His Incarnation (see also Jn 8:12; 14:6). Thus He **guides** (v. 3) the Church to the heavenly holy of holies (**the altar of God**, v. 4). So this enlightenment puts joy in one's face (v. 5). In hymns of the Church, **Your holy mountain** and **Your tabernacles** (v. 3) are seen as referring to the Mother of God and to the saints.

43:1 Ps 43 describes (1) the daily praise and thanksgiving (v. 9) the Church offers God in the midst of sufferings and persecution (vv. 2–17); the steadfastness of the Church in the midst of sufferings and even martyrdom itself (vv. 18–26; see also Rom 8:36); and (3) the Church's hope in the Lord to be raised from the dead at the general resurrection (v. 27).

44:1 Ps 44 is a prophetic description of the Word Incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ (**the End**), and His Church, composed of both Jews and Gentiles. The **Beloved One** is the Word Himself, and His Incarnation brought about changes (**things that shall be changed**, v. 1). For He established His Church (**the peoples**), and even changed His **enemies** into friends (v. 6). Thus, vv. 2–9 describe Him (see also Heb 1:8, 9); and vv. 10–18 describe His Mother, the Mother of God, who is both His **queen** (v. 10) and His **daughter** (vv. 11, 14). These verses also describe the Church begotten from her (**daughters**, v. 10; **the daughters of Tyre**, v. 13—the Gentiles; **the virgins**, v. 15; **sons**, v. 17). **Myrrh and stacte** (v. 9) are sweet-smelling fragrances or incense. **Cassia** was used in ancient medicines, a reference to healing.

45:1 Ps 45 is about **hidden things** concerning **the End**, who is Christ. These hidden things are “the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ” (Col 2:3), which are now revealed in His Incarnation and made known among the Gentiles (Col 1:26, 27). Here, before His Incarnation, the earth was **troubled** with fear (vv. 3, 4, 7), which was the fear of death. But after His Incarnation, the Church no longer fears death (v. 3), because His works (v. 9), that is, His death and Resurrection (**early in the morning**, v. 6), opened up **the torrents of the river** of God's grace to the Church (v. 5). Thus, hatred (**wars**) ceased among the Gentiles **to the ends of the earth**, and the Church was established among them. For **stillness** in prayer replaced the tumult of hostility between them (vv. 10–12).

46:1 Ps 46 is a prophecy of Christ (**the End**) and His ascension to the Father (v. 6). And the Man who ascended is called **God** (vv. 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), **Lord** (vv. 3, 6), **Most High** (v. 3), and **King** (vv. 3–5, 7, 8–10); therefore, Jesus Christ is coequal with the Father. Also, the ascended Christ is worshiped by the Church both as God and Man (vv. 2, 7, 8), and with joy (**rejoicing**, v. 2), with fear (**fearsome**, v. 3) and with intelligence (**understanding**, v. 8).

47:1 Ps 47 is a prophecy of the Church as heaven on earth (see also Heb 12:22, 23). In this respect she is described as a city (vv. 2, 3, 4, 9, 14), as Mount Zion (vv. 2, 3, 12, 13), and as a temple (v. 10). And Jesus Christ is called **Lord** (vv. 2, 9, 12), **King** (v. 3), and **God** (vv. 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 15).

48:1 Ps 48 is a prophecy that presents a contrast between the children of the body and the children of the kingdom (prayers at the reception of catechumens). Children of the body live under the reign of death and the fear it instills in them; therefore, in an attempt to overcome this fear, they become occupied with objects of the senses, especially wealth and the power it brings with it (v. 7). But their riches cannot redeem their souls and bodies from the grave and decay, and from death and Hades (vv. 8, 9, 11–15, 18–21). Therefore, all peoples should **hear this** and **give ear** (vv. 2–5) to **the End** (v. 1), who is Christ our God. For He became incarnate to ransom mankind from slavery to sense objects and to the reign and fear of death (v. 16). However, by way of contrast, the children of the kingdom are delivered by Him from this slavery (vv. 6, 10, 17).

49:1 Ps 49 is a prophecy of the awesome Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Day of Judgment. It is awesome, as emphasized in the phrases **beauty's splendor** (v. 2), **a fire** and **a mighty storm** (v. 3), and it is awesome because **heaven** and **earth** will be present (vv. 1, 4). But most of all it will be awesome because Christ's divinity will be fully shown to the universe (**openly**, v. 2). In contrast to this, at His First Coming, He did not show Himself “openly” but remained hidden by His humility, as for example, He lived in poverty and lowliness. However, the full splendor of His glory will be seen by all at His “coming to judge the living and the dead” (Creed). For He will come as God in the flesh (vv. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 14, 16, 22, 23) and judge all, including the Jews (vv. 7–22).

50:1 Ps 50 teaches the nature of genuine repentance, which is the reason it is used so often in the services of the Church. Historically, King David committed the sins and transgressions of adultery and murder (vv. 1, 2; see also 2Kg 11; 12). However, He obtained mercy from God because of his repentance. Yet many fall into sins but never come to repentance; therefore, no one can use David's sins as an excuse to sin. For sins and transgressions in themselves do not draw down the mercy of God. Genuine repentance, however, does attract His mercy, for He sees it and responds accordingly (v. 3). So genuine repentance is characterized by such things as confession to God (vv. 4–8); inward purity (vv. 12–16); and inward humility (vv. 17–21).

51:1 Ps 51 reveals who will be in “the world to come” (Creed), which belongs to Christ (**the End**, v. 1). It is also called **the land of the living** (v. 7), that is, the land occupied by the resurrected righteous ones (vv. 8–11). And that world is also said to be **forever and unto ages of ages** (vv. 10, 11). But the unrighteous, such as Doeg, will not be there (vv. 2–7).

52:1 Ps 52 revolves around two questions, both of which relate to Christ (**the End**, v. 1). The first question asks: **Do all the workers of lawlessness not know?** (v. 5), and the second, **Who will grant from Zion the salvation of Israel?** (v. 7). The answer to the first question is yes, for they willfully reject Christ as God, and therefore are fools (v. 1). But, in answer to the second question, their rejection cannot prevent Him from granting salvation to the Church ("Israel," v. 7; see also Gal 6:16).

53:1 Ps 53 is a prophecy concerning the betrayal of Christ. For just as the Ziphites betrayed David (see 1Kg 23:15–21), so also Judas and the Jewish leaders betrayed Christ. These leaders are called **strangers** and **the powerful** (v. 5). Nevertheless, Christ's sufferings and sacrifice on the cross were **voluntary** (v. 8), for no one could take His life from Him without His consent (see also Jn 10:18; 18:6). And He thanked the Father (**O Lord**, v. 8) for His Resurrection (v. 9), to teach us to do the same.

54:1 Ps 54, similar to Ps 53, is a prophecy concerning the betrayal of Christ, who is **the End**. In the midst of His sufferings and betrayal by Judas (vv. 13–15), He prays on behalf of the Church. For within the Church there is suffering and betrayal, sometimes even to death. For example, when He prayed, **And the terror of death fell on me** (v. 5), He was not saying this because He Himself feared death. Rather, He intercedes for us, for our fear of death fell on Him, that we might not fear it. Therefore, when death fell on Him on the cross, He, in turn, destroyed it once for all by the power of His divinity.

55:1 Ps 55 describes the war between Christ (**the End**) and the devil (**he**, v. 2). Christ fought and won this war as a Man on behalf of the Church, and this victory is inscribed like a **pillar** in the Church's memory (v. 1). Through this inscription, the Church is able to wage a successful war against this same enemy. (This same phrase, **pillar inscription**, is used to introduce Ps 55–59, in v. 1 of each.) Now this war is not only against the devil but also against his angels (**those who war against me from on high**, v. 3; see also Eph 6:12). Verses 4–14 tell the Church how to fight the enemy; for example, the faithful will not fear death when facing the enemy (vv. 4, 5, 12, 14).

56:1 Ps 56 prophesies the death and Resurrection of Christ (**the End**, v. 1). He did not corrupt (v. 1), that is, His holy body did not decay in the grave (**the cave**, v. 1; see also Ps 15:8–11; Acts 2:25–32; 13:34–37). Verses 2–12 give the Church the hope of “the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed).

57:1 Ps 57 concerns Christ (**the End**). It underscores the reality that Christ's holy body did not corrupt in the grave (v. 1). For with His incorrupt body, He destroyed death, the devil, and sin (vv. 2–10). Realizing these things, the Church is glad and bears fruit for God (vv. 11, 12).

58:1 Ps 58 is also concerning Christ (**the End**, v. 1). For the Church remembers that Christ's holy body did not decay in the grave (**corrupt not**, v. 1), and the Father raised Him from the dead (vv. 2, 3, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18). In contrast to the Lord's sinless life, which is the reason He was raised up by the Father (vv. 4, 5), those who work lawlessness are not shown mercy (vv. 6–9, 12–16).

59:1 Ps 59 is also concerning Christ (**the End**, v. 1). For the Church remembers the changes (**things yet to be changed**, v. 1) brought about by the cross (**a sign**, v. 6), and the teaching (**for teaching**, v. 1) it brings to the Church. For the Incarnation brought about the mystery hidden before time, namely, that Christ would burn down (**he burned**, v. 1) the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile (vv. 1–14), and form them into one body (Eph 3).

60:1 Ps 60 reveals Christ (**the End**, v. 1) as the King (v. 7) and Great High Priest leading the Church in hymns of praise to the Father, and therefore, to the Trinity (see also Heb 2:12, 13).

61:1 Ps 61 is a prayer of Christ (**the End**, v. 1). He is praying this prayer on behalf of the Church, which is His body (**congregation of people**, v. 9; see also Eph 1:22, 23). He is encouraging His members to **be submissive to God** (vv. 2, 6), and the psalm gives numerous good reasons to do so.

62:1 Ps 62 is a prayer of Christ the King (v. 12), instructing His Church in morning prayers. For this world is like **the desert of Judea** (v. 1), which is **desolate, impassable, and waterless** (v. 2). And the soul that **remembers** God during the night **on** his **bed** will also learn to **meditate on** Him in the morning (v. 7). Such a soul will **be filled** (v. 6) and cannot be injured by the devil and his angels (**they**, v. 10).

63:1 Ps 63 is a prayer of Christ (**the End**, v. 1), instructing the members of His Church how to wage a good warfare against the devil and the fear of death (**fear of the enemy**, v. 2) in times of persecution and martyrdom.

64:1 Ps 64 is a prophecy concerning Christ (**the End**, v. 1) and concerning His Church in relation to the theme of sojourning in this world (**the situation of the sojourners, when they were about to depart**, v. 1). See 4Kg 24 for the historical background, when Jerusalem was carried away captive to Babylon. These two cities focus attention on the theme of sojourning, for the Church is, so to speak, sojourning in the city of Babylon. Babylon means confusion, as can be seen from Gn 11, for the Church is sojourning in a confused world. But Jerusalem means peace, for the Church is looking for the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come (Creed). For peace will inhabit the new world, and this psalm instructs the Church in how to sojourn in anticipation of this world to come.

65:1 Ps 65 prophesies the Resurrection of Christ (**the End**, **a psalm of resurrection**, v. 1). All the earth is invited to worship the risen Christ (vv. 1–4). All are invited to **come and see the works of God** (v. 5), which He wrought in abolishing death and rising again from the dead, as typified by the Exodus in Israel's history (v. 6). And His Resurrection demonstrates that He will **rule in His power forever** (v. 7) over His Church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Him (vv. 7–20).

66:1 Ps 66 prophesies the Resurrection of Christ (**the End**, v. 1). Verses 3 and 5 in particular emphasize the incorporation of the Gentiles into the Church through the Resurrection.

67:1 Ps 67 prophesies the Resurrection of Christ (**the End**, v. 1) and His Ascension into heaven (v. 19; see also Eph 4:8). In hymns of the Church, **the mountain of God** (v. 16) is seen as referring to the Mother of God. Throughout the psalm, the blessings given the Church by the Resurrection are enumerated. For example, Christ trampled death (v. 21) and crushed the satanic hordes of fallen angels (v. 22).

68:1 Ps 68 prophesies the Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ (**the End**, v. 1) and the changes it would bring about (**concerning things that shall be changed**, v. 1). The changes His Passion would bring are noted throughout the psalm. Examples are: (1) the Church would become a house of prayer for all peoples (v. 10; see also Jn 2:19; Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46); (2) the cross would bear our reproaches against God (v. 10; see also Rom 15:3); (3) the cross would destroy death (**gall** and **vinegar**, v. 22; see also Mt 27:34, 48; Mk 15:23, 36; Lk 23:36; Jn 19:28–30); and (4) the Jews would be rejected for their unbelief, and the believing Gentiles brought to salvation (vv. 23, 24; Rom 9:9–11).

69:1 Ps 69 is a prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ (**the End**, v. 1). Prayer is the ascent of the heart and mind to God (**in remembrance**, v. 1). In this ascent, prayer focuses a person on the Lord and His salvation (**that the Lord may save me**, v. 1). The early Desert Fathers used v. 2 as a text of ceaseless prayer (**O God, make haste to help me**, v. 2), thereby living out the exhortation of St. Paul in 1Th 5:17 to “pray without ceasing.” Also, this prayer, “O God, make haste to help me,” is often seen as the precursor to the Jesus Prayer: “O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” Verses 3–6 show some results of receiving God's help.

70:1 Ps 70 teaches the Church about deliverance from captivity (**taken captive**, v. 1) to the devil and his angels (**my enemies**, v. 10; see also Eph 6:12). For these enemies ensnared mankind in the fear of death and the lifetime of bondage it engendered (see Heb 2:15). But from birth to death, we are delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ from this fear (**from birth**, v. 6; **to old age and to my last breath**, v. 18). For we are **delivered** and **set free** in His **righteousness** (v. 2), on which we **meditate** . . . **all the day long** v. 24).

71:1 Ps 71 is a prophecy concerning **Solomon**, who is Christ Himself, the King of Peace, for the name “Solomon” means “peace.” And the Father (**God**) gave all **judgments** to Him (v. 1; see also Jn 5:22), and in the world to come (**forever and unto ages of ages**), **all the earth shall be filled with His glory** (v. 19).

72:1 Ps 72 teaches **the upright in heart** (v. 1) not to be jealous of people who prosper in this life but who have no vision of "the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come" (Creed). For their vision of life is limited to this present world, and they have **no upward gaze** of the judgment hanging over them **at their death** (v. 4). But the upright have a vision of God in their heart (**O God of my heart**) and of the world to come (**forever**, v. 26). Therefore, they **cling to God** and put their **hope in the Lord** (v. 28).

73:1 Ps 73 is a prophecy for **understanding** (v. 1). An understanding of what? That all human history is incarnational in nature. Therefore, human history may be called “the history of the Incarnation of the Word.” For this history, **from the beginning** (v. 2) **to the end** (vv. 1, 3, 10, 11, 19), speaks of the Word of God Incarnate and His lordship throughout history. And this Incarnate **God is our King before the ages** (v. 12) and the Creator of the world (**You created**, v. 16). **He worked salvation in the midst of the earth** (v. 12) through the cross, and **crushed the heads of dragons** (vv. 13, 14) at His Baptism. He also arose from the dead (**Arise, O God**, v. 22).

74:1 Ps 74 is a prophecy concerning the Judgment Seat of Christ (**the End**, v. 1; see also 2Co 5:10, 11). Therefore, all men are commanded not to **corrupt** (v. 1), that is, **do not transgress the law**, nor **exalt yourselves** in sin (v. 5). For God Incarnate is judge (**God is judge**, v. 8), and the Lord's **cup** of judgment is in His hand (vv. 8, 9). Then **the horns** of corrupt men shall be crushed, but those of **the righteous man shall be exalted** (v. 11). And this man **shall greatly rejoice forever** in the world to come (v. 10; see also Creed).

75:1 Ps 75 is a prophecy contrasting two opposing kingdoms. The **Assyrian** (v. 1) is the devil, who leads his kingdom: the fallen angels (v. 4; see also Col 2:15) and fallen people (vv. 6–9, 13). **The End** is God Incarnate (vv. 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13), who leads His kingdom: the holy angels (vv. 5, 9) and holy people (vv. 3, 10, 11, 12). The final outcome in this battle is obvious: **Who shall stand against You?** (v. 8).

76:1 Ps 76 is Christ (**the End**, v. 1) teaching the importance of using the memory, especially **in the day of affliction** (v. 3). For one is to remember **God** (v. 4), **the eternal years** (v. 6), and **the Lord's works** (v. 12). Verses 5–21 describe the numerous benefits of this remembrance.

77:1 Ps 77 concerns **understanding** (v. 1). What needs to be understood is that Christ is speaking to His Church (vv. 2, 14; see also Mt 13:34, 35; 1Co 10:4, 14), called **children yet to be born** (v. 6), **His sanctuary** . . . **founded forever on the earth** (v. 69), and **His people** . . . **His inheritance** (v. 71). The content of His instruction is the entire psalm itself, an overview of the history of Israel.

78:1 Ps 78 is a prophecy concerning the suffering and martyrdom (vv. 1–4) that would face the Church in this present age (**to the end**, v. 5; **from generation to generation**, v. 13). It also shows the Church's response to all this (vv. 5–12), because the Church knows herself to be the people of God and the sheep of His pasture, and also has her eyes on the world to come (**forever** and “from generation to generation,” v. 13).

79:1 Ps 79 is a prophecy of the Incarnation and the changes (**things that shall be changed**, v. 1) that it would bring about. For Christ (**the End**, v. 1), **who sits upon the cherubim** (v. 2), will **reveal** Himself (vv. 2, 3, 4, 8, 20) in the Incarnation for our salvation (v. 3), and establish His **vineyard**, the Church (vv. 9–17). This vineyard would consist of those who are changed through conversion to Him (vv. 4, 8, 15, 20) and who are saved from **the Assyrian** (v. 1), who is **a wild swine** and **a solitary wild beast** (v. 14)—that is, the devil.

80:1 Ps 80 is a psalm regarding Christ (**the End**) and His Church (**the winepresses**, v. 1). For His Church is the new wine (the new covenant), formed in the Sacrament of Baptism (Mt 9:16, 17; 1Co 12:13). And Israel's deliverance from Egypt (vv. 1–11) is a type of baptism (1Co 10:1, 2). However, after baptism, the Christian is to be careful to walk in God's ways and heed His voice (vv. 12–17).

81:1 Ps 81 reveals Christ God as present and judging in the midst of His Church (v. 1). This prophecy calls church members **gods**, which is the same thing as calling them **sons of the Most High** (vv. 1, 6). For they were made gods and the sons of God by the new birth in baptism. However, these gods are warned by their God to take care of the poor and needy (vv. 2–7). For Christ rose from the dead (v. 8), and “He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead” (Creed).

82:1 Ps 82 prophesies that all who hate Christ (v. 3) will also persecute His saints (vv. 4–9; see also Jn 15:18; 2Ti 3:12). Various nations mentioned (vv. 7–9) represent the kinds of persecutors who seek to destroy the Church. Even avowed enemies find a common ground of unity in order to persecute the Church (v. 6). But the Church is taught how to pray in times of persecution (vv. 10–19), and even some of these enemies are converted to the Lord (v. 17).

83:1 Ps 83 regards Christ (**the End**) and His Church (**the winepresses**, v. 1). For His Church is the new wine (the new covenant), formed in the Sacrament of Baptism. And those who keep their baptism (**walk in innocence**, v. 12) long to see God and the world to come (vv. 2–9). As the Creed says, “I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.” For one day in this new world and its life is better than a lifetime (**a thousand**) in this present fallen world (**the tents of sinners**, v. 11).

84:1 Ps 84 is a prophecy of the Incarnation (**the End**, v. 1). His Incarnation (vv. 10–14) gives His **holy ones** (v. 9) deliverance from captivity (v. 2), the remission of sins (v. 3), deliverance from God's wrath (vv. 4–6), joyous life (v. 7), mercy (v. 8), and peace (v. 9).

85:1 Ps 85 reveals the prayerful spirit of a servant of God (vv. 2, 4, 16), for the Lord will **incline** His **ear** and **hear** him (v. 1). This spirit is characterized by humility (v. 1), hope (v. 2), ceaseless prayer (v. 3), a lifting up of the soul to the Lord (v. 4), the glorification of God (vv. 5–10), godly fear (v. 11), and thanksgiving with one's whole heart (vv. 12–17).

86:1 Ps 86 is a prophecy regarding the meaning of the Nativity. This connection is found in the Incarnation of the Most High (v. 5) and the City of God (vv. 2, 3). The city's inhabitants, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, are those who were born again in her (vv. 4–7).

87:1 Ps 87 is a prophecy concerning Christ (**the End**) and His death, burial, and Resurrection (v. 14) on man's behalf. The prophecy focuses especially on His burial, for when He was buried, His body was placed in a grave, and His soul descended into Hades (v. 4). Both the grave and Hades are described as **the pit** (v. 5), **the dead** (vv. 5, 11), the **grave** (vv. 6, 12), **the lowest pit**, **the shadow of death** (v. 7), **darkness**, **a forgotten land** (v. 13), and **despair** (v. 16). From all this, Christ, in His great love for man, saves all who **respond** to Him and **understand** (v. 1) what He did for them.

88:1 Ps 88 concerns understanding the Lord's mercy and truth (vv. 2, 3, 6, 9, 15, 25, 29, 34, 50). This mercy and truth is in the new covenant He made with the Church (vv. 4, 6, 29, 35, 40). In His Incarnation, the Lord is called “the seed of David” (see vv. 4, 21, 50; see also Mt 1:1), the Lord God (vv. 7, 8, 9; see also Jn 20:28), the Firstborn of God the Father (vv. 27, 28; see also Heb 1:6), and the King (v. 19; see also 1Ti 6:15). His throne is established in the Church through the works of His Incarnation—for example, through His Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (vv. 6–19), through His sufferings and death (vv. 39–46), and through His Resurrection (vv. 47–52).

89:1 Ps 89 is a morning prayer (vv. 5, 6, 14) designed to keep one focused on the Lord rather than on this temporal life and its hopelessness (vv. 5–11). For He exists outside time, and is therefore our only refuge (vv. 1, 2). Every morning is an opportunity to return to Him in repentance (**Return, you sons of men**, v. 3), and He is very patient, because a thousand years in His **sight are like yesterday, which passed, and like a watch in the night** (v. 4; see also 2Pt 3:8). He is very patient, because He does not will that anyone should perish (2Pt 3:9). Therefore, when we focus on the Lord every morning, we look for His return at the Second Coming (v. 13), and for His mercy, joy, enlightenment, and prosperity throughout each day (vv. 14–17).

90:1 Ps 90 describes the intensity of spiritual warfare the Church wages against the devil and his angels, both in life and in death. These enemies are called **hunters** (v. 3), **things moving in darkness**, **mishaps**, **demons of noonday** (v. 6), **sinners** (v. 8), **evils**, **scourges** (v. 10), **asps**, **lions**, and **dragons** (v. 13). They seek to ensnare us with **every troubling word** (v. 3). These words are like **arrows** that try to pierce the soul with unnatural **fears** (v. 5), especially the fear of death. Their numbers are many (**a thousand** and **ten thousand**, v. 7).

Success in this warfare is called **salvation** (v. 16), which comes through God and our hope in Him (**My God** and **I will hope in Him**, v. 2). God is called **the Most High** (vv. 1, 9), **the God of heaven** (v. 1), and **the Lord** (vv. 2, 9). He also commands His angels to help us (vv. 11, 12; see also Heb 1:14). His salvation is described as **help** (v. 1), **shelter** (vv. 1, 14), protection, **refuge** (v. 2), freedom (v. 3), overshadowing (v. 4), the shield of truth (v. 4), deliverance (v. 14), glorification (v. 15), and satisfaction (v. 16).

91:1 Ps 91 concerns **the Sabbath day** (v. 1), which speaks of rest. In this psalm, the rest is that of the soul. The Lord offers us this kind of rest (Mt 11:28–30). What then is our part in achieving such rest? Our part is **to give thanks** day and night for God's **mercy** and **truth** (vv. 2, 3), and to **greatly rejoice** in God's works in both creation and salvation (vv. 4–6). God the Father wrought these works by His two **hands** (v. 5), that is, by His Son and His Spirit.

But who does not experience such rest of soul? People **without discernment** (v. 7), who work **lawlessness** (vv. 9, 10). What are the fruits of a soul at rest? Divine exaltation and **rich mercy**, especially in **old age** (v. 11); victory over **enemies** and **evildoers** (the devil and his angels, v. 12); and the flourishing, multiplication, blossoming, increasing, and **prospering** of the virtues of righteousness in one's life as one grows older (vv. 13–15).

92:1 Ps 92 concerns **the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was settled** (v. 1). The Sabbath is Saturday, the seventh day of creation. The day before this is Friday, the sixth day of creation. On this sixth day, the Holy Trinity created numerous living creatures, but especially man himself (“when the earth was settled,” v. 1; see also Gn 1:25–27). God created man in His image and likeness. But man fell away from God, and Ps 92 is about the renewal of this image and likeness. Thus, this psalm is **the praise of an ode** concerning this renewal (v. 1).

The Lord reigns . . . **from of old;** . . . **from everlasting** (vv. 1, 2). In His Incarnation (**clothed and girded Himself**, v. 1), He **prepared** His **throne** in the hearts of the faithful (v. 2). At Pentecost, He sent the Holy Spirit (**the rivers**, vv. 3, 4; see also Jn 7:37–39) to renew us with the living waters of baptism. In these living waters the saints lift up their **voices** in praise of the Holy Trinity. They also believe the Lord's **testimonies** (the Scriptures) and live in **holiness**, which things are **proper to** His **house**, the Church (v. 5).

93:1 Ps 93 is a psalm for the fourth day of the week (v. 1), which is Wednesday, the fourth day of creation in Gn 1:14–19. On this day, God created the sun, the moon, and the stars to give light on the earth and to rule over the day and the night. The sun speaks of Christ; the moon, of the Mother of God; and the stars, of the Church (Php 2:15; Rev 12). The light of the sun, the moon, and the stars speaks of the light given the fallen world by Christ through the Mother of God and the Church. This light enlightens the fallen world concerning the eternal kingdom of God.

However, evil people in the fallen world oppose and persecute Christ, the Mother of God, and the Church (vv. 5–7). Throughout Church history, many martyrs have suffered for the faith. Thus, the question arises: “How long, O Lord, will this continue?” (see vv. 3, 4). The answer is, **the God of vengeance** (v. 1) will bring persecution to an end when He judges the fallen world in righteousness (vv. 8–23; see also Acts 17:31), at which time He will **repay their lawlessness to them** (v. 23). Meantime, He is patient with people, giving them the opportunity to turn to Christ and the Church in repentance and faith before the Great Day of Judgment (v. 15).

94:1 Ps 94 is an invitation to worship (**come**, vv. 1, 2, 6). This worship is called **the praise of an ode** (v. 1). An ode emphasizes great joy (v. 1), and praise is offered with **thanksgiving** (v. 2). The object of our worship is **the Lord** (vv. 1, 3, 6), **God** (vv. 1, 3, 7), and the **King** (v. 3). This Lord, God, and King is God the Father. **His hand** is the Son, who holds **the ends of the earth** (v. 4) and **the people** and **sheep** of the Father's **pasture** (that is, the Church, v. 7). The Father created the world by His two hands, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit (v. 5). Therefore, Ps 94 is an invitation to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But those who refuse this invitation will never find **rest** for their souls (v. 11; see also Mt 11:27–30; Heb 3; 4). For those who hear this invitation (**hear His voice**, v. 7) but refuse it are like Israel during their forty-year wanderings in the desert (vv. 8–10). They hardened their hearts in rebellion by their own free will (v. 8), and we are warned not to harden our hearts (v. 8).

95:1 Ps 95 is a prophecy about the building of the house after the captivity (v. 1). The house is the Church, which includes the Gentiles (vv. 3, 5, 7, 10). The Gentiles were the captives of the demons (v. 5). **The Lord** (vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13) is the Lord Jesus Christ, who freed the captives. These former captives now worship Him (v. 9), and He will come again to judge the world and its gods in righteousness and truth (v. 13).

This psalm was composed and sung by King David when he placed the ark of God in the tabernacle he set up (1Ch 16). This ark was a type of the Mother of God with Christ in her womb. For the Lord was conceived in her womb at the Annunciation for our salvation (Lk 1). Thus, v. 2b is sung as a refrain in the First and Third Antiphons of the Divine Liturgy at the Feast of the Annunciation, celebrating the freedom of the captives.

96:1 Ps 96 is a prophecy concerning the restoration of the earth (v. 1), when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to raise the dead and establish the world to come (Creed). Virtually everything in this psalm points to this restoration, which reveals Christ as the all-powerful Lord and universal Ruler over all things (vv. 1, 5, 8, 9). Creation will be restored, the dead will be raised to see His glory, His enemies will be destroyed, and the righteous will rejoice exceedingly (vv. 1–9). In light of this coming restoration, we should love the Lord, hate evil, be glad, and give thanks (vv. 10–12).

97:1 Ps 97 prophesies the first and second comings of Christ to save both Jews and Gentiles in His Church (vv. 2, 3). This salvation will cause a new song (vv. 1, 4–6) to be sung to the Father (**the Lord**, v. 1). It would be accomplished through the First Coming of Christ, who is called the Father's **right hand and His holy arm** (v. 1). He is also called the Father's **salvation** and **righteousness** (v. 2), and **His mercy** and **truth** (v. 3). At His Second Coming, He will come to judge the world **in righteousness** and **uprightness** (vv. 7–9).

98:1 Ps 98 prophesies the enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ at the Father's right hand to reign over mankind both as God and Man. Man's anger cannot alter this (v. 1). He also reigns over the angels, the highest order of which is **the cherubim** (v. 1). However, before His enthronement, He humbled Himself in becoming Man and going to the cross (Php 2:8). Now He is highly exalted (vv. 2, 6, 9; see also Php 2:9, 10). Before His Incarnation, He also reigned over Israel as their God (vv. 6–8). Now He is reigning both as God and Man at the Father's right hand, and the Church worships at His **footstool** (v. 5), which is the cross.

99:1 Ps 99 is **a psalm of thanksgiving** to the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 1, 4). We thank Him for the privilege to serve Him **with gladness** and **great joy** (v. 2). We thank Him that He is our God, and that He created us and made us **the sheep of His pasture** (v. 3). We thank Him for His goodness, **mercy**, and **truth** (v. 5).

This psalm is popular for devotional reading, but has no special liturgical use apart from its place in the weekly psalm cycle.

100:1 Ps 100 is simply called **a psalm by David**. It is a morning prayer, and the key to understanding this psalm is the statement, **O Lord, I will sing to You of mercy and judgment** (v. 1). We need the Lord's mercy and judgment each morning that we might give Him glory all the day. The Lord's mercy is His helping grace, and His judgment is His discernment, the crown of the virtues. We need both to fight against the devil and his angels. These enemies are identified as **those who commit transgressions** (v. 3), **the evil man** (v. 4), slanderers (v. 5), **arrogant**, **insatiable**, and unjust (vv. 5, 7), and **the sinners of the earth** (v. 8). We need the Lord's mercy and judgment to slay them each morning (v. 8). We also need the saints (**the faithful of the earth**, v. 6) to intercede for us.

101:1 Ps 101 is about a **a poor man, when he was depressed and poured out his supplication before the Lord** (v. 1). This Man is Jesus, who became poor for our sakes and interceded with the Father for our salvation (see also 2Co 8:9; Heb 5:7). The **Lord** to whom He prays is the Father (v. 2), and vv. 3–12 describe Jesus' extreme anguish for us (see also Mt 26:38). He also rose again for our salvation, for He is the Lord over death (**when You rise up**, v. 14). He is the Creator of the world (vv. 26–28; see also Heb 1:10–12), and He also created the Church (vv. 19, 23, 29), composed of Gentiles as well as Jews (v. 16).

102:1 Ps 102 begins and ends with, **Bless the Lord** (vv. 1, 22). Verses 2–14, 19 give us many reasons why the Lord should be blessed, and vv. 15–21 explain who is to bless Him. **Man** is to bless Him (vv. 15–18), and **His angels** as well (vv. 20, 21). Man is to bless Him for **His covenant** (v. 18), and the angels, for the privilege to be **His ministers** (v. 21).

103:1 Ps 103 opens and closes with, **Bless the Lord, O my soul** (vv. 1, 35). Everything in between gives many reasons why the Lord is to be blessed. He is to be blessed because He is the lover of man, of angels, and of creation. His care runs through all creation, which is filled with His goodness (v. 28). But the visible creation fell into death and decay (**return again to their dust**, v. 29); however, He sent forth His Spirit at Pentecost to renew man and creation (v. 30).

104:1-1 Ps 104, 105, and 106 form a trilogy, each with the heading, **Alleluia**, which means “praise the Lord.” This heading emphasizes praising the Lord and giving Him thanks for His works of mercy (104:1–3; 105:1, 2; 106:1, 2). These works are traced in great detail from Abraham on, and are fulfilled in the coming of Christ to save mankind: **He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their corruptions** (106:20). The Father sent His Word, who **crushed the gates of bronze and shattered the bars of iron** (106:16). He trampled death by His death and Resurrection, bestowing life on those in the tombs (**those sitting in the darkness and shadow of death, bound in poverty and fetters**, 106:10; **He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their chains to pieces**, 106:14).

The response of those who are **wise and shall keep these things, and shall understand the mercies of the Lord** (106:43) is “Alleluia.”

107:1 Ps 107 is a prophecy concerning the ascension and enthronement of Christ at the Father's right hand (**Be exalted above the heavens, O God**, v. 6; **I shall be exalted**, v. 8). From this enthronement He is now singing to the Father in the midst of His Church (vv. 2–4).

108:1 Ps 108 is **for the End** (v. 1), who is Christ Himself. It speaks of the unbelieving Judas, who betrayed Him to the unbelieving Jews. Judas the son of perdition is lost (Jn 17:12), fulfilling this Scripture. Verse 8 is quoted in Acts 1:20 as referring to Judas, who **loved cursing** and rejected **blessing** (v. 17). He cursed Christ and rejected His blessing. This was the ultimate betrayal, described especially in vv. 6–19. But the Father raised His Son from the dead, and He now leads the Church in praise of the Blessed Trinity (vv. 30, 31).

109:1 Ps 109 is a prophecy concerning the Melchizedek Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which explains the true meaning of the Nativity. In Gn 14:18–20, Melchizedek is called the king of Salem and priest of the Most High God (see also Heb 7:1). His priesthood was not based on genealogy (Heb 7:3). It was based on himself alone, for no one preceded him in priesthood, nor succeeded him (Heb 7:8). On this basis he was a type of Christ, whose priesthood is based in His endless life, for He rose again from the dead (Heb 7:16).

The Lord [the Father] **said to my Lord** [Christ], **"Sit at My right hand"** (v. 1). For Christ is not only Man, but also the Lord God, coequal and one in nature with the Father. For He is begotten from the Father before all time (**before the morning star**, v. 3), and is therefore His eternal Son (v. 3; see also Creed). He is the Son of David according to the flesh (Mt 1:1), but He is also the Lord of David according to His divinity (see also Mt 22:41–45).

At the Father's right hand, this Melchizedek Priest rules and reigns over all things, including His enemies (vv. 1, 2, 5–7), and leads His Church in heavenly worship of the Blessed Trinity (v. 3).

110:1 Ps 110 has the heading, **Alleluia** (v. 1), which emphasizes praise and thanksgiving to the Lord with one's whole heart (vv. 1, 3, 10). The Church (**the assembly**, v. 1) praises and thanks Him for all His works (vv. 2, 3, 6, 7), especially those related to His eternal **covenant** (vv. 5, 9). **The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord** because of all His works. Those who practice this fear have a **good understanding** (v. 10) and therefore will offer continual praise to God.

111:1 Ps 111 is another **Alleluia** or praise psalm (v. 1) that blesses the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. He is the Man who is blessed. **His seed**, **the generation of the upright**, and **his house** refer to the Church (vv. 2, 3). He gives the gift of **his righteousness** to the Church (v. 3) and teaches the Church by example how to live in this righteousness (vv. 1, 4, 9). But **the sinner**, the devil, is **angry** with Christ and His Church; therefore, the desire of this sinner and the **desire of sinners** like him **shall perish** (v. 10).

112:1 Ps 112 is an **Alleluia** psalm that continually praises the risen, ascended, and enthroned Lord (vv. 1–3). Verses 4–9 give a series of reasons He is to be praised and blessed: (1) He is **high above all the nations**, and **His glory is above the heavens** (v. 4); (2) All created things in heaven and earth are humble compared to Him (vv. 5, 6); (3) He exalts the poor in spirit (vv. 7, 8); and (4) He is establishing His Church and her children (v. 9).

113:1 Ps 113 speaks of Israel's history in their exodus from Egypt across the Red Sea and the Jordan River into the promised land (vv. 1–11). The lifeless idols of the nations in this land could neither will nor do anything to stop Israel (vv. 12–16). By contrast, the believers in Israel were those who feared the Lord and hoped in Him (vv. 17–26). Therefore, the history of believing Israel was the history of their salvation.

More importantly, Israel's exodus from Egypt and crossing the Jordan River speak of Christ's Baptism and our subsequent Christian baptism. For Christian baptism is Christ's Baptism. He was baptized in the Jordan River for our sake. He was also **the rock** from which we drink the waters of salvation (v. 8; see also 1Co 10:1–11).

114:1 Ps 114 speaks of the person who loves the Lord because the Lord loves him by hearing his prayers (v. 1; see also 1Jn 4:19). The love of God matures in this believer through (1) answers to prayer (vv. 1, 2); (2) deliverance from the fear of death and the dangers of Hades (vv. 3–5); (3) humility and rest in the Lord (vv. 6, 7); and (4) looking for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come (vv. 8, 9; see also Creed).

115:1 Ps 115 speaks about “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (Creed). St. Paul interprets the psalm in this manner in 2Co 4:13–18. The psalmist recognizes the futility of this life (**every man is a liar**, v. 2). But by the vision (**ecstasy**, v. 2) of faith, we wait for the resurrection of the dead and our future life in the kingdom of God. Our faith is the reason the death of **His holy ones** is precious to God (v. 5). The **bonds** (v. 6) of death are broken apart by our resurrection, and we will **offer a sacrifice of praise** (v. 7) in the world to come (**O Jerusalem**, v. 9). By way of foretaste, we now **take up the cup of salvation** (v. 4) in the Eucharist, and offer it as a **sacrifice of praise** (v. 7) to God.

116:1 Ps 116 is the shortest of all the psalms. It is quoted by St. Paul in Rom 15:11 to show that the Gentiles are included in the promises made to Israel (Rom 15:8). It also reveals that our salvation is based in the Lord's **mercy** and **truth**. God's mercy **rules over** those who walk by faith, and His truth is the substance of faith that **endures forever** (v. 2) in them.

117:1 Ps 117 sets forth the theme, **Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever** (vv. 1–4, 29). Verses 5–28 are rich in teaching and give many reasons we are to give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation He provided us through His sufferings, death, and Resurrection (v. 28). The following verses are some of the reasons for thanksgiving: (1) v. 6 (quoted in Heb 13:6) emphasizes deliverance from the fear of man; (2) vv. 22, 23 (quoted in Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10, 11; Lk 20:17; Acts 4:11), show the Lord becoming the Chief Cornerstone of the Church; (3) v. 24 reveals the exceeding joy of the Resurrection; and (4) vv. 25, 26 (quoted in Mt 21:9; Mk 11:9; Lk 19:38) refer to the original Palm Sunday.

118:1 Ps 118 is the longest of all the psalms, and its headings are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The key to its understanding is vv. 1 and 2, for they explain who are the blessed people. These people are those who are blameless; who walk in the law of the Lord; who search out His testimonies; and who search for Him with their whole heart. The statements describe a dynamic spiritual life and set the stage for progressing through all the truths revealed in vv. 3–176: that with God's help and by continual repentance, a blameless walk with Him is possible. This blameless walk is the way for one to prepare for the day of his death. Christ Himself lived and died this way; and through Him, we who believe are to live and die in this way also.

119:1-1 Ps 119–133 are called **odes of ascents**. These are also known as “graduals.” In her services of worship, the Church ascends by degrees to the heavenly holy of holies, for worship is an ascent of the heart and mind to the Holy Trinity in adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. For example, the word *Eucharist* means thanksgiving. The climax of the Church's ascent is when the celebrating priest says in the Divine Liturgy, “Let us give thanks unto the Lord,” in offering up the body and blood of Christ. Historically in Israel, these songs were sung by the faithful as they walked from great distances up to Jerusalem for the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. From this usage, the principal liturgical use in the Church comes as we progress through Lent toward Pascha. For these are the psalms sung each Wednesday and Friday at the Presanctified Liturgy as we make our pilgrimage to the Resurrection of Christ our Passover.

134:1-1 Ps 134 and 135 go together both in content and in use. In the Church, they are called the Polyeleos, or “Many Mercies.” Ps 134 is similar in content to Ps 113, rehearsing the salvific history of Israel. Ps 135 is a responsive psalm, with the choir and the people singing antiphonally or alternately; it is an Old Testament “Great Litany.”

136:1 Ps 136 was sung in exile in the Old Testament, while Israel was in captivity in Babylon. In the Church, it is prayed by the Christian community as being in exile in this world.

137:1 Ps 137 shows worship to be heaven on earth, for the Church sings to the Lord **in the presence of angels** (v. 1). Heaven and earth are united in Christ; therefore, the Church is heaven on earth. The Church consists of believing Gentiles as well as believing Jews (v. 4), singing and giving thanks with **all** their **heart** (v. 1).

138:1 Ps 138 is **for the End** (v. 1), who is Christ. He is God in the flesh, and as Man He descended into Hades (v. 8), trampling death by His death on our behalf. He also arose from the dead (v. 18) that we might be led **in the way everlasting** (v. 24). Therefore, we do not fear death, for His Holy Spirit is present with us (v. 7), and we are not separated from Him even in death.

138:1 Verses 13–16 reveal the sanctity of life of an unborn child and explain why, both in ancient Israel and in the Church, aborting a babe in the womb is seen as the sin of murder.

139:1 Ps 139 is **for the End** (v. 1), who is Christ. He prayed this prayer during His sufferings and death on behalf of the Church. In so doing, He delivered and rescued us from **the evil man** and **the unjust man** (v. 2). This man is the devil, and the **unjust men** (v. 5) are his angels. We are in a continual war with these fallen angels (v. 8), but our victory of thanksgiving is through the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 14).

140:1-1 Ps 140 and 141 are the psalms of the evening incense. These two psalms are both sung at Vespers. Ps 141:2 was sung in Israel, and now in the Church, during the offering of incense to God. As Rev 5:8 teaches, incense is the visible sign of the prayers of all God's people. The prophet Malachi foretold its continued use in every place, including in the offering of worship by the Gentiles (Mal 1:11). Incense was brought to Christ as a gift at His birth, and it has been used in the worship of the Church from her very beginning.

142:1 Ps 142 teaches God's righteousness (vv. 1, 11) in contrast to man's futile efforts to attain righteousness based on the Law (v. 2). For **the enemy** (v. 3), who is the devil, overcomes my feeble efforts at righteousness (vv. 3–5). But with the gift of God's righteousness through faith, the Holy Spirit **guides me in the land of uprightness** (v. 10). King David knew God's righteousness through faith, and so do all who walk by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

143:1 Ps 143 describes our war against **Goliath** the giant (v. 1). Goliath was arrogant and vainglorious against the Lord and Israel; David slew him and cut off his head. This is a picture of our war against the powerful sinful passions, especially arrogance and vainglory, the most destructive of sins. This psalm sets forth arrogance and vainglory in their true light, for the arrogant and vainglorious man **is become like vanity, his days like a passing shadow** (v. 4), and he **speaks empty things** (v. 8). But the truly joyous and blessed people are those who bless the Lord with a humble spirit (vv. 1, 15). And the Father **sent forth** His **Hand** [the Son] **from on high** to deliver us from the **great waters** of arrogance and vainglory that destroy the soul (v. 7).

144:1 Ps 144 describes the Church's blessing and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 1–3). The Church (**generation and generation**, v. 4; and His **kingdom of all the ages**, v. 13) blesses and exalts the Son of God for all His works in the Incarnation and the power of his deeds (vv. 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 17). We fear and love Him for all His works on our behalf (vv. 19, 20). We bless His name every day and will bless and exalt Him into the world to come (vv. 1, 2, 13, 21).

145:1 Ps 145 praises the Lord, the Creator, for His eternal reign in the Church (vv. 1, 2, 6, 10). For He is our helper, our hope, our freedom, our restorer, our wisdom, and our keeper (vv. 5, 7–9). No earthly rulers can provide these things, for death overtakes them (vv. 3, 4).

146:1 Ps 146 describes a psalm as a good thing and as something sweet to God the Father (v. 1). This is true because He is **building Jerusalem** (v. 2), which is the Church. He is doing this through His Son, whom He sent to renew His people and His creatures (vv. 2–11). For example, through the sacraments of the Church, He **heals the brokenhearted, and He binds up all their wounds** (v. 3). He is **pleased with those who fear Him, and with those who hope in His mercy** (v. 11).

147:1 Ps 147 exhorts the Church (**O Jerusalem** and **O Zion**, v. 1) to praise God the Father for sending His Son **to earth** (vv. 4, 7). **His wind** is the Holy Spirit, and from Him **the waters shall flow** (v. 7). Thus, the Church glorifies the Blessed Trinity in her worship.

148:1-1 Ps 148–150 are called “the Praises,” and they form the conclusion to the Psalter. These three psalms exhort all creation to praise the Blessed and Holy Trinity. The climax of the Psalter is reached in Ps 150, where humanity and creation, everywhere and in all circumstances, are called upon to make this doxology to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, our one God.

151:1 Ps 151 is **outside the number** of the Psalter, but **written with David's own hand** (v. 1). It concerns the slaying of the giant Goliath. Historically, David slew him as recorded in 1Kg 17. He slew him through humility (**I was small**, v. 1) and through the Lord (v. 3).

From a spiritual standpoint, Goliath stands for the sinful passions of arrogance and vainglory (see also Ps 143). Thus, with the Lord's help, we slay these giants with humility.

1:1 **Job** was originally called Jobab (42:19). Thanks to the LXX text he is no longer the mystery man "from the land of Uz." He is from **the land of Ausitis**, which was located on the borders of Edom and Arabia (42:19). He is also a descendant of Abraham through Esau, and his first wife was an Arab (42:20). This makes him a Gentile, and Esau the unbeliever was his forefather. St. John Chrysostom, quoting Ecc 7:21, notes that the text qualifies Job as **blameless,** that is, "just," but that it did not say, "without sin." Only Christ was without sin (Heb 4:15).

1:6 Heaven is inaccessible to **the devil**; yet he **came with them** because he is an angel with a nature similar to **the angels of God**. However, writes St. Gregory, “He was in the Lord's sight, but the Lord was not in his sight. When a blind man stands in the sun, he is bathed with the sun's rays, but he still does not see the light by which he is lit.” And St. John Chrysostom teaches that “‘he came with them’ means nothing else but that [the devil] too is dependent upon God.”

1:7 The devil accuses the righteous before God “day and night” (Rev 12:10). With God's permission, he pummels our minds with evil thoughts and weakens our bodies with pain and illness, ever seeking to influence us towards evil. But through hardship, the righteous are clothed in the “whole armor of God” (Eph 6:13). We are called to “glory in tribulations” (Rom 5:3), knowing that we are to walk in obedience to Christ's commands (Mt 5:10).

1:10-12 St. John Chrysostom remarks that Satan's will is his own, but he derives his power from God, who does not allow him to act except with justice. He cannot bring harm to the faithful, and even profits those who wage war against him, “for tribulation makes the strong man stronger.” Jesus conversed with evil spirits and even granted their request to be sent into a great herd of swine (Lk 8:32, 33).

1:13 St. Gregory compares the **elder brother** to the Jews, and the rest of Job's sons and daughters to the Gentiles. The collapse of the house (v. 19) points to the Final Judgment, when we will either be crushed by Christ the Rock or take refuge in Him (see Lk 17:26–30).

1:20 **Job** did these acts, according to St. Hesychius, less as a sign of mourning than to get rid of what possessions were left with him, thus leaving the enemy no means by which he could further test him. “He wanted to strip down, nude to nude, with his enemy, and **he fell to the ground** to humble himself before God.”

1:22 Job did not **charge God** with injustice for the evils that had befallen him (see Ps 22:2). “It is not the events, but the perversity of thoughts, that makes us suspect God of meanness” (JohnChr).

2:2 St. Gregory comments that since the devil has already been defeated, the Lord is chiding him for the impotence of his pride. St. Hesychius teaches that the devil cannot even speak without first receiving permission from God.

2:4 The devil was unable to understand how Job could seek salvation over saving his own **skin**—that is, **his life**.

2:7 St. Gregory remarks that from the beginning, Satan has been working to destroy the Body of Christ, inflicting wounds on God's people throughout the history of the Jews, and continuing in his fury until he came to the very Head of the Church.

2:8 Job in his misery is an image of Christ on the Cross. He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 8:3). “With a shard, therefore, the pus is scraped, when sin is defeated by the flesh.” St. Gregory also notes that the repentant sinner, like Job, looks “unflinchingly upon the stains of sin by which he is covered.”

2:9 St. Hesychius teaches that Satan “recruited” Job's **wife**, as he had done with Eve. St. John Chrysostom asks, “What are you saying, woman? When God needs to be . . . propitiated, you are, rather, preparing to provoke Him! For if it is God who has caused these bad things, He needs to be invoked, not blasphemed.” And Jesus said, “He who endures to the end will be saved” (Mt 10:22).

2:15 **Job did not sin with his lips**: “When holy men undergo persecution . . . they not only never transgress in injurious expressions against God, but they never launch words of reviling against their very adversaries” (GrgGt).

2:16-18 **Job's three friends** came to **comfort him**, but the contrary took place, because they imagined they understood the reason he suffered such things.

3:1-3 Job **cursed his day** of birth, but as a pious man he never said he could not endure his pain.

3:8 The **sea-monster** is identified as Satan (3:8; 7:12; 9:13; 26:12; 41:1; Ps 74:13, 14; 87:4; 89:10; 104:26; 148:7; Is 27:1; 30:7; 51:9; Ezk 29:3; 32:2; Jon 1:17).

3:20 “The heart of the just knows its own bitterness because it understands how troublesome is its exile here, where it lies wounded and cast out” (GrgGt).

3:21 St. Gregory writes that those who seek to die to themselves are like those who dig for **treasures**. “The closer they come to their goal, the more eager they become for the work.”

4:3-6 In his hypocrisy, Eliphaz begins to mock Job for the very virtues he had been praised for. Christ was mocked and reviled in a similar way (Lk 23:35–37).

4:7 Eliphaz could not understand why God would allow a righteous man to suffer. The Fathers give four reasons why God allows suffering: (1) as a means of punishment, when there is no hope for rehabilitation (see Jer 30:14, 15 and notes); (2) to bring the sinner to repentance (see Jn 5:14); (3) to prevent future sins (see 2Co 12:7); and (4) “that the power of God might be made known” (Jn 9:2, 3).

4:13-21 St. Gregory comments that Job's friends typify teachers of false doctrines, who pretend to hear hidden words from God in order to confuse the weak and to “cast a veil of reverence” over their preaching.

5:1-27 St. Gregory remarks that Eliphaz' words would have been true, had they not been delivered against the patience of so great a man. Like the Hebrews, Eliphaz knew the acts of the Lord, but he did not know His ways (Ps 102:7).

6:2 Christ is the **scale.** He “came to weigh the merit of our life, and brought down with Him both justice and lovingkindness together” (GrgGt).

6:5-7 God is the Source of both physical and spiritual **food**. Christ is the **bread** that satisfies, and His **words**, being “salted with truth,” give eternal life.

6:10 Having placed his hope in the Lord, Job faced **the grave** with peace of soul. It was Eliphaz who had **lied about the holy words of** . . . **God**.

6:11-13 “The strength of the righteous is to subdue the flesh, to love the hardships of this world for the sake of eternal rewards, to count the allurements of prosperity as nothing, and to overcome the dread of adversity in our heart” (GrgGt).

6:18 Job's lament gives voice to Christ in His Passion, summed up when He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Ps 21:1; Mt 27:46).

7:8 **I am no more** speaks of death and judgment, for believers know that they "will be lost if they are judged apart from mercy, for even this very life that we seem to live righteously is sin" (GrgGt).

7:11 St. Gregory remarks that we are to approach confession with Job's frame of mind.

7:12 St. Hesychius comments that **a guard** refers to the enemy, who is allowed to afflict the righteous with hard trials.

7:20-21 Christ also asked “**why**?” while hanging on the Cross (Mt 27:46). Job looked to death for relief (v. 21), but Christ's death **purged** our **lawlessness** (Jn 1:29), and His Resurrection **in the morning** (Ps 5:3) brought a new covenant of life and hope.

8:1-4 **How long**? The unjust cannot bear the edifying words of the righteous, but speak even well-known truths boldly and with big words so they will appear learned.

8:11-13 Bildad's images, which rightly describe **all who forget the Lord**, are wasted on Job. In speaking of those who have forgotten God, St. Gregory writes that while they accept God's gifts and blessings, “they do not seek His glory, but their own applause.”

9:2 Job's question is answered in Christ, the only truly **righteous** One.

9:5 St. Ambrose sees in the **mountains** a type of the Old Testament and the Prophets. “The Jew grew old; grace was renewed.” Christ “overturned” the understanding of the Law (2Co 5:17) and established the comprehension that is of the Spirit.

9:8 St. Gregory the Great sees in **heaven** a type of the preaching of the apostles and evangelists. St. Cyril notes that this is the same Lord who, as Man, walked **on the sea as on firm ground** (Jn 6:19).

9:9-13 St. Hesychius sees v. 9 as denoting all of God's great works, and compares v. 10 to Jn 21:25. God **goes beyond** us (v. 11) when He defers judgment, and **passes by** when He visits us.

9:15 “All human righteousness is proved unrighteous if it is judged in strict rules”; therefore we must be strenuous in prayer, so that our righteous deeds may be seasoned by humility (GrgGt).

10:1-3 Here we see Job growing weaker, calling on God's help lest he **give heed** to the enemy. Job, like Christ, “learned obedience through the things which He suffered” (Heb 5:8).

10:8-12 St. Ambrose writes that Job, knowing no one is immune from falling, rejects what comes from unholiness and confesses what comes from weakness. To act in an unholy way is not part of the human condition; rather, it comes from the "poison of unbelief." Man's pardon lies in God's mercy and not in man's power.

10:9-12 From his conception, man is shaped by God. St. Cyril writes, “None of the members of the body as formed from the beginning is polluted. Let the mouths of all heretics be stopped who slander their bodies, or rather, Him who formed them” (see 1Co 6:19).

10:20 The righteous ask that their trials might be over, says St. Hesychius, so that many around them might not stumble as a result of seeing so much suffering and sorrow.

10:20-22 St. Hesychius writes that this **land** refers to hell: “Man should fear going into these places.” St. Gregory remarks, “But what advantage is it for us to foreknow these things, if it is not our lot to escape them?” Indeed, Job knew he would be redeemed (19:25). Therefore, as the Lord says, “Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you” (Jn 12:35).

11:1-20 Unlike Job, Zophar had all the answers and no questions. Zophar is incorrect in asserting that if a man does all the “right” things, God will bless him; when in fact, man's will cannot force God to act. The intellectual demands of men like these are satisfied with their manmade theories and doctrines. They are more anxious to appease an inaccessible God than to trust in a God who loves them.

12:5-6 **The appointed time** also speaks of the Day of Judgment, when the **innocent** One will judge **those who** provoked Him.

12:15 St. Gregory the Great interprets **water** to mean the grace of the Holy Spirit. “If the grace of the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the hearer's mind, the sense is immediately dried up.”

12:22 The **shadow of death** is the Law, which makes all sinners liable to punishment by death; but Christ brought **light** to the shadows (GrgGt).

13:1 God reveals His mysteries to the ones He has found to be holy (Hesych).

13:17-28 Job's is the voice of mankind, “eagerly desiring to advance from fear to love. . . . He seeks the very presence of his Creator, familiarly, in the flesh,” that he might both hear and be heard (GrgGt).

14:5 God sets bounds to our spiritual attainments. We learn humility by the things we are unable to master, that we may not be exalted by those things we have the power to do (GrgGt).

14:7-11 Christ was **cut down** in His death, but would **sprout again** in His Resurrection (see Ps 1:3) and send out **tender shoots**—“the faithful being multiplied by His Resurrection grew out far and wide” (GrgGt).

14:14 **Will man live again**: “Our Lord, when He was near His passion, took up the voice of those who were weak in Himself, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me’ (Mt 26:39); and that He might remove their fear, He took it in Himself” (GrgGt).

14:17 As a mortal man, Job has **transgressed unwillingly**, that is, “sin not leading to death” (1Jn 5:16, 17). But “one day it may also come forth out of the bag of secrecy into the publicity of the Judgment” (GrgGt).

15:1-6 “Blessed Job bears a type of the Holy Church universal, and his friends bear the likeness of heretics” (GrgGt).

15:20 “With their feeble insight, [Job's friends] did not perceive that the Lord had given him over to be tempted so that, like an athlete of Christ, he might be fashioned by the temptations and attain to the crown of a greater glory” (AmbM).

16:8 St. Hesychius compares this verse to Christ's betrayal at Judas's hands (Jn 13:21; Mt 26:25).

16:17 Compare this verse to 1Pt 2:22 and Lk 23:24.

16:18 The **earth** did **not cover** Christ's **blood** shed on the Cross; rather His blood has covered the earth, for the Church has preached the gospel of salvation in all parts of the world (GrgGt).

17:4 A stunning example of God's enemies lacking **discernment** shows up in St. Paul's commentary in 1Co 2:7, 8 on those who crucified Christ.

18:1-21 St. Gregory sees Bildad's words as being unwittingly directed against the devil.

19:5 Job's friends, seeing his affliction and knowing his righteousness, should have bewailed their own miserable condition. “With what vengeance did they deserve to be smitten, who had not served like him?” (GrgGt).

19:7-19 The Fathers note clear parallels between this passage and Christ's Passion (see Mt 27:40; Jn 18:23; Mt 27:26, 27, 29; Is 53:2, 3).

19:23-27 “No one since the days of Christ speaks so openly concerning the Resurrection as he did before Christ” (Jerome).

20:1-3 Zophar's so-called superior **understanding** blinded him to the truth.

20:12-14 St. Gregory comments that the hypocrite hides his evil intentions behind soft words inspired by demons, but the faithful hide the “honey and milk” of heaven under their tongue (SS 4:11).

21:7-14 Some, seeing the righteous suffer and the sinner prosper, assume that God's judgment is not just. But although the ungodly may prosper on this earth, they cannot escape judgment when they die. Christ will say to all who reject Him, “depart from Me” (Mt 25:41; Lk 12:47, 48).

21:16 “Let us pray together to undergo toil here, so that we may deserve to gain the consolation of eternal rest in the kingdom of heaven. For prosperity and abundance constitute a powerful inducement to do wrong; they exalt a man to pride and induce him to forget his Creator” (AmbM).

21:23-26 Riches should not lift up the soul, nor should poverty disturb it.

21:29 Those who do not pass through the present life as if it were a **road** to that which is to come are unable to comprehend those who do.

22:1-30 **Eliphaz** went from a dead heart to idle words, and from idle words to the sin of lying, and from lying to insults and abuse. These are the descents of increasing sin (GrgGt).

22:2 When prideful people know they are going to lose the argument, they often repeat what is already known, “lest, by holding their tongue, they should appear to be defeated” (GrgGt).

22:23 Eliphaz failed to realize that it was because of Job's righteous deeds that he was afflicted in the first place (1:12).

23:1-3 In the midst of affliction, the righteous know God by faith, but long all the more to see His form. Christ will take the form of fallen men and fulfill Job's desires (GrgGt).

23:12 Similarly, the Virgin Mary has hidden many things in her heart (Lk 2:19).

24:1 We are wrapped up within the divisions of time, since we are created beings. But God, Creator of all things, encompasses our **times** by His eternity (GrgGt).

24:2-6 **The ungodly** here denote false teachers, who lead others away **from the right way** of salvation (GrgGt).

24:8 “The showers of the mountains are the words of the learned” (GrgGt). The **rock** is Christ and His Church, to whom the afflicted ones flee.

24:14-16 “Everyone who avoids the light loves darkness, seeking to be hidden, though he cannot be hidden from God” (AmbM).

25:4 “Every just man is just by illumination from God, not by comparison with God” (GrgGt).

26:1, 2 Is it possible for a man to **help** God? St. Gregory gives a qualified “yes.” Relating this passage to 1Co 3:7, he writes, “For to ‘plant’ and to ‘water’ is to ‘help,’ both of which would be only a void ministration if God does not give the increase in the heart.”

26:14 “If we can hardly endure the wonders of His humility, with what nerve do we encounter the loud and dreadful advent of His Majesty?” (GrgGt; see Ps 49:3).

27:3 “He signifies here the nostrils of his inner man, with which he gathered the odor of eternal life, and drew in the grace of the heavenly ointment by a twofold sense, as it were” (AmbM).

27:6 How can Job say that he has not **done anything wrong**, considering that he accuses himself of having sinned (7:20; 9:20)? Because even righteous men find it difficult to avoid involuntary sin (see 14:17–22 and note; Rom 7:13–25 and notes). “For what man's heart, bound up with this corruptible flesh, does not slip in ill-bent thought? . . . But when there is a resisting of the thought, the soul is freed from being confounded. And so the mind of the righteous, even though it is free from bad practice, yet sometimes falls to the ground in bad thinking” (GrgGt).

27:12 Compare with Jam 4:17.

28:1-3 God's **order** is plainly seen in things like **silver** and **gold**, but “the design of God Himself is invisible” (JohnChr).

29:1-6 St. Gregory interprets this passage in the light of Christ and His Church. The **lamp** denotes Holy Scripture (2Pt 1:19; Ps 118:105); **my house** is “the dwelling place of the mind”; and **butter** (v. 6) is the “holy preachers, filled to the full with the fatness of good works.”

29:14-15 **I put on righteousness**: Compare to Gal 3:27. The preaching of the Church enlightens the **blind** man, who does not know where to go, and supports the **lame** man, who “does not have the power to go to the place he sees.”

29:16 St. Cyril notes that it is not only the natural father who is called **father** (see 1Co 4:15), “for Paul was father of the Corinthians, not by having begotten them after the flesh, but by having taught and begotten them again after the Spirit.”

29:17 “Oh what a spoil did the Church take from the mouth of the devil, when, by converting, she carried off Saul himself, the spoiler!” (GrgGt; see Acts 9:1–12).

29:19 An image pointing to the **waters** of baptism and the coming of the Holy Spirit, who **would settle** on the apostles at Pentecost.

29:20-25 An image pointing to the growth of the Church.

30:1-12 St. Gregory sees these **younger** men, along with the **fathers** who taught them, as heretics. But they also can be seen more universally to illustrate those who teach, and those who follow, false doctrines. They are **in want and famine** (v. 3) because they are lost and spiritually malnourished. **Salty herbs**, says St Gregory, means they "observe the least precepts and disregard the greater ones." They no longer understand the truth, but are content to **chew** its **roots.** The **thieves** are those who would steal the faithful away from the Church. Indeed, the true Church is taunted by her critics, while the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is used as a **byword** (v. 9) by these **sons of fools** (v. 8), who misuse and exploit it as they pursue every "wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14).

30:13-31 This passage carries several voices: (1) that of Blessed Job; (2) that of Christ in His Passion; (3) that of the Church in the midst of persecution; and (4) that of the faithful in the midst of their struggle.

30:25 “Who then are the ‘merciful’ (Mt 5:7)? Those who give money or feed the poor? No. But who are they? Those who have become poor for the sake of Him who became poor for our sakes (see 2Co 8:9)” (SymNew). These have nothing material to give, yet they constantly weep with compassion over the **man in distress**.

31:1, 2 St. Gregory writes that Eve sinned and “came to death” because she allowed desire to enter her soul through the “windows” of her eyes. He warns the faithful to be careful that we not even look on what is forbidden. “If I defile my mind in thought, I can never be the inheritance of Him who is the Author of purity” (see Mt 5:27, 28; 1Pt 1:13).

31:3-6 “The righteous man is scourged and corrected by the rod of discipline, because he is being prepared for the Father's estate of inheritance. But the unjust man is let go in his own pleasures because temporal good things are supplied to him to the same degree that eternal ones are denied him. . . . So let the righteous weigh well the evils that await the wicked, and never envy their passing happiness” (GrgGt).

31:6 **He knows**: “It is not that the Creator of the periods of time learned anything from time, but His ‘knowing’ is His affording the knowledge to us by the example of each particular case as it emerges” (GrgGt).

31:16 “That does not mean, ‘yes’ for this need, and ‘no’ for that one; but ‘yes’ to every need without distinction, even if it is perilous, very costly, or risky” (JohnChr).

31:25 St. Gregory the Great comments that the righteous have not **rejoiced** in **great** earthly **wealth**; rather, it is seen as a burden, because they have to “carry so many things” on their journey to their heavenly inheritance. All things belong to God; therefore we must strive to share all we have with our needy neighbor (Gal 2:10).

32:1-22 **Elihu**, puffed up with arrogance, represents those who profess truth with the lips, but despise truth in the heart. St. Gregory says arrogance is manifested in four ways: (a) when the proud think they possess any goodness of themselves; (b) when they believe they can earn God's blessings by their own merit; (c) when they boast of possessing something they do not have; and (d) when, despising others, they wish to be the sole possessors of what they have.

33:1-3 Where St. Gregory sees in Elihu few admirable qualities, St. John Chrysostom gives Job's young friend credit for wanting Job “to be declared as righteous” (33:32), while his other friends desired only to condemn him.

33:4 St. Ambrose writes that this verse shows the **divine Spirit** “to be both divine and Creator.” St. Gregory of Nazianzus writes that “this Spirit shares with the Son in working both the Creation and the Resurrection” (also see Ps 103:30).

33:31-33 Elihu has uttered great and powerful words, yet immediately follows up with pride and foolishness. He is like those who “preach Christ even from envy and strife . . . not sincerely, supposing to add affliction” to the suffering of another (Php 1:14–17).

34:1-3 Elihu, sad to say, did not preach in order to make men wise, but to display his own superior wisdom.

34:5-8 Job did not say this. Elihu added to and twisted Job's words to strengthen his own argument.

34:37 Elihu accused Job of having deserved his scourges, and of having sinned after the scourges. But the Lord judged otherwise, asserting that he was scourged without reason (2:3), and blessing him doubly afterwards (GrgGt).

35:13 “Not only does the Lord not countenance wrongs, but He does not even wish to look on them” (JohnChr; see Hab 1:13).

36:22 Even while offending Him with his arrogance, Elihu prophesies Christ, **the Mighty One**.

37:5 The **Mighty One** (v. 5) will indeed **thunder** out of a whirlwind (38:1), and Elihu and Job's friends will be silenced.

37:6, 7 God uses the random **winter storms** and the **rain** and **snow** to show man his **weakness** in the face of God's overwhelming power. Indeed, Christ taught this lesson to His disciples when he calmed the storm (Mt 8:23–27). “He has created man to be weak, and yet man thinks himself to be strong; and thereby he becomes even more feeble” (JohnChr).

37:9, 10 “What scientific laws, pray, can you lay down concerning thunder and lightning, O you who thunder from the earth, and cannot shine with even little sparks of truth?” (GrgNa).

38:1 **Out of the whirlwind**: It was as if God wanted to place heaven itself above Job, as if He had brought His throne near to him (JohnChr). Had Job been about to die, the Lord would have praised him for his faithfulness. But since he is about to be doubly restored, the Lord reproved him, “lest his victory itself should lay him low with the sword of pride” (GrgGt).

38:3 This verse was intended to restore and encourage a discouraged Job (JohnChr).

38:7 Before the **stars** were made, the **angels praised** the Lord. “All the unspeakable harmony of the highest heavens, both in the service of God and in the mutual concord of the celestial powers, can therefore only be preserved by the direction of the Spirit” (BasilG).

38:8 “As if it were being born, the sea is first poured out, then takes its form, and is ‘gathered together into one place’” (JohnChr; see Gn 1:9).

38:14 **The power of speech** was given to man alone.

38:15-19 Christ descended to the very **gates of** hell and **death** and opened them, so that by dying, He might overcome their strength and bring **light** to the **darkness**.

38:32-34 The “father” (v. 28) brought forth the Morning Star (i.e., **Mazzaroth**), which is Christ (Rev 22:16), “when the fullness of the time had come” (Gal 4:4). The Lord lifted up His **voice** (v. 34) when the apostles, having been immersed in the **rain** of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, preached the gospel to the world (see 1Kg 8:10, 11; Ps 93:3).

38:36 St. Ambrose quotes this verse in speaking of Christ the High Priest's woven bridal garment, “adorned with precious stones” (see Ex 35:27 and note).

38:38-41 The **dust** represents sinners, who were hardened into **stone** when Christ built His Church. The **lion** denotes the apostles, who "waited" until Pentecost, and the **raven** denotes the Gentiles (GrgGt).

39:1-4 St. Gregory the Great and St. Ambrose see in the begetting of young by the **wild goats** and the **deer** a type of the “labors of fathers who beget spiritual children” (see Gal 4:19, 20).

39:5-12 St. Gregory sees in the **wild donkey** a type of the saints who seek the kingdom of heaven, far removed from earthly cares, and who pay no **heed** to **the blame** (v. 7) of the evil one. He sees in the **wild ox** a type of the proud nations which were tamed by the gospel. The **manger** is understood to be Holy Scripture, and the **ropes** are the precepts of discipline in the Church. The **seed** is the word of preaching (Mt 13:3), and the **threshing floor** is the Church itself (Mt 3:12).

39:18-25 The **horse** and **rider** are like the body and soul of the righteous, who fight the adversary fearlessly, waiting for the sound of the **trumpet** and to hear the words **“Well done!”**

40:1-5 St. Gregory remarks that God is saying to Job, “You were considering your own loftiness, but you were ignorant of that of others. Having heard of the virtues of others, answer Me, if you can, concerning your own.”

40:6-14 God chastens the **righteous** “in order to raise them to a higher state of purity, and delivers them over to various trials that He may purge away all their unclean thoughts . . . and may thus transmit them like pure gold to the judgment to come” (JohnCas).

40:8 The Lord at last tells Job why he has suffered. “This is the balm for Job's wounds. This is the crown of the contest. This is the reward for his patience” (GrgNa). St. John Chrysostom writes that all that has gone before is now justified. Indeed, Job's remaining **righteous** in the midst of affliction perfectly demonstrates Christ, who suffered without sinning in His humanity that He might be made known in His divinity.

40:15 The **wild animals** described to Job are seen by some Church Fathers as a type of Satan, the ancient enemy. Having been shown the “lofty aspirations and works of the saints,” Job is now being shown the wiles and snares of the adversary who afflicted him.

40:19-22 Satan was created first among all the angels and was exalted as **ruler** of **creation** (see Ezk 28:12, 13; Is 14:12).

40:23 Here one is reminded of Pharaoh, who did **not notice** the waters of the Red Sea rushing over him until it was too late (Ex 14:23–28). The **Jordan**, says St. Gregory, signifies those who have been sealed with the sacrament of baptism.

40:24-26 Christ brought the strategies of the devil to naught by overcoming them, thus taking away his power. The devil “seized the bait that was His Body,” and the “sharp sting of His Godhead pierced him through” (GrgGt).

40:27-28 The enemy, says St. Gregory, is against God in His holiness, “but does not disagree with His judgment,” for he always seeks to tempt righteous men. “Yet the Lord permits this, either mercifully or righteously.” This, then, is a kind of **covenant** between God and Satan wherein the wishes of both parties are fulfilled. “Each attains what it desires and terminates its quarrels by the desired result.”

40:29 To the Lord, writes St. Gregory, the devil is as irrational as an unclean animal, as malicious as a snake, and as harmless as a caged **bird**. The Lord played with him when, in Christ's Passion, “He showed Him the bait, but concealed the snare.”

41:1-3 Even the very powers that oppose God by their evil doings are subservient to Him.

41:4-15 The enemy had **power** over the “deep” (v. 24), which is the earth, until Christ, **his antagonist**, pierced his impenetrable armor. St. Gregory the Great writes that the **doors of his face** (v. 6) are “wicked teachers” who lead their students straight to hell, and his stony **skin** illustrates hardened sinners mutually shielding each other so that no breath of life can reach them. **Lights** come from his **mouth** (v. 11) “because they inflame the minds of the hearers to love unbelief, and from seeming to shine by wisdom, they surely burn with wickedness.” The **smoke** is “darkening doubt,” and **coals** are earthly desires, kindled to **flame** by pride, envy, lust, and avarice.

41:24-26 God allows the enemy to live for two reasons: that he might disgrace himself the more in being conquered by the weaker; and that mankind might be crowned with victory in overcoming him (CyrJer).

42:4 **Hear me, O Lord**: Speaking to God is not so much what we say with our mouths, but rather “to long for Him with eager desires” (GrgGt).

42:5 **Now my eye sees You**: The gift of spiritual knowledge—that is, when we begin to perceive the hidden things of God—is conferred on us through repentance and the fear of God, which gives birth to a deeper faith. “This is called ‘the faith of divine vision.’ Until then, hearing, but now divine vision. But vision is more certain than hearing” (IsaacS).

42:6 Job was still in physical torment, yet having seen God, he was undone, and asks for nothing more. “Because Job has condemned himself, God has justified him” (JohnChr; see 40:8).

42:7 Note that Elihu is not mentioned. There are many like Elihu in the Church who refuse to proclaim properly the truths they believe, and whose swollen pride makes them unacceptable to God. “Sacrifice does not restore him, because he already believes what he should believe, but heavenly justice drives him away on account of his flood of words” (GrgGt).

42:7-9 Job images Christ as suffering **servant**, High Priest, and Intercessor on behalf of all. St. Gregory writes that he also images the Church. Job's intercession is echoed by Abraham and Moses (see Gn 18:22–33; Ex 32:32) and fulfilled by Christ (Lk 23:34). As we worship during Divine Liturgy, we offer up ourselves and, because Christ offered Himself first for our sake, we receive acceptance and forgiveness through Him.

42:11 Job's righteousness and God's faithfulness were indeed demonstrated to **all** through his suffering, according to the Lord's word (40:8). St. Gregory the Great comments that Job's double blessings point to the general resurrection, when the Church will receive “that which is hers twofold: having received the Gentiles in full number, all Judea shall then also be found to agree to run to her faith” (see Rom 11:25, 26; Is 61:7; Rev 6:11) “on the preaching of Elijah” (see Mt 17:11). **They ate food and drank with Him** images the eucharistic supper. As **uncoined gold** is shaped into a coin, so the faithful, having been made in God's image, are being shaped into His likeness through participation in Him. The **lamb** points to the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ offered up during Divine Liturgy.

42:13-15 St. Gregory comments that Job had the same number of children as before (1:2), “in order that those who had been destroyed might be shown to be alive.” The daughters' names designate the redeemed human race, which shines forth like the **day**, spreads a sweet spiritual fragrance like **cassia**, and overflows with abundance like a **horn** of plenty.

42:18 **He will rise**: Job is, after all, a book about resurrection from the dead—the continual hope of the Old Testament prophets. Job's physical healing was only a foretaste of what he will experience in God's kingdom. The final verses serve to establish Job in history, as an historical person. St. John Chrysostom remarks that the exiled Jews in Egypt included this section because they knew they would soon return to Jerusalem, “and desiring this, they could find in the history of Job a significant brazier with which to rekindle their piety.”

1:1, 2 The Book of Proverbs was written that one might know Christ, the Wisdom of God. As St. Paul pointed out, Christ is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1Co 1:24). St. Hippolytus also said, “These are the proverbs of Solomon, that is to say, the peacemaker, who, in truth, is Christ the Savior.”

It was also written that one might partake of the virtues Wisdom begets in those who obey Him. Thus, although the human author of this book is King Solomon, the Author behind the author is Wisdom Himself, the Son and Word of God.

Wisdom instructs those who know Him. The word **instruction** incorporates several aspects: teaching, correction, discipline, reproof, learning, education, and training. Wisdom and His instruction in the virtues are emphasized throughout the Book of Proverbs. The purpose of correcting and disciplining oneself is to remove the deceptions of sin, so the God-given virtues in one's nature can manifest themselves (MaxCon, JohnDm).

1:6 Proverbs is characterized by **parables**, **hidden sayings**, **wise words and riddles**. And as Wisdom gives one discernment regarding these, he is able to understand Wisdom's instruction. *Parables* are illustrations used to teach the virtues. Christ, the Wisdom of God, also used parables extensively when He taught as recorded in the Four Gospels. *Hidden sayings* and *riddles* can only be understood by illumination. Wisdom illuminates those who know and are taught by Him. *Wise words* are like a door that leads into the inner sanctuary of Wisdom. If Wisdom opens this door to the earnest seeker after the virtues, this seeker will find Wisdom and partake of His virtues (see also Mt 7:7, 8.).

1:7-8 Wisdom begets **the fear of God** in “the simple” (v. 4). The simple are beginners on the spiritual path. This fear is **the beginning of wisdom**, **godliness toward God**, and **the beginning of perception**. As these beginners practice this fear, they grow in **good understanding** of Wisdom and His virtues. The ungodly are those who **despise** Wisdom and His **instruction**. They may claim to believe in God, but they do not know Wisdom nor live a virtuous life. Consequently, they do not truly believe in God.

1:9 **My son** is a form of address used throughout Proverbs. Wisdom is like a father and a mother to His children, for He has deep love and affection for them. He instructs them out of such parental tenderness.

1:11-19 When Wisdom became a righteous Man in His Incarnation, He allowed His enemies to crucify Him (**unjustly**, v. 12), and to bury Him in a tomb (**hide** Him **in the earth**, v. 12). Their objective was to **take away his remembrance from the earth** (v. 13); however, He is now remembered all over the world. But His enemies are forgotten. Judas Iscariot **cast** his **lot** with the enemies of Wisdom and **acquired a common bag** and **purse** with them (v. 15). For he sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Consequently, they took **away their own soul in ungodliness** (v. 19).

1:20-21 Wisdom is present everywhere and is in all things. He moves about boldly in the public streets and squares, seeking to draw all to Himself, and through Him to God the Father. When He became incarnate, He also exhibited this courage in public places. And He imparts this same courage, one of the four general virtues, to those who believe in Him and walk in the fear of God.

1:22 The **simple** are beginners in the life of virtue. Because of their faith, Wisdom gives them the gift of **righteousness**—one of the general virtues of Wisdom. As long as they **hold fast** to this righteousness, **they shall not be ashamed**.

1:23 **Perception** is one of the general virtues of Wisdom, and the crown of the virtues. But those **without discernment** . . . **become ungodly** because of their **arrogance**, the worst of vices. Wisdom reproves them in hopes they will return to Him through repentance.

1:24-35 Wisdom sends forth His Holy Spirit (**my breath**) to teach the wise His **word** (v. 24). Those who pay no attention to this teaching **shall eat the fruits of their own way** (v. 33). But those **who obey** Wisdom **shall dwell in hope, and shall be at rest without fear from every evil** (v. 35).

2:1, 2 A loving son receives the words of Wisdom and hides them in his heart. Such a son becomes an obedient listener to Wisdom and inclines his heart to **understanding**.

2:3-6 Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, places the crown of the virtues (**understanding** and **perception**) on a son who seeks Him as intensely as people seek monetary gain (**silver** and **treasure**). Such a son will understand godly fear and come to know God the Trinity.

2:7-23 There are two roads on which mankind is traveling: the evil road of the vices and the good road of the virtues. Each of these two is addressed many times in this passage (vv. 7–17). The evil road leads to death and Hades, from which there is no return (vv. 18, 19). The good road leads to the world to come (**the land**, vv. 21–23).

3:1-38 This chapter may be divided into three sections, each section beginning with the address, **My son**. And each deals with three vices or sinful passions and their cure: forgetfulness (v. 1), rebelliousness (v. 11), and carelessness (v. 23).

3:1, 2 Forgetfulness is the forgetting of Wisdom's laws concerning virtue, and the beginning of its cure is obedience from the heart to Wisdom. Such obedience is the road to life and peace.

3:4-10 **Faithfulness** in **almsgiving** (v. 3) is a manifestation of obedience to Wisdom from the heart, and helps one not to forget His laws. For one who forgets the laws of Wisdom **exalts** his **own wisdom** (v. 5), stumbles on the **straight path** (v. 6), **relies** on his **own discernment** (v. 7), and turns to **evil** passions (v. 7). But **almsgiving** is part of the golden chain around one's **neck** (v. 3; see also 1:10). For one attached to his material possessions will soon forget and **forsake** Wisdom and His laws (v. 3).

3:11-22 Rebellion is an offspring of forgetfulness and is characterized by a heart that despises and faints under Wisdom's instruction—one aspect of which is **reproof** (v. 11). For Wisdom **instructs** and **chastises** His children, because He **loves** them (v. 12; see also Heb 12:5, 6); otherwise, they would forget God and fall into rebellion against Him. But Wisdom's education leads to **discernment** (v. 13) and **righteousness** (v. 18).

Those who know Christ will find Him to be the true **riches** (vv. 14, 15, 17), and **no honor** given Him is worthy of Him (v. 16). To travel His good road brings one **peace** (v. 19), **life** (v. 20), and **security** (v. 20). Then too, they come to know Him as **the Lord** (v. 20) and the Creator of the world, for **God** the Father **founded** the world through Him (vv. 21, 22).

3:23-38 One who forgets Wisdom becomes **careless** (v. 23). Such carelessness is characterized by fearfulness (v. 27), **intimidation** (v. 28), unfaithfulness in almsgiving (vv. 30, 31), betrayal (v. 32), quarrelsomeness (v. 33), lawlessness (vv. 34, 35), the **curse of God** (v. 36), **arrogance** (v. 37), and **dishonor** (v. 38). And the cure for carelessness (v. 25) is the grace of the virtues: discernment, righteousness, courage, and self-control (**grace around your neck**, v. 24).

4:1-28 This chapter may be divided into three sections, in which Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, addresses His children. Verses 1–8 emphasize obedient thinking. Verses 9–18 speak of the paths of Wisdom. Verses 19–28 show the various senses of body and soul involved in the paths of Wisdom.

4:1-8 **Obedient** thinking, firmly planted in the heart, **guards** and does not **forget**, **disregard**, or **forsake** the **commandments** of Wisdom (vv. 5, 6). Such thinking also **loves**, **secures**, and **honors** His commandments (vv. 6, 7). When this is the case, Wisdom, in turn, **cleaves to** (v. 6), **keeps** (v. 6), **exalts** (v. 7), and **embraces** (v. 7) His children. In so doing, He puts a **crown of graces** and **delight** on their heads (v. 8).

4:9-18 The paths of Wisdom are **life** (vv. 9, 12), uprightness (v. 10), conducive to freedom (v. 11), energetic (v. 11), are light and give **light** (v. 17); and they reject the paths of the **ungodly** and **lawless** (vv. 13–16), for their paths are **dark** and full of stumbling (v. 18).

4:19-28 The paths of Wisdom involve the senses, both of body and soul: the **ear** (v. 19), the **heart** and its **fountains** (vv. 20, 22), the **mouth** and **lips** (v. 23), the **eyes** and **eyelids** (v. 24), the **feet** (vv. 25, 26), and the **hands** (v. 27). Such involvement brings **healing** and wholeness (v. 21).

Concerning 4:24, St. Hippolytus writes, “He looks straight forward who has thoughts free of passion, and he has true judgments, who is not in a state of excitement about external appearances. When he says, ‘Let your eyes look straight forward,’ he means the vision of the soul.”

5:1-6 Wisdom is twofold. It is Christ Himself, and secondly, it is His **words** or teachings (v. 1). His children who incline their ear to Him and His teachings will guard good thinking, which is called **perception** (v. 2). Perception is the crown of the virtues. And the good thinking in this case revolves around Wisdom's command concerning fornication vs. marriage. Moreover, His teaching regarding this matter is called a command, because it is not subject to change. His command is to stay away from sex outside marriage, for this path will lead to **Hades** and **death** (vv. 3–6).

5:7-14 Prostitution here refers to engaging in sex outside marriage, which may or may not involve the payment of money. The sons of Wisdom need to obey Him and His teachings, and stay away from sex outside marriage (vv. 7, 8). For the perils are many.

In fornication, a man becomes one flesh with numerous women, which in the end brings **regret** and a totally dissipated life (vv. 9–11; see also St. Paul's teaching in 1Co 6:15–20). Such a son will regret **hating** the **instruction** and **reproofs** of Wisdom (vv. 12, 13). Furthermore, **little by little**, this lifestyle leads to other sins, which are evident not only to God but to the **church** (v. 14).

5:15-19 Marriage is sacred, here called **waters** which are pure, for it was ordained by Wisdom (v. 15; see also Gn 2:23, 24). But adultery **spills** these waters and damages the marriage bond (v. 16). However, faithfulness in marriage is called **wide places**, because it is filled with blessings from Wisdom (vv. 16–18). For within it, both husband and wife **rejoice together** (v. 18), and the wife's love and companionship make her husband **great** (v. 19).

5:20-23 In conclusion, the eyes of God **keep close watch** on a man (vv. 20, 21). For a man who embraces a woman not his wife may do so in the dark, but what he does is fully exposed before God. And although a lawless woman may ensnare a man, the man also is responsible for chaining himself with **his own sins** (v. 22). For he refuses Wisdom's crown of **discernment**, and is finally destroyed with the rest of the undiscerning (v. 23; see also Heb 13:4).

6:1-40 This chapter warns against four vices or sinful passions: a careless tongue (vv. 1–6), laziness (vv. 7–16), a lawless spirit (vv. 17–25), and unlawful sexual intercourse (vv. 26–40).

6:1-6 Assuming **debt** for a friend in this instance refers to a son of Wisdom pledging with his lips to join with a friend in his evil undertakings (v. 1). As St. Paul said, “Evil company corrupts good habits” (1Co 15:33). With such a pledge, a man's tongue becomes his worst enemy (v. 2). Wisdom speaks to His son, commanding him to **save** himself (v. 3), for this son cannot save his friend before he saves himself. And he certainly cannot save him while participating with him in his sins (v. 3).

So Wisdom commands His son to cease being a coward (**Do not be faint**, v. 4), to reject his careless pledge to his friend, and to provoke his friend to change as well. Furthermore, this son is to awake from his spiritual slumber and move forward quickly with this matter, that he may save himself, like **a gazelle from the snares** and **a bird from a trap** (vv. 5, 6; see also Eph 5:14, 15).

6:7-16 Laziness, both of body and soul, leads to **poverty** (vv. 13–15). But Wisdom commands His son to be **diligent** (v. 16). To achieve this, he must mark the behavior of two created things: the **ant** and the **honeybee**. Outwardly they appear insignificant (v. 8) and **weak** (v. 12), but one who discovers their habits will also find the Word and Wisdom of God, who is Christ Himself. And when he imitates their way of life through the grace of Christ (vv. 7, 9, 10, 11), his laziness will be cured.

6:17-25 A lawless spirit is a person who **rejoices in everything the Lord hates** (v. 20). His soul is **incurable** as long as he continues on this path (v. 19). His vices or sinful passions are characterized by **a haughty eye** (arrogance), **an unrighteous tongue**, **hands that shed** innocent **blood**, and **feet** that run to **evil** (vv. 21, 22)—a troublemaker in the community (vv. 17, 18, 23).

But a child of Wisdom can avoid a lawless spirit by guarding the laws and commandments of Wisdom, and by fastening them to his soul like a **collar** around the neck (vv. 24, 25). This collar is the golden chain (1:10) of the general virtues, associated with the crown of discernment. This crown and chain are the virtues of discernment (and its synonyms), righteousness, courage, and self-control, which together beget all the other virtues of Wisdom.

6:26-40 Unlawful sexual intercourse is sex outside the bonds of marriage. And when a man **walks about** (v. 26) and is tempted, the commandments of Wisdom fastened to his soul will keep him from this vice or sinful passion. These commandments will also guard him while he **sleeps** (vv. 27–29). But a man who lets down his guard and succumbs to this passion will ultimately destroy himself (vv. 30–40).

6:32-33 “Desire is a fire, and the flesh is like a garment. The latter is an easy prey, and the former is a tyrant. And when anything harmful is not only taken within, but also held fast, it will not go forth again until it has made an exit for itself. Figuratively speaking, he keeps a fire in his breast who permits an impure thought to dwell in his heart. And he walks upon coals who, by sinning in act, destroys his own soul” (Hippol).

7:1-27 This chapter contrasts two sons: one with the crown of discernment (vv. 1–6), and the other without it (vv. 7–24). A summary regarding both concludes this chapter (vv. 25–27).

7:1-6 Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, begets discernment, the crown of the virtues, in His children. This passage explains how a son of Wisdom may gain the crown of **discernment as a friend** (v. 5), that Wisdom's commandments may keep him from unlawful sexual intercourse. Thus, he makes discernment his friend when he **guards** His **commandments** (vv. 1, 3), **hides** them in himself (v. 1), **honors** them (v. 2), and **fears** them (v. 2). This means a son should value Wisdom's commandments as he would the **pupils** of his **eyes** (v. 3) and the **fingers** on his hands (v. 4). He writes these commands across his spiritual **heart** (v. 4) and confesses that they are like a **sister** to him (v. 5). For just as a brother treats his sister with purity, the commandments of Wisdom will keep His son from an adulteress (v. 6).

7:7-24 An adulteress easily captures the son without the crown of discernment (v. 10) and leads him to destruction. He is likened to **an ox led for slaughter** (v. 22), a **dog** tied up (v. 23), a **deer** pierced with **an arrow** (v. 23), or a **bird** that is trapped (v. 24).

7:25-27 The summation regarding the two sons is as follows. The wise son wearing the crown of discernment holds fast to Wisdom's teachings (v. 25), and thus prevents his heart from turning aside to the ways of the adulteress (v. 26). But those without discernment are walking on the road to **Hades** and the **chambers of death**, and they are **innumerable** (vv. 26, 27).

“You have seen her mischief. Do not wait to admit the rising of lust; for her death is everlasting. And for the rest, by her words and arguments, she wounds, and by her sins she kills those who yield to her. For many are the forms of wickedness that lead the foolish down to Hades” (Hippol).

8:1 **Wisdom** is Christ Himself, and we are to **proclaim** Him to mankind. **Discernment** is the crown of the virtues, and it obeys the one who possesses it. This means the individual person is superior to the discernment he possesses, and he uses it in the proclamation of Christ.

8:1-35 This chapter has been called, “The Divine Wisdom Manifest in Creation Offers Himself to Mankind.” It may be outlined as follows: Introduction (8:1); Wisdom's relationship to mankind (8:2–21); Wisdom's relationship to the Father (8:22–30); and Conclusion (8:31–35).

8:2-3 Wisdom is omnipresent and fills all things.

8:4-6 Wisdom speaks to every human being (**O men** and **the sons of men**, v. 4). Before they know Him, they are **simple** and **uninstructed** (v. 5). If they obey Wisdom out of love for Him, He will give them **astuteness** (vv. 5, 6). Astuteness is the crown of the virtues (14:25).

8:7-8 Wisdom is the **truth** of the Father and only speaks the truth (vv. 6b, 7). Since He is the truth, He only speaks what is righteous; there is nothing unrighteous in His words. His righteousness is one of the general virtues that begets all the other virtues. In Jn 14:6, He said, “I am the truth.”

8:9 **All things** are the “sacred things” of v. 6. These things are **evident** to those who have the crown of understanding through knowing Wisdom and obeying Him.

8:10-21 **Silver**, **gold**, and **precious stones** are not worthy to compare with the value of pursuing Wisdom and His virtues. These virtues are such things as counsel, knowledge, understanding, discernment, and righteousness. They are likened to **fruits** (v. 19) that are produced by Wisdom within those who **love** Him (v. 17).

8:22 Wisdom knows all things.

8:23 **The Lord** is the Father, and **created** in this statement means the Father established Wisdom over His works; for the Father made all things through Wisdom (AthanG). “Created” as used here does *not* mean the Father made Wisdom Himself, for the next clause shows the Father established Wisdom over His works **in the beginning before time**. Therefore, “created” is used in this verse as a synonym of **established**, for Wisdom, who is the Word and Son of the Father, is *not* a creature. He is “begotten from the Father before all time” (Creed; see also v. 25).

The beginning of His ways means two things. It means the Father made all things through Wisdom, and it also refers to the Incarnation, when the Wisdom and Word of the Father became flesh (see also Jn 1:14). The phrase **for His works** refers both to the works of creation and to those accomplished by Christ for our salvation, which are outlined in the Creed. “In the beginning before time” is the same as “In the beginning was the Word” in Jn 1:1. For the Father “established” Wisdom “before time.” Therefore Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God, is not a creature (1Co 1:24).

8:24-25 The word **before** occurs five times in these verses, and it emphasizes that Wisdom Himself exists outside creation. The words **begot me** show the relation of Wisdom to the Father. Wisdom is the Son of the Father, begotten from Him before and outside all time and ages (see also Creed).

8:26-28 Wisdom, the Son of the Father, **was present** (v. 27) with the Father when He made the world; therefore, the Son exists with the Father outside creation. The Father is not a creature; therefore, neither is His Son.

8:29-30 The Son also created the world, for He **was working beside** the Father. The Father is the Creator, and the Son is the Creator. How so? Because the working is *one* working. They are two distinct Persons, but the work of creation is one work. Although He is not mentioned here by name, the Holy Spirit was also present and working, for He, too, is the Creator (see Gn 1:2). Three distinct Persons created the world with one working. This one working is emphasized in the statement: “The Father made the world through the Son in the Spirit.” Therefore the Holy Trinity, our one God, made the world with one working, and They rejoice in one another (v. 30).

8:31 When the Father completed creation, He rejoiced in it. He also rejoices **in the sons of men**. Those who respond to the Father's joy, in turn, rejoice in Him.

8:32-33 The conclusion to 8:1–31 is this: Heed the Wisdom of the Father, and the man who does so is blessed. Such a man will keep his eyes on Him at all times.

8:34 The true issues of life center in Christ, the Wisdom of the Father. Those who center their life in these issues will experience the **grace** of the Father, **the Lord**.

8:35 People who sin against Wisdom act contrary to their own God-given nature (**souls**). For human nature is good in itself, but those who behave contrary to their nature **act ungodly toward their own souls**. Those who do so **love death**.

9:1 Wisdom is Christ, and He built His **house**. This house is first the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, for He was conceived in her womb. Secondly, His house is the Church (Heb 3:1–6). This house is built on Christ, on the Mother of God, and on the apostles and prophets. Christ Himself is the Chief Cornerstone (Eph 2:19–22).

The **seven pillars** of the Church is the Holy Spirit, who is called “the seven Spirits of God” (Rev 3:1). These seven spirits are the graces of the Holy Spirit that rested on Christ, summarized in Is 11:2, 3: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, godliness, and the fear of God. These are the “seven pillars” by which the Church is **supported** through Christ.

9:2 Christ shed His precious blood (**sacrifices**) and offers it in the **wine** of the Eucharist at the Holy Altar (**table**).

9:3 Christ sends His servants to invite people to Christ and His Eucharist.

9:4 Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, gives those who **turn aside to** Him the crown of the virtues, which is discernment.

9:5-6 Wisdom invites mankind to **eat my bread**, which is His body, and **drink the wine**, which is His blood in the Holy Eucharist. Those who accept His invitation and forsake their vices or sinful passions (**lack of discernment**) will find life in His Eucharist (see also Jn 6). Those who seek Wisdom's discernment (the crown of the virtues) will **keep straight** their **understanding with knowledge**.

9:7-24 Wisdom's discernment, seen in **the counsel of saints** (v. 10), manifests itself in holy behavior, seen in **a wise** and **righteous man** (vv. 8, 9).

9:25 Holy behavior is conducive to long life.

9:1-25 This chapter may be outlined as follows: Introduction (v. 1); Wisdom's invitation to mankind (vv. 2–6); Wisdom's discernment in those who accept His invitation (vv. 7–24); and conclusion (v. 25).

10:1 A wise son knows Wisdom and His virtues. But a son **without discernment** is a **grief**, for he lives in vice.

10:2 **Lawless** rich men do not benefit from their wealth, for their vices lead them to **death** and Hades. But **righteousness**, one of the general virtues of Wisdom, **delivers** one from such an end.

10:3 Wisdom, who is the Lord, **will not let the soul of the righteous man starve**, for He will enrich it with the fruits of righteousness. But **He overthrows the life of the ungodly**, because He allows them to eat the fruits of their own vices.

10:4 The Lord allows a man's vices to **humble** his soul. Perhaps he will turn from them. But courage is one of the general virtues begotten by Wisdom. **Courageous** people **enrich others** in virtue.

10:6 **Understanding** is the crown of the virtues, and when **the heat** of temptations and trials comes at this son, he is **kept safe**. But a son without the fruits of the virtues (**harvest time**) is dried up **by the wind** of his vices (**lawless**).

10:9 A **wise man** is a virtuous man, and he is virtuous because he **receives the commandments** of Wisdom. Self-control is one of the general virtues. A wise man is able to control his tongue through Wisdom (see also Jam 3). But an unwise man cannot control his tongue (**unguarded in speech**), which overthrows him in his **perverseness**.

10:13 The general virtues of Wisdom produce love, but their absence causes men to become hateful and **lovers of strife**.

10:15 Perception is one of the general virtues. With perception coupled with self-control, a man is able to keep his mouth under check. But the mouth of **a rash man** is unchecked, and therefore, **approaches destruction**.

10:20 **Discreet lips** reveal the presence of self-control and the general virtues. Forbearance is a fruit of these virtues.

10:24 **Evil things with laughter** are the fruits of men **without discernment**. But Wisdom, who is Christ, **gives birth to discernment in a man**.

10:29 A virtuous man lives in the gladness of hope, but the hope of a man of vice **perishes**.

10:30 **A holy man** is one who knows Wisdom and His virtues. To such a man, **the fear of the Lord is** a **stronghold**.

11:2 **Humble** people **meditate** on Wisdom and His teachings concerning virtue. But **arrogant** people pay no attention to Wisdom, and this leads them to **dishonor** before Him.

11:4 **Righteousness**, one of the general virtues, cuts a **straight** path through this fallen world. Those who travel this path are **blameless**, but **ungodliness** is characterized by a crooked path.

11:6 A righteous life produces **hope** in a man, for his hope is in the world to come. But the ungodly **boast** only in this life, which is **perishing**.

11:8 The ungodly do not exercise self-control over their **mouth**, for they know nothing of the general virtues of Wisdom. But those who know and love Wisdom partake of His general virtues, two of which are **perception** and righteousness. Such people benefit others.

11:10 A man with discernment, the crown of the virtues, has his mouth under control, for he knows how to be **quiet**. Self-control is a “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:19–23). But the mouth of a **man in need of discernment** is out of control and treats others with **contempt**.

11:15 **Lazy** people do not pursue Wisdom and His spiritual riches. But courage is one of the general virtues, and **courageous** people **support themselves** with these virtues.

11:17 Righteousness is one of the general virtues of Wisdom. These virtues beget all the other virtues, called **seed**. Wisdom endowed human nature with this seed, which grows, develops, and bears good fruit in those who obey Him.

11:22 Both good and evil **desires** are motivated by hope for fulfillment. The **righteous** hope for fulfillment in the kingdom of God; therefore, every desire is energized by this hope. But the desire of the **ungodly** is energized by hoping in this fallen world. Since this world is perishing, its hopes perish with it.

11:24 **Every sincere soul is blessed** because sincerity is a fruit of self-control, one of the general virtues of Wisdom. But an **angry** soul is out of control, and therefore is **not graceful**.

11:29 “The fruit of righteousness and the tree of life is Christ. He alone, as man, fulfilled all righteousness. . . . But the souls of the unrighteous meet an untimely expulsion from the presence of God” (Hippol).

11:30 The apostle Peter quotes this verse in 1Pt 4:18. The **righteous man** suffers according to the will of God, but this verse encourages him constantly to commit his soul to God and His faithfulness. For the persecutor will receive his recompense in due time.

12:1 Wisdom's **instruction** incorporates several aspects, one of which is **correction**. **Perception** is the crown of the virtues, and a perceptive man loves to be corrected**.** But a man **without discernment hates** correction.

12:2 No one can live a virtuous life without the **grace** of God. As Wisdom said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). Thus he who finds the Lord's grace and lives by it becomes better, that is, bears the fruits of virtue. But His grace passes by the **lawless man** in **silence**.

12:4 A **courageous wife** is one who possesses the general virtues; therefore, she is **a crown to her husband**. But a wife without these virtues is like **a worm in a tree**, for her evildoing gradually **destroys** him.

12:5 Upright judgment is the crown of the virtues, and, together with righteousness, is one of the general virtues. But the **judgments** of the **ungodly** are deceitful.

12:8 **Understanding** is the crown of the virtues, and coupled with righteousness, courage, and self-control, it helps one to use his **mouth** in a praiseworthy manner. But a **slothful** man does not know these virtues. His mouth is undisciplined; thus he brings **contempt** upon himself.

12:10 **Compassion** is a fruit of righteousness. Thus in man's dominion over every living thing (Gn 1:28), he is to express this dominion in compassion. But the ungodly evidence no such **affections**, for they know nothing of **mercy**, even toward animals.

12:13 The **desires of the ungodly** are not rooted in the general virtues of Wisdom; therefore, their desires pursue the sinful passions. But **the roots of the godly are in** the **strongholds** of these virtues.

12:15 Gentleness is a fruit of the general virtues, and it manifests itself even in one's eyes. But contention is a fruit of vice, which causes others to suffer.

12:18 Astuteness is the crown of the virtues (see also 14:25), and with it, together with righteousness, courage, and self-control, a man keeps his anger under control. But a man without this crown (**without discernment**) and these other virtues **proclaims his wrath** through his mouth.

12:19 **Honesty** is a fruit of righteousness and the other general virtues. But an **unrighteous** man lives in deceit.

12:20 The **tongues of the wise heal** others, because they possess the general virtues of Wisdom. But the tongues of the unwise are like **swords** that **wound** as they speak.

12:22 **Peace** is a fruit of the general virtues, for people who possess them are peacemakers. But a man with a deceitful heart knows nothing of this.

12:25 **Understanding** and **perception** are two aspects of the crown of the virtues. But undiscerning people bring **curses** on themselves.

12:31 The fruit of righteousness is life-giving to others, for a righteous man does not remember wrongs done to him. But **the ways of remembering wrongs** are death-giving to others, for these ways destroy personal relationships.

13:1 Astuteness is the crown of the wise (see also 14:25). Obedience is a fruit of this wisdom, but disobedience evidences a lack of such wisdom. Obedience is the right use of the will, according to God and human nature. But disobedience is a use of the will contrary to God and nature. For human nature is good in itself (Gn 1:31), and obedience to God is in harmony with it.

13:2 Man's soul is good by nature, and the **fruits of righteousness** manifest themselves naturally from the soul. But lawlessness is willful and prevents these natural fruits from showing themselves. Unless this man corrects himself, he will **destroy** his own good nature.

13:3 He who **guards** or disciplines his own **mouth** allows the natural virtues of the soul to manifest themselves. But lack of this discipline **dismays** the soul, because these virtues are frustrated.

13:4 Courage is one of the general virtues of Wisdom. Courage keeps a man from being **idle** in his desire for the natural virtues to show themselves.

13:8 The **wealth** of the soul is the virtues with which Wisdom endows it. As these virtues manifest themselves through Wisdom, they **ransom** the **soul**. But this poor man is one who by his vices prevents his virtues from showing themselves. Thus, he cannot **withstand** the **threat** of these vices.

13:10 The deceptions of sin lead the soul **astray** in vice. But the righteous correct and discipline themselves, and their souls manifest the natural fruits of righteousness, such as **compassion** and mercy.

13:11 An **evil man** is not evil by nature. For if he were, he could not correct and discipline himself. He does evil things by the wrong use of his free will, which is often energized by **arrogance**, one of the worst of the vices. **Those who know themselves** know they are good by nature, and they will use this God-given wisdom to remove the deceptions of sin.

13:15 A **deceitful son** is one who lives in the deceptions of sinful vice. The good in his nature cannot manifest itself in goodness (**nothing good**). But a son is also a **servant**, and if he is **wise**, he will remove these deceptions and obey Wisdom, and live according to nature. In this way Wisdom will prosper his deeds.

13:16 The **law of the wise** is to live in harmony with Wisdom and human nature. But a **man without understanding will die** in this condition through the **snares** and deceptions of vice, unless he corrects and disciplines himself.

13:17 A **good understanding** is the crown of the virtues, and it manifests itself in gracious behavior toward others. Such understanding evidences a good mind and a knowledge of Wisdom's law. But **scorners** of Wisdom behave in **destructive** ways toward others.

13:18 Astuteness is the crown of the wise (see also 14:25), and an **astute man** acts with knowledge. But a man without this crown (**without discernment**) **spreads** his **evil** because he is deceived by sin.

13:20 **Instruction** by Wisdom **removes** the **poverty and dishonor** of a man caused by the deceptions of his own sin. For by this instruction, a man learns to correct and discipline himself with regard to these deceptions. And he who **heeds** Wisdom's **rebukes will be glorified** by Him.

13:23 A **sinner** is sinful not by nature, but by the wrong use of his will. **Evil things** will overtake this wrong use. But **good things overtake the righteous**, because they obey Wisdom, and with His help live according to their good nature.

13:26 The **rod** is the gentle rod of rebuke, and the father who does not use it **hates** his own son. But he who **loves** his son educates him carefully in his natural and God-given virtues.

14:1 **Wise women** build up their families when they possess the general virtues of Wisdom: discernment, righteousness, courage, and self-control. But **those without discernment destroy them**.

14:3 A **man without discernment** is one who does not possess the general virtues of Wisdom. Such a man is energized by **arrogance**; thus he beats people with the harsh **rod** of his mouth. But **the lips of wise men** are self-controlled, because they possess the general virtues of Wisdom.

14:6 **Evil men** are evil not by nature but by choice. They have chosen not to know Wisdom and His instruction. Therefore, wisdom cannot be found among them. But **perception** and discernment are two aspects of the crown of the wise, for they choose to know Wisdom and His instruction.

14:7 Everything pertaining to Wisdom and His instruction is **contrary** to a man without discernment. But **perception**, the crown of the virtues, is a good **weapon** on the lips of the wise.

14:8 **Astute men** are wise men who **know their ways** because they are not deceived by vice. But unwise men are those without the crown of discernment who therefore live in the folly of their own deceptions.

14:12 People deceived by the vices believe they are on the right **road** of life. But in truth their road leads to **the depths of Hades**.

14:14 A **bold-hearted man** in this case is bold in his vices (**filled with his own ways**). A **good man** is good both in nature and in choice, and his thinking is sound.

14:15 A **simple man** is easily deceived (**believes in every word**), but an **astute man** has the discernment to remove the deceptions of sin through **repentance**.

14:17 A **quick-tempered man** behaves in a reckless manner because he is taken with anger. But a man with **discernment**, the crown of the virtues, is patient and thus can handle what comes his way.

14:18 Men without discernment **share in evil** because they choose to do so. But astute men **take hold of perception**, the crown of the wise, and thus choose the good.

14:22 **Deceivers** are self-deceived by their vices, and thus **devise evil things** by choice. But good men are good both by nature and choice, and thus bring forth **mercy and truth**.

14:25 **The crown of the wise is astuteness**, one of the general virtues of Wisdom. In their astuteness, by the grace of Wisdom, the wise choose goodness. But the undiscerning know neither Wisdom nor His virtues; thus they spend their time choosing vices.

14:28 The Lord's commandments are **a fountain of life**, because He is the life of those who obey Him. Those who know this life are able to remove from themselves the deceptions of sin (**the snare of death**).

14:30 **Longsuffering** is a fruit of discernment and the general virtues, but cowards (**the fainthearted**) are devoid of these virtues.

14:31 A **gentle spirit** is a fruit of the general virtues, and such a man heals his own **heart**. But **a sensual heart is the moth of the bones**, because this heart is overcome with the cares of the fallen world.

14:34 A **good heart** is good both by nature and choice. Such a man knows Wisdom and His virtues. But He and His virtues are **unknown in the heart of those without discernment**.

15:1 **Even men of discernment** lose their discernment if they respond in kind to the anger of others. For this response clouds their ability to understand a matter. But a **humble answer** manifests a calm spirit and allows truth to penetrate the situation.

15:3 **The eyes of the Lord are in every place**, because He fills all things. He observes **both the evil and the good**. The evil are good by nature but evil by choice, and He sees these choices. The good are good by nature and by choice, and He also sees this.

15:4 The **Spirit** of Wisdom is the Holy Spirit. He is everywhere present and fills all things. Those who partake of His fullness use their **tongues** to heal others, and are **a tree of life** to them.

15:8 Perception is the crown of the wise, and it helps them to control the use of their **lips**. But the **hearts of those without discernment are not safe** to others, because their mouths are out of control.

15:13 An **uninstructed man** does not know Wisdom and His instruction; thus, he **will not love those who reprove him**. Nor will he **keep company** with **wise** people, because he chooses to live in the deceptions of his own sins.

15:15 An **upright heart** is one that knows Wisdom and His virtues. Thus, he chooses to seek these virtues, such as **perception**, one of the general virtues. But the **uninstructed** are those who live in the deceptions of their own vices (**know evil things**).

15:19 In itself, anger is a blameless passion, useful in turning one away from vice. But if this passion is out of control, it turns one to **contention**. **Longsuffering**, however, is a fruit of the general virtues, and uses anger to turn away from this vice. Longsuffering **calms rising quarrels**.

15:21 **Idle men** are cowards, because they have no courage to deal with their problems (**thorny plants**). But courage is one of the general virtues, and **courageous** men confront their thorny issues and **smooth** them out.

15:22-25 This passage, coupled with 16:1–9, is read during Wednesday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

15:25 Evil men are good by nature but evil by choice. They refuse to obey counsel, because it contradicts their choices. They especially refuse to obey any counsel for the **common good** of others.

15:30 **Almsgiving and faithfulness** are fruits of the general virtues of Wisdom. These fruits **cleanse** the **sins** of love of money and unbelief. These fruits are also evidence of **fear of the Lord**, by which people **turn aside** from choosing vice (**evil**).

15:33 **God is far from the ungodly**, not in place but in will. The will of God and the will of the ungodly are far apart. **But He hears the prayers of the righteous** because their will and His will are in harmony.

15:37 He who **rejects** Wisdom's **instruction** refuses to correct the sins that deceive him. Such a man **hates** his good soul and the virtues Wisdom implanted within it. But **he who gives heed to** Wisdom's **reproofs loves his soul**, because he removes the deceptions of sin that prevent his soul from growing in the God-implanted virtues.

15:38 A man who fears God receives Wisdom's correction and instruction in the virtues. Such a man begins and continues to understand the **glory** of God.

16:1 Salvation begins and ends with humility (JohnChr). Humility is a fruit of the general virtues of Wisdom, and it manifests itself in works. The Lord sees these works and is pleased. But people are ungodly because they lack humility; thus their works are unacceptable to the Lord. **The evil day** indicates the destructive road they are traveling in life.

16:1-9 This passage, coupled with 15:22–25, is read during Wednesday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

16:3 Righteousness is one of the general virtues of Wisdom. These virtues launch one on the good road to travel throughout life. This road is characterized by the good fruits of righteousness, one of which is humility (**the beginning of a good way**). **Sacrifices** are acceptable, but the virtues of Wisdom are **more acceptable to God**.

16:4 The Lord is the Author of the virtues (**knowledge with righteousness**). Man cannot have the Lord without the virtues, nor can he have the virtues without the Lord. Therefore, when man **seeks the Lord** and finds Him, he will also find the virtues of which He is the Author. Those who seek the Lord with this in mind (**rightly**) will also find the **peace** He authors.

16:7 **Righteousness** is one of the general virtues Wisdom begets in those who know and love Him. This virtue is the standard (**weight of a scale**) by which the Lord does His works. Thus, His righteousness is also the standard by which man does works acceptable to Him.

16:1-9 This passage, coupled with 15:22–25, is read during Wednesday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

16:12 Man lives in one or the other of two **abodes**. These abodes are mutually exclusive. Thus man has a choice. He may choose Wisdom, who is Christ, or he may choose **gold**. He may love Christ, or he may love money, but he cannot love and live in both abodes simultaneously.

16:14 Wisdom's instruction incorporates several aspects: teaching, correction, discipline, reproof, learning, education, and training. Thus, he who receives this **instruction shall be in good things**. And He **rebukes** those who love Him, for this is part of His instruction. These rebukes help us to remove the deceptions of sin, for these deceptions stand in the way of one's growth and development in the virtues of Wisdom.

16:17 Gentleness and **humility** are fruits of the general virtues of Wisdom. Wise people place more value on these fruits than on anything associated with the **arrogant** (**spoils**). For such spoils go before destruction (v. 16).

16:20 Understanding is the crown of Wisdom's virtues, and it is **a fountain of life to those who possess it**. But **without discernment** one is led away from this fountain of life to evil or false fountains of instruction.

16:21 The spiritual heart of a wise man is the abode of understanding. It has the eyes to see and the ears to hear Wisdom and His instruction (see also Eph 1:18). Such a man **carries knowledge upon his lips**.

16:29 Certain people can grow old with great **dignity**. Who are these? Those who have followed the general virtues of Wisdom, one of which is righteousness.

16:30 Self-control is one of the general virtues, and these produce all the rest, two of which are **patience** and **control** of the **temper**. These virtues are far superior to the military strength necessary to **capture a city**.

16:31 The unrighteous are those who do not know and love Wisdom and His virtues. Thus they live in vice (**all evil things**). But all the virtues (**all righteous things**) have their source in the Lord. “Nothing is purer than virtue; nothing more unclean than vice; for the one is brighter than the sun, the other more stinking than mire” (JohnChr).

17:1 **A morsel** is a small amount, and it indicates the need to avoid extremes (**a house full of many good things**). Possessions are good in themselves, but too much of a good thing can weigh one down. These excesses lead to quarreling, which robs **enjoyment in peace** and even engenders unacceptable worship (**unrighteous sacrifices**).

17:3 The Lord chooses those He foreknows (see also Rom 8:29). He saw the **chosen** before He created them. He saw their spiritual **hearts** and the furnace of testing they would endure in their faith. For as **silver and gold** are refined and purified in a **furnace**, so are the hearts of the elect.

17:4 An evil man is righteous by nature but evil by choice. For he **heeds the tongue of the lawless**. But a righteous man is righteous by God, nature, and choice. Thus he **pays no attention to false lips**, for he chooses to live according to God and nature.

17:9 Wisdom's instruction consists of teaching, correction, discipline, reproof, learning, education, and training. Thus, it **awards benefits to those using it** and **prospers them**.

17:14 Vice (**evil**) cannot be **removed** from anyone or **from his house** as long as he **repays evil for good**. To choose to live contrary to God and nature is to repay evil for good, for He is good, and human nature is good. Such an individual cannot be removed from his vices unless he comes to repentance.

17:16 People who live contrary to God and nature conjure up false judgment. They become so deceived they judge unrighteousness as righteousness, and righteousness as unrighteousness. Such judgment is the ultimate of uncleanness and of becoming **abominable before God**.

17:19 True friends and brethren **are begotten** by Wisdom, who is Christ. One who has such true friends and brethren is rich indeed, for they help him **on every occasion** and **in necessities**.

17:22 A **changeable man** in this case is a **heart without discernment**, for he does not experience the stability of Wisdom's general virtues. Thus, he easily **falls into evils with his tongue** and into **grief**.

17:29 **He who refrains from uttering a harsh word is intelligent**, because this restraint shows he possesses the general virtues of Wisdom and thus has his tongue under control. He also has **longsuffering**, a fruit of **discernment**, one of the general virtues.

17:30 A man **without understanding** who asks Wisdom for wisdom will receive it, for understanding is the crown of the wise. It enables one to **hold his peace** rather than lose his temper. And one **who holds his peace will seem to have discernment**, the crown of the wise.

18:1 A **pretext** is an excuse a man rationalizes **when he wishes to separate from his friends**. After this pretext is accomplished, and when his friends discover it, probably after the fact, they no longer trust him. But they **reproach** what he did **at every opportunity**.

18:4 **A word** is Wisdom's instruction in the virtues, and when it is **in the heart of a man**, it is **deep water**. Wisdom's virtues in a man are like **a river** and **a fountain**, for **life springs up** from them.

18:7 A man's mouth ruins him because he is **without discernment** and the general virtues. Such a mouth **snares his soul**. His soul is good by nature, but the soul of this man is incapable of manifesting its natural virtues, for his vices block them out.

18:8 Unnatural **fear**, such as the fear of death, **destroys slothful men**, because they are too lazy to seek Wisdom and His virtues. These men are **cowardly**, although their **souls hunger**. Their souls, good by nature, are starving to be fed with Wisdom and His virtues.

18:10 The righteous are trained by Wisdom to run to **the name of the Lord**, for example, by praying, “Lord, have mercy.” The righteous focus on His name and find **great strength** there.

18:14 Discouragement, or depression, is more difficult to cure than anger, for discouragement is hopelessness. At least an angry person still has fight left in him, although his anger is misdirected. And **a servant with discernment** is able to calm this anger. **But who can support a discouraged man?** The answer comes in 18:15.

18:15 Discernment, perception, and understanding are three aspects of the crown of the wise. This wise person seeks to understand from Wisdom how to cure the hopelessness of the man in 18:14, provided he is willing to be cured.

18:19 **A brother aided by his brother** fights for the truth. The two together are like **a strong and fortified city** and **a well-founded palace**. The Church is this city and palace. And the Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, quoting this verse, said, “There is no other way in which the truth can be made manifest when there are discussions concerning the faith, since each one needs the help of his neighbor.”

18:21 The use of one's **tongue** is capable of imparting spiritual **life** to people, but it is also capable of killing them spiritually. But **those who rule over it** by the general virtues of Wisdom will enjoy the **fruits** of its wise use.

19:1 Man is good by nature, but he **maltreats** himself and his goodness when he does not seek Wisdom and His general virtues (**lack of discernment**). But in his heart, he has the audacity to **blame God** for what he does to himself. This blame is caused by the deceptions of his own sins. He needs to accept responsibility and remove these deceptions through repentance. Then his good nature will manifest itself through Wisdom.

19:6 Understanding and discernment are two aspects of the crown of the wise. Through Wisdom, a man will discover them increasingly.

19:8 There is a proper love of oneself. It is to love one's good nature and the virtues implanted in it by Wisdom. He who **loves himself** in this way will also love the Wisdom who created him. From Wisdom, he will increasingly gain more discernment about himself and **find good things** implanted there.

19:15 Man is not cowardly by nature, for Wisdom implanted courage in human nature. But when a man chooses to be **idle**, he is too lazy to seek Wisdom and His virtues. Thus, his soul starves because the natural virtues are unable to grow and develop in him through Wisdom.

19:17 **Mercy on the poor** is almsgiving, which is **lending to God**. **And He will repay him according to his gift** means we cannot out-give God.

19:21 The heart of man is deep, and it entertains many thoughts. But these thoughts are useless and harmful unless they are grounded in **the counsel of the Lord**. This counsel is the truth of Wisdom and His virtues. One grounded in this counsel will **abide forever**.

19:23 There are two kinds of fear in this verse. One is **the fear of the Lord**, which nourishes spiritual life in a man. The other is **fear in places where knowledge is not examined**. What place is this where Wisdom's knowledge is not examined? In this fallen world where many refuse to examine such knowledge. Failure to examine Wisdom's knowledge nourishes unnatural fear in man and brings on the darkness of spiritual ignorance.

19:25 A **pestilent man** is a troublemaker and scoffer who refuses to be corrected by Wisdom. But when he is punished by his own disobedience, a man **without discernment** may see this, and be motivated to seek Wisdom and His astuteness. On the other hand, a **discerning man** is one who accepts reproof from Wisdom. Thus, he gains more understanding and perception.

19:29 **Lashes** and **punishments** are prepared to teach those without restraint and **those without discernment** their need for Wisdom and His virtues. For as Heb 12:6, 7 says, "'For whom the LORD loves He chastens, / And scourges every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"

20:1 Wine and strong drink are not evil in themselves. Wine is **intemperate** in those who drink too much of it. The same is true of strong drink when people **commingle with it**. Too much of either militates against Wisdom and His virtues. Lack of self-control and violence to oneself, and perhaps to others, are the results.

20:5 **Counsel** is the virtues of Wisdom implanted as **deep water in the heart of a man**. And **discernment**, the crown of the wise, is able to **draw out** these virtues.

20:9 Two questions are asked in this verse. In the first question, a man denies any possibility of having a **pure heart**, and uses this as an excuse not to pursue one. In the second question, a man denies any possibility of being cleansed from the sins he committed, and thus uses this as an excuse to sin more. “To fall is not so grievous as to lie where we have fallen; nor to be wounded so dreadful as after wounds to refuse healing” (JohnChr).

20:15 The Lord made the ear and the eye. This refers to the soul as well as the body. For the eyes and ears of the spiritual heart see and hear from Wisdom, if they are healthy.

20:17 Those who **open** their spiritual **eyes** to see Wisdom will be **filled with** His **bread** of virtues, for Christ is the Bread of life (Jn 6).

20:20 A **vow** made to God is voluntary and not a requirement. But if a man vows too quickly to set apart (**sanctify**) to God something he owns, but afterwards changes his heart, this becomes **a snare** to his relationship with God. For example, this would be true of monetary commitments made to the Lord's work.

20:22 The light of the Lord is man's true breath. As healthy breathing of air in the lungs is good for a man, more so is the healthy breathing of the Lord's light in his soul. For this light **searches the inner man**, which is the soul of man. As a man breathes the fresh air of God's light in his soul, he is purified and cleansed from his sins.

20:25 When a man refuses to breathe the fresh air of the Lord's light (v. 22) in his soul (**inner man**), he does evil things. These things **bruise** and **fracture** his soul, and cause him choke to death spiritually for lack of air.

21:1 **A flow of water** indicates the movement of the will in **the heart**. This movement is a free movement **of the king** toward God. God's will **inclines** the king's will in the proper direction. Thus, the two wills move in the same direction, with the king's will in willing submission to the will of God.

21:3 Righteousness is one of the general virtues of Wisdom implanted in those who know and love Him. **To do righteous things** shows the free movement of the will in one who lives according to Wisdom and His virtues. **To speak the truth** also shows the free movement of the will in one who declares the knowledge Wisdom imparts to him.

21:6 **The ungodly** are those who move their free will in the wrong direction. This movement is away from Wisdom and His virtues. Therefore **they are not willing to do righteous things**.

21:10 The **intemperate man** is one example of a man who moves his free will in the wrong direction, the lack of self-control. The punishment he receives is his own fault. The **simple man** is one who is beginning to move his will toward Wisdom and His virtues. Astuteness is the crown of the wise (see also 14:25), one of the general virtues. **Understanding** is another aspect of this crown. Therefore, when the simple man truly observes the punishment the intemperate brings on himself, he becomes wiser.

21:14 Upright judgment is one aspect of the crown of Wisdom's virtues. This judgment, coupled with righteousness, produces **joy**. Such people are holy. **Evildoers** are those who willfully pursue vice or sinful passions. Since they rationalize righteousness to be unrighteousness, they see **a holy man** as **unclean**.

21:21 A **wise man** is one who knows and loves Wisdom and His virtues. He **assaults** the **fortified cities** of his own sinful passions and **pulls down the stronghold**, likely the opinions of the **ungodly**.

21:24 **Desires** are blameless passions that need to be kept under control. But a **slothful man** refuses to control his desires. He **chooses not to do anything** about his spiritual laziness; therefore, his desires control him.

21:26 “The alms that please the eyes of our Redeemer are not those gathered in unlawful ways and from lawlessness. . . . We are plainly warned by Holy Scripture not to get anything by sinning under the pretext of almsgiving” (GrgGt).

21:29 The **ungodly** choose to live contrary to Wisdom and His virtues of **courage** and **counsel**. Their negative choice shuts them out from these virtues.

22:1 **A good name to be chosen more than much wealth** is the name *Christian* (see Acts 11:26). For Wisdom is Christ, and those who follow Him are known by this name. And His **good grace** is worth **more than silver and gold**, for by His grace Christians live according to His virtues implanted within them.

22:4 **The fear of the Lord** is the offspring of Wisdom, who is Christ. He is the begetter of all the virtues, described as **riches and glory and life** (see Jn 10:10).

22:5 The **crooked** are those who choose to live contrary to God and human nature, for in itself the soul is straight, not crooked. **Thorns and snares** are sinful passions. **But he who guards his own soul will keep away from them.** He is able to do this through Wisdom and His virtues.

22:8 A **cheerful man** is one free from the love of money and the vainglory it produces. He is very generous in almsgiving, and blessed by God. **The vanity of his works** refers to those done for one's own glory. But since the cheerful man is blessed by God, his almsgiving is free from vanity and done for God's glory.

22:12 **Holy hearts** belong to those who live according to Wisdom and His virtues. The Lord's love manifests itself in **blameless** hearts, and He sees these spiritual hearts which **are acceptable to Him**.

22:16 A **lawless man** is one who willfully rejects Wisdom and His virtues. His mouth becomes a **deep pit** of lawlessness. The Lord's hate for this man and his ways is hate in the sense of rejection. It is not the passion of hatred, for He is dispassionate.

22:20 When the spiritual heart inclines its ears to hear Wisdom (**my word**) and **the words** of His wise people, it becomes established. This inclination is the free movement of the will toward Wisdom, and the intent to obey Him.

22:27 St. Paul said in agreement with this verse, “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’” (1Co 15:33).

22:30 **The eternal landmarks** refers to the Orthodox faith handed down in the Church. These landmarks must not be removed. “I cannot sufficiently wonder at the madness of certain men, at the impiety of their blinded understanding, at their lust of error, such that, not content with the rule of faith delivered once for all, and received from the times of old, they are every day seeking one novelty after another, and are constantly longing to add, change, and take away, in religion” (VincLer).

23:1-4 Understanding is one of the general virtues of Wisdom. He who has this virtue understands true life. **A false life** (v. 3) is the love of riches and gourmet dining. Poor people should never measure themselves by rich people. A false life is one of deception.

23:12 The source of instruction is Wisdom, who is Christ our Teacher. If one gives his spiritual heart and ears to Him, he will be instructed by Him with **words of perception**, the crown of the virtues.

23:16-19 Wisdom addresses His son (v. 19), and encourages him to **spend time with** His **words** (v. 16). The Book of Proverbs is an example of His words of Holy Scripture. These words are like a door that leads into the inner sanctuary of Wisdom (see also Mt 7:7, 8). If he does this, his thoughts will be **directed aright** (v. 19). He will also learn to fear the Lord **the whole day long** (v. 17), and other virtues of Wisdom, such as **hope** (v. 18), will be like **offspring** in him.

23:21 This verse seems to summarize vv. 20–36. Drunkenness, fornication, and spiritual slothfulness are an unholy combination. These things leave one **with tattered and ragged garments** and “more naked than ground meat” (v. 31).

24:3-5 **Understanding**, **perception**, and **discernment** are three aspects of the same thing, known as the crown of the virtues. A **house** is a man, and Wisdom is the builder of the house, that is, He builds a man into a **wise man of strength**. Such a man considers Wisdom and His virtues to be superior to a **man who has a large estate**.

24:7 Wisdom is the Lord. **Councils** are **the gates of the wise**. Within these gates the wise **deliberate** together concerning the true interpretations of Scripture (**the mouth of the Lord**). These interpretations are the **good thinking** that results from their deliberations. The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Church are examples of these councils.

24:10-12 Evangelism **rescues those being led into death, and saws off** their **bonds**, and **does not spare them help**. The evangelist has no need to know a man before he evangelizes him. For the Lord **knows the hearts of all**, since He **formed every breath** and **knows all things**. At His Second Coming, He **will render to each man according to his works**.

24:13 **Honey** is the teaching of Wisdom, and when it is eaten, it sweetens the soul. “He uses ‘honey’ figuratively, meaning divine doctrine, which restores the spiritual knowledge of the soul” (Hippol).

24:16-37 Righteousness is one of the general virtues of Wisdom, who makes righteous a man who believes in Him. This man is not yet perfect, but will always **repent** and **choose instruction** (v. 37) when he falls into sin. **But the ungodly shall weaken in evils**, because he chooses to be weak and evil, and has no interest in repentance or instruction.

24:17 The **enemy** is some sinful passion one has overcome, but he should **not rejoice** in this victory, nor be puffed up (**exalt yourself**). Rather, he should rejoice in Wisdom, who helped him gain the victory. “We can do nothing against our faults without the help of God. . . . And we ought not be puffed up by victories over them . . . lest He see your arrogant heart . . . and you begin to be forsaken by Him, and troubled once more by that passion, which by God's grace you had previously overcome” (JohnCas).

24:31 Pr 24:31, 32, 35, 36: A man without the discernment of Wisdom is like a dried-up and barren field and vineyard. The evangelist first prepares his own soul with the virtues (**works**). Then he **walks behind** Wisdom in the fields to water the dry and barren vineyards.

25:4 Silver shines unless it is covered with dross, the waste material that comes off in something. Human nature is good in itself, and would shine if it were not covered with the deceptions (“dross”) of the sinful passions. These deceptions are removed by spiritual athleticism (**beat drossy silver**), such as prayer and fasting. When these are removed, the natural sheen of the virtues shines from one's nature (**made entirely clean**).

25:5 The King's throne is a spiritual heart established in the virtues of Wisdom (**established in righteousness**). When the sinful passions (**the ungodly**) are slain, this throne is established in the heart.

25:6, 7 When we conquer a sinful passion, we are told not to **brag** on ourselves **in the presence of the King**. For it was by His helping grace that we gained the victory. Rather, we boast in Him alone. Otherwise, He will humble us by allowing the passion to return and overcome us.

25:8 The **eyes** are those of the spiritual heart. When we see the spiritual riches of Christ, then we may **speak** of them (see also Eph 1:18).

25:18 This saying is for those who try to be too spiritual too fast. Divine teaching (**honey**) should be swallowed a little at a time, and not treated like a gourmet table on which to gluttonize. For it will turn sour in the spiritual stomach, and be vomited up, and no longer be sweet to the taste.

25:24-25 The Lord rewards those who love their enemies (see also Mt 5:43–45; Rom 12:19, 20).

25:31 A man who is his own spiritual director (**a man who does something without counsel**) is like **an unfortified city whose walls are broken down**.

26:1-13 These verses describe the condition of a **man without discernment**. Such a man is spiritually bankrupt. But discernment is the crown of Wisdom's virtues, and the man who possesses it is spiritually rich.

26:14-17 These verses describe the condition of a **slothful man**. His condition is akin to that of the man without discernment, for he, too, is spiritually bankrupt. But he is so deceived, he actually believes he is **wise**.

26:18-29 These verses describe the condition of a divisive man. He has **seven vices in his soul** (v. 26). St. John Cassian in his treatise on the vices speaks of eight of them: gluttony, unchastity, avarice, anger, dejection, listlessness, self-esteem, and arrogance. The man without discernment, the slothful man, and the divisive man exhibit such vices.

27:1 The Lord alone has foreknowledge. Neither men nor angels have foreknowledge. Men and angels, including the devil and his angels, can only guess about the future. Men and angels know the future only if the Lord reveals it to them. Therefore, no one should **boast about tomorrow**, for no one **knows what the next day will bring forth** (see also Jam 4:13–16). Furthermore, one may be dead tomorrow. “Hold fast then to virtue. For even so, if you depart young, you will depart in safety; if you come to old age, you will reach it safely” (JohnChr).

27:2 It is acceptable for **neighbors** and **strangers** to **praise** a person, provided he does not seek praise from them. If he seeks and obtains it, he will praise himself with his **own lips**. This kind of praise is self-exaltation, a destructive passion.

27:3 A man without discernment is a man without Wisdom and His virtues. This is serious enough (**heavy**). But add **wrath** to his foolishness, and his treatment of others becomes unbearable, like the weight of a heavy stone and cumbersome sand.

27:6 Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord Jesus with a **voluntary kiss**, and He said of him: “It would have been good for that man if he had never been born” (Mk 14:21).

27:17 **Iron** is a dull metal, but it glistens when sharpened. Man's nature is like iron that becomes dull through the deceptions of sin. It is good underneath, but in need of sharpening that it may glisten and show its true nature. Similarly, true friends **sharpen** one another so the God-given virtues may develop and shine on **the countenance**.

27:20-21 A **fixed** eye indicates an unbendable will, which refuses to be instructed in the virtues of Wisdom. It never stops sinning, for example, in its **intemperate** use of its tongue. The sinful appetite (**insatiable**) of such a will is comparable to the appetite of **Hades and destruction**.

27:22 A man **praised** by others faces a dangerous crossroad, where few survive spiritually. One road leads to self-exaltation and thence to destruction. The other leads into a furnace of **fire** in which the **silver and gold** of one's nature is purified by Wisdom and His virtues.

27:23 A **lawless heart** is one which voluntarily turns away from Wisdom and His virtues; thus it seeks the vices (**evil things**). **But an upright heart** voluntarily seeks Wisdom and His general virtues and their fruits.

27:25 See Jn 10:27, 28.

28:1 An **ungodly man** is one who lives contrary to God and his God-given nature. He lives in the unnatural fears of his own imaginations (**when no one is pursuing**). Thus, he lives in unreality and cowardice. But a **righteous man** lives in the reality of Wisdom and His virtues, in which he is **confident as a lion**.

28:2 It is sometimes said, and rightly so, “Condemn no man, and you will be saved.” An **astute man** knows Wisdom and His virtues; thus in himself he condemns no one. His demeanor also helps **quench** condemnations when they arise.

28:5 **Evil men** are those who voluntarily live in vice, for they do not have upright **judgment**, one of Wisdom's general virtues. **But those who seek the Lord** and possess His virtues understand upright judgment **in everything**.

28:9 Wisdom, who is Christ, is the Lawgiver, and His law teaches virtue. Therefore, **he who turns away his ear so as not to hear the law** makes **his prayer repulsive** to the Lawgiver.

28:13 The **righteous** are those made righteous by Wisdom. When they help one another conquer their sinful passions, **great glory arises**, that is, God is glorified. But **in places** where ungodly people influence others, men are conquered by the vices.

28:14 An unwise man **hides his own ungodliness**; thus he cannot prosper spiritually. But a wise man takes the initiative to remove his deceptions of sin through repentance (**leads his own rebuttal**). Such a man prospers in the love of God.

28:20 God's grace makes a man righteous and helps him walk righteously. But a transgressor **walks in crooked ways**, which entangle him. “Crooked ways” are the sinful passions.

28:28 A man **without discernment** is a man without Wisdom and His virtues. This man **trusts in an arrogant heart**. How foolish and lost this man is! But **he who walks** in Wisdom and His virtues, **such a man shall be saved**.

28:30 **The places of the ungodly** refers to this fallen world. The righteous live in the world, but they **lament** its condition. For “blessed *are* those who mourn” (Mt 5:4). When the righteous convert the ungodly, sinful passions are destroyed (**in their destruction**). Thus, righteous people increase.

29:1 A **reproving man** is one who first reproves himself. Afterwards he is able to help others discipline themselves in spirituality. An **obstinate man** is one who rejects Wisdom and His virtues, and pursues vice. But when his vices suddenly **consume** him, he cannot be cured (**no remedy**).

29:6 The vices, or sinful passions, are **a great snare to a man**. But **a righteous man** is one who loves Wisdom and His virtues; thus he lives **in joy and gladness**.

29:10 **Bloodthirsty men** are first of all the demons, and secondly, those influenced by them. They **hate a holy man** and are out for his blood. **But the upright** seek him out to learn how to increase in holiness.

29:19 Wisdom's instruction incorporates several aspects: teaching, correction, discipline, reproof, learning, education, and training. A **stubborn servant** is one who intends not to **obey** instruction, even though he may **understand** something of what is taught.

29:23 The Lord allows a man's **arrogance** to humble him, so, if possible, he might learn humility. But the Lord only **supports the humble-minded** with the **glory** of His virtues.

29:25-26 The **fear** and **awe of men** trip up growth in the virtues. Such fear and awe constitute **ungodliness** that **causes a man to stumble**. But he who **trusts in the Master** fears Him, and **rejoices** in salvation.

29:27 **Righteousness** is the Lord's righteousness. Man is not its source. For example, **leaders** cannot impart righteousness to those who serve them. But the Lord easily and freely imparts righteousness to those who serve Him.

30:1 **Those who believe in God** will **fear** His **words**, and this fear will lead them to repentance.

30:2-3 One cannot know God through worldly wisdom, which God considers foolishness (see also 1Co 1:20, 21).

30:4 This verse asks six questions. The answer to the first five is “Christ.” The answer to the sixth is “Christian” (**the name of His children**).

30:5-6 See Rev 22:18, 19.

30:7-8 One of the **two things** asked relates to the means of living a virtuous life, namely, the grace of God. For apart from His grace no one can live a virtuous life. O Lord, **do not take away grace from me before I die**. The second request is for the necessities of life (v. 8).

30:11-15 **Evil offspring** are the sinful passions, and the devil is their father (Jn 8:43, 44). But this also applies to evil offspring in a family.

30:16-35 Numerous animals are mentioned: the leech, the raven, the eagle, the serpent, the ant, the rabbit, the locust, the lizard, the lion's cub, the cock, and the he-goat. These animals and the other situations described emphasize the opposition of Wisdom and His virtues to the sinful passions. For example, the sinful passions are like the **leech** (v. 16), for these, so to speak, drain the blood out of one's spiritual life. But the wise are like the **rabbit** (v. 28), for their home is Wisdom, who is Christ (**the rocks**).

31:1, 2 **God** is the Author of the Book of Proverbs, and His **words** are to be kept by His children.

31:10-30 A **courageous wife** is one who knows Wisdom and His virtues. Her value is priceless to her husband. She is an icon of the Church, the Bride of Christ. For she is to her husband what the Church is to Christ.

1:1 **Words** can be best understood as “collected sayings” (see 12:9–11). The word *ecclesiastes* comes from the Greek root word *ecclesia*, meaning “assembly,” which is also used to refer to the gathering of Christians in the New Testament. Thus, *ecclesia* is translated “church” in the English language, and is used to refer to both the gathering and the building where the people gather.

1:2 **All**, that is, everything in life that is apart from the purpose for which God created us, **is vanity** (see Rom 8:20).

1:3-7 We **labor** that we may profit, but labor loses its meaning (see Mt 16:26) when it has no eternal purpose. From **generation** to **generation**, we inherit death (Job 14:10). But Christ, the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2), gives meaning to our labor and raises us up from death to life.

1:8-11 Even the human quest for knowledge and wisdom proves fruitless, because man cannot remember what he learned. **Nothing new** (v. 9) contrasts with the OT prophets who proclaim a new covenant (Jer 38:31; Is 65:27) created in Christ.

1:12-13 The **Preacher** is about to explain why he has come to this conclusion.

1:14 **The choice of one's spirit** means that we freely choose **vanity** or evil deeds as opposed to doing God's will. This tells us that man is not sinful by nature, but rather sinful by choice. This same phrase is also used in 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6, 16; 6:9.

1:15 Despite his pessimism, the Preacher knows that God is indeed at work in the world, and only He can make the **crooked** . . . **straight** (Is 40:4).

1:17-18 True **wisdom** is Christ, whose mysteries are far beyond our **understanding**.

2:1-3 The Preacher spoke **in** his **heart** because the heart is the center of our true self. It is the center of **good** or **vanity**, affection and coldness, mercy and hardness, **wisdom** and folly, reason and confusion.

2:13 Man can choose **wisdom** or **foolishness, light** or **darkness**, good or evil.

2:16 No matter whether we walk in the light of wisdom or in the darkness of folly, everyone suffers and dies without **remembrance**. It is for this reason that Christ has come to trample down death by dying that we might live eternally in Him. Thus, we are bold to sing, “Memory eternal!”

2:24-26 Earthly food **and drink** still ends in death, but the eternal food of the Eucharist (Jn 6:55) imparts **good**—that is, **wisdom**, **knowledge**, and **gladness** (v. 26)—to those who labor for God.

3:1-11 The eternal Word—the **beginning** and the **end** (v. 11; Rev 22:13)—came into **time** and redeemed all things. He turned our weeping into joy, our mourning into dancing, our hatred into love, and our time into **eternity**.

3:14-17 **That men would fear before Him** expresses the Preacher's understanding of why the world is the way it is. God uses the world to turn us to Himself, for at the end of the age, the **time** will come for **judgment** (see 5:7; 7:15; 8:11, 12; 11:9; 12:14).

3:22 This is a reminder that we are to **rejoice** in the simple satisfaction of accomplishing the **works** God has given us to do.

4:1-3 Job expressed a similar sentiment of being **oppressed** when he wished that he had never been born to see such sorrow (Job 3:10–16). But Christ has sent a **comforter**, the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16), to wipe away all tears. Verse 2 speaks of the communion of the saints.

4:8 Our Lord spoke of this kind of person in the parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:16–21).

4:10 What a marvelous picture of encouragement in the Church!

4:12 The **threefold cord** may be linked to the virtues of faith, hope, and love (1Co 13:13).

4:13-17 In a striking reverse parallel, Christ stands in contrast to the **old and senseless** earthly **king** while also fulfilling him, for He was **born poor** and was raised up **from the house of prisoners** to be **made king**. Yet those who **come afterward** do indeed **rejoice in him**, bringing right sacrifices of praise into His house.

5:14-16 A description of life for a man who has no hope, whose **labor** is only to satisfy his hunger, who **labored for the wind**. But in the light of Christ we have hope, joy, health, and peace of mind.

6:1-12 Life is no more than a **shadow** (v. 12). No matter what we achieve on this earth, we cannot take it with us when we die. At the same time, the Christian may rejoice, for true Wisdom is Christ. The **soul** that labors for the food of immortality is **covered** not in **darkness** but in light, and lives not **a thousand years twice** (v. 6), but forever (Jn 6:55–58).

7:1 **Good olive oil** symbolizes here the acquisition of earthly wealth, but in the new covenant, it symbolizes the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.

7:5-10 In Christ, the **song of senseless men** has been turned into the worship of the faithful, and the latter days, not the **former days,** are **better** (v. 10). So much for “the good old days”!

7:16 The **overly righteous** are like the Pharisee who “went up to the temple to pray” (Lk 18:10), and the **overly wise** may be likened to the wise of this world (1Co 1:18). St. Paul writes, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Co 10:12).

7:18 See Rom 8:28.

7:20 In the Orthodox funeral service we say, “For there has never been a **man** who has lived and has not sinned.”

7:26-29 We are all vulnerable and easily led astray by anyone with evil intentions, be it a **man** or a **woman**. But on a deeper level, **the woman who is a snare** speaks to the fallen Eve, and through her to all humanity, for she is our mother. There is indeed only **one man** that **God** made **upright**, and that one Man is Christ our God, who broke the curse of death and freed us from our sins.

8:1-5 Christ's “face shone like the sun” on Mount Tabor (Mt 17:2). The faithful also shine with His ineffable light, as Christ Himself said, “You are the light of the world” (Mt 5:14). Therefore, let us work to acquire the **wisdom** that is Christ our **king**, that we might shine as lights “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Php 2:15).

8:8 Only Christ **has authority in the day of death**; and it is His power that releases and delivers us from **that war**.

8:11-12 Intentional sins are not a one-time event; the consequences continue for **a long time**.

8:15 This trilogy of words, **eat, drink, and be merry**, is also used by Jesus in the parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:19).

9:1 There are two ways to go through life. Those **righteous** and **wise** are **in the hand of God**; unregenerate **man** is on his own.

9:4 The **living dog** is an image of the Gentile believers (Mt 15:26, 27), and the **dead lion** images the nation of Israel.

9:7-8 Here is an OT image of the Eucharist, baptism, and chrismation.

9:11 The victory in both **race** and **battle** belongs to the faithful.

9:14 The **little city** is the world, and the **great king** is the devil who besieged it.

10:1 When we say, “There's a fly in the ointment,” the saying comes from this verse (oil can be translated “ointment”). This image illustrates how sin affects creation.

10:4 **Do not leave your place**: The wise man must not stray from his determination to glorify God.

10:15-17 **The city** can be seen as an image of the Kingdom of heaven, ruled by Christ the **king** and His **princes** (v. 16), the faithful. Christ calls the scribes and Pharisees **fools** (v. 15) for being too blind to see the truth (Mt 23:17, 19).

11:1-10 This chapter teaches we are not to hold onto that which we have been given, but give it away.

12:1 **The days of your youth** reminds us to follow the Lord from the earliest years of our lives.

12:5 The **caper plant** grows on rocky cliffs, stone walls, and in cracks and crevices of rocks in the Middle East.

12:8 Though the **Preacher** ends on a negative note, with **all is vanity**, the positive message of this book is contained in 12:6: “Remember your Creator.” Or as Proverbs teaches us, “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Pr 1:7).

1:1 **The Song of Songs**: The title in the superlative indicates this song, in the biblical idiom, is the greatest of all songs, just as the Holy of Holies (Heb 9:3, RSV) means the holiest of all places. The author is Solomon, whose name means “Peace.” This is significant because the greatest song belongs to One who Himself is the “Prince of Peace” (Is 9:6, NKJV). Thus, Solomon is a type of the King of Peace, Christ, throughout this allegory. Christ Himself is portrayed by the Bridegroom (Is 62:5), and the song is that of the marriage of the Lamb (Rev 19:7–9).

1:2 **Let him kiss me** speaks not of the kiss of reverence, but of that of intimacy. The Holy Church, long awaiting the Lord's coming, proclaims here her desire for intimacy with God. “The more abundantly she is filled up with His beauty, the more vehemently her longings abound” (GrgNy). The Lord sent angels, patriarchs, and prophets to Israel, all of whom brought spiritual gifts, but far better than the gifts or their bearers is the Giver Himself. The Bride seeks these heralds no longer, but the presence of her true Love Himself, the Son of God in His Incarnation.

1:3 The Holy Spirit is Himself the **ointment** of the Lord. In the Nicene Creed, Christ “became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary” (whose name means “myrrh”). The smells of His **ointments** are the gifts of the Spirit. Likewise, the saints in their virtues have this fragrance of Christ, according to St. Paul (2Co 2:15–17). The **young maidens** are Christ's chosen ones, born again through holy baptism.

1:4 The Church here is in the plural **we** because she is made up of a multitude of faithful souls. This is a clear statement of the principle of synergy: **we will run after** Christ, something which He Himself helps us to do, for apart from Him we can do nothing (Jn 15:5). However, we run wholeheartedly (1Co 9:24). The Church is the house of a **king**, a vast palace, but those who enter into her mysteries are those who have been brought into the inner **chamber** (2Co 12:4).

1:5 The Fathers interpret the blackness of the Church as resulting either from sin or from persecution. “When we were sinners and dark, God made us full of light and lovely by shining on us with His grace” (GrgNy). **Kedar** means dark or **black.** Bedouin tents, the tents of Kedar, are made from the hides of black goats. Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (Gn 25:13), and in other references Kedar is a place of trouble (Ps 119:5). **The curtains of Solomon,** the curtains of the temple, were lavish in their opulence and beauty.

1:6 The Church suffered terrible persecution from **the sons of my mother**, the inhabitants of Jerusalem who despised Christ. There was one **vineyard** immediately after the Resurrection: Jerusalem, the city of peace. But after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the Church scattered throughout the world, planting new **vineyards** everywhere she went.

1:7 The Bride awaits the Bridegroom, seeking intimate communion with Him. The One **whom my soul loves** is the true Spouse of the human soul, Jesus Christ, the **shepherd.**

1:8 The Church has become the crown jewel of creation, the **fairest** maiden, just as the soul through holy baptism is made most lovely among the souls of men. The **young goats** are carnal stirrings and nascent passions. We **tend** them, but do not feed them!

1:10 The Bridegroom is flattering His Bride. The **cheeks** are the virtue of modesty. The **turtledoves** symbolize fidelity, for they mate once for life and live in high and lofty places. Turtledoves were the prescribed offering for the poor (Lv 5:7; 12:8). St. Joseph, with the Christ Child and His mother, brought two turtledoves to the temple at the time of purification after His birth (Lk 2:22–24).

1:12 This prophetic verse was fulfilled by Mary of Bethany's anointing of the Lord with **spikenard** for His burial while He was **at the table** (Mt 26:6, 7; Mk 14:3; Lk 7:37, 38; Jn 12:3).

1:13 This passage was fulfilled by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (Jn 19:39–41) when the Lord was anointed again after his death, covered with **myrrh** and bundled in linen. He will **take rest** in the Church.

1:14 **En Gedi** was an oasis on the west coast of the Dead Sea. It is a symbol for baptism. David encamped here when he fled from Saul (1Kg 24:1).

1:15 **Doves** are birds of peace, not birds of prey. Peace makes one's eyes beautiful to behold.

1:16 The **shaded bed** is the Church, the place man continues to meet in intimate “communion with the Divine” (GrgNy).

1:17 Both **cedars** and **cypress wood** are well known for their distinct odor, their incorruptible nature, and their ability to repel pests and vermin.

2:1 The Bridegroom has become **a flower**, that is a mortal, a reference to the Incarnation. The Son of God becomes man not in exalted splendor, as a lily of the mountaintops, but in humility, a **lily of the valleys**, the lowest places.

2:2 The Bride, the Church, is **a lily among thorns**, the afflictions of this life. “In the midst of a wicked people, there is a good people that receives the mercy of God” (Aug).

2:3 The Bride now speaks, exalting the Bridegroom. Of all **the trees of the woods**, the **apple** tree gives nourishment with sweet fruit. In Scripture, the apple is a symbol of favor (Dt 32:10; Ps 16:8; Zec 2:12). Christ the **beloved** far surpasses in glory **the sons**, the righteous, for they become by grace what He is by nature. His commandments are **sweet** to those who thirst for the living Word (Ps 118:103).

2:4 **The house of wine** is the Church filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18–21). The Bride desires God's **love**, to be overshadowed by the Presence of the Lord—not unlike the tabernacle in the Old Testament (Ex 40:35) and the Theotokos, the living tabernacle of the New Testament (Lk 1:35).

2:5 **Cakes of raisins** were given to the people of Israel after King David completed the burnt offerings and peace offerings to God before the ark of the covenant (2Kg 6:16–19; 1Ch 16:1–3, NKJV). They, together with the **apples**, symbolize the sweetness of God's grace bestowed on believers.

2:6 This is the **embrace** of the tender and attentive lover. The **right hand** of God indicates His royal favor (Ps 15:11; 16:7; Heb 8:1).

2:7 The Bridegroom addresses the faithful as **daughters of Jerusalem**. The **powers** that assist us are the angelic **hosts** and even the saints. The **field**, according to the Lord, is the world (Mt 13:38) we live in. St. Paul takes the metaphor one step further, calling us “God's field” (1Co 3:9).

2:8 The soul responds to **the voice** of the Lord. The image of the coming of the incarnate Word of God, **leaping** down from heaven, **skipping over the hills**, is from another of Solomon's works, foretelling the Incarnation (WSol 18:15, 16). Melito of Sardis calls the Incarnation “the transition of the Lord—His assumption of our flesh, through which by His birth, His death, His resurrection, His ascent into heaven, He made transitions, so to say.”

2:9 The **gazelle** or **young stag**, smaller than other deer, shows that among humans the Lord appeared as a humble man, servant of all. **Bethel** means the “house of God,” which is the Church.

2:11 St. Paul writes similarly to the Christians in Rome (Rom 13:12).

2:12 **The flowers** tell us spring (a symbol of resurrection) is here. The Lord has commanded a **time of pruning** that we might bear more spiritual fruit (Jn 15:2).

2:13 The **fig tree** is a figure of Israel, God's people before the Incarnation (Hos 9:10; Mt 21:19–21; Mk 11:13, 20, 21; Lk 13:6, 7). But the figs are **young** and immature, like those believers who have not grown in their faith (1Co 3:1). The true vine is Christ (Jn 15:1–5), and **the vines** are the Church, the New Israel. We are the **fragrance** of Christ to God the Father (2Co 2:15).

2:14 **And come**: The Lord commands the sleeper to arise and join Him (Eph 5:14). The **dove** is a symbol of fidelity and chastity. The **rock** is Christ (1Co 10:4). It is the **voice** of Christ that is heard in the Church.

2:16 The Bridegroom belongs to the Bride and no other. The Bride belongs to the Bridegroom and no other. St. Paul writes of this mystery (Eph 5:32), comparing the relationship between Christ and the Church with marriage.

2:17 This is the dawning of the eternal **day**, and the **shadows** of ignorance and error **depart** in the radiance of Christ's glory (Rom 13:12).

3:2 There are those who **seek** God in the wrong places. The **marketplaces** and **streets** are symbols of the world, but God is found in His Church.

3:3 **The watchmen** are the prophets, apostles, and evangelists who proclaim the Word of God and bear witness to the Incarnate Christ. The Church holds their writings, the Holy Scriptures, in the highest honor.

3:4 The Bride will not rest until her **mother's house**, Israel from whom the Church was born, recognizes Christ as their God and Savior. Mary Magdalene fulfilled this prophecy. After searching for the resurrected Christ, she was found by angels. Hearing He had risen, she **departed from them** and **found him**.

3:6, 7 The daughters of Jerusalem, the predecessors of the Gentile Church, marvel at the coming of the king **from the desert**. This is the wedding procession of **Solomon** and his bride. The Church will meet her King at His return. **The bed** is the “palanquin” (v. 9), a portable couch enclosed in a framework of poles and canvas, carried on the shoulders of **mighty men**, symbolic of the dwelling place of the King who rests in His saints forever. “**Frankincense** is allotted to God, while **myrrh** is . . . for the dead. . . . The Bride . . . is likened to the vapor of incense, namely, because she worships” (Theod).

3:8 These warriors hold **a sword**, which speaks of the living and written Word of God (Eph 6:17, 18).

3:9, 10 This **palanquin** is made of the same precious materials used in the construction of the temple (see note at 3:6, 7). **Solomon** is a type of Christ the **King**.

3:11 **Solomon** is a type of Christ. The **crown** with which His **mother**, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, **crowned him** is His immaculate flesh, which He assumed from her and brought to the right hand of the Father (Heb 2:9; 8:1). In the Orthodox **wedding**, crowns are placed on the heads of both bride and groom.

4:1 The **veil** speaks of the hidden mysteries of God in the Church. According to Scripture, Mount **Gilead** had exceptionally good pasture (Nm 32:1), again looking ahead to the Church.

4:2 The bride's **teeth**, made clean by **washing** (baptism and repentance), are the gateway to receiving nourishment, the meat or “solid food” of the Word (1Co 3:2). The bride is fruitful, **bearing twins**.

4:3 In the Church, our **lips** proclaim the Gospel of Christ in a **manner of speech** which is **pleasant**. St. Paul calls this “speaking the truth in love” (Eph 4:15).

4:4 The **tower of David** would be the impregnable fortress in David's Jerusalem. The Church is the New Jerusalem, and this fortress is the immovable confession of Christ, the Gospel, against which even hell itself has no power (Mt 16:16–18). **A thousand shields** refers to small bucklers, a piece of defensive armor, speaking of God's protection of those in warfare.

4:5 The **breasts** symbolize both the beauty of Solomon's bride and the beauty of Christ's Church.

4:6 The dawning of the eternal **day** of the Lord will mean that **the shadows** of sin and death will depart from us forever (see Rev 21:3–5). **The mountain of myrrh** is likely a reference to the fragrance of God's eternal Kingdom and the presence there of holy incense (Rev 8:3, 4).

4:7 The Bridegroom calls his chosen Bride **beautiful** and also extols her virtues, saying that she is without **blemish**, as emphasized by St. Paul (Eph 5:26, 27).

4:8 The **bride** from **Lebanon** reminds us the Church is not only for Jews. **Senir and Hermon** are the ridges of Judea and Cilicia, known to be the dwelling places of wild beasts and predators, including **lions** and **leopards**—which, according to St. Gregory the Dialogist, are symbols of demons. Thus, we serve Christ in a fallen world.

4:9 As Solomon was taken with his **bride**, so Christ is **ravished** or wounded in His **heart** by His love for the Church. His calling His Bride **sister** means Christ is our brother (Heb 2:11), reminding us that He assumed our humanity in His Incarnation.

4:10 The **garments** of the Church, and therefore of the saints, are her righteous deeds (Rev 19:8, 14), better than all **spices,** for they fill the world with the **fragrance** of Christ Himself (2Co 2:14, 15).

4:11 **Milk** signifies teachings acceptable for children and immature Christians (Heb 5:12). **Honey** signifies wisdom (Pr 24:13), food for the mature believer.

4:12-15 In this passage, the **bride** is called a **garden,** which speaks of (1) the beauty of the plants and the **fountain** and (2) the **fragrance** of the **fruit**. **The living and rushing water** (v. 15) is a phrase used by Jesus (Jn 7:38), speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit in believers. St. Gregory of Nyssa, in urging Christians to seek out godly leaders, quotes 4:12: “But, employing the lamp of the Spirit for the search, you should, as far as is possible, seek for ‘a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed.’”

4:16 The **wind** being called upon to **blow** upon the **garden** can be likened to the Holy Spirit, the strong wind that blew on the Apostles beginning in the upper room (Acts 2:2).

5:1 **Milk** and **honey** together signified the overabundance of delights in the Promised Land (Ex 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lv 20:24; Jos 5:6; Jer 11:5, 39:22; Ezk 20:6, 15), but **bread** and **wine** comprise the image of the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9), the Holy Eucharist. In the Church, **friends** and **brothers** are invited to **eat and drink**.

5:2 The Bridegroom **knocks at the door** of the heart when He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev 3:20). Although omnipotent, like a gentle and unyielding lover the Lord enters only when invited. “If they open to Him, He enters in, but if they delay and will not, He departs from them” (AthanG).

5:3 The Lord **washed** the **feet** of His disciples (Jn 13:5) after they returned from preaching, showing that even the greatest saints cannot keep completely free of sin without His help (Jn 15:5).

5:5 The Bride **arose** to open the door for her **beloved**. This is a powerful image of the Church working together with God to do His will. St. Paul is bold to say, “We are God's fellow workers” (see text and notes, 1Co 3:9).

5:6 **I . . . did not find him** is a solemn reminder that our Bridegroom cannot be found unless He chooses to reveal Himself (see Mt 16:15–17).

5:7 The apostles and preachers of the faith are **the guards of the walls**, the keepers of the New Jerusalem. They guard the Church by the true teaching of the doctrine of Christ and protect **the city** from charlatans, Christ-peddlers, heretics, and schismatics. The **veil** remains on those who know only the Mosaic Law (2Co 3:14–18).

5:10-16 In the richness of poetic language, the bride extols the beauty and grace of her **beloved**. Applying these words to Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, we see that He is: **(1) a shining . . . light** (v. 10), "the light of the world" (Jn 8:12); (2) **chosen from countless thousands** (v. 10): "Therefore, peoples shall give thanks to you / Forever and unto ages of ages" (Ps 44:18); **(3) like refined gold** (v. 11), "on His head a golden crown" (Rev 14:14); (4) seen with **eyes . . . like . . . doves** (v. 12): "The eyes of the Lord are in every place" (Pr 15:3); (5) revealed with glorious **cheeks** and **lips** (v. 13): "His voice as the sound of many waters" (Rev 1:15); (6) beautiful in **hands** and **stomach** (v. 14): "Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him" (Mt 8:3); (7) strong of **legs** and **feet** (v. 15): "His feet *were* like fine brass" (Rev 1:15); (8) **altogether desirable** (v. 16), "more beautiful than the sons of men" (Ps 44:3).

6:1 The daughters of Jerusalem, the companions, now inquire where they can find such a Bridegroom. Those who are wise still **seek him.**

6:2 **His garden** is the Church.

6:5 The Bridegroom warns His Bride against trying to somehow see His Divine Essence, for no one shall see Him and live (Ex 33:20). The angels, even the mighty seraphim, veil their faces before His glory (Is 6:2).

6:8-9 There is little patristic commentary on this passage. The **queens** appear to represent the souls of those who reign with Christ through their watchfulness and their evangelical way of life. The **concubines** may give **praise** to the bride (v. 9) but expend their energy on worldly attachments. Both the queens and concubines approach the King's throne, but only the queens rule with Him. Seeing the Church as **mother** (v. 9), St. Cyprian of Carthage writes, if one “resists and withstands the Church, can he still be confident that he is in the Church?” Despite the multiplication of religious sects, each offering its own brand of revelation, salvation, or enlightenment, there is but one Bride of Christ.

6:10 The Bride, the Church, is **beautiful as the moon** because she is illumined by the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 3:20) and reflects the light of His glory.

6:11 Here, the Bride goes down to the **orchard** when she inspects the **fruits** that grow there, an act of self-examination. The Church is called to examine her spiritual progress, watching for those who still need assistance in bringing forth virtue (see 2Co 13:5). On the subject of married love, King Solomon wrote concerning one's wife, “Rejoice together with the wife of your youth” (Pr 5:18). The wife gives her body to her husband, and he gives himself to her (1Co 7:4). This is a powerful picture of our intimacy with God at the Holy Eucharist, for marriage is an icon of the Church (Eph 5:25–28).

7:1 **Shulamite** means “peace,” the feminine form of Solomon. The Church, replete with Gentiles of every nation, beckons with fervor the Shulamite, who represents the Jewish people, and calls her to **return** to the knowledge of her Redeemer (see Rom 11:28, 29).

7:2-10 Just as the Bride praised the beauty of the Bridegroom (5:10–16), so here the Bridegroom extols the beauty of the Bride. The beauty of her **feet** (v. 2) calls to mind the beauty of the **feet** of those who preach the gospel of peace (Is 52:7; Rom 10:15). The **nose** (v. 5) is the organ of scent, the most discriminating of the senses and the one most closely linked to memory. This discernment forms a part of the living memory of the Church. **The king** is taken with the **head** and the **hair** of his bride (v. 6), and also with her stature and her **breasts (v. 8)**. St. Paul teaches that "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Eph 5:25). At the marriage of Cana, Jesus saved the **good wine** (v. 10) until last (Jn 2:10). All of these things are symbolic of the love between husband and wife or between Christ and the Church.

7:11 This is a paraphrase/repeat of 2:16 and 6:3. The Bride again declares her full devotion to the Bridegroom and no other.

7:12-14 The Bride beckons the Bridegroom that they may **go forth** together **into the field**. Jesus taught, “The field is the world” (Mt 13:38). This, together with words like **villages** (v. 12), **rise early** (v. 13), **the vine has flowered** (v. 13), **aroma** (v. 14) and **fruits . . . new and old** (v. 14), suggests a prophetic description of evangelism by the apostles and the Church.

8:1 Some Orthodox commentators see the Bride calling the Bridegroom a **brother** who could **nurse at my mother's breasts** as a veiled reference to the Incarnation of the Son of God. For the Lord addressed His followers, saying, “Here are My mother and My brothers” (Mk 3:34). St. Athanasius, in his Paschal Letter of 329, writes concerning 8:1, “The God of all, the Maker of times and seasons, who knows our affairs better than we do . . . so also does He send [Christ] not unseasonably, but seasonably.” St. Paul teaches that Christ came in “the fullness of the time” (Gal 4:4).

8:2 **My mother's house** is symbolic of the “house of the Lord” (Ps 22:6). God's house has “many mansions” or dwellings (Jn 14:2), and these chambers are the intended home of all humanity. In the **spiced wine** we see in mystery the mixed wine consecrated in the Eucharist.

8:5 Jesus told His disciples, “the fields . . . are already **white** for harvest” (Jn 4:35), a picture of the Gentile Church. St. Ambrose supports this understanding, seeing **she who comes up** as “the Church; for Solomon chose her, whose hidden love he had discerned.” Further, he sees the **mother** as “Mary, whose soul God pierces and divides” (see Lk 2:35).

8:6 “Christ is the **seal** . . . in the **heart** that we may always love Him, and **a seal** on the **arm**, that we may always do His work. Therefore let His image shine forth in our profession of faith, let it shine forth in our love, let it shine forth in our works and deeds so that, if it is possible, all His beauty may be represented in us. . . . Christ is our love . . . since [love] has offered itself to **death** for transgressions” (AmbM).

8:7 Storms, **water,** and surging **rivers** cannot **quench** “the **love** of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38, 39).

8:8 The companions are concerned for their little **sister,** who **has no breasts**—she is immature. Yet one day she will be **spoken for** in marriage. This is perhaps a picture of the fledgling Gentile Church, initially small in number but with potential for growth. Interestingly, throughout the twenty-five years of the Acts of the Apostles (AD 33–58), many Gentiles came to the Church, but nowhere do they yet preach or teach.

8:9, 10 The **wall** is the bride, the Church, and Ambrose also sees it as the believer's soul. In either case, the goal is to **build** upon what is there. The Lord calls Himself a **door** (Jn 10:9), for we cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven but through Him (Jn 14:6). Neither can we know Him fully apart from the Church; hence the Bride is herself likened to a door. **Cedar panels** are both aromatic and pleasing to the sight.

8:11, 12 The location of **Baal Hamon** is unknown, a hidden mystery. The Lord's **vineyard** is likewise a mystery to the world, though present everywhere. The **keepers** are the Holy Apostles and those who follow them. **My vineyard** reminds us that the Church belongs first to Christ, though both leaders (**Solomon**) and faithful together **keep its fruit**.

8:13, 14 The conversation between Bridegroom and Bride is coming to a close. The Bridegroom speaks across time and space to those who dwell in the gardens of the Church to **give heed** to her **voice**. Many see **escape, my beloved** as a prophetic encouragement of the Ascension, after which Christ will come again to receive us to Himself (Jn 14:3).

1:1, 2 Jesus promised, “**Seek**, and you will find” (Mt 7:7), just as is promised here.

1:4 According to St. Paul, Christ is “the **wisdom** of God” (1Co 1:24).

1:5 A **spirit of discipline** brings with it honesty, discernment, and righteousness.

1:7 This passage brings to mind the prayer, “O Heavenly King,” in which we confess, “the **Spirit** of Truth . . . is everywhere present and **fills** all things.”

1:13, 14 God intends for man to have eternal life. Evil and **death** are not of God's making (see Jam 1:12–18).

2:1-11 This worldview of the ungodly has not changed markedly in the roughly 3000 years that have passed since these lines were penned. Compare Lk 12:16–21.

2:12-22 Many church fathers see this passage on disdain for **the righteous man** as being fulfilled in the life of Christ.

2:18 Compare Mt 27:43.

3:1-23 The question, “Why do the just suffer?” is answered in this section.

3:9 **Truth**, **love**, **grace** and **mercy** are fulfilled in Christ and in His **faithful** in the Church.

3:1-9 The Church sees the lives of the martyrs reflected in these verses. See also Dt 33:3; Job 12:10; Ps 117:15.

3:10-12 Tragically, **the ungodly** do not jeopardize only their own salvation, but their **wives** and **children** are affected as well. See also 3:16–19; 4:6.

3:13 A touching promise for the single **woman** and for married couples that cannot have children.

4:1 **Virtue**, more than anything else, attracts the gift of **immortality**. The Church sees in this verse a commentary on the splendor of virginity and the worthiness of the monastic calling. The seven great virtues are humility, liberality, chastity, mildness, temperance, happiness, and diligence. See also Acts 24:16.

4:2 See 1Co 11:1; Heb 6:12.

4:10-15 Though he is not named in this passage, this is a specific reference to Enoch, who **was taken up** to be with the Lord and **made perfect** (Gn 5:18–24).

4:17 A repeated theme in this book is that the ungodly do **not understand** the ways of **the wise** (see 1Co 2:14).

4:20 **The day of reckoning** is the final judgment, when the unjust will see **their lawless deeds**.

5:5-6 The **way of truth** refers to the path of wisdom exemplified in the lives of the **sons of God**, the saints. Like Judas, the ungodly have a sense of regret but not repentance as they face judgment, a theme that continues through 5:14.

5:17-20 The **full armor** of God represents His holy attributes realized in Christ and in those who are baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27). St. Paul lists similar spiritual armor in Eph 6:11–17.

6:1-10 A word of exhortation to **kings, judges**, and rulers: their source of **power** is **from the Lord** (v. 3). St. Paul agrees in Rom 13:1–6.

6:10 **Holy things** here are God's commandments and wise instruction, which **are taught** to the faithful. In the Divine Liturgy, “holy things” refers to the Body and Blood of Christ received in Holy Communion.

6:12 **Wisdom** will be **easily perceived** and **found** when she is the sole desire of the heart (see also Jam 1:5).

6:15 Everything necessary for our salvation is contained in **the perfection of discernment** which is embodied in Christ (see 7:22–24).

6:16 God knows our **every thought** and **meets** us when our every thought is fixed on Him (see also Pr 8:20; WSir 15:1).

6:17-20 Desire for **wisdom** leads from **instruction** to **love** to virtue to God's everlasting **kingdom**.

6:24 The **prudent king** is fulfilled in Christ. In this light, the **wise men** can be seen to foreshadow His Church, which brings **salvation** to **the world**.

7:1 The **first-formed man** is Adam.

7:2 **Ten months**: The months of the Jewish year were four weeks long. Human gestation is forty weeks.

7:4-5 Solomon is a type of Christ, who was also born a **king** (see Is 9:6; Mt 2:2) yet wrapped in **swaddling cloths** (see Lk 2:7, 12).

7:6, 7 Here is the story of salvation. Man realizes that his **life** has no real purpose and will end in death. He prays and is enlightened with **discernment**: only **God** can save him. He calls on God, who sends **wisdom**—that is, Christ—and His Spirit.

7:7-14 This passage is fulfilled in Christ and His Church, to which nothing earthly can stand **in comparison** (v. 8). She is the **unfailing treasure for men** (v. 14; see Lk 12:32–34).

7:22-30 The Fathers agree that this passage illustrates the divine attributes of Christ, who is “the **image** [v. 26] of the invisible God” (Col 1:15). One may also recognize here many of the qualities the Church sees in the Virgin Mary, who bore God the Son in her womb. From these verses we are reminded that through deification or becoming *like* God, humanity is given the capacity to share in the uncreated energies of God—His **power, purity, light,** and **goodness**.

7:27 Through the wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can be made **friends of God** (see Jn 15:15).

8:1, 2 The multitude said of Christ, “He has done **all things well**” (Mk 7:37). As Solomon **loved** and **sought** wisdom, so Christ loves and seeks His **bride**, the Church (see Mt 25:1–13; Eph 5:22–32).

8:4 The mysteries of **the knowledge of God** are later revealed to the Apostle John (Jn 15:15), who is also called the Theologian, the Knower of God.

8:7 Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His **righteousness**” (Mt 6:33). **The virtues** here are similar to those in Gal 5:22, 23.

8:8 Wisdom brings to the believer **great experience** and adventure. There is a personal joy and excitement that comes from an understanding of the things of God.

8:10-11 He who is Wisdom, Christ our God, found **honor in the presence of the elders** in the temple at the **young** age of twelve (Lk 2:42–47).

8:14 A description of the King of kings.

8:19-20 Orthodox theology teaches that the **body** is the outer covering or “tent” of the **soul** (2Pt 1:13), and that together they comprise the human person. The soul is inherently **good** and comes into being at the time of conception (see Zec 12:1).

8:21 **Wisdom** is a **gift** from **God**; yet we are called to search for her diligently.

9:1, 2 **Word** and **wisdom** are synonymous; both are a reference to Christ. This entire chapter anticipates the Incarnation of the Son of God.

9:5 Like Solomon, Christ is God's **servant** and the **son of** His **maidservant**. Unlike Solomon, Christ is perfect **man** and is eternal.

9:6 In his prayer, Solomon foresees **one** who is **perfect among the sons of men**.

9:8 As High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ serves at heaven's **altar** in the true **tabernacle** after which the earthly tabernacle and **temple** were patterned (see Heb 8:1, 2).

9:15 Through His death and Resurrection, Christ made the **corruptible body** to be immortal (see 1Co 15:47–49).

9:17-18 The presence of the Holy Trinity is unveiled here. **Your counsel** refers to God the Father, who gives His Son, **wisdom**, and sends His **Holy Spirit** to reveal the knowledge of salvation to **mankind**.

10:1 That Wisdom **delivered** Adam—and Eve—from their **transgression** is beautifully captured in numerous Orthodox icons of the Resurrection of Christ.

10:7 St. Jude chooses a similar word picture in describing apostates: “late autumn **trees** without **fruit**” (Jude 12). The **pillar of salt** is a reference to Lot's **unbelieving** wife (Gn 19:26).

10:10 Our lives are a combination of **hardships** and the successes of **increased . . . fruit** from our **labors**. Wisdom helps us through both. St. Paul encouraged Timothy to “endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2Ti 2:3).

10:13-14 When Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and in **a pit** in Egypt, **wisdom did not abandon him** (Gn 39–45). To His righteous followers, Jesus promises, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5).

10:17-20 Solomon has in mind the Song of Moses (v. 20), which is also sung in heaven and begins, “Great and **marvelous** are Your works, Lord God Almighty!” (Rev 15:3, 4).

10:1-21 This historical overview from Adam to Moses shows the active role that the Word of God (Wisdom) takes in salvation history. St. Peter records a similar history (2Pt 2:4–9). Verse 21 prophesies Christ's miracles (Is 35:5, 6; Mt 11:5).

11:4-8 In the first of seven antitheses, or comparisons (see 16:1–21; 17:1–18:4; 18:5–19; 19:1–9), God is seen both to punish His **enemies** and to show **kindness** to His people by the same means—in this case, with sweet and **defiled** water (see also 11:13). The **rock** is a symbol of Christ (Lk 20:17; 1Co 10:4) and the water is symbolic of eternal life (see Jn 4:14).

11:9-2 According to the Fathers, God could destroy the world **in a single breath** (v. 20). But in His mercy and love, and recognizing the good inherent in man at creation, God will **correct** those who have fallen away **little by little** (12:2), desiring their **repentance** (v. 23).

11:22 See Is 40:15.

11:24 With His creation complete, “God saw everything He had **made**, and indeed, it was very good” (Gn 1:31).

11:25 In Christ “all things consist” (lit. “hold together”; Col 1:17).

12:2 God gives us every opportunity to **believe in** Him.

12:3-11 **The inhabitants** of the **holy land** were the Canaanites, who were very **unholy**. Here again, as in 12:2, the Lord could have destroyed them by **one severe word** (v. 9), but instead He judged them **little by little**, giving them **a chance for repentance** (v. 10). Jesus taught the Most High God "is kind to the unthankful and evil" (Lk 6:35).

12:12-18 The Almighty God is utterly sovereign and merciful. He will **not judge unjustly** (v. 13; Gn 18:25). He rules over us with **great forbearance** (v. 18).

12:19 For God's **children**, the sacrament of confession, or **repentance**, makes us hopeful.

12:22 Note how God's chastening fits the sin.

12:23-27 Another description of the **judgment of God** (v. 26) on the Egyptians. The Apostle Mark brought the gospel to Egypt, and the fruit of his labor remains to this day.

13:1-19 **All men** are encouraged to look beyond the beauty of creation to its source and inspiration, Almighty God, and to **know Him who exists** (v. 1).

13:3 See Ps 8:5, 6.

13:5 St. Paul uses this same reasoning in Rom 1:20.

13:6 On Mars Hill, St. Paul preached to those who **while seeking God** had gone **astray** (see Acts 17:26, 27). We **find Him** in His Holy Church, in the Scriptures, and in our prayers to Him.

13:8-9 As in 13:5, St. Paul teaches why **they are not to be excused** in Rom 1:20, 21.

13:11-16 Solomon explains the length to which a **carpenter** goes to make a false **image** (v. 16).

14:1-5 **Wisdom** mercifully provides **safe** passage for man.

14:6, 7 These verses refer to the time of Noah (Gn 6) and also foreshadow Christ and the saving **wood** of the Cross.

14:8-21 Man's creation of godless **idols** (v. 12) separates him from that loving union with God for which he was created. Idolatry is **a trap for the feet of fools** (v. 11).

14:22-29 Every form of **depravity** (v. 25) flourishes in a society where idols are worshipped as deities. A sense of moral order in such a culture is impossible (see Rom 1:26–30).

14:26 See Acts 15:20.

15:3 To **know** God is **immortality**—eternal life (see Jn 17:3).

15:4-19 Idols are **evil** images that entice the worshipper away from the True God and towards nothingness. Holy images or icons, such as the cross and images of Christ and His living saints, help keep us from idols.

15:7 St. Paul also teaches that the **potter** makes **vessels** for honor and dishonor **from the same clay** (Rom 9:21). We choose to live either in light or in darkness.

15:10 See Is 44:20.

15:11 God, who **formed** us and **breathed** life into us, has a rightful claim on our **soul**!

15:13 There is hope for a practicing idolater because he **knows that he sins**.

15:15 Compare with Dt 4:28.

16:1-21 God again uses similar means both to save His people and to judge His enemies (see also 11:4–8; 17:1–18:4; 18:5–19; 19:1–9). **The food of angels** (vv. 20), or manna, was both food for Israel and a symbol of the Eucharist (Jn 6:31, 32).

16:2 God sending His people **quails as food** is described in lively detail in Nm 11.

16:5 Related passages are Nm 21:6; Dt 32:24; 1Co 10:9.

16:6-12 The holy fathers see in the bronze serpent (Nm 21:9) a symbol of the healing power of the Cross. See also Jn 3:14.

16:10 See Dt 32:33.

16:13 Christ the Savior descended into **Hades** and exercised His **authority over life and death** to release those in prison (see Eph 4:9, 10).

16:15-18 This event is recorded in Ex 9:22–26.

16:20 In Jn 6:31–34, Jesus makes it very clear that He Himself is the true **bread from heaven**. Unfortunately, many modern Christians fail to commune regularly with Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus warns, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53).

16:24-29 God works through His **creation** to teach man that it is not creation but the **word** of His Wisdom that preserves them (v. 26). Just as God used fiery hail to destroy, so He uses the rays of the sun to defrost the crops. So then, man should arise at **sunrise** to thank God, for God's blessing will leave the one who is **unthankful** just as quickly as the rising sun melts **frost** (see 2Ti 3:2).

17:1-4 As seen earlier (see text and notes at 11:4–8; 16:1–21; 18:5–19; 19:1–9), God uses similar means both to judge His enemies and to bless His people. Here God is seen to send **darkness** (v. 2) to terrify the Egyptians and **light** (18:1) to guide the Israelites. This is the same darkness of **Hades** (v. 13) into which Christ descended (1Pt 3:19).

17:3 See Ex 10:22, 23.

17:7 See 2Ti 3:8, 9.

17:9, 10 See Jer 26:22, 23.

17:11 See Rom 2:15.

18:1-4 **Great light** (see Is 42:6) points to Christ, who is the fulfillment of **the law** (v. 4) and the light of **the world** (Jn 8:12).

18:3 See Ex 13:21.

18:5-19 The sixth means is presented by which God both blesses His people and punishes His enemies (see 11:4–8; 16:1–21; 17:1–18:4; 19:1–9). Here we see God punishing the Egyptians' murder of the Israelite children by slaying their firstborn (Ex 1:9–16), while protecting and glorifying the Jews (v. 8). The **one child** (v. 5) is Moses, who prefigures Christ.

18:6 **That night** (see Ex 12:42, 43) marks the first Passover Feast.

18:8 Here again is the case of God's punishing the Egyptian **enemies** being coupled with His blessing of His people (see 18:5–19 note).

18:12 This event is recorded in Nm 33:4.

18:15 The Red Sea crossing was such a miraculous event in the history of Israel that Solomon describes it with these words: **Your all-powerful Word leaped from heaven**. The Son of God is a warrior, saving His people (see Ex 15:3; Rev 19:13).

18:20-25 Once again salvation in Christ is foreshadowed when the high priestly prayers of the **blameless man**, Aaron, are said to **cut off** (v. 23) death. Aaron's vestments, his **long robe** (v. 24), like the vestments of Orthodox bishops and priests, symbolize Christ in His intercession for the **world** (v. 24).

19:1-9 Here, in a seventh and final antithesis (see 11:4–8; 16:1–21; 17:1–18:4; 18:5–19), God effectively works through His **creation**, using the **Red Sea** both to save His people and to destroy His enemies (vv. 6, 7). This event is seen in the Church to foreshadow Christ's Baptism in the Jordan, when He drove out the powers of darkness and sanctified all creation. Verse 9, **Praising You**, **O Lord**, is a reference to the Song of Moses (Ex 15:1–18).

19:22 The conclusion of the Wisdom of Solomon is a doxology. God, through His Wisdom, has providentially **exalted and glorified** His chosen **people**, Israel, granting them salvation. With the coming of Christ, Israel becomes the Church of the Gentiles, the new "Israel of God" (see Gal 6:16; 1Pt 2:9), and Christ, the Wisdom of God, becomes her Head. (See also 12:20; 18:8; Lv 26:44; Ps 125:3.)

1:1 **Forever** tells us Wisdom is without beginning. He is Christ, the power and wisdom of the Father (1Co 1:24).

1:4 The statement **Wisdom was created before all things** is a prophecy concerning the Incarnation of Wisdom, who was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8); for He became incarnate for us men and for our salvation (Creed). “Created” refers to His human nature which He assumed at His conception in the Ever-virgin Mary. “All things” refers to all creation, which Christ came to redeem along with the children of God (Rom 8:21–23; Eph 1:10; Col 1:15–17). **From eternity** also shows that Christ is without beginning.

1:6 This verse is left out of some ancient manuscripts but included in others. It very possibly was taken out following the Bar Kochba rebellion of AD 135, when Jewish rabbis made a strong effort to purge the LXX of references that could be interpreted as referring to Christ as Messiah. This was done to stem the tide of Jewish conversions to Christianity, which had brought near total destruction to the Jewish nation.

1:7 Again, **created wisdom** refers to the Incarnation (see 1:4), while wisdom **poured . . . out on all His works** reminds us the Father created all things through His Son.

1:10-11 **The fear of the Lord** brings blessing both to **life** and to **death**.

1:12 The capacity to **fear the Lord** and thus to believe in Him is **joined with** the infant **in the womb**. This would explain why the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of the special faith of nursing babes (Lk 18:15–17).

1:23-27 To gain **wisdom** we must be obedient to **the commandments**, maintain faithfulness and humility, and come to God with an undivided heart.

2:1 One who determines **to serve the Lord** will be tested and face **temptation** (see 1Co 10:13). Thus, we **prepare** our soul for this challenge to our fidelity.

2:12-14 Faintheartedness, the loss of endurance, and double-mindedness are forms of unbelief and bring great instability (see Jam 1:8).

3:1, 2 Ben Sirach implores **children** to listen to the wisdom of their **father** and **mother**. Verses 1–16 contain timeless counsel for children concerning their parents.

3:18 Humility is essential to true spiritual works and opens the door to God's immeasurable **grace**.

3:20-23 Ben Sirach's word on mental health.

3:24-27 A **hard heart** is a great spiritual danger, warned against in the OT and NT. **There is no healing** for the man afflicted by this disease (v. 26; see also Mk 8:17; Heb 4:7).

4:10 The care of the poor, the needy, and the orphan is nothing short of Christlike: **you will be like a son of the Most High**.

4:11-19 Gaining **wisdom** is not passive or automatic. Note the action verbs: **seek** (v. 11); **loves** (v. 12); **come** (v. 12); **holds fast** (v. 13); **serve** (v. 14); **obeys** (v. 15); **gives heed** (v. 15); **trusts** (v. 16).

5:1-8 Looking to **possessions** and being **independent** from God is dangerous to one's soul. To assume that God is unwilling or unable to deal with our sins and therefore we can escape the consequences of our deeds is also dangerous. Thus, Ben Sirach's exhortation: **Do not delay to turn to the Lord** (v. 7).

5:9-1 The **double-tongued** man is one who “talks out of both sides of his mouth” and **brings shame and disgrace** (6:1).

6:2-4 In ancient agrarian societies where fences were few, a young **bull** would be forced from his herd and would wander about looking for a herd where he was strong enough to assert dominance. But in doing so he was in danger of encountering stronger bulls and being **torn in pieces**. So is a man who looks only to himself for counsel and wisdom. One Orthodox saint teaches, “He is a fool who has himself as his spiritual father.”

6:5-17 There are also those who are fair-weather friends and appear to be especially close when one is prosperous. But if things turn for the worse, these false friends will become **enemies** (v. 13). Faithful friends are a great **treasure** (v. 14). Such friendships are beyond **worth** (v. 15) and are like a good and healing **medicine** (v. 16).

6:18-19 Lifelong **instruction** is essential to gaining **wisdom**. As a farmer patiently **plows and sows** in order to produce good fruit, so is the one who gains the fruit of wisdom.

6:20 To the **undisciplined** and spiritually ignorant, the gaining of wisdom seems to be **harsh** and overly demanding. But the person seeking wisdom will gladly **continue with her** because of the great good she will bring into his or her life.

6:32-37 The requirements for gaining wisdom: (1) be willing to **be taught**—have a teachable spirit; (2) **love to listen** (v. 33) rather than persistently talking; (3) **attach** ourselves (v. 34) to those older and wiser; (4) listen carefully to **divine narrative** and wise **proverbs** (v. 35); (5) continuously **practice** the **commandments** (v. 37) of the Lord. As we do these things, He will grant our desire for wisdom. Remember, the early church fathers saw the Wisdom of the Proverbs and Sirach as speaking of the preincarnate Christ. We find in Him the complete personification of Wisdom.

7:1-3 Wisdom requires we avoid all forms of **evil things**. For if we participate in **wrongdoing**, we **reap** its bitter fruit **sevenfold**.

7:10-11 Be bold in **prayer** and **alms**, or deeds of mercy. The Lord through His Church both **humbles and exalts** us by providing special seasons of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving to the needy, especially during Lent and Advent.

7:18 **Ophir**, likely in southwestern Arabia, was a famous source for gold in the ancient world. The queen at Christ's right hand (Ps 44:10), the Theotokos, is arrayed in gold from Ophir.

7:20-21 The wise employer places high value on a worker who is **intelligent** and devoted to his job. In ancient times this meant repaying the **servant** with his **freedom**. In our times it means providing just compensation and job security.

7:22 Because they are God's creation, we **take care of** animals we own.

7:24-25 The father arranged the **marriage** of his **daughter**, and until then he protected her **chastity**.

7:29-31 **Love** for God and honor for **His priests** go hand in hand. The OT laws required that part of each sacrifice to God be given to the priests for their support. Here, following **give them their portion as commanded**, the Syriac version of the LXX includes what some believe to be an emendation by an early Christian copyist. It reads, “the bread of oblations and the firstfruits of the hands.” Orthodox Christians would understand this to be the prosphora bread to be used in the Eucharist.

7:32 God has always promised **blessing** to those who give **to the poor**.

8:1-3 The application for us is this: Only join battles worth winning.

8:6-9 Valuable counsel for our youth-oriented culture.

8:10 To **kindle the coals** is to arouse the passions.

8:17-19 Ben Sirach warns us not to reveal our thoughts to just anyone. In the Church, the priest vows that all confessions will be kept **confidential**.

9:1 A warning against marrying a woman and then becoming **jealous** of her. Instead, love her and encourage her to use her gifts.

9:3-9 Up-to-date ancient advice on a man's behavior toward women. A **courtesan** (v. 3) is a prostitute of noblemen. A wise man is not to **gaze at a virgin** (v. 5), that is, any young unmarried woman. To do so could tempt the couple to immoral relations, which in Jewish society carried a strong penalty (see Dt 22:28, 29). The **beauty** of a married woman belongs only to her husband (v. 8). It is especially important for a man to avoid dining and drinking alone with a married woman lest they fall into sin and **destruction** (v. 9).

9:10 Loyalty to **an old friend** is a great virtue. A **new** friend cannot take his place.

9:15 The strongest friendships are based on a relationship with **the Most High** God!

10:4-5 Since the Lord has **authority** over all, **He will raise up** rulers for His purposes and in His **time**.

10:9 A very humbling passage. One could almost call it crude, except that God is forcing us to face our utter lack of a basis for personal pride.

10:14-15 This theme echoes Pr 3:37 and is repeated by St. Peter (1Pt 5:5, 6).

10:17 When the faithful die in Christ, we sing, “Memory eternal!” By contrast, the Lord **puts an end** to the **memory** of unworthy rulers (v. 14) and nations (v. 16).

10:20-23 All are to **fear the Lord—**the **rich** and **the poor**. A poor man with true godliness and spiritual wisdom must be honored.

10:28-29 All human beings should humbly recognize the immense value and glory of their own **soul**. The Lord Jesus Christ may have had this passage in mind when He spoke the words of Mt 16:26.

11:2-9 This section deals with the age-old tendency to judge matters merely by external **appearance**. Woven in are warnings about boasting of a present possession or position.

11:10 We are to work faithfully and devotedly, but if we become involved in **too many things** they can overwhelm us. Rushing about to fulfill our obligations, we will keep falling further behind.

11:16-17 As with 10:28, 29, one wonders if our Lord did not have this passage in mind when He spoke the parable in Lk 12:16–21.

11:22 Being **independent** in terms of freedom from a dictatorship or oppression is a blessing. Here, however, is a spirit of independence from God, the “I've-got-it-made” syndrome.

11:24-25 At the **end** of our **life** we will be judged for the whole of it. And those who remain watch for the **revelation** of the **works** of the departed. This helps explain why the Church waits long to glorify her saints.

12:1-6 Christians extend hospitality, but not indiscriminately (see Ps 140:4, 5; 2Ti 3:6). Almsgiving—giving to the needy—has always been a godly virtue. The Wisdom of Sirach teaches when one practices this virtue to wisely choose a godly recipient. The man **who does not give alms** is classed with those who persist in **evil** (v. 3).

12:4-7 These verses reflect the view of ancient societies, including the Hebrews and Greeks, that one should extend grace or do good mainly to one's family or to one who is godly. Few believed in doing good to one's enemies until Jesus Christ strongly taught us to do so (see Mt 5:38–48; Lk 6:27–36). St. Paul sums up the Christian view of almsgiving: “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal 6:10).

12:7-18 In a fallen world the godly will always have enemies—either human or demonic, or both. Ben Sirach warns us of fair-weather friends (vv. 8, 9). An enemy is like rust, which ruins metal (v. 10). Be on guard and **never trust your enemy** (v. 10).

13:3-4 When a **rich man** falls, he has many helpers. But when **a poor man is wronged**, often even his friends push him down further.

13:14-17 Everything in creation **loves its like**! Thus, we have nations, tongues, and tribes (see Rev 5:9), and that is natural. But for Christians, we do not first identify ourselves as Greek or Russian or American. Rather our allegiance is first to “a holy nation” (1Pt 2:9), which is the Kingdom of God.

14:2 See 1Jn 3:21.

14:3-7 A **small-minded**, stingy **man** is not fit to be wealthy, for he will not help others. Such a person only does good accidentally (v. 7).

14:12 **Death** makes no contract or **covenant** with anyone to come at the time we might prefer. (See 14:17, and also Gn 2:17; 3:19 for the eternal covenant of death.)

14:20-1 The pursuit of **wisdom** is portrayed, with many vibrant metaphors, as the primary goal of life—keeping in mind that wisdom is ultimately and fully embodied in Christ.

15:2 Wisdom is for those who will seek her with the love of **a mother** seeking her child, or of a groom being received by his young **wife**.

15:11-12 It is not rational to say God **led me astray** into sin. (Nor is it Orthodox to give the excuse, “The devil made me do it.”) In His creation of mankind, God gave us the freedom to choose good or evil. Without that freedom we could neither be held accountable for our evil deeds nor rewarded for our good works.

15:16 **Fire and water** represent extreme opposites. One could allegorize: we can choose between condemnation and baptism.

15:19 The **fear** of God is reverential awe, the foundation for worship, love, and obedience to Him (see Dt 30:15–20).

16:1-3 A **multitude** of **children** is seen in Scripture as a blessing from God (Gn 24:60; Ps 127:3–6). But God forbid they be **useless** or **ungodly**.

16:6 **A fire will be kindled** and **wrath is kindled** are references to the stirring up of sinful human passions.

16:7 The **ancient giants** are mentioned in Gn 6:4; WSol 14:6; Bar 3:26; and 3Mc 2:4.They are described as expert men of war, arrogant, insolent, foolish, mighty, and trusting in their own strength. They were destroyed by God in the flood.

16:8-9 The men of Sodom are referred to here. In Ezk 16:49, 50 God declares the people of Sodom were arrogant and had abundant food and wine, but were unconcerned for the poor and needy. They also committed “acts of lawlessness” before God, which are described in Gn 19: homosexual acts of incredible disgust. The Sodomites were so “haughty” they had to be dealt with by God in extreme harshness.

16:10 During their sojourn in the wilderness, God allowed the 600,000 **foot-soldiers** of Israel to die because of **their hardness of heart**.

16:12-14 The OT and NT teach us that God holds all mankind accountable and will judge us according to our **works** (see Ps 61:13; Pr 24:12; Mt 25:31–46).

16:15-21 Ben Sirach understands well the mind of the skeptic who refuses to believe in God. Because the unbeliever does not admit that outside his limited realm of finite wisdom God could exist, the author calls him **diminished in heart**, **without discernment** and **deceived** (v. 21).

16:22-23 Ben Sirach here offers one of the finest evangelism lessons in the OT. His premise: A teachable person will receive precise and accurate **knowledge** from God. How? He will recognize God has created everything in **exactness** of order, and the way to find harmony and peace in life is to find our place in His plan and order. The author also gives instruction on (1) the creation of the world (16:24–28), (2) the creation of man (17:1–8), (3) God's revelation through His covenant (17:9–19), and (4) how to return to God (17:20–27).

17:1-8 In the previous verses Ben Sirach briefly sets forth the order and majesty of God's creation of the world. Now he begins a discourse on the grandeur of **man** made in the **image** of God. Consequently man is given **authority** and **dominion** and power over all the earth.

17:9-19 God intended **Israel** (v. 14) to be a tight-knit, unified nation. But He also intended her to have open and honorable relations with **every nation** (v. 14), that is, the Gentiles, ultimately becoming the instrument of their salvation. However, as a nation they did not fulfill this divine intent. Their unity became centered in their ethnicity rather than their relationship with God. They even grew to despise the Gentiles with no concern for their salvation. It is extremely important for us within the Church, the new Israel, not to fall into this same sin and incur the same judgment (see Rom 11:11–36). For the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel in the Church, see the following passages: Rom 4:9–16; 9:6, 8, 23–27; 11:7; 1Co 10:18; Gal 6:16; 1Pt 2:4–12; Rev 3:12; 21:2, 10.

17:20-23 This marvelous passage on repentance forms the basis for many of the prayers, litanies, and services of the ancient Church. This passage was used and paraphrased in the third-century treatise attributed to St. Cyprian entitled “Exhortation to Repentance.”

17:23 This verse emphasizes the temporal existence of man. Death is seen as the destroyer of earthly praise to God. Augustine translated **thanksgiving** as “confession.”

17:24 The **mercy** and **atonement** from **the Lord** anticipates the coming of the Son of God.

17:26 On earth nothing is **brighter than the sun**, yet even it can be eclipsed. So with mankind, the best of us can be darkened by **evil**.

18:3-6 The **works** and **wonders of the Lord** are of such magnitude and majesty, it is impossible to enumerate them all or to plumb their depths. Augustine has a long and moving sentence on the depth and beauty of Scripture in which he says that if one had a long lifetime to study it at leisure, he could never fathom it all. He concludes by quoting a portion of v. 6: **When a man completes his search, then he starts over**.

18:8-10 Man's inability to consistently practice righteousness, the brevity of even the longest life, and human suffering all move God to be compassionate and merciful.

18:15-16 A friendly **word** often brings more comfort than does a **gift**. However, a **gracious** person will give **both** comforting words and **fitting** gifts.

18:18-20 These serious admonitions apply to one's **health** and daily life, but their ultimate application is to prepare the soul for the final judgment.

18:22 Making a **vow** to **the Lord** can be as simple as promising Him to give a tithe of one's income, or as all-encompassing as monastic vows (see Nm 6:5; Acts 18:18).

18:24 God teaches us that we must use our **wealth** to help those in **need**.

18:26 Times are changing. In **these days of sin**, when the culture takes an evil turn, the **wise man** will be even more careful to **guard against wrongdoing**.

18:28 As one labors to be **wise**, that virtue will spread to **others**.

18:29 Interestingly, the heading **Self-Control** appears in the Greek text.

19:1 One who has self-control will not dissipate his wealth in drunkenness, nor will he be careless about small things. “Faithfulness in small things is no small thing” (Aug).

19:8 The one exception to not passing on hearsay is when keeping quiet **is a sin**.

19:13-17 These verses urge careful examination. The KJV uses "admonish" for the Greek *elegzon*, which we have rendered **question**. Some would render it "reprove" or "examine." However, true friendship requires that we gently and tactfully ask a friend or a neighbor about a potential false charge or hurtful statement. We always give the benefit of the doubt to our neighbor or friend, remembering that we all slip and sin with our **tongue** far more often than we realize (v. 16).

19:18-27 This passage affirms the nature of true wisdom by contrasting it with false wisdom. All wisdom begins with the **fear of the Lord** (v. 18).

19:26-27 Outward **appearance** can be an indicator of wisdom.

20:3 The martyr Cyprian (200–258), in a passage attributed to him calling this book by its nickname “Ecclesiasticus,” meaning “Church Book,” places Sirach on a par with all other Scripture. Many church fathers also quoted from Sirach. In his treatise, Cyprian quotes first from 17:24–26 and then from 20:3. This document includes a great many Scripture quotes, mostly from the LXX but also a few from the NT, and is worthy to be studied by all Christians.

20:4 A **eunuch** is a castrated man who serves as an attendant to a sovereign in his bedchamber or harem. The analogy here is that a man who uses senseless violence to bring about **justice** is impotent in producing justice.

20:5-8 The church fathers insist that the most difficult discipline for most of us is learning to keep **silent**. “Now what ought we to learn before everything else, but to be silent, that we may be able to speak? Lest my voice should condemn me, before that of another acquit me, it is written: ‘By thy words thou shalt be condemned’” (AmbM).

20:9-12 These verses employ contrasting terms to show that things are not always as they appear to be.

20:14-15 Beware of fools bearing gifts!

20:16-17 The foolish man awash in self-pity complains about being friendless and unappreciated. His world revolves around himself, and he becomes a laughingstock to all.

20:19 This definition of a fool as **a man without grace** serves as a reminder to Christians to rely on the grace of God in their speech instead of merely on their own understanding.

21:1-3 A simple and powerful summary of the attitude of the repentant believer. If one has **sinned**, he is not to continue in it. Rather, he is to pray urgently for forgiveness. The humble believer must view all sin as dangerous, as much as a poisonous **snake**. St. Paul follows this exhortation when he says, “Flee sexual immorality” (1Co 6:18).

21:3 **Lawlessness** is any form of rebellion against the duly constituted authority over us. God calls it “every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes” (Dt 12:8).

21:11-28 This passage is a brilliant series of comparisons and contrasts of wisdom and folly.

21:13 The guidance of a **wise man** flows **abundantly** from his lips because it comes from the Holy Spirit (see Mk 13:11).

21:16 Literally, “**the** exegesis **of a fool**.”

21:17 St. Paul speaks of “the word of wisdom” (1Co 12:8).

21:27 Jude 9 also warns against rebuking **Satan**, instead instructing us to say, “The Lord rebuke you!” (See also Zec 3:2.)

22:1 A powerful condemnation of laziness. The **filthy stone** was used like toilet paper—which explains 22:2.

22:3-6 Because the **father** is ultimately responsible for the discipline of children, St. Paul issues a helpful word in Eph 6:4.

22:11 The concept of **rest** for the dead suggests a life after death, not a cessation of existence.

22:13 Close contact with **a fool** can defile a person, and his influence is an exhausting irritation.

22:22 St. John Chrysostom has a lengthy discourse on friendship in which he quotes from this verse, listing the evil actions that destroy friendship: “reproaching . . . and revealing of a secret, and a treacherous wound.” He goes on to say, “For there is nothing good without friendship . . . so let there be a man having ten thousand talents and another a hundred friends: the latter is more rich in resources than the former.”

22:27 This passage amplifies Ps 140:3, which is sung at Vespers.

23:1-6 It appears this prayer may have formed the basis for the Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, the prayer of repentance which Orthodox Christians pray repeatedly throughout Great Lent, though that prayer is simpler and shorter.

23:9 Ben Sirach's warning reflects the serious matter of making **vows** and not fulfilling them. To break a vow made in **the name of the Holy One** would be to take God's name in vain (Ex 20:7).

23:20 This verse is very clear on God's foreknowledge: all things are **known to Him**.

24:1 This chapter is a poetic discourse on **Wisdom**, which can only find its fulfillment in Christ, and thus is viewed by the early church fathers as being Christological. The Greek word *sophia* (wisdom) is feminine in gender, and therefore the pronouns associated with it are translated in the feminine. The preincarnate Christ is revealed as the eternally begotten Son, God of God, co-equal with the Father. Also, Wisdom, the preincarnate Son, is exalted above all. Perhaps St. Paul had this passage in mind when he penned Php 2:5–11, which many believe is an early Christian hymn.

24:3 “Observe the peculiar attribute of the Divine Generation, that the Son doth not seem to have come forth out of any place, but as God from God, a Son from a Father, nor to have a beginning in the course of time, having come forth from the Father by being born, as He Himself who was born said: ‘**I came forth from the mouth of the Most High**’” (AmbM).

24:8 **Created me** is a prophecy concerning the incarnation of Wisdom. He is Christ, the power and wisdom of the Father (1Co 1:24). The phrases **a place to live**, a **tent in Jacob**, and **an inheritance in Israel** also emphasize the Incarnation.

24:9 The phrases **before the age**, **from the beginning**, and **in the age to come** show that Wisdom is without beginning. The statement **He created me** is prophetic of the Incarnation as well. For Christ, the power and wisdom of the Father, assumed a human nature at His conception in the womb of the Mother of God, the Ever-virgin Mary.

24:16-17 St. Paul teaches that in Christ we find a superabundance of the riches of **grace** (Eph 1:7, 8).

24:21 Though the Christian finds true nourishment in the Body and Blood of Christ, he will always **hunger** and **thirst for more** of Christ in all aspects of life.

25:1-15 Though these verses primarily describe those worthy of praise, they also include a denunciation of the unworthy (v. 2). It is interesting that one of the great celibate monks of the Church, St. John Chrysostom, should say of v. 1: “For there is no relationship between man and man so close as that between man and wife, if they be joined together as they should be . . . nothing whatever is more precious than to be . . . loved by a wife and to love her.”

25:7 The Christian must love and pray for his enemies while rejoicing at **the downfall** of evil.

25:15 Ben Sirach continues his diatribe on the **evil wife** (vv. 15–25, and again in 26:5–12). Following each of these passages are sections praising a good wife (26:1–4, 13–18). Both vice and virtue are fair game for this outspoken author!

25:21 Historically, it was seen as disgraceful for **a wife** to financially support **her husband**. When necessity calls for the husband to stay at home with the children and keep the house while the wife earns the income, be aware of these warnings of Ben Sirach.

25:24 Just as neglecting a crack in a reservoir could cause a flood, so also an emboldened **evil wife** can produce a torrent of wicked deeds.

25:25 The OT rules concerning divorce were less strict than those given by Jesus.

26:1-4 A **good wife** brings her husband happiness (vv. l, 2, 4), long life (v. 1), and **peace** (v. 2).

26:5-6 After listing three **fears**, Ben Sirach declares the fourth to be the **wife** who is **jealous over another woman**. The implication is that her jealousy is unfounded.

26:9-12 This passage warns of the sin of sexual promiscuity. Clement of Alexandria says of v. 9, “But languishing looks, and ogling, which is to wink with the eyes, is nothing else than to commit adultery with the eyes” (ClemA).

26:13-18 This passage makes many of the same observations as 1Pt 3:1–6.

26:20-3 Business-related scandals are not new. Unless a **merchant** holds **steadfastly to the fear of the Lord**, the work of his hands will be **overturned**.

27:4-7 Jesus Christ must be the Lord of our **reasoning process** (v. 6), keeping our motives pure.

27:5 Cyprian of Carthage (martyred AD 258) sees this passage as the basis of St. Paul's and all Christian sufferings. “This, in short, is the difference between us and others who know not God, that in misfortune they complain and murmur, while adversity does not call us away from the truth of virtue and faith, but strengthens us by its suffering.”

27:8 The Lord Jesus Christ confirmed and amplified this truth in His fourth Beatitude (Mt 5:6).

27:13-14 Trash **talk** and **swearing** may make a man look tough, but Ben Sirach is right: it is **offensive** and gains no respect from others.

27:27 Moses told the children of Israel the same thing in different words: “You will know your sin when evils overtake you” (Nm 32:23).

28:1 This concept is recorded in Dt 32:35, and is affirmed by St. Paul in Rom 12:19.

28:2 The Lord Jesus Christ echoed this truth in His Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:14, 15). It is not that God's grace and forgiveness are somehow purchased or earned by our first forgiving others. Rather, our unforgiveness prevents us from having the humility to receive God's mercy and forgiveness.

28:3 It is well known that those who are filled with **wrath** and discontent develop serious diseases. Forgiveness of others promotes our spiritual and physical **healing**.

28:4 One of the most powerful of Christ's parables greatly amplifies this common human failing (Mt 18:23–35).

28:6 The church fathers often urge us to ponder our **death** and the great judgment seat of Christ in order that we **stand fast** in a state of preparation for that awesome day.

28:24 Some see **possessions** as referring to the tongue, which is to be guarded as carefully as **silver and gold**. Cyprian, apparently quoting the Vulgate, renders this verse as, “Hedge thine ears with thorns, and hearken not to a wicked tongue.”

28:25-26 The Church teaches us to weigh our **words** and to pray, “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth” (Ps 140:3). He who **lies in wait** is Satan, who desires to capture our soul.

29:1 Christ expands on this in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:42).

29:10-13 “What is so likely to win favor as gratitude? . . . What [is] more natural than to love one who loves us?” (AmbM). Thus, we are urged to give our **money** to help a **brother and friend** (v. 10).

29:11-13 This passage is a precursor to Christ's words in Mt 6:19–21. Since the Sermon on the Mount is the heart of the Lord's teachings, and since it rings with many words and concepts from Sirach, it is easy to see why the early Church gave the book the nickname “Ecclesiasticus” (Church Book). Verses 12 and 13 instruct us to keep an **alms** fund in a safe place so it will be available when we meet a needy person. One who is generous to the poor will be protected from **affliction** and his **enemy**. Perhaps following the Old Latin, some fathers read v. 12 as, “Store up your alms in the heart of the poor man.”

30:1-13 God believes in discipline! Heb 12:5–10 reveals how the Lord disciplines His children, and asks the question, “What son is there whom a father does not chasten?” (v. 7).

30:16 May we thank God for **health of body** and **joy of heart**!

30:19 In the “Bel and the Serpent” section of Daniel, they tried **offering** food and drink **to an idol**; Daniel laughed, and they failed.

30:21-25 Ben Sirach teaches that sorrow does not simply sneak up on us and take over. Instead, we **give** ourselves **over** to it (v. 21), or we can **put** it **far away**. How? By **rejoicing** (v. 22), loving our **soul**, and comforting our **heart** (v. 23).

31:1, 2 Among the great problems caused by wealth and its accumulation are **anxiety** and sleeplessness. “Why enviest thou the rich man? Is it because he has subjected himself to many cares? . . . Because he is bound like a dog, with ten thousand chains—namely his riches? . . . As though at enmity with ourselves, we have devised a tyranny more powerful than natural want of rest—the sleeplessness which comes of wealth” (JohnChr).

31:8-11 Rare is the individual who is rich but does not love money. Such a person can do great good in the world. “For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1Ti 6:10). “What is greater than the man that knows how not to be excited at the thought of money, and has contempt for riches, and looks down as from a lofty vantage-ground on the desires of men? Men think that one who acts thus is more than a man” (AmbM).

31:12-13 This passage gives attention to righteous conduct at dinner parties. Issues such as moderation in food and drink, good manners, proper conversation, and even stinginess are addressed.

31:14 Eating **everything** in sight is not new! Ben Sirach calls for restraint.

31:16 Even during Lent, when dining elsewhere, the fathers say to **eat what is set before you**.

31:19 A **small** helping of food **is sufficient** for those with **discipline**. This is not written just for monks, but for all Christians.

31:25-31 Throughout Scripture, **wine** is seen as a good gift from God if we **drink it in moderation** to bring **gladness of soul** (v. 28).

32:1, 2 In ancient times, hosting a **banquet** was a magnificent honor. Ben Sirach reminds the host to **be as one of them** and to **take care of them**—that is, be the servant of your guests.

32:3-6 This banquet is complete with a **concert** of dinnertime **music** (v. 5) and **delicious wine** (v. 6). Looking ahead, imagine the grandeur of the “marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9).

32:7-13 Banquet behavior for a **young man**.

32:17 A wise man is correctable; a **sinful man** is not.

32:23 We are called to trust **the Lord** in **every work** we do, not just in religious work.

33:2 The analogy of a hypocrite being **like a ship in a storm** indicates he is in grave mortal danger.

33:5 The mind **of a fool** moves in circles. His **reasoning** reveals a state of confusion.

33:7-9 God is the author of holy **days**, **seasons**, and **feasts**. This is clear both in the OT and in the NT: for example, people gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 5). Human beings are created to experience some days as **sanctified**, some as **ordinary,** as we live within time (v. 9). The fact that some feast days became abused in the Old Covenant does not mean we are not to have them in the New. The Church as the new Israel (Gal 6:16) has the authority of Christ to mark her holy days and seasons.

33:13 The same theme found in this pivotal verse is found throughout the OT (Is 45:9; 64:7; Jer 18:6). Complete submission to the will of our Creator is the highest of virtues.

33:14-15 The cross of Christ is the preeminent example of **good** coming out of **evil**.

33:16-18 These verses are autobiographical. The author speaks of himself as coming on duty following the other OT authors. But after great effort, laboring **like a grape-picker**, he gathered many sayings of wisdom into one large collection. With God's **blessing**, his word became the greatest of his **time**. He takes pleasure that his labor has not been for himself **alone**, but for **all who seek instruction**.

33:30-33 To enslave another human being is fundamentally wrong. However, in ancient societies it was common, as it still is in many parts of the world. In Israel's history, slave-owners were taught to treat their slaves humanely, as these verses clearly show. In fact, the faithful **servant** was to be treated **as a brother.**

34:1, 2 The foolish person gives himself to false **hopes** and **dreams**.

34:6 From ancient times **the Most High** God has revealed Himself in dreams and visions to godly people whose hearts were prepared to receive them.

34:9-12 One who has had an easy, limited, untested life **knows little**. By contrast, **he who has traveled about** is broadened by that **experience,** tested by the dangers of intensive travel. He has given himself to serve others in or by his travels, and will have more **understanding** and wisdom about life than he can put into **words**.

34:15-17 Once we have learned to **fear the Lord** and hope in Him, then we can **love Him** with our whole being. We find Him our constant **support** and **protection**. He lifts up our souls, fills our countenance with **light**, and brings **healing** to our afflictions.

34:18-19 When money we donate is ill-gotten gain, **the Most High is not pleased**.

34:23-26 This litany of questions highlights the continuous struggle between good and evil. The person who **fasts** and then commits **the same sins all over again** (v. 26) profits nothing.

35:1 Ben Sirach declares that he who **keeps the law** does the equivalent to making a peace offering. Faithfulness to God's revelation requires obedience. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn 14:15).

35:2 The traditional meaning of **alms** is “charity” or “a gift of anything needed by the poor.” Almsgiving is equivalent to a **praise offering**. The Scriptures and the church fathers place a striking emphasis on almsgiving.

35:8 St. Paul writes, “God loves a **cheerful** giver” (2Co 9:7). The **tithe** is the giving of ten percent of our income. Is the tithe only for Israel? St. Irenaeus wrote in the second century, “Thus the Jews consecrated tithes of their goods to Him, but those who have received liberty [in Christ] set aside all their possessions for the Lord's purposes.” In other words, giving ten percent is minimal. St. John Chrysostom wrote in the fourth century, “If there was a danger then [under the Old Covenant] in omitting tithes, think how great it must be now!”

35:10 If we give our tithe, the Lord has promised to repay us **sevenfold**. How? Perhaps by making us more wise in the management of our money. Or He may prosper our work so that we have even more to give. Or both! Even better, He always enriches the generous giver with joy and many spiritual blessings.

35:13 Simply being **poor** does not mean that one will receive God's special compassion, for many are poor due to laziness or unwillingness to work. But for those who have been **wronged** and thus are poor, God hears their prayers and will compensate for their suffering, either in this life or the next. God is on the side of those who suffer through no fault of their own: the orphan, the widow, the oppressed.

35:17 The devout, **humble man** knows God has heard his prayer because he is **comforted** by **the Lord**.

35:19 Ben Sirach assures us **the Lord will not delay** in answering our prayers. The first half of ch. 36 is a prayer for Israel.

35:24 Through Christ's **affliction** on the Cross, we receive **mercy**.

36:1-4 Ben Sirach prays for **mercy** for **us** (Israel); that **all the nations** (the Gentiles) would **fear** Him; and that God would **let them see Your power**. Rom 9:24–10:4 is one of many biblical passages that explain how God has answered this prayer. Augustine said of v. 4, “We see this prophecy in the form of a wish and prayer fulfilled through Jesus Christ.”

36:7 Here **oath** refers to the covenant God made with Abraham (Gn 17:21).

36:8 Though God has shown Himself as a “consuming fire” in history, His preference is to redeem and save His enemies, for He is a God of mercy and grace.

36:10 **The tribes of Jacob** include all those of the true Israel, in both the Old and New Covenants (see Rom 2:26–29).

36:13 The new **Zion**, the Church, holds a **celebration** every Sunday, the Divine Liturgy. In it, the Body and Blood of Christ, the full expression of all **virtue**, is given to the **people** of God.

36:17 Though this prayer was for Israel, it was also for **all on earth**. Thus, the Church has become the New Jerusalem, the new Zion, the new nation in which the OT prophecies are fulfilled (see Rom 3:29–31; 4:13–16; Gal 4:21–31; all of Hebrews but especially 12:18–29; 1Pt 2:4–10; Rev 21:9–27).

36:21-23 Women of ancient times often had little or no choice concerning the man they would **accept** to marry. As with Isaac and Rebekah, for example (Gn 24:1–67), marriages were often arranged by parents or someone in authority. It is worth noting, however, that some sociological studies indicate there was not the unhappiness arising from this practice that we moderns are prone to imagine, and certainly not the divorce rate! The Scriptures laud a **woman** who is **beautiful**, both outwardly (v. 22) and inwardly (v. 23).

36:24 See Pr 31:10–30.

36:25-27 A good marriage protects both husband and wife from the snares of the devil.

37:1-6 Avoid one who is a **friend in name only**. To have trusted a friend who becomes an enemy is a great **grief**.

37:7-10 Though there is safety in many counselors, be sure to know beforehand what the agenda is.

37:21 If we do not heed God's **wisdom**, we will not experience His **grace**.

37:29-31 **Gluttony** is not only sinful, it is dangerous to one's health.

38:1, 2 It is godly to **honor** the hard-working **physician**, who is seen in Scripture as a gift from God. Since God is the true Healer, it is He that gives the physician healing skills. Kings kept physicians in their retinue and often gave them lavish gifts when they had successfully treated **the king** or his family.

38:4 The ancients understood the healing power of plants and minerals, all **created** by **the Lord**.

38:5 This is a reference to Ex 15:23–25.

38:6-8 God gives healing skills to **druggists** and pharmacists for the benefit of all mankind.

38:9-11 There is a direct link from prayer, repentance of **sin**, and worship to healing.

38:14-15 How blessed are those whose **physician** is a faithful, praying Christian.

38:16-23 Proper mourning **for the dead** is essential to the healing of our grief. An honorable **burial** for the departed was considered a great work of mercy in the ancient Church. Each parish had its volunteers who washed and dressed the body, making preparation for burial. We are warned not to allow our hearts to be **grief-stricken** (v. 18) so grief overpowers us, for some have even died from grief. Thus, St. Paul says we grieve, but not as those “who have no hope” (1Th 4:13).

38:23 The **exodus of his spirit** implies life after death.

38:24 From here to the close of the chapter, Ben Sirach reveals the **wisdom** of the **scribe** (v. 24), the plowman (v. 25, 26), the **craftsman** (v. 27), the **blacksmith** (v. 28), the **potter** (vv. 29, 30), and other laborers who work with **their hands** (v. 31).

38:25 **The goad** is a cattle prodder.

39:1-11 Those who **study** the Scriptures are described here. A modern-day equivalent would be the seminarian who learns the Old and New Testaments. **The ancients** would include the apostles and church fathers.

39:4-11 This sounds like the biography of St. Paul.

39:14 Incense has been an important aid to prayer and praise of God from time immemorial. King David wrote, “Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense” (Ps 140:2). The prophet Malachi predicted incense would be used in worship and prayer among the Gentile nations (Mal 1:11). This continues to be fulfilled in the Church. One of the gifts brought to the baby Jesus by the wise men was **frankincense**.

39:15-16 As fallen humans, many tend to see things as bad. God sees them as **good**. It is our unbelief that clouds our outlook.

39:17 The **waters** in **a heap** refers to the oceans being separated from the land at creation (Gn 1:9, 10).

39:19-20 Nothing takes the all-knowing God by surprise!

39:24-25 Those who by virtue of God's work are **holy** see all of God's ways and works as **good**.

39:26-27 The **basic needs** of human beings are ever the same.

39:32-35 Here, Ben Sirach inserts a brief autobiographical comment. God's great work is redemption and salvation, which He accomplishes through His Eternal Son.

40:1 Knowing the **heavy yoke** we bear, Jesus promised, “My yoke *is* easy” (see Mt 11:28–30). St. Paul called the heavenly Jerusalem “the **mother of** us **all**” (Gal 4:26).

40:12-17 This passage contains a dialectic demonstrating that in the midst of surrounding evil, deeds and attitudes of the righteous shine and produce **grace** and **blessing** (v. 17).

40:19-23 The Scriptures from start to finish consistently glorify married love between a faithful husband and wife.

40:24 **Almsgiving** can be translated “merciful giving.” One who gives alms should make it a lifetime habit. Almsgiving includes deeds of love and kindness, not just monetary gifts.

40:27 The reverential awe or **fear of the Lord** brings **a paradise of blessing** in this life as well as in the life to come.

41:1 The coming of Christ changed everything. Ben Sirach rightly calls **death** a **bitter memory**. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live” (Jn 11:25).

41:5-7 Tragically, the **children** of the **ungodly** usually follow their parents' path.

41:12-13 The Wisdom Literature of the OT is replete with admonitions to establish and maintain **a good name**. Pr 22:1 declares, “A good name is to be chosen more than much wealth.”

41:18 From the birth of the synagogues during the Babylonian captivity until the mid-20th century, if one openly sinned in the Jewish community one was called **before the assembly** to give an account and express repentance. This was practiced in many Christian churches as well.

41:26 We cannot always control what we hear. We can absolutely control **telling** others what we've heard **and revealing secrets**.

42:1, 2 In according with this teaching, St. Paul wrote, “I am not **ashamed** of the gospel of Christ” (Rom 1:16).

42:5 There is no shame in making a **profit** or in the **discipline of children** to keep order at home while the merchant is away. The reference to the **evil servant** seems harsh, yet wicked servants if left unpunished could destroy one's home or business (see notes on 33:30–33).

42:8 This would seem to refer to a leader in the synagogue who must instruct and arbitrate. The **old man** judging the **young** reminds us the “generation gap” has its roots in antiquity.

42:9-11 This passage expresses the universal concerns that any moral **father** would have for his **daughter**. It does not contain all of a father's concerns, nor does it reflect the deep affection that good fathers feel for their daughters.

42:13 **Moth** larvae are hatched from eggs laid by moths within the fabric of **garments**. The analogy is that wickedness comes from within the heart, as Christ taught (Mt 15:19). Ben Sirach had in mind the fall of Eve, thus sin **from a woman**.

42:14 There is a subtle contrast here that can easily be missed. Whereas the churlish baseness of **evil** male conduct can be vulgar and obscene, the flirtatious seductiveness of a **woman** can lead to the even more serious sins of fornication or adultery.

42:15 Any **works** done by God begin with His Word. He decrees it and it is done. Though the Greek for “words” here is plural, the Christian knows the Eternal Word (Logos), the Second Person of the Godhead, was and is eternally active in all creation (see Jn 1:1–18).

42:16-25 It is likely St. Paul had this passage in mind when he wrote Rom 11:33–36.

42:17 Not even the greatest of **saints** or angels can declare all the **wonders** of God that stand firm as a testimony to **His glory**.

42:18 The word **abyss** means “a bottomless pit” and speaks of the infinite and unfathomed reaches of earth, space, and all creation. **The human heart** is placed alongside the abyss since it too contains a universe that only **the Most High** can know and fathom.

42:20 The Lord Jesus Christ elaborated on this thought (Mt 12:31–37).

43:1 In the Greek this verse is comprised of all nouns except for one preposition: a challenge to translate. It is a unique doxology to the beauty of the earth and heavens.

43:2-5 A similar teaching on **the sun** appears in Ps 18:5–7.

43:11-12 The **rainbow** is like a jewel that adorns creation. In Revelation, a rainbow appears “like an emerald” around the throne of God (Rev 4:3).

43:13-26 Note the action words that describe how God relates to His creation: **By His command** (v. 13); **at His appearing** and **by His will** (v. 16); **He sprinkles** (v. 18); **He pours** (v. 19); **He consumes** (v. 21); **by His reasoning** (v. 23); **by His Word** (v. 26). Natural phenomena do not “just happen.”

43:26 St. Paul makes a similar statement (Col 1:17). By the Living Word all things were created, and in Him all things hold together, or consist.

43:27 This verse declares the great truth of God's supreme omnipresence. He permeates everything, but also transcends everything. He is in everything but is above everything. Literally, **He is the all** is “The all is He.”

43:27-33 We have a choice: Either we give glory to God for all His works, or we shrink back in unbelief. King David wrote, “The fool said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Ps 52:1).

44:1 This begins a section of Sirach that continues to the end of ch. 50, giving honor to the famous men of the OT in the same spirit as Heb 11.

44:3-15 The author of Heb 11:34–38 perhaps borrowed his thoughts from this passage of Sirach.

44:17 Noah by his **righteous** life became a propitiation for the whole human race. That is, a special mercy was given by God in the form of a covenant: He would never again destroy the human race by a **flood**.

44:21 This **oath** by God to bless the **seed** of Abraham is fulfilled in and through the Church. The Church embraces all **nations** and fulfills the role of ancient Israel in the prophecies of the OT (see note on 36:17; Mt 23:38; Lk 21:20–24). **The River** is the Euphrates.

45:1-4 **Moses**, of **blessed** memory, is honored among the **saints**. He brings great encouragement to all believers because on many occasions he stumbled (Ex 4:13–15; 5:22, 23; Nm 20:11, 12 are but a few instances), yet he repented, persevered, and followed God. **The Lord honored him** (v. 3) and **sanctified him** (v. 4).

45:7-13 Aaron was vested with **an adornment of glory** (v. 7). Similarly, the Christian priesthood in the Church is vested. Why? To perpetuate the law? Not at all, for the Levitical priesthood has passed away. Rather, the priest is vested because he represents the King of kings. He is to be the image of Christ, no longer common but ordained (Jn 15:16).

45:15-16 Only if one understands the Church as set forth by the apostles can these verses be completely fulfilled. Thus, the seed of Aaron continues in the priesthood of the Church in the same way that all true believers are the seed of Abraham.

45:22 This passage has encouraged the hearts of God's servants down through the centuries. Most have served with low pay and many died in poverty. But the eternal promise is that **the Lord Himself** will be their true **inheritance**.

45:26 Here Ben Sirach pauses to pray a benediction on God's priests as they serve **His people**.

46:1, 2 It is probable that Ben Sirach is speaking of the incident in Ex 17:8–13 when **Joshua** defeated the Amalekites. Joshua prevailed in battle as long as Moses **lifted up his hands**, holding the rod of God in them. Due to Moses' fatigue, it became necessary for Aaron and Hur to support his arms until the battle ended. The name Joshua means **savior**.

46:3 These enemies were idol-worshipping tribes that engaged in evil practices such as the sacrifice of babies. They were worthy of God's judgment. Thus, Joshua **led the wars for the Lord**.

46:4 The **sun** being **held back** refers to the miracle of the sun moving from east to west being interrupted in a supernatural manner until the battle led by Joshua could be fought to a successful conclusion (see Jos 10:12, 13).

46:6 For the battle **at the descent of Beth Horon**, see Jos 10:11.

46:12 Such passages as this and 49:10 make it clear that Sirach reflects a widely held ancient belief in the resurrection. Since 49:10 is in the section on Ezekiel, it would seem clear Ben Sirach had in mind Ezk 37:1–14, which predicts the resurrection of the faithful of Israel.

46:19 The Christian concept of death is that the body will **sleep** until the resurrection, but the spirit, or the soul, is present with the Lord.

46:20 Blessed Augustine, in an article entitled “Why We Repudiate Arts of Divination,” refers to Samuel speaking to Saul through the medium of En Dor (1Kg 28:3–19). He calls such things as consulting mediums “delusions,” “pernicious error,” and “fornication of the soul.”

47:1 The prophet **Nathan** reproved King David for his adultery with Bathsheba and for having her husband killed in battle (2Kg 12:1–15).

47:2 This is called both the thank offering and **peace offering** described in Lv 3. The **fat** of the offering was to be burned on the altar; the breast and right shoulder of the lamb or goat were to be given to the priest.

47:6 See 1Kg 18:2 for this occasion when the women sang this refrain after the defeat of the Philistines, when David killed Goliath.

47:8 Undoubtedly these practices of David are what made him a man “after His (God's) own heart” (1Kg 13:13).

47:9, 10 The renowned musical and liturgical abilities of David are clearly seen here.

47:11 The **covenant** God made with David (2Kg 7:16) is that He would establish the throne of David **forever**. This promise is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the seed of David according to the flesh and the eternal King of heaven.

47:13 This **sanctuary** or temple, which had been rebuilt and refurbished by King Herod, was standing at the time of Christ. But Jesus predicted it would be utterly destroyed and not one stone would be left upon another (Mt 24:2). This prophecy was fulfilled by the Roman invaders in AD 70. The sanctuary that will **last forever**, and which replaces the former one, is the New Jerusalem, the Church of the Living God (see also Mt 23:38, 39).

47:19-22 After being given great wisdom, fame, and wealth by God, Solomon compromised and **brought disgrace** (v. 20) on it all by his enslavement to sexual passions. But God, in His great mercy, did not **abandon** (v. 22) David's lineage. Ultimately, Christ was born of the **seed** of **David** (v. 22).

47:23-25 Due to his passions, and in direct disobedience to God, **Solomon** took many foreign wives who worshipped idols. Thus he planted seeds of rebellion and disobedience in his son **Rehoboam**. The same is true of his former-servant-turned-enemy, **Jeroboam**. Their disobedience to God caused the division of the Hebrew kingdom (see 3Kg 11:1–13:42). Sometimes the Northern Kingdom of **Israel**, made up of ten tribes, is also called **Ephraim**. The Southern Kingdom was called Judah and included the tribe of Benjamin. Jeroboam led Israel into great sin through the worship of idols (see 3Kg 12:46–54). The result of this evil was the total ruin of the ten tribes of the northern kingdom. These people were never heard from again, and became known as the ten lost tribes of Israel.

48:1 **Elijah** was a great **prophet**, a powerful man of faith and prayer. His great fault was his fear of the wicked Jezebel—most remarkable since he had been so fearless with her evil husband, King Ahab (see 3Kg 18:1–19:10).

48:5 This raising of **the dead** refers to the son of the widow of Zarephath (see 3Kg 17:1–24). Note in that passage Elijah stretched himself upon the child three times, crying out to **the Most High** for the child's life to be restored. Orthodox Christians see in this a foreshadowing of prayer to the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

48:6 Apparently a reference to King Ahaziah (see 4Kg 1:2–17).

48:7-8 The **kings anointed** by Elijah were Hazael and Jehu (see 3Kg 19:15, 16). The only prophet anointed by Elijah who is mentioned by name is Elisha. But since there were at least 100 prophets who had been protected by Obadiah from the massacre carried out by Jezebel, it can be assumed that Elijah anointed several or all of them (see 3Kg 18:3, 4).

48:11 Ben Sirach is saying that since Elijah did not die but was caught up into heaven by a whirlwind, then all who **fell asleep** in the **love** of God since Elijah's time will yet live. As Christians, we know our resurrection is possible only because of Christ, who rose from the dead.

48:12 **Elijah was covered by the whirlwind**: “Was covered by” also means “was enshrouded by,” and thus could be translated “disappeared in.”

48:13-14 Elisha's dead **body prophesied** in the sense that it worked the miracle of a dead man being restored to life when he was hastily placed in the tomb on Elisha's bones (see 4Kg 13:21). The Bible teaches there is power in holy relics.

48:17 In addition to **cisterns**, Hezekiah had a tunnel constructed through **hard rock** to allow the **water** of the Gihon spring to flow into the pool of Siloam. Archeologists have discovered Hebrew words carved in the wall of the tunnel, celebrating its completion in the time of Hezekiah's reign as king (see 2Ch 32:2–4).

48:18-22 **Rabshakeh** (v. 18) was an Assyrian title, probably meaning "chief of staff" or "governor." **Sennacharib**, (v. 18) king of the **Assyrians** (v. 21), was encamped at Lachish and sent the insolent Rabshakeh to demand that Hezekiah surrender the city of Jerusalem to him. Hezekiah turned to the Lord in repentance and sent for guidance from **Isaiah**. They were **rescued** from Sennacharib, who ultimately died (see 4Kg 18:13–19:37). The **angel** (v. 21) **destroyed** 185,000 of Sennacharib's soldiers (see 4Kg 19:35).

48:23 See 4Kg 20.

48:25 Isaiah's prophecies concerning the coming of Messiah and the rise of the Church are more precise than those of any other prophet of the OT.

49:6, 7 The sad prophecies of **Jeremiah** were a great burden to him. On one occasion he determined not to speak them, but could not hold them back (Jer 20:9). His prophecies about the destruction and burning of Jerusalem were completely fulfilled (see Jer 38:14–39:10; 52:12, 13; 4Kg 25:1–21).

49:8-9 In spite of the hardships and sorrows of living with his people during the Babylonian captivity, **Ezekiel** had visions of great **glory** to come and the restoration of the people of Israel to their land. Verse 9 likely refers to Ezk 38:22, which prophesies God pouring out wrath upon the attackers of a restored Israel. God will do **good** to those who walk in the right paths.

49:14-15 Enoch's being **taken up from the earth** by God certainly plants the seed of the doctrine of the resurrection. One could argue that Joseph's concern for the removal of **his bones** from Egypt (v. 15) to the Promised Land connotes a hope for a future resurrection.

50:1 **Simon** II was **high priest** in about 220–196 BC and would have been known to Ben Sirach.

50:1-4 **Simon** supervised major renovations to the **temple** and the increase in height of the security **wall** surrounding it. Other important projects, such as building a huge water cistern and strengthening **the city** of Jerusalem against siege, were the products of his leadership.

50:5 This refers to processions around the temple by the people during high holy feasts. The same is practiced in the Orthodox Church to this day. Coming **from behind the veil** refers to the high priest coming out of the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.

50:15 The Greek word for **King of all** is found nowhere else in the LXX.

50:16 The **trumpets of hammered work** would signify finely made trumpets of expert craftsmanship.

50:21 This concludes the description of the Day of Atonement service, which points to Simon's strong liturgical skills and the beauty of this service in the temple. As this account was obviously written by one who observed this service in person, we conclude that the author was a personal acquaintance of Simon. This would also explain why so much space in the book is devoted to a high priest who did not hold the same rank and prestige in Hebrew history as the famous men mentioned in chs. 44–49.

50:22-24 This benediction beautifully expresses the **mercy** of **God** and the **gladness of heart** He gives us. Finally we see hope for redemption (v. 24). The word **redeem** means “to bring forth a ransom” or “to release on payment of a ransom.” This age-old Jewish hope is accomplished through the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Eph 1:7–14; Rom 8:22, 23).

50:25-26 The **mountain** is a district in the Edomite Mountains on the east side of the Jordan, beginning slightly north of and running southward parallel to the Dead Sea. The three peoples mentioned—the Samaritans, the **Philistines**, and those in **Shechem**—were ancient enemies of Israel. The Samaritans were probably called **not a nation** (v. 25) because they were a mixture of peoples brought in by the Assyrians. They were called a **foolish people** (v. 26) because they were primarily idol-worshippers. They have a temple on Mt. Gerizim until this day. Shechem, modern Nablus, was the small town where Jesus encountered the woman at the well known to us as St. Photini (see Jn 4:1–43).

50:27-29 This is a brief biographical reference to the author of the Wisdom of Ben Sirach; **Jesus, son of Sirach, son of Eleazar** of Jerusalem. These words were added by the grandson of Jesus, the translator of Sirach. (See the Prologue for additional comments of the translator.)

51:1 This begins two closing psalms: (1) a prayer of thanks (vv. 1–12); (2) a poem expressing the author's love of Wisdom (vv. 13–30).

51:5-6 Apparently the **unclean** and **unrighteous tongue** refers to someone who lied about Ben Sirach to the king, nearly causing his **death**. Thus, this prayer is largely devoted to thanking God for saving him.

51:10 The ancient Church saw **the Father of my Lord** as God the Father, and **my Lord** as Jesus Christ. Similarly, the Holy Spirit inspired King David to write, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, / Until I make Your enemies the footstool of Your feet’” (Ps 109:l). In quoting this the apostle Peter declared “my Lord” referred to Christ (Acts 2:34, 35).

51:15 **From blossoms to ripening grapes** indicates that Ben Sirach's ardent search for wisdom began early in his youth and continued to the time of this writing, when he was mature in age.

51:18 Though uncreated **wisdom** is seen by the Church Fathers as the preincarnate Son of God, the Logos, nevertheless wisdom exists as a created attribute of man as well as a gift from God. Thus, Ben Sirach prayed for and received the gift of wisdom.

51:21 When one is **stirred to search for** God and His good gifts with a sincere heart, one will never be disappointed.

51:25-26 **Wisdom** is **near** to us because Christ is near to us.

1:1 “But **the word** came **to Hosea** as a teacher of God, softly speaking to the disobedient and making them return through what he says and does” (Theoph).

1:2 **A wife of fornication** is a woman given to prostitution. It also suggests Gomer was one of Baal's worshippers. Likely Hosea's wife was a young Israelite woman who before marriage was involved in the Canaanite rites of initiation prescribed for future brides, intended to ensure their fertility. “From these people God will build the Church, which will be made holy through its union with the Son of God, as this woman was made holy by her union with the prophet” (Iren). The unbelieving wife is made holy by her believing husband (1Co 7:14).

1:4 **Jezreel** means “God sows” (judgment), and here it designates the place (today the Arab village of Zerin) where King **Jehu** of Israel killed Queen Jezebel along with King Ahab's royal house (4Kg 9; 10).

1:6 **Lo-Ruhamah** means “Unpitied” or “No Mercy.”

1:9 **Lo-Ammi** means “Not My People.”

1:11 They shall **come up out of the land**: They will live the life of the saints as well, **for great shall be the day of Jezreel**. Indeed, great is the day of Christ, when He will raise to life all the dead.

2:2 This prophetic saying was probably issued in the years following the Syro-Ephraimite war of 733 BC, during which the two Israelite kingdoms were in a state of enmity.

2:3 **Strip her naked:** An act of humiliation preceding capital punishment of an adulteress (Ezk 16:39, 40; Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22). Perhaps this means Israel would experience humiliation during the Assyrian exile, beginning in 722 BC.

2:5-7 **I will go after my lovers** refers in a historical setting to the Israelites' frequent forays into idolatry.

2:13 **Baalim** refers to various *manifestations* of the god Baal rather than to many deities named Baal. **Days of** Baalim points to the festivals listed in v. 11. Originally consecrated to God, these festivals became tainted by Baalism. Similarly, today's world secularizes Christmas and Easter as best it can.

2:14 **I will lead her astray**: “Having received the light of the knowledge of God in mind and **heart** . . . she is no longer able to find her old path” (CyrAl).

2:19 “How great is God's mercy! A prostitute fornicates with many lovers, and because of her offense is handed over to the beasts. After she returns to her husband, she is said not at all to be reconciled to him but rather to be betrothed. Now notice the difference between God's union and that of men. When a man marries, he turns a virgin into a woman—that is, a non-virgin. But when God joins with prostitutes, He changes them into virgins” (Jerome).

3:1 Chapter 3, written in autobiographical style, should not be read as another version of ch. 1, a biography, or as referring to Hosea's second marriage to a woman other than Gomer. Instead, ch. 3 describes events which occurred after the facts of ch. 1. “**Again** means that he [Hosea] has previously loved a whore, who now is an adulteress” (Jerome). Hosea is an icon of God's unconditional love. **The Lord loves the children of Israel** in spite of their constant acts of idolatry.

3:2 Hosea had to pay to redeem his wife for himself. Likewise, in order to redeem sinful humanity, Christ had to pay with His own precious life.

3:5 The object of this seeking is twofold: **the Lord their God and David their king**, showing this text to be a messianic prophecy. At some time Israel, once rejected, “will be called, and by faith she will return and know the God of all and David along with Him, that is, the One who is from the seed of David, Christ according to flesh, the Lord and the King of all” (CyrAl).

4:1 The second part of Hosea's book (chs. 4–11) consists of prophetic sayings and begins with an assessment of the moral status of northern Israelite society as a whole.

4:5 “One says that Israel will **be weak** not forever but for days. For it has been reserved for her a time of salvation and a return to faith” (CyrAl). See also Rom 10:1; 11:26, 27.

4:8 “They used to sacrifice goats for sin; for this reason the sacrifice was called sin. . . . They **eat the sins of My people** means they (the priests) eat the offerings brought for sins” (CyrAl).

4:9 “Seemingly he calls **ways** the walking in works and **counsels** the faults from outrageous thoughts” (CyrAl).

5:2 **I will be your instructor**: The accent falls here on correction or instruction rather than on punishment. “I am your master, or rather instructor, who wishes to correct, rather than to punish; to save, rather than to lose” (Jerome).

5:7 “‘**Strange children**,’ he says, are those who, from the womb, and from their swaddling-clothes, were dedicated to the worship of idols, perhaps when the fathers offered the thanksgiving and sacrifices for births to the demons. Therefore, ‘strange children’ are the ones who are not in God. Or, according to another interpretation, the ones from the foreign wives” (CyrAl; see Dt 7:3, 4).

5:10 **The princes of Judah**, the military leaders, are guilty of moving **the boundaries.** This may be an allusion to the Judean advance into the Benjamite territory in 733 BC. But Judah's princes do not stop at Benjamin; they begin to pluck portions out of the Ephraimite territory, which never belonged to the Southern Kingdom. This wrongdoing is compared with the crime of those who move the boundary markers (Dt 19:14; 27:17; Pr 22:30).

5:15 “By **My place** we have to understand God's place, His splendor and majesty” (Jerome).

6:1 “These may refer to those among the Hebrews who afterward came to believe in Christ. In such a thirst and long captivity they will seek the face [5:15], namely, the Son” (Theoph).

6:2 The Church understands this text as a messianic prophecy regarding Christ's Resurrection: **two days** refers to the time the body of Jesus lay in the tomb; **the third day** points to His glorious Resurrection, promising **we shall rise** with Him. St. Paul writes that Jesus “rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1Co 15:4), most likely alluding to this passage from Hosea.

6:3 Among the Church's early writers, Tertullian (ca. AD 160–225) is the first to relate this passage to the Resurrection of Jesus, and more precisely to the myrrhbearing women who went at **daybreak** (Lk 24:1) to their Master's tomb to anoint His body.

6:6 God does not reject worship as a whole, but He criticizes the way Israel perceives it. Instead of a means to enter into a relationship with God and to foster community ties, the worship gradually becomes a goal in itself (Am 5:21ff.; Mic 6:6ff.). This applies also to Orthodox people who see the liturgy as “boring.”

7:8 “The kingdom of the ten tribes has become like any other nation because they went away from the Lord. And he [**Ephraim**] is like a bread beneath the ashes that is **not turned**, that is, he does not repent” (Jerome).

7:11 “Why was **Ephraim** compared with a **dove** and not with other birds? The other birds hurry to protect their offspring even at the risk of life. And when they see a bird of prey, snake, raven or crow approaching their nest, they . . . attack with their beak, and wound with their claws, and with a crying voice show the parent's suffering. Only the dove does not grieve for or miss [its] robbed offspring. Ephraim is rightly compared with this bird because he does not suffer for his devastated people but is indifferent to their salvation” (Jerome).

8:1-14 Here God is addressing Hosea immediately after the conclusion of the Syro-Ephraimite war (733 BC). He charges **Ephraim** (vv. 10, 11) with unfaithfulness. Idolatry, political plots, and lack of trust in Him with respect to foreign relations—all these make the inhabitants of **Samaria** (vv. 5, 6) consider God's instructions a strange thing. For this reason, His punishment is near: **Israel**, the **worthless vessel** (v. 8), will be brought into captivity. Judah will experience the same fate because of her arrogant attitude toward God.

8:12 **A multitude of statutes**: This saying is one of the earliest evidences that by the eighth century BC the Torah (“instruction” or “law”; Ex 24:12; 34:1) was circulated, at least partially, in a written form.

9:4 “Having collected the fruit of the vine into the **wine** vats, they offered the firstlings as a libation to the demons, and not to the God who gave them. They also offered loaves of bread as first fruits of the harvest—except that the sacrifice will become for them defiled and impure, he says, and the offerings will be considered as **mourning bread** (that is, disgusting, impure and odious). For what reason? For the law considered unclean anyone who approached a dead body either by blood relationship or rather by the very touching of the body. . . . Therefore the mourning bread is that bread which was at hand as food for those who were mourning for the dead; for those who strive to avoid contamination with a dead body it is considered terrible even to taste this bread” (CyrAl).

10:1, 2 “Having good shoots and fruit-bearing branches, she [Israel] produced many clusters, and the abundance of the grapes equaled the great number of the branches. But she who before was of such a kind offended God afterward, turning the abundance of the **fruits** into a great number of offenses. The more people she had, the more **altars** she built, and she overmatched the abundance of the land by the number of idols” (Jerome).

10:13 “They ate **the fruit of deception**, namely, they had a useless and senseless hope. For the true fruit is the one that can save and help, the love toward God and the glory of righteousness. On the contrary, the false fruit would reasonably be considered impiety, for in the end it altogether descends to what is abominable” (CyrAl).

11:1 The New Testament application of this passage in Mt 2:15 concerns the return of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph from **Egypt**. Matthew did not use the Septuagint version (**his children**), but rather a Hebrew manuscript which had the singular “my son.”

11:3-4 “**I bound the feet of Ephraim**, that is, the whole Israel . . . although he was awkward. God Himself declares why this is so: ‘I will take them in My arms.’ This image is from child raising. Those who take infants in their arms are those who bind their feet, bringing their feet together. For it is necessary, I think, that the thighs and knees of anyone who sits down should be drawn together. And in fact this is so. ‘I bound the feet’ as, for instance, it was written about Abraham, who bound his son Isaac when he thought to bring him as a sacrifice to God. One must note that the Hebrew version and other versions do not have ‘I bound the feet’ but rather ‘I became as one who nourishes Ephraim’” (CyrAl).

11:8-9 Here, as in numerous other places in Scripture, **God** speaks as though He were a **man**. He condescends to communicate in our terms. In this dilemma, it is the infinite, overwhelming love of God that triumphs. His **heart turned** against His just decision to punish the apostate people (10:8, 14, 15).

12:5 **They wept and entreated Me**: The only choice Israel has is to beg God for mercy.

13:14 “Moreover the Lord liberated everyone, and redeemed them through the suffering of the Cross and the shedding of His blood, when His soul descended into **Hades**, and He did not experience corruption to His flesh; and He speaks of the death itself as well as Hades: ‘I will be your death, O Death!’ For that reason I have died so that you may die through My death. ‘I will be **your sting**, O Hades’ for you devoured all with your throat” (Jerome).

14:3 “Become rich in supplies of goods, promise to bring to Him the gifts of the lips, the thank-offering songs and confession. For such things as these are the fruits of the tongue” (CyrAl).

14:5 Israel's return to the Lord may be compared with the repentance of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11ff.). God responds generously to repentance. In the parable, the father sees the repentant child and runs to meet him. In Israel's case, God also begins the healing as soon as Israel shows the first signs of repentance. If **love** unconditionally flows from God upon Israel, it means that love is His foremost attribute. Hosea may be considered the spiritual forerunner of John the Evangelist, who gave one of the most beautiful definitions of God when he wrote, “God is love” (1Jn 4:8).

1:1 Amos preached repentance during a time of spiritual drought that preceded judgment (Lk 3:1, 2); indeed, Christ's Advent was an **earthquake** that shook the world (Mt 28:2), and the coming of the Holy Spirit a judgment by fire (vv. 4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5).

1:3-3 These judgments are clearly against God's spiritual enemies: demonic powers, idolatry, false teaching, pride, hypocrisy, etc. Gregory the Great sees **Gilead**, which means “heap of testimony” (see Gn 31:47, 48; Jos 1:12–18 and note), as showing forth the witness of the faithful; and the **saw made of iron** as being “the sword of error,” or false teaching, which leads the people astray. “When therefore, we endeavor to instruct these people not to entertain perverse views, we must first admonish them not to seek their own interests. For if the root of pride is cut away the branches of false assertions become withered.”

2:6 In the ultimate perversion of good, Judas sold Christ for thirty pieces of **silver** (Mt 26:15).

3:1 The Lord accused the Israelites more severely “and showed that they deserved greater punishment, because they sinned after receiving the honors that he had bestowed on them” (JohnChr).

3:4 As a **lion** will not **roar** in a forest that has no prey, so the passions will not attack the believer who brings “every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2Co 10:5).

3:6 John Chrysostom writes on the question of whether God is the author of evil: “Now evil is a many-faceted thing. . . . There is evil, which is really evil: fornication, adultery, covetousness, and the countless dreadful things, which are worthy of the utmost reproach and punishment. Again there is evil, which rather is not evil but is called so: famine, pestilence, death, disease, and other of a similar nature. . . . These were evils intended to become the sources of good to us, chastening our pride, goading our sloth and leading us on to zeal, making us more attentive.”

3:12 “If there are but **two legs or a piece of an ear**, leap back from him who has wounded you. . . . Do not despair of salvation. . . . The Lord does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he return and live” (BasilG).

4:7 “We ought to strive with great care that we may not be that **city** upon which the **rain** of the Word of God either does not come at all, or, at least, only late and rarely. Without any doubt, if the dew or rain of the Word of God is provided too late, the fruits of souls will be the same as earthly fruits which do not receive rain” (Caes).

4:10-12 “In their hardness of heart and with their frequent habit of sinning, they are beyond the purgation of this very brief age and the punishment of the present life” (JohnCas).

4:13 As both God and Man, Christ, the **Anointed** One, holds the **thunder** of His divinity within His humanity. His very breath was created “in the midst of the earth” (Ps 73:12; see Zec 12:1) when He was conceived by the uncreated Spirit in the womb of the Virgin.

5:2 “God can do all things, but the **virgin** who has **fallen** will not be raised up. . . . Such are evil virgins in the flesh, not in the spirit; foolish virgins, who, having no oil, are shut out by the Bridegroom” (Jerome). Israel is a “fallen virgin” not because she is chaste, but because she has never experienced the joys of marriage; therefore she will be struck down without leaving a legacy. It will be as though she had never existed.

5:6 **House of Joseph** refers to Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gn 46:20) and their descendants, who were the main tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. By extension, it refers to all of Israel.

5:7 **Justice** and **righteousness** are perfectly fulfilled in Christ.

5:8-20 The Sun of Righteousness rises in the **morning** and **transforms** (v. 8) the repentant soul from death into life. But on the **day of the Lord**, those who flee God will be plunged into the very **darkness** (v. 20) that they love so much (see Jn 3:19–21).

5:10 Christ, the **upright word** Incarnate, was hated for publicly rebuking the scribes and Pharisees **in the gates** (Mt 21:45, 46; Lk 11:45–12:1; 13:14–17; Jn 7:7; 8:20; see also Pr 9:8).

5:14-15 “For when a man rules his own self—and that counts for more than to govern others—his heart is in the hand of God, and God turns it where He wills. If He turns it to the good, perfect goodness is His. And so let us be in the hand of God that we may seek the good . . . that you may live, and so the Lord God Almighty will be with you” (AmbM).

5:21-27 Those who adhere to the “propriety” of religious practice, but whose hearts are rebellious, will be judged harshly; while those who may not follow the “proper” rules, but who love God as far as they are able, will be accepted by Him.

5:27 **Beyond Damascus** points to Assyria as the nation that will conquer and exile Israel, bringing about the Lord's judgment. This prophecy was fulfilled in 722 BC (4Kg 17:5, 6).

6:1-6 Basil the Great, quoting this passage, comments that it is shameful when we spend our time running about "searching for anything not demanded by real necessity but calculated to provide a wretched delight and ruinous vainglory."

6:12 **Justice** was overturned when Pilate, having declared that Christ was innocent, submitted to the **anger** of the Jews and allowed Him to be crucified (Lk 23:13–25). Chrysostom remarks further that **bitterness** was hell's response when Christ entered.

7:2 Like all true prophets, Amos grieves and intercedes on behalf of his people.

7:7 **Adamant** is a stone of unbreakable substance. Ephraim the Syrian writes that this “stone” is Christ, set **in the midst** of the **people**. “The leaders of the people were gathered together against Him and wanted His downfall because His teaching did not please them. But He said, ‘It will crush and destroy whomever it falls upon’ (Mt 21:44), because He had resisted idolatry, among other things.”

7:14-15 Gregory the Great writes on the work of grace in the life of the humble: “What a skilled worker this Spirit is. There is no question of delay in learning what the Spirit teaches us. No sooner does the Spirit touch our minds in regard to anything than we are taught; the Spirit's very touch is teaching. The Spirit changes the human heart in a moment, filling it with light. Suddenly we are no longer what we were; suddenly we are something we never used to be.”

8:8-10 The day of Christ's Crucifixion was indeed a day of **mourning** (v. 10). The earth quaked (Mt 27:50–53), and the **sun** was darkened at midday (Mk 15:33). In a more immediate sense, this prophecy may also have been fulfilled on June 15, 763 BC, when a total solar eclipse occurred in Palestine.

8:11 Basil the Great writes that when the people “put to death the bread of life, a hunger for the bread came upon them.”

9:1-15 This prophecy is fulfilled in Christ and His Church. In the Incarnation, He shook the **gateway** of humanity under the Old Covenant; destroyed demonic powers with the **sword** of the Spirit; descended into **Hades** (v. 2); sanctified creation in the **river** (v. 5) of baptism; made **his ascent to the heaven** (v. 6); and **established** His Church **on the earth** (Acts 1:8, 9; 2:1–11). He restored the faithful **remnant** (v. 12); brought in the **nations** (v. 12); and planted His Church among them. **Drink wine** (v. 14) foreshadows the Eucharist.

9:11 At Nativity services in the Church we sing this hymn to the Mother of God, who is typified by the **tabernacle**: “Fulfilled is the prophecy of him that cried aloud, saying, ‘I will raise up the tabernacle of holy David that is fallen.’ You, O Undefiled, did prefigure His words, through whom the dust of man has been wholly refashioned into a body for God.” Chrysostom writes on the **fallen** tabernacle of our human nature, “For it was not possible to raise it up otherwise, unless He who fashioned it in the beginning stretched out a hand to it and formed it again from above by the regeneration of water and the Spirit. Behold the awesome and ineffable character of the mystery. He dwells always in this tabernacle, for He put on our flesh, not to put it off again but to have it always with Him. If this were not so, He would not have deemed it worthy of His royal throne.”

9:12 This verse points to the Gentile believers, who had been dead in their sins, but now, through the apostles' universal preaching, are **called** by His **name** (see Acts 2; 11:26; 15:13–19).

1:1-7 **Give heed, O earth**: Micah's oracle announces judgment not only for a specific place and time, but for all time and for all **people**. The physical cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, with their rebellious and sinful inhabitants, are icons of mankind. Some, like those in Jerusalem, practice “right religion” in God's **house**, but with sinful hearts. Others, like those in Samaria, have forgotten how to worship God and have turned to **idols** (v. 7) of their own making. Though God's immediate judgment on Samaria and Jerusalem is destruction, His universal judgment is Christ Himself, who **will come down** (v. 3) in the Incarnation and destroy sin, death, and the devil (see Is 31:4).

1:4 **Like wax before the fire** echoes Ps 67:2, which is used in the Resurrection services in the Orthodox Church.

1:6, 7 Samaritans were among the first to repent and receive the gospel (Jn 4:1–42). Therefore, this prophecy is ultimately fulfilled in the Church, Christ's **vineyard**.

1:7 The city embodies all the sins of the people. The images used in worship at Samaria, the wealth gathered in her sanctuaries, are referred to contemptuously as **the price of a harlot**.

1:8 **Barefoot and naked**: See Ezk 24:17–23; Is 20:2; 2Kg 15:30.

1:10-16 Though this passage is often considered one of the most difficult in the book, some clarity emerges when it is viewed with the understanding that the Old Testament inevitably points to and is fulfilled in Christ and His Church. As God used the Gentiles to strike the Jews in judgment (v. 11), so in the Incarnation He **came down** to cut off (v. 16) Israel's heritage because of their ungodliness and to save His **inheritance**: His Bride, the Church.

2:1, 2 A universal indictment against those who work **evil** in the earth against the poor and needy for their own gain. The passage can also be taken as a description of those who persecute Christ (**a man**) and His Church (**his house** . . . **his inheritance**).

2:3-5 Ultimately, the **evils** are the Cross, which bent the **neck** of the proud and powerful like a yoke.

2:4-7 The Jews who **provoked the Spirit** (v. 7) will lose their inheritance, which will be taken away (v. 4) and given to the Gentiles.

2:11 This verse is regarded by scholars as difficult at best and corrupted at worst.

3:1 **He will say**: This rendering in the third person (as found in the LXX) is opposed by the Hebrew text, which consistently reads in the first person ("I will say" or "I said"). The third person form is thought to be the more original.

3:2 **You who hate good and love evil**: The negative form of an idea articulated in Am 5:15, "'We hated evil and loved good.' And restore justice in the gate."

3:2-3 The closest parallel to this passage is the charge against the shepherds in Ezk 34:2, 3: “O shepherds of Israel who feed themselves, should not the shepherds feed the sheep? 3 Behold, you drink the milk and clothe yourselves with the wool. You slay the fatlings, but do not feed My sheep.”

3:8 Micah is a true prophet of God, as opposed to the false prophets of v. 5. Note that Micah's prophecy against **sin** under the Law emphasizes the Spirit's **judgment** and **power**; while Isaiah's parallel prophecy (see Is 61:1, 2), which is fulfilled in the New Covenant, emphasizes healing and liberty in Christ (Lk 4:17–21).

4:10 St. John Chrysostom, in his sermon on Jn 16:21, 22, sees Christ's words echoing those of the Prophets (see also Hos 13:13; Is 13:8; Jer 4:31). He writes, “Now, He was making use of a comparison frequently employed by the Prophets, also, when they compared their sufferings to the excessive pain of birth pangs. What He meant is something like this: ‘Suffering as keen as birth pangs will take possession of you. However, the pain of childbirth becomes a cause of joy.’” Indeed, the **daughter of Zion** will “give birth” to a new creation when she has been redeemed by Christ (see note at Jn 16:21, 22).

5:6, 7 **The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations**: This phrase does not necessarily imply the scattering of Israel, but rather a focal point for the gathering of the nations together in Christ, as in 4:1–3 and 4:6, 7.

6:1-5 A covenantal “lawsuit,” filed by the Lord against Israel. Here the prophet functions like an “attorney” in God's lawsuit against His people.

6:3-5 This passage recalls the liturgical themes that run through the services of Great and Holy Week, especially Orthros of Great and Holy Friday (Service of the Twelve Gospels).

6:8 The classical definition of true religion: Micah in one verse knits together the basic themes of the books of Amos (righteousness—**to do justly**), Hosea (steadfast love—**to love mercy**), and Isaiah (humility and faith—**to be ready to walk** [or “to walk humbly”] **with the Lord your God**).

7:6 This verse is quoted by Christ in Mt 10:35, 36 and Lk 12:53.

7:18-19 All our sins will be cast into the depths of the sea: The Fathers agree that this phrase foreshadows baptism.

1:1 Cyril of Alexandria interprets ch. 1 as a prophecy of the coming of Christ, when the Jews would revile and reject Him and incur the curses mentioned, understood spiritually. But Cyril is optimistic about the full restitution of the Jews, noting the solution found in v. 20—they need only to look up to God in faith.

The book begins in a manner similar to the other prophets, describing the advent of the Word of God to Joel. This is not merely a formula (see Jer 1:2; Ezk 1:3; Hos 1:1), but is God's way of arresting our attention, beckoning us to read the work not merely as literature, but as Holy Scripture. The advent of the word of the Lord to the prophet should lift our minds to Christ, the eternal Word of God.

Joel the son of Pethuel: The prophet's patronymic is included since Joel was a relatively common name (see 1Ch 4:35; 5:4, 8, 12; 6:13, 18, 21; etc.). Furthermore, the meanings of names in the ancient world were considered far more significant than they are today, and the overtones of Joel and Pethuel resonate throughout the text. The meanings of these names are ambiguous, although Jerome understood Joel to mean “God is” or “God is setting out,” and Pethuel to mean “God is opening.”

1:2-3 Both the past and the future are called on to testify to the magnitude and weight of the coming destruction. Not only does this mark out the special nature of the coming onslaught, but it reminds us of the way persons in the past and the future participate in the present.

Scripture memorializes two types of events. On the one hand, the righteous exploits of God working through His saints (e.g., Ps 104) are held up as examples to be followed. On the other hand, there are the mistakes of the people of God and their consequences (e.g. Ps 105). Joel begins with the latter, while finishing with a promise of the former.

Elders . . . all of you inhabiting the land: Not only does the prophet call for the attention of the elders and the general population, but by formulating his petition in this manner, he indicates that his message is to be read by both the spiritual (the elders) and the carnal (the inhabitants of the land). The message of Joel is fitted to each person according to his spiritual fitness and place in his journey towards God, yet all should pay attention.

1:4 **Caterpillar**, **grasshopper**, **locust**, **red blight:** Exactly what creatures these words signify, whether in the Greek or in the Hebrew, we cannot say for certain. While some have suggested the four words describe four kinds of insect, others claim they refer to different stages in the lifecycle of the locust. Both are educated guesses.

On the metaphorical level, the text can be seen as four different waves of assault against the land. While Ephraim of Syria saw this as a reference to four different Mesopotamian kings, subsequent fathers accepted this verse as a prophecy of the four major conquests of Israel: the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans (see Dan 2).

1:5 Joel addresses the people of Israel as if they were all drunkards. Drunkenness represents the general proclivity of Israel to satisfy their pleasures. The prophet addresses people who are using good things to excess, drinking not to quench their thirst but to become drunk. Christ used this same theme when He warned those who were making merry in His own day (Lk 6:24–26).

1:6, 7 Here the prophet not only begins to describe what is in store for his wayward people, but he phrases this eight-line poem as if it were a dirge to lament the occupation of the land. Joel composes it both to shame Israel and to draw attention to the gravity of the situation.

Lion: The prophet turns from the locust metaphor to that of a lion to describe the conquering enemy, highlighting their powerful inhumanity. The first targets are the grapes and the figs, i.e., the juice and the sweetness of the land, representing the livelihood and wealth of Israel. This is the same manner in which the devil and the passions assault our own spiritual life. When we succumb to the temptations of the flesh, the powers of evil enter into our land and first attack the virtues of our character and our good deeds.

1:8 The bride weeps, presumably, for the death of her betrothed. In this same manner the apostles, in the days of Christ's betrayal and death, were like virgins girded with sackcloth, lamenting the death of their bridegroom. Indeed, in our own time, when God judges His People for their sins, we should assume this same demeanor, repenting, being cleansed by our tears, and awaiting the return of Christ our Savior.

1:9 Joel 1:9, 10, 13: **The meat-offering and the drink-offering** (v. 9); **grain-offering and drink-offering** (v. 13): The grain-offering is of bread, and the drink-offering is of wine. Joel, by reemphasizing the loss of bread and wine in the land, not only recalls the image of agricultural plague but anticipates the future life of the Church. We have before us the image of the Church stripped of the eucharistic sacraments through the disobedience of the community. In this situation, the priests are called to lament the plight of the land and intercede for their wayward people (see 2:17).

1:11 By calling the farmers to mourn, Joel not only includes landowners in the national calamity, but also reinforces vv. 9, 13. For just as the priests are to mourn over the people they tend, so the farmer is to weep over his care—his crops. The loss of property is, in the sight of God, a rather insignificant matter. More importantly, the prophet calls us to go beyond and grieve over the destruction of other people, and of the sins which ravage our souls.

1:12 **They put to shame the delight of the sons of men**: The phrase, a Hebraism, literally translates “have shamed their joy.” That is to say that joy, a good thing in and of itself, was being abused and defiled by the Israelites.

1:13 For the loss of the sacrificial rite, see note at vv. 9, 10. It would be a mistake to read this as an anticlerical passage, for the prophet neither upbraids the priests nor questions the importance of the priesthood. Rather, Joel calls the spiritual leadership of the land to fulfill their proper role in times of national distress.

1:14 See Is 58:4, 5. This is but one more reason for fasting in the life of the Church—to repent of the sins of the community. The leaders and elders of the land are called to change their luxury into sackcloth (v. 8) and to cry out incessantly and fervently to God. Fasting without contrition of heart is nothing.

1:15 The threefold woe is the appropriate response in this disaster since the Holy Trinity has been offended. This reminds us as well that the Day of the Lord is not the visitation of Christ alone, but is a judgment that involves the participation of all three Persons.

The **day of the Lord** could suggest a day either of punishment or of reward. As it turns out, Joel uses the term here and in 2:1, 11 to refer to a day of judgment, but as he turns to the promised salvation of God, the day of the Lord becomes a day of restitution for the people of God (2:31; 3:14, 18).

1:19 The prophet interrupts his narrative with a prayer, reminding us that our deliverance from disaster comes not from any other so-called gods, but from the Lord Himself.

1:20 Just as all the beasts look to God to give them their food in due season (Ps 103:27), so they do here, since He will fill them with every good thing by His hand (Ps 103:28).

2:1-11 In this chapter the prophet switches to the future tense. While ch. 1 appears to discuss a plague that has already occurred, ch. 2 warns of yet another imminent plague. Furthermore, Joel moves from agricultural images to military ones. The repentance of the Church is the aim of the passage. Joel depicts the coming disaster in a number of ways, but he emphasizes throughout that God's sovereign plan is ultimately at work.

2:4-5 St. Cyril notes that nothing was more warlike than the fully equipped horse, which “leaps over the earth in such a way that, I suppose, it mimics the clatter of chariots. And they gallop over any mountain crest, and fly down every hill, and produce the crackle of a flame devouring a reed.”

2:12-17 Repentance is an ascetic effort. Joel emphasizes the inner state of the heart, bidding us to rend not our clothes but our hearts. This does not mean that the prophet opposed physical expressions of repentance. The penitent is to fast, weep, and mourn, all physical acts. Everyone in Israel was to gather to call upon the Lord, a physical and liturgical act. These acts, done in the right manner, only assist our repentance. If, in fact, we are justified simply by confessing our sins (1Jn 1:9), how much more so when our repentance is expressed physically, through our bodies and the community?

Interestingly, the prophet never tells us of what Israel was guilty. His emphasis remains on the coming judgment and the need to repent.

2:17 **Between the porch and the altar**: The altar represents the animal sacrifices which were offered to the Lord, while the porch refers to the people. So while the altar became a place of life through the death of the sacrificial animal, the porch was also a place for the dying who sought life. The priests, by placing themselves between the porch and the altar, were to mediate this life to the people. Because of the sacrifice of Christ, the porch and altar have been united. Christ's death brings life to us.

2:17-18 These two verses form the center of the book. The passage summarizes all that has been written so far and introduces the rest of the book, which presents God's promises and explores the eschatological hope of Israel.

2:20 **Army from the north** refers to the Assyrian or Babylonian forces, since locust plagues generally came from the east or southeast. Nevertheless, this northern adversary will be driven by the Lord into a **dry land**, referring to the deserts from which locust plagues would come. The **eastern sea** and **western sea** refer to the Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea, respectively.

2:21-23 The prophet calls on the **land**, the **beasts of the field**, and the **children of Zion** to rejoice. Just as the prophet distinguishes between two types of people earlier in the book (see note on 1:2, 3), so he does here, as well. The beasts refer to the more carnal Israelites while the children of Zion refer to the spiritual. The land refers to both of these groups.

2:22-32 The prophet now turns his gaze towards the final rest of the people of God, prophesying the coming of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit. These eleven verses are fulfilled ultimately in Christ, the sacramental life of the Church, and Pentecost.

2:22-24 **The trees bear their fruit**: In this verse Joel foreshadows the cross of Christ, the tree which bore the greatest fruit of all. **The vine and the fig tree** refer to the establishment of the Church (see Rom 11:17–24; Jn 15:1; Lk 13:6–9). **Rain**, **wheat**, **wine**, and **oil** refer to the **food that is right for you**, namely the sacraments of Holy Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

3:1 When Peter quotes this verse, he changes **after this** to “in the last days” (Acts 2:17), one of several modest modifications of the verse. Peter's adaptation of Joel indicates that he understood the passage to be eschatological. **Your sons and daughters shall prophesy**: The gift of prophecy was to be given to both men and women without distinction (see Acts 21:9).

3:5 **There shall be proclamation of the good news**: The Greek can also be translated “and there shall be heralds of the gospel,” suggesting a prophecy of the missions of the Twelve and the Seventy Apostles, all of whom were appointed by Christ.

4:1 In this chapter Joel deplores the mistreatment of Israel and prophesies the coming judgment of God on all the nations. While on one level the prophecy can be read as a promise of the restoration of Israel after the exile, the images go beyond this. Making use of apocalyptic imagery, Joel also refers to the last days of humanity, in which Israel will be spiritually restored and become the source of life for the rest of the nations. **Captivity of Judah and Jerusalem**: This prophecy refers to the restoration of Judah from the exile in Babylon. The Hebrew version does not mention the exile.

4:2 The judgment of all nations can be understood in one or more of three different ways. It may, on the one hand, refer to the attempted siege of Jerusalem during the building of the wall (see 2Ez 4). There is a strong case for this interpretation because of the earlier reference to the restoration from exile. Secondly, the passage may refer to the age of the Church, in which God deals with the persecutors or heretics who attempt to assail her. Thirdly, this may be understood as the final judgment of all people for their sins. In any case, God is dealing with nations who are willingly attacking His people.

The **Valley of Jehoshaphat** most likely refers to the Kidron Valley, just east of Jerusalem. The triumph of God over His enemies in a valley is echoed in 1 Enoch 53; 54, but here the valley is fiery. This image was retained in the New Testament, where Christ refers to a valley in which trash was burnt, Gehenna (translated “hell”), as a symbol of judgment.

4:4 **All the coast of Philistia** refers to the non-Jewish nations that lived in Galilee and its environs. Under Babylonian and Persian administration, many non-Jewish peoples moved into the northern regions of Israel.

4:6 The slave trade was widespread in antiquity. The abduction of Israelites for sale into slavery is attested as late as the Maccabean period (1Mc 3:41; 2Mc 8:11).

4:9-12 This passage is sarcastic in tone. God does not desire the death of a sinner (Ezk 18:23, 32), but knowing that the nations will attack Israel, He goads them on. He is well aware that their attack will come to no avail, but he uses the assault as an opportunity to bring them into judgment.

4:10 **Spears**: The Greek word used here indicates a special kind of spear. It was a barbed pole used to probe for concealed pits into which an advancing soldier might fall.

4:13 While the nations turn from farming to warfare, the Lord does the opposite, attending to agriculture, harvesting grain, and treading wine. While the treading of grapes is typically an image of the massacre of enemies, Joel emphasizes the moral aspects of the image. The runoff of the grapes is not simply blood, but the result of the abundance of evil in the nations (see Rev 14:17–20).

4:16-17 The language used by Joel is reminiscent of descriptions of the last days found in the New Testament. In the final judgment the Lord shouts out (1Th 4:16) and establishes an incorruptible Jerusalem (Rev 21:9–27).

4:19 In previous verses, God deals with the Mesopotamian army. Here He promises to dispense with Israel's other enemies, Egypt and Edom.

4:21 **The Lord shall dwell in Zion**: Joel closes his book in fitting manner, pointing to the final state in which God will abide among His people. Although this verse was fulfilled in Christ, only in the last days will it be completely fulfilled in the restoration of all Creation.

1:1 The Old Testament contains twelve references to men named **Obadiah**. Of this prophet we know little except that his name means “Servant of the Lord.” The people of **Edom**, descendants of Jacob's elder twin, Esau (see Gn 25:19–26), often stood in conflict with Israel (see 3Kg 11:14–17). Throughout this short book, Edom and Esau are employed interchangeably as titles for an actual kingdom and as general examples of rebellious humanity.

1:2-4 Edom is **made . . . least among the nations**, that is, humbled in response to its **arrogance** of heart and boasting. The **clefts of the rocks** mentioned in v. 3 are likely an allusion to the Edomite fortress of Sela, also called Teman and Petra, surrounded by cliffs rising up to 2,000 feet in height. Rebellious Edom here typifies the extent of human pride and arrogance with its seemingly boundless scope, yet still brought under the yoke of God.

1:4-7 Obadiah proclaims the destruction of Edom as thorough and complete: whereas thieves steal only what they need or desire, and **grape-gatherers** leave gleanings behind (see Lv 19:9; 23:22), Edom will be wholly and completely cast **down**.

1:8-11 Edom's indictment for the **slaughter and ungodliness** committed against its **brother Jacob** is primarily centered on their failure to protect Israel from the foreigners who oppressed it, rather than any specific oppression on the part of the Edomites (though they were not entirely innocent in this regard; see v. 13). In failing to protect Israel, Edom incurred the guilt of a good undone, of a lack of fraternal love and responsibility. Perhaps the severity of this crime gives rise to the fact that the judgment against Edom is here pronounced before the full indictment against the nation is proclaimed (it follows in vv. 12–14), rather than after as is usually the case in prophetic literature.

1:12-14 This whole passage is stirringly anticipatory of Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats (Mt 25:31–46) and His proclamation that actions done or left undone to the children of God are done directly to Christ (Mt 25:40, 45). In addition to the historical events undoubtedly referred to in these verses, Edom is also taken up once again as a typification of sinful human attributes: lack of benevolence and pleasure in another's misfortune (v. 12); passivity and the desire for profit from another's loss (v. 13); the hindering of another's escape from undue persecution (v. 14).

1:15-18 Those who would engage in acts such as those described in vv. 12–14 are reminded, as you have done, **it shall be done to you**—a connection between action and consequence that is maintained by Christ in His model prayer: “Forgive us our debts, / As we forgive our debtors” (Mt 6:12). The **day of the Lord**, that is, His judgment, will come upon **all the nations**. Such people may rage in their pride and deceit (the likely meaning of **so too shall all the nations drink wine**), but eventually they shall have their comeuppance and **it will be as if they never existed**. The faithful of the Lord, however, shall be delivered and sanctified (v. 17), preserved even through the destruction of those hardened in sin (v. 18).

1:19-20 This passage, which delineates the possessions of the land as they will be found after God's judgment of Edom, may well be an addition to the original prophetic oracle. The Greek text is confusing (as is the text in the Hebrew) as to the precise geographic extent of the lands delineated, but the general thrust of the proclamation is clear: Judah, oppressed by Edom and its allies, will inherit the land of its oppressors at their defeat.

1:21 The final proclamation of the prophecy is hopeful both in a political sense, inasmuch as Judah shall **exact vengeance on the mountain of Esau**, and in a more eschatological sense: the divided people shall again be one (**kingdom** is in the singular), and rather than existing under the tumultuous leadership of judges or kings, the kingdom **shall be the Lord's**.

1:1, 2 Jonah's calling is set apart from that of the other prophets because he is commanded to preach not to his own people, the Jews, but to the Ninevites. The Book of Jonah points to Christ's Great Commission (Mt 28:19, 20) in four ways: (1) **Arise and go to Nineveh** parallels Christ's words, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” (2) Jonah's deliverance from the belly of the whale foreshadows the baptism of which Christ speaks in the same passage: “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (3) Jonah's preaching to Nineveh foreshadows the apostles' preaching to the nations in obedience to Christ's command: “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” (4) God's protection of Jonah is echoed in Christ's words, “and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.”

1:2 **Nineveh** was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. See Tb 14:4, 8; 3Mc 6:8.

1:5 **Hold** means literally “belly,” as it is translated in 2:1, 3 (see note at 2:3).

1:9 In Jonah's weaknesses we see our own fallen humanity, but as he turns towards God, we begin to see a figure of Christ emerge. To be called by His name, we must first become His **servant**.

1:5-11 Christ and His disciples had a very similar experience on a boat in a storm (see text and note at Mt 8:24–26).

1:14-16 God's power in nature, combined with Jonah's witness, persuade the sailors to convert to the God of Israel. Later, the Spirit's presence in Jonah will convince the Ninevites to repent and seek salvation. Similarly, God's presence in creation (Rom 1:20), combined with the presence of the Holy Spirit in believers (Acts 2:38–41), draws men to God.

2:1 **Three days and three nights** is a prophetic type of Christ's three-day sojourn in the “heart of the earth [*Sheol*]” (Mt 12:40; see also Mt 16:4; 1Pt 3:19: “He [Jesus] went and preached to the spirits in prison [*Sheol* or Gr. *Hades*]”).

2:2 Jnh 2:2, 3, 7: **His God . . . my God**: The pronouns “his” and “my” emphasize a personal relationship with God.

2:3 **Belly of Hades**: The word translated “belly” can also be used to mean “womb.” Jonah's deliverance—first, out of the “belly of the ship” (1:5, 6) and now from the whale—is a type both of deliverance from death and of spiritual rebirth in the waters of baptism. Just as Jonah's “rebirth” makes possible the repentance and salvation of the Ninevites, so our Lord's Resurrection from the dead makes possible our salvation. In the Old Testament, Hades (Heb. *Sheol*) was the place of all the dead, a place of shadowy existence, of being cut off from the presence of God. It is used especially in poetic passages as a synonym for death. Hades held all the righteous dead before the crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

2:5-6 To the Hebrews, the sea was a frightening place, full of chaos and death. To be cast into the sea was to sink down into Hades. See Ps 87:7, 8.

2:3-10 Jonah's prayer echoes the language and imagery of the Psalms. See especially Ps 17:5, 7; 30:23; 41:8; 49:14; 68:2, 3; 119:1.

3:2 **According to the message I previously spoke to you**: A reminder to Jonah that the message and the mission had not changed.

3:5-9 In an amazing response to Jonah's preaching, the Ninevites show us the true meaning of repentance in the following ways: (1) By the ancient practice of fasting, which implied a total fast. (2) By wearing **sackcloth** and **ashes**. Sackcloth was a rough, uncomfortable cloth made of goat or camel hair, used for making grain bags. It was worn as a sign of mourning (see Gn 37:34; Est 4:3; 1Mc 2:14; Mt 11:21). Putting ashes on one's head also symbolized mourning or repentance (see 2Kg 13:19; Is 58:5; Jer 6:26). (3) By prayer. (4) By changing their behavior. True repentance is not just feeling sorry, but involves both the heart and actions.

3:6 **The king** acted after the people. This was a spontaneous, popular movement, not imposed by the crown but inspired by the Holy Spirit.

4:1-7 Once again, Jonah's weakness controls him. Here Jonah's excessive nationalism is expressed in his disappointment at God's mercy. He knew God's character, and anticipated what would happen; yet, like the proud brother in the story of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11–32), he hoped to see the Ninevites destroyed. “After all,” he might have said, “why would God want to save foreigners?” The **gourd** that is damaged by the **worm** is an icon of this attitude, which is personified in the unbelievers who allow pride and jealousy at the salvation of others to enter their hearts. Many like these will put Christ to death, thus bringing about their own destruction.

4:4 The Lord's question to Jonah is rhetorical and a rebuke. The tone of the Greek implies that, in fact, Jonah does *not* have the right to feel the way he does.

4:11 The people of the nations live in spiritual darkness until the light of the gospel is brought to them by God's messengers: the apostles, preachers, and all the faithful, who bear equal responsibility to “make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). **And many livestock**: The Lord's compassion extends to all He has created, including the animals.

1:1 **The burden**: See Hab 1:1 and note. Nahum's prophecy takes on its deepest meaning when **Nineveh** is seen as an icon of sinful humanity. The “good tidings” (2:1) of the gospel turn the hearts of men away from idolatry (1:14–2:2); while the fire of the Holy Spirit (2:5) and cleansing in the waters of baptism (2:7–9) destroy demonic powers, purging and renewing the repentant heart.

1:3 The Church teaches concerning Holy Confession that unless one is sincerely repentant, the priest's prayer for absolution is meaningless and ineffective.

1:4 **He threatens the sea and makes it dry**: At the Great Blessing of Water on Theophany we sing, “The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You and were afraid. The Jordan turned back, seeing the fire of the Godhead descending bodily and entering its stream. The Jordan turned back, beholding the Holy Spirit coming down in the form of a dove and flying about You. The Jordan turned back, seeing the Invisible made visible, the Creator made flesh, the Master in the form of a servant. The Jordan turned back and the mountains skipped, looking upon God in the flesh; and the clouds gave voice, marveling at Him who has come, the Light of Light, true God of true God.”

1:3-5 This Old Testament imagery of the earthquake (also see 1Kg 4:5; 3Kg 19:11; Ps 103:32) was fulfilled ultimately at the Crucifixion (Mt 27:51). **Clouds** symbolize the Holy Spirit (see Ex 13:21, 22; 24:12–18 and notes). A cloud was at Christ's **feet** at His Transfiguration (Lk 9:34); and He Himself says He will come again in a cloud (Lk 21:27).

1:8-10 The **overwhelming flood** is fulfilled in baptism.

2:1 The **good tidings** are the gospel of **peace**, preached by the apostles. See Rom 10:15.

2:5 **As torches of fire**: See Jdg 7:16. The specter of the universal ravager, fire, is invoked to suggest an image of total destruction.

2:6-9 Nineveh was situated on the Tigris and Khoser Rivers, and ancient sources such as Xenophon and Diodorus note that the city was destroyed by flooding. Nineveh worshipped the goddess Ishtar, which would be **led away** by those who captured the city. This passage also points to the destruction of God's enemies in the waters of baptism.

2:11 A picture of the few terrified survivors, looking sadly on the ruins of their once-magnificent city.

2:14 The power of the **lions**, which represent the enemies of God, would be destroyed by the more powerful **sword** of the Spirit, “for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Mt 26:52).

3:4-7 The final judgment against the great harlot, an image of all that is evil, is found in Rev 17–18.

1:1 Prophets frequently describe prophetic oracles as “burdens” (Heb. *massa* I: “burden, carrying” and *massa* II: “pronouncement, prophecy,” both deriving from a verbal root *nasa*, “to carry”) from the Lord, possibly because the oracles nearly always spell out heavy judgment from God (Jer 23:33). In contrast, Jesus describes his burden as “light” (Mt 11:30). John says that because of all God's love has done for us, keeping His commandments is not burdensome (1Jn 5:3).

1:2 Habakkuk laments the seeming silence of God in response to the rampant injustice and violence in the nation. When God reveals to Habakkuk the horrors in Judean society from His point of view, the prophet is horrified. He cries for God to act, but there is no answer from God. “How long?” is a familiar refrain among the Old Testament prophets (Zec 1:12) and the psalmists (Ps 12:1) when God appears silent, remote, and powerless (Is 63:15). God hates violence on the earth and will judge severely the cruel treatment of humans by other humans (Gn 6:5–7; Ps 10:6; Rev 6:10).

1:5 God frequently responds to humans in surprising ways. But God's “answer” to Habakkuk's lament is beyond belief.

1:7 The Chaldean standard for judgment is not God's righteous law, but their own purposes of conquest. Despite their evil, God can still use ungodly people and sometimes unwilling servants to accomplish His purposes, as in the cases of Pharaoh, Balaam, and Judas.

1:9 Violence will be punished with violence. God will use the Chaldeans to inflict punishment upon the evildoers of Judah. Israel's history showed that God was willing to use other nations to punish Israel. The cycle of Israel's covenant unfaithfulness, punishment, repentance, and subsequent restoration is amply described in Judges and 3 & 4 Kingdoms. What is new and surprising to Habakkuk is the extent of Judah's punishment, for God hints at their exile and utter destruction as a nation. The nation of Judah falsely believed that their fickle repentance (Hos 6:1–3) as well as God's covenant with David and the presence of the temple in Jerusalem would protect them forever (Jer 7:3) from God's unrelenting anger. They were sadly mistaken.

1:11 In a moment of self-recognition, even the godless Chaldeans realize they are not a law unto themselves. Although they are the vessels of God's wrath upon Judah, they are still answerable to God for their crimes against humanity.

1:12 With surprising boldness, Habakkuk questions God's judgment. Here Habakkuk is like many other biblical prophets: Abraham (Gn 18:23ff.), Moses (Ex 32:11ff.), Jeremiah (20:7), or Amos (7:1ff.). Throughout the Bible, men and women wrestle mightily with God and His will, like Jacob with God at the River Jabbok (Gn 32:22).

1:14 Habakkuk complains that the Chaldeans, God's chosen vessels, show absolutely no respect for human dignity.

2:1 Despite his questions, Habakkuk displays his stubborn faith in God's ultimate purposes. While waiting for what surely will be God's reprimand, Habakkuk is already marshaling his strength to answer back.

2:2 Habakkuk hears and sees God's response (1:1)! God's answer must be written so clearly that its readers can take immediate action.

2:3-4 During tumultuous times, God first commands Habakkuk to wait patiently for His vision to arrive, despite all contrary appearances or delays. Heb 10:37, 38 quotes these verses from Habakkuk to exhort its hearers to endure suffering boldly as we await the fulfillment of God's promises.

2:4 Against those Judaizing Christians who wanted to bind the entire Law (particularly circumcision) upon Gentile converts, Paul quotes Habakkuk to show that we are justified by faith, not by the works of the Law (Gal 3:11; Rom 1:17).

2:5 Pride is the fountain of all vices. In the following verses, Habakkuk describes the profile of the arrogant individual with whom God is not pleased (2:4). His increasingly ravenous appetites are indeed hellish and deadly.

2:6 The Bible warns that the arrogant man will surely be destroyed for his evil.

2:10 Man has a relentless hunger for material gain, which he thinks will insulate him from misfortune; but wealth is false security. This deluded quest for self-sufficiency is described elsewhere as virtual atheism (Ps 11:4, 5). The yield is not security but death and destruction. There is no security other than in God.

2:11-12 While the powerful engage in empire building, the truth of God's ultimate judgment over the proud is known by the smallest and the numerically insignificant. The city built by bloodshed and conquest will ultimately be destroyed. Only the city built with righteousness will endure.

2:14 Elsewhere, Hosea describes the fundamental human problem as lack of knowledge of God (Hos 4:1, 6; 6:6). This ignorance unfortunately is self-inflicted because men suppress the truth about God (Rom 1:18–32).

2:16 The proud man, for his debauchery and violence, will ultimately drink the wine of God's wrath. The Book of Revelation describes the eschatological judgment upon the “great Babylon” in terms of God giving her to drink of “the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath” (Rev 16:19).

2:20 The mystery of God is best honored with silence. When God revealed Himself out of the whirlwind, Job too was found speechless (Job 40:5; 42:3).

3:2 St Augustine believes the two living creatures are either the two testaments, the two thieves, or Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

3:3 This verse is quoted in Orthodox hymnology (in the Festal Menaion) on the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple (Nov. 21) and on Christmas.

3:4 Augustine believes this verse refers plainly to Jesus.

1:1-11 The revival that occurred in the **days of Josiah** prefigured the coming of the gospel in Christ, which will culminate on the final Day. Christ was the final **sacrifice** (v. 7), whose death and Resurrection was, and is, the ultimate judgment against sin in the earth. Indeed, with His stretched-out **hand** (v. 4), which was pierced through on the Cross, He destroyed idolatry, punished the proud **princes** of darkness, and **cut down** the Old Covenant.

1:12 St. Jerome writes that this verse was fulfilled when Christ went to **Jerusalem** (Mk 11:11). He was looking at everything in the temple “as though He were searching with a lantern . . . but He did not find what He wanted. . . . The Savior searched; the Apostles searched; in the temple they found nothing, so they left it.”

2:7-11 **All the islands of the nations** (v. 11): A prophecy that is fulfilled in the Gentile Church.

3:1-13 Christ gathered the **nations** together and judged them with the **fire** (v. 8) of the Holy Spirit. **The day of My rising up** is a clear prophecy of the Resurrection.

1:14 **Zerubbabel**: See 2:23 and note.

2:6 **I will shake heaven and earth**: “There have been two remarkable transformations of the human way of life in the course of the world's history. These are called two ‘covenants,’ . . . two ‘shakings of the earth’ [Heb 12:26; Mt 27:51]. The first was the transition from idols to the Law; the second, from the Law to the gospel. The gospel also tells of the third shaking, the change from this present stage of things to what lies unmoved, unshaken, beyond” (GrgNa; see Heb 12:28). Indeed, writes Augustine, Christ moved heaven and earth when He was born of a Virgin; and moved **the sea and dry land** when He made His name known throughout the whole world.

2:7 **The choice things of all the nations shall come in**: Augustine remarks that this phrase prophesies the building of the Church from those chosen from among the Gentiles. These are Christ's “living stones” (1Pt 2:5), renewed by faith and empowered by grace, building a house far more glorious than any earthly temple.

2:9 **I will give peace**: “Since the restored temple signified the Church, which Christ was to build, those words can mean only ‘I will give peace in that place (the Church) which this place (the rebuilt temple) prefigures.’ . . . Not, however, until the House of the New Testament receives its final consecration will its greater glory in relation to the house of the Old Testament be made perfectly clear” (Aug).

2:10-19 This is Haggai's third discourse, intended to teach that the people must depend on God's grace for life and for holiness, and not on themselves or even on God's temple. God is good to us, says Haggai, not because we deserve it, not even because His presence makes us holy, but simply because *He has chosen to bless us*. God offers us an opportunity to return to Him through repentance and confession, as is illustrated in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11–32), recounted to us just two weeks prior to the Great Fast of Lent.

2:11 **Ask the priests concerning the law**: “For such is the important function of the priesthood to give answers to those who question them concerning the Law” (Jerome).

2:20-23 The oracle is private, addressed to **Zerubbabel** only. Note that he is addressed not as a descendant of David but as being **from the tribe of Judah**, implying that the Davidic kingship is not about to be reestablished. Official, royal acts in the ancient world were authenticated by the use of the monarch's **signet**. In designating Zerubbabel as his signet, the Lord was, in effect, stating that Zerubbabel would be acting as His vicegerent, charged with carrying out His supreme rule and divine will. On a deeper level, this is a strong messianic prophecy. “When our soul becomes peaceful . . . then she will receive Christ like a signet ring upon her, for she is the image of God. Then she will be according to that image, because heavenly is the heavenly man. And we need to bear the image of the heavenly one, that is, peace. . . . I wish the Lord Jesus may say to you, ‘Put me as a seal upon your arm’ [SS 8:6]. May peace glow in your heart, Christ in your works, and may there be formed in you wisdom and justice and redemption” (AmbM).

1:1 Zechariah records an exact date when his visions began. **The eighth month** is a reference to the Hebrew calendar, while the second year of Darius is a Persian rendering of time. **Zechariah** is the **son of Berechiah** and grandson of **Addo the prophet**. The identity of the prophet and the time of the prophecy are not merely historical references; they are eternally significant because the revelation of God came to Zechariah at this time.

The **word of the Lord** is an action of God in His graceful self-disclosure. The word of the Lord comes to Zechariah veiled, but when the Messiah comes in Bethlehem of Judea five centuries later, He comes in the flesh. Indeed, the language of the LXX here parallels the language used by John to describe the Incarnation (see Jn 1:1–18). The Word who comes to Zechariah is truly the eternal Son of God, the Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity who becomes flesh as Jesus Christ.

1:2 Zechariah informs the people of God's wrath against them. In the Bible, God is a God of wrath as well as of love. Indeed, the wrath and love of God are not contradictions within Him but are manifestations of His One Being. A God who was not angered over the sins of His creatures would be a God who did not care.

The issue of impassibility is also raised here. For the Church Fathers, God is impassible. This means that the nature of God does not change. God is not controlled by passions, desires, emotions that change unpredictably and radically as in man. God is consistent, pure, and simple. Impassibility, however, does not mean that God does not care. His wrath shows that He cares deeply. God loves His creation perfectly. His love and wrath are not changing, inconsistent, impure, or unreliable. God is not like man. His wrath and love are not like human wrath and love.

1:3 The dichotomy between the Old and New Testaments held by the arch-heretic Marcion and by many modern heretics as well is shown to be wrong since the God of the Old and New Testaments is the Holy Trinity. In the Old Testament, God has wrath and love just as He does in the New Testament. Zechariah delivers the same message of repentance later preached by Christ Himself. Repentance is necessary for salvation. There is no right relationship with God without turning from sin to God.

1:4 Zechariah warns the people not to **become like your fathers**. The prophets warned the former generation, calling them to turn away from their evil ways. Sadly, God notes, they did not listen. There is continuity between the message of the previous prophets and the message of Zechariah. This message is the same precisely because it is from the lips of God. The message of the prophets is fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Mt 5:17).

1:5 Zechariah asks a question that plagues humanity: Where are your fathers and the prophets? He reminds them of their own mortality by reminding them of the death of their fathers and the prophets. The prophets and their fathers are dead and buried in Mesopotamia because they did not repent. Zechariah is also presenting a contrast between men, who are transient and mortal, and God, who is immortal and transcendent. The previous generation is dead and gone, but God lives and remains the same. As Paul exclaims, “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8).

1:6 God commands His people to **receive My words and My ordinances**. God does not force His way upon mankind. He honors free will. He wants human obedience, fidelity, and fellowship. He calls people to repentance, but He never circumvents human free will.

1:7 The first vision occurs between mid-January and mid-February, 520 BC, three or four months after Zechariah delivers the initial call to repentance.

1:7-17 Zechariah unveils eight visions promising the restoration of the temple. All eight visions follow a pattern: (1) vision, (2) questions, and (3) answer. Eight is the number of re-creation in Holy Scripture. Jewish males were circumcised on the eighth day. Thus, the eight visions indicate a renewal of the covenant with the people of God.

1:8-10 Zechariah sees the vision, then asks the angel talking to him for an interpretation. Even the prophet must have guidance to understand the Word of God. The meaning of God's self-disclosure is not self-evident. This is why the Church, and not any mere individual, is the interpreter of Holy Writ.

1:11 The horsemen are angelic hosts, that is, angels in the armies of heaven. These particular angels are scouts. They have traveled around the world and found everything peaceful.

1:12-13 The **Angel of the Lord** intercedes for the exiled Jews, pleading for mercy toward Jerusalem and Judah. The Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is often a type of Christ, sometimes referred to as “Christ in the Old Testament.” In this case, we have a type of the first and second Persons of the Godhead. The eternally begotten Son intercedes for the people of God before the eternal Father. Zechariah thus foreshadows the High Priesthood of Christ.

The Jews have been in exile seventy years (586–519 BC). The Lord replies with **kind and comforting words**, a comfort to the people, no doubt.

The holy angels serve before God, minister to men, and also intercede for men. The Church teaches the faithful to pray to the angels to intercede on behalf of mankind and the people of God. This is one instance in Holy Scripture of the dialogue of prayer occurring between a holy man and the angels.

1:14-15 Zechariah is enjoined to cry out the good sayings and comforting words of God to the people. God is **jealous for both Jerusalem and Zion with great jealousy**. This is a Semitic construction meaning that God is *really* jealous. The Greek word rendered “jealous” is the origin of the English word “zeal.” It means “jealous,” but also means “to strive after,” “eagerness,” and “admiration.” “For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God” (Ex 20:5) is the explanation for God's commandment against idolatry. It may sound strange to modern ears to hear God speak of His holy jealousy, yet what husband would not be jealous in a positive sense for his wife? One would question a husband's love for his wife if he did not care whom she had conjugal relations with, spent time with, gave money to, or heaped devotion upon. Love does not preclude a zeal for the beloved or a protective, positive, proper jealousy. God is jealous for His people against all falsehood that destroys His creation.

The source of God's jealousy here is the foul way the enemies of the Jews treated them in the exile. God was angry with His people and directed these nations against Judah as divine punishment. These enemies, however, went farther than God intended. God uses evil for good and evil men for good purposes, but this does not excuse the evil or ascribe divine authorship to it. The wrath of God against His people does not justify the violence and wickedness of those who are instruments of it.

2:1-4 The vision of the **four horns** and **four craftsmen** is a message of hope and comfort for the people of God. Horns symbolize power in the Old Testament. The four horns are the hostile armies that carried first Israel, then Jerusalem and Judah into exile.

2:5-17 The vision of the **measuring line** pushes the promise of 2:1–4 further. The destructive work of the four horns now being completed, the way is clear for the heavenly surveyors to survey Jerusalem for rebuilding.

2:10 God calls the exiled back to the land of promise in a second exodus, promising to bring back His people from across the globe.

2:17 **Let all flesh fear before the presence of the Lord**: This phrase calls to mind the cherubic hymn of the ancient Liturgy of St. James (sometimes sung as a carol in Western Christmas celebrations): “Let all mortal flesh be silent, and stand with fear and trembling, and meditate nothing earthly within itself: For the King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ our God, comes forward to be sacrificed and to be given for food to the faithful; and the bands of angels go before Him with every power and dominion, the many-eyed cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, covering their faces and crying aloud the hymn, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.” This is the proper approach to the presence of God in our lives, in the liturgy, and most especially during Communion. The prophet speaks of the divine humility and self-emptying of Christ for us. We are likewise called to humble and empty ourselves in His presence for Him.

3:1 The Hebrew name Joshua (Greek Jesus; Aramaic Yeshua) means "Savior" or "He who saves." It is a common name in the Old Testament (Joshua son of Nun, Jesus son of Sirach, Joshua the high priest here, among others) and at the time of Christ. Many cultures around the world today name children Jesus.

The scene opens with the high priest Joshua standing in the presence of God being opposed by the devil. Satan is the accuser who opposes the people of God (see Job 1; 2).

3:2 St. Michael the Archangel would not dispute with the devil over the body of Moses, but said, “The Lord rebuke you” (Jude 9). Even more astoundingly, Jesus Christ (**the Lord**) says, **“The Lord rebukes you.”** This is fulfilled in the temptation of Christ, when He relies upon the written word of Holy Scripture rather than His own power as Son of God to rebuke Satan and resist temptation (Mt 4:1–11; Mk 1:12, 13; Lk 4:1–13).

3:3-5 Joshua the high priest wears the **filthy garments** of the Jews of his time, while Jesus Christ the Great High Priest wore them in the Incarnation for all people. Jesus our Lord took the flesh of a servant, wore our filthy rags, bore our sins, and was accused on our behalf before God and by man unjustly.

3:10 This promise is for peace, safety, luxury, blessing, and paradise.

3:1-10 The LXX makes the Christological typography of the fourth vision crystal clear. Paul calls Jesus the High Priest who supersedes the high priest in the Jerusalem temple (Heb 3:1, 2; 7:21). The high priest in the Old Testament is also a type of Christ, as is the case here. This includes the Jewish high priest contemporary with Christ and the apostles (Heb 9).

4:1, 2 Awakened from a dream by an angel, Zechariah asks him to explain its meaning. Zechariah sees a golden **lampstand**, a seven-branched candlestick called a menorah. The menorah is a symbol for Israel. It appeared in Solomon's temple and appears still in the Jewish synagogue. St. John the Theologian saw Christ in the midst of seven lampstands (Rev 1:12–20), which are seven churches.

4:3-5 Zechariah also saw **two olive trees**. He does not know what they mean. The two olive trees may be either Israel and the Church (the old and new Israel) or the Old and New Testaments.

4:6 The word of the Lord declares to Zerubbabel through Zechariah, **‘Not by mighty power nor by strength, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.** The power of God, not human power, will rebuild the Jerusalem temple (see Ps 126:1). The divine and human synergy is thus affirmed here. Human labor is necessary, for God will not make the temple appear magically. Even so, the human efforts of the attempt to rebuild the temple thirteen years previously failed because the people did not depend on the Holy Spirit. Human efforts alone achieve nothing in the Kingdom of God. Human efforts under the power of God the Holy Spirit yield everything God wills.

4:11-14 Zechariah asks twice more about the olive trees. He is finally told, **“These are the two sons of richness who stand beside the Lord of all the earth.”** They represent the two powers or functions held by the two men, Zerubbabel (political leadership) and Joshua the high priest (sacerdotal leadership).

5:1, 2 The **sickle** is “scroll” in Hebrew. Both are indicative of judgment. The sickle is huge, of roughly the same dimensions as the tabernacle in the wilderness (see Ex 26:15–28) or the porch of Solomon's temple (see 3Kg 6:6, 7).

5:3-4 The seventh and third commandments are given here as representative of the first and second tablets of the Law (see Ex 20:1–17). The first tablet of the Law addresses the relationship between God and man; the second tablet speaks of the relationship between man and man. Covenant-breakers are excluded from the covenant. Israel is forewarned not to forsake the covenant with God again. The same judgment that led to the exile seventy years previously awaits them should they fail to be faithful.

5:5-11 This is a vision of a **measuring basket** or *ephah* (a measuring bucket for grain) **going forth** with a **woman** named **lawlessness** in it. The angel puts a **lead weight** in the **mouth** of the basket to keep her in it. **Two** angelic **women** whisk the measure off to **Babylon**, where it is placed on a prepared foundation. This passage assures the people of God that paganism will be destroyed. Good will overcome evil.

5:7-9 The activity of the Holy Spirit is often accompanied by activities of the wind or breath throughout the Bible.

6:1-15 The concluding vision of **four chariots** brings to mind the first vision (1:7–17). The four horsemen in the first vision were angelic warriors, since chariots were used by such soldiers in the ancient world.

6:2-8 The heavenly chariots span the four directions of the compass. Peace, rest, and security are given to the Lord's land. This reminds us of God's providential care of us through the activities of the angels.

6:9-15 Zechariah is commanded by the word of the Lord to collect gifts from the **rulers** and **useful men** of **captivity** into **the house of Josiah** and place these gifts of **gold**, **silver**, and **crowns** at the feet of **Joshua** the high priest. The promise is made that the crown goes to the one who endured. Others then shall come to rebuild the temple. In the New Testament, crowns are cast at the feet of Jesus Christ the Great High Priest (Rev 4:10). St. Paul promises crowns to believers who endure (1Co 9:24–27).

6:12 The word is variously rendered “Dayspring,” “Sunrise,” and “Orient.” The Hebrew reads “Branch.” This verse provides the backdrop for the hymn sung during the wedding service as the bride and groom circle the analogion and at the ordination of a priest as he is led around the altar: The Lord's redemptive work takes place in the family and in the Church.

7:1 This date would be mid-November to mid-December, 518 BC.

7:2-3 The authorities ask whether to continue the fasts associated with the fall of Judah and the Babylonian Captivity. The fourth-month fast commemorated the fall of Jerusalem. The seventh-month fast commemorated the murder of Gedaliah. The tenth-month fast commemorated the siege of Jerusalem. The fifth-month fast remembered the burning of the temple.

7:4-7 As He often does in the Scriptures, God replies with a series of rhetorical questions designed to arouse the contemplation of one's inward disposition. During these fasts over the past **seventy years** of exile, the outward disposition was maintained but the hearts of the people were not devoted to God.

7:8-12 The people failed to live justly in relation to their neighbors. They were **disobedient** to God's **Law** and **Spirit** given in Moses and the prophets. This brought **great wrath** from God. The result was the exile.

Nowhere is fasting condemned here. In fact, fasting continued as part of Israel's practice. Jesus Christ fasted. The apostles and early Church did, too. Fasting is an integral practice of the Church through the ages. The prophet is not saying, “Your heart is not in it, so stop the fast.” Instead, he calls for repentance so that the heart and life are cleansed by proper fasting. Proper fasting involves the heart in right relationship to God and man. The prophet calls for his hearers to fast rightly, not to stop fasting because they are living wrongly.

7:13-14 These verses spell out the cost of refusing to **listen** to God: God will not listen to them in their time of need.

7:1-14 Chapters 7 and 8 are a unit representing a single prophecy. The question about fasting raised in 7:1–14 is addressed again in 8:19, showing the literary unity of the two chapters.

8:1-23 Chapter 8 contains ten sections, each beginning with **Thus says the Lord Almighty**.

8:1-3 God's zeal is a protective love that does not wish to see His people degraded and harmed. God's zeal here is for **Jerusalem** and the temple mount specifically. God will return to **Zion**, to the temple, to dwell between the cherubim on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies. Jerusalem will once again be what she was intended to be, the **True City, the Mountain of the Lord Almighty, the Holy Mountain**.

8:4-5 The picture of security includes **elderly men** and **women** sitting in the open squares of Jerusalem while children are playing (see Is 65:19, 20).

8:6-8 God will bring the exiles back. **They shall be to Me a people and I will be to them a God in truth and in righteousness**: This is a type of Christ in the Incarnation, in which God tabernacles with man (Jn 1:14), and of the New Jerusalem in the Eschaton (Rev 21:3).

8:9, 10 Zechariah exhorts the people to find strength to rebuild the temple. Jerusalem shall not have economic and political peace until that is accomplished. When man puts his own interests above the spiritual, moral, and liturgical things of God, prosperity is fleeting.

8:11-15 The exile curse is lifted. The postexilic blessing is on the way. Thus, the prophet exhorts, **be of good courage**!

8:16-17 God demands that His people **speak the truth**, judge with truth, and avoid false oaths (Mic 6:8). Truth is essential for the people of God in every aspect of life: religious, personal, social, judicial, and political.

8:19-23 The matter of fasting which began this lengthy section (7:1–8:23) is addressed again. Fasting becomes **joy**, **gladness**, and feasting. Jerusalem will become a place for universal worship of God among all peoples (Is 2:3). Restored Judah has a mission to be light to the **nations**. This mission is fulfilled in Christ and now belongs to the Church.

8:23 The **hem** of the **Jewish man**'s garment refers to the prayer shawls worn by Jewish men, which had tassels representing all the commandments of the Law. The Hebrew text has “wings” instead of “hem.” The Orthodox deacon's stole represents angelic wings. When the deacon holds the right half of the stole up, this represents angelic activity. When he lets it down, it represents angelic rest.

9:1-21 The second half of the Book of Zechariah consists of two **burdens** or oracles. Both burdens are related to the Messianic Age. The first burden (9:1–11:17) focuses on the Passion of Christ, while the second burden (12:1–14:21) focuses on the Second Coming of Christ.

9:1-8 The cities mentioned here are pagan cities of Syria and Philistia falling within the limits of the promised land (Gn 15:18–21; Ex 23:31). This prophecy may point to Alexander's conquests after 333 BC. The destruction of Judah's enemies precedes the Messianic Age. The restoration, Messianic Age, and coming day of the Lord are the themes of chs. 9–14.

9:9, 10 The Triumphant Entry of Christ into Jerusalem is foretold here (see Mt 21:1–9; Mk 11:1–10; Lk 19:28–38; Jn 12:12–19). Matthew and John cite v. 9 (Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15). Rather than riding proudly on a warrior's chariot in victory, the Messiah-king rides humbly on a donkey, notes St. Ambrose. Justin Martyr comments, “Jacob predicted that Christ would ride upon an ass [Gn 49:11] and Zechariah confirmed it.” He views the unharnessed colt as signifying the Gentiles and the harnessed donkey as symbolizing the Jews.

9:11 The fathers typically see this verse as a reference to Christ's descent into Hades to set the captives free.

10:1-3 Zechariah condemns the spiritual leaders (**shepherds**) who fleece the flock of God by **false visions** and **false dreams** using Semitic idols. God will punish them as well as deliver Judah.

11:1-17 The Good Shepherd (see Jn 10) is contrasted with the bad shepherds of 10:1–12. He replaces the bad shepherds Himself.

11:12-14 The Good Shepherd is betrayed. Matthew cites this passage in his Gospel (26:15; 27:9). The pieces (or shekels) of silver are the price for a slave (Ex 21:32).

12:10-14 This mourning may also apply to the apostles, the women, the Mother of God, and others who mourned Christ at His crucifixion. It may also refer to repentance as a result of beholding the Crucified, seeing who He is and why He is dying and turning to Him in faith and obedience.

13:7 **Smite the shepherds and draw out the sheep** is “Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered” in the Hebrew text. Jesus cites this verse in Mt 26:31 concerning the falling away of the disciples upon His arrest. As it appears in the LXX, the passage matches vv. 1–8, continuing the warning against the false prophets and the promise of the people's delivery.

13:8-9 The people of God are tried. Two thirds of the people shall die but the third part will remain. This trial is compared to the way silver and gold are purified by fire. In the end, God calls those who are purified by His Name, and in turn they call Him their God.

14:1-21 The prophet foresees the nations gathered in battle against Jerusalem, God's delivery of His people, and the establishment of a secure, peaceful land (see Is 66:15–23; Ezk 38–40; Joel 4:9–21; Mk 13:7–27; Rev 20–22). In the New Testament, this is to be accomplished at the Second Coming of Christ and the last battle between God and Satan.

14:3-4 The Lord's **feet will stand on the Mount of Olives** in this reference to the Messianic Age. This applies both to the Incarnation and the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus and the disciples stayed on the Mount of Olives during Holy Week (Lk 21:37), and, of course, Jesus spent the night on the Mount of Olives when He was betrayed (Mt 26:30). Whether or not Christ will touch down upon the Mount of Olives at His Second Coming is another question. The eschatological imagery here, however, indicates judgment in the presence of God.

14:8-11 Christ is the **living water** (Jn 4:10–14). In the Apocalypse, a river runs through the Holy City (Rev 22:1–5). The Garden of Eden was at the headwaters of four great rivers (Gn 2:10–15). In the garden of Paradise, Christ is the living water who sustains, refreshes, and gives life to the inhabitants.

14:18-20 The grotesque imagery of the destruction of the enemies of Jerusalem reminds the reader of the utter seriousness of God's judgment. The passage warns that those who do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King (who is the Lord) are destined for the same fate. Sometimes we look at the judgment of God upon wicked figures and think ourselves safe from wrath because our evil is small by comparison. The fact that we are not murderers of millions does not make us safe. The standard of God's judgment is whether we worship Him in Spirit and in truth (Jn 4:21–24).

Zechariah concludes with a condemnation of Egypt and all nations that do not come to Jerusalem to **celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles** (also called the Feast of Booths; see Lv 23:33–36). This feast was associated with covenant renewal and the deliverance of Israel. Christ is the eternal Word of God who, in the Incarnation, “dwelt [or tabernacled] among us” (Jn 1:14). So then, all who reject Christ and do not enter the Church to celebrate and serve Him are condemned.

14:21 The **Canaanite** is a merchant. The connotation appears to be that merchants will no longer be necessary or allowed in the Lord's **house**. The cleansing of the temple by Christ comes to mind in this regard (see Mt 21:12, 13; Mk 11:15–19; Lk 19:45–48; Jn 2:13–17). One is also reminded how easily God's house is turned into a bartering place and how churches can be used for profits rather than prophecy. The booming industry of Christian items today is alarming. It has always been easy to confuse piety and profits in relation to the Lord's house. The day is coming in the Kingdom of God when this shall be neither permitted nor necessary. Indeed, the coming age is one when God Himself shall supply every need of His children. Buying and selling will no longer be necessary.

1:1 Malachi means “my messenger.” A **burden** or oracle is a prophetic poetic message in the form of a question and answer dialog between God and the people. Malachi is a long oracle rebuking the hypocrisy of the people of God. **Take it to heart** is good advice for reading any of the prophets.

1:2-4 **In what way have You loved us?** God declares His love for His people, but they reply coldly. God reminds them of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated** is a Semitic way of emphasizing God's choice of Jacob, not of indicating hatred for the unchosen (see Gn 25:23; Lk 14:26; Rom 9:10–13).

1:7-8 The priests offered **defiled bread**, as well as **blind**, **lame**, and **sick** animals, as sacrifices contrary to Mosaic directives. Malachi observes that they do not treat their civil **ruler** with such contempt.

1:9, 10 The Lord calls the people to make atonement and to **pray**. He will not, however, **accept an offering** favorably while the priests and people continue their liturgical misdeeds. When liturgical actions are void of repentance and faithfulness, the clergy and people simply go through the motions.

1:11 A remarkable and clear prophecy that **the Gentiles**, in their worship of God, **in every place** or church will burn **incense** before Him—as Israel had done. To this day, incense is **offered** in nearly every service of the Orthodox Church.

1:12-14 In Malachi's day people complained that worship brings on **weariness**. Today, people complain that worship is “boring.” Worship was not designed by God as entertainment, but for His people to have communion with Him.

2:3 The word here is **dung** (Gr. *anaustrov*). The Hebrew text also reads "dung." The offal of offerings was removed from the sanctuary and burned (see Ex 29:14; Lv 4:11, 12). God detests false offerings so intensely that He threatens to rub dung on the faces of the priests and take them out to the dung heap as refuse. This passage was so disturbing that later *Targums* translated it, "I will make visible on your faces the shame of your crimes." In this instance, Malachi delivers an angelic message with an earthy tongue, demonstrating the severity of the priestly misdeeds.

2:4-6 Malachi reminds the priests of the Levitic **covenant** and what they are meant to be and do (see Nm 25:12, 13; Dt 10:8, 9).

2:7 A stunning job description of the **priest** serving Christ today.

2:10 Christians call God **Father** because Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten Son of God, revealed Him as Father (Mt 3:17; 6:9), and He has made us the children of God (Jn 1:12).

2:10-12 Sons of Israel **profaned the holy things of the Lord**. Too often they followed foreign gods through intermarriage with pagan women, which was prohibited (see Ex 34:11–16; Dt 7:1–4). St. Paul echoes this truth in saying, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2Co 6:14).

2:13-16 In this passage, God says **I hate** two **things**: hypocrisy (v. 13) and divorce (vv. 14–16). Regarding divorce, the husband is held accountable, for he has **forsaken** his **wife**. We learn that (1) marriage brings companionship—an intimate relationship and partnership between husband and wife; (2) marriage is a **covenant** between the Lord and the husband and wife, not to be broken—which is why the historic Church sees it as a sacrament which is permanent; and (3) marriage produces the fruit of **offspring**—we pray in the wedding service, “And let them behold their children's children.” Thus, God's final word to husbands: **do not forsake her** (v. 16).

2:17 The people **weary the Lord**, accusing Him of blessing **evil** doers and withholding **justice**. The truth is that their own evil acts cause their troubles.

3:1-7 **My messenger**: The Lord will **send** John the Baptist to **prepare the way** (see Is 40:3) as forerunner of the Messiah. Our Lord Jesus Christ verifies this prophecy about John in Mt 11:10, 14.

3:2-3 As with many prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament, the first and second comings of Christ are not separated. The Lord comes as both Savior and Judge. As Savior, He redeems the creation from sin, death, and the devil. As Judge, He will both **purify** and terrify: **And who can withstand His appearance?** The **offering** is the body and blood of Christ.

3:5 **Sorcerers, adulterers,** and **those who swear falsely** indicate practices deeply destructive to the soul and to society. Sorcery or witchcraft is an attempt to manipulate creation for one's own ends. Adultery is sexual infidelity to one's spouse or with the spouse of another. Swearing falsely by God's name is lying and perjury, taking God's name in vain.

This list of **those who exploit wage-earners** . . . **oppress widows and afflict orphans** . . . **pervert the justice due foreigners,** and **do not fear Me** demonstrates the biblical concern with social as well as personal morality. The Old Testament prophets, Christ Himself, the New Testament apostles, and the saints of the Church all address social matters. Creation is a singular reality and cannot be arbitrarily divided into personal and social categories.

3:6, 7 God has **not changed** and does not change. The Scriptures (Heb 13:8) and the Church Fathers apply this verse to Christ.

3:8-12 How **have we insulted you**? God answers this self-righteous question pointedly: they have withheld **tithes and offerings**. A tithe is a tenth of one's income; offerings are additional gifts. Some modern Christians reject tithing, claiming it is a part of the Law not applicable today. But they forget that Abram (Abraham) tithed to Melchizedek five hundred years before the Law was given to Moses (Gn 14:18–20). And Melchizedek is a type of Christ (Heb 6:19–7:6). To those who tithe, God promises **a blessing until it is overflowing.**

3:13-15 Speaking **against** God is the heart of the problem. They call people who serve God **foolish** and accuse Him of blessing the wicked, thereby attempting to put Him on trial.

3:16-18 Contrast such people with **those who feared the Lord and reverenced His name**. Their names are in **a book of remembrance** (Ex 32:32–34; Is 4:3; Dan 7:10).

3:19 For **all who do wickedly**, the day of the Lord, the last judgment, **shall burn them up**.

3:20 For those **who fear** the Lord, Christ **the Sun of Righteousness**, He shall bring **healing**.

3:22 **Elijah** the Tishbite and Moses were present with the Lord at His Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–13).

3:24 The Giver of **the Law of Moses** will soon become incarnate, writing His laws on our hearts and minds and remembering our sins and lawless deeds no more (Heb 10:16, 17).

1:1 **Isaiah** in Hebrew means “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation.”

1:4-6 The image of Israel is that of an entire body covered with **wounds** and **sores**—a body that not only refuses treatment, but will not even recognize that it is sick.

1:9 God will not allow His people to be completely wiped out. One good **seed** will still yield much fruit, and a few will listen to the words of the prophet.

1:11-15 God **will not forgive** (v. 14) false religious piety, but He will accept the sacrifice of “a broken spirit, / A broken and humbled heart” (Ps 50:19).

1:21 **Righteousness** is God's presence, which **lodged** in **Zion**, but the people forsook Him.

1:22 **Silver is worthless**: the words of the prophets have been corrupted with bad interpretations. They **mix wine with water**: correct doctrine has been watered down by human reason.

1:23 The people are **orphans** because they have become **disobedient** to their heavenly Father. The **widow** has rejected the Bridegroom.

1:24-31 God's **judgment**, tempered by His **mercy**, will **humble** and **establish** order as it was **at the beginning** for those who repent.

2:2-3 The **mountain** is a symbol of the Church, which will **proclaim** God's **way** to **all the Gentiles** (see Mic 4:1–4).

3:10 Their sin is made worse because they **hand over** those who are **righteous**.

3:16 **Daughters of Zion** are the wealthy women of Jerusalem who lived near the royal palace and the temple during Isaiah's time. Their humiliation is a metaphor for the coming humiliation of Jerusalem.

4:4 **The Spirit of judgment**: God will send a flood of affliction on the people to **wash away** their sin, and **the Spirit of burning** will be like a purifying fire to **purge** them of their guilt. These two images of water and fire also prefigure the washing of regeneration in baptism.

5:1 The **song** of the vineyard is similar to Jewish harvest songs used on feast days. In Jn 15:1–6, Christ calls Himself “the true vine”; His Father “the vinedresser”; and those who are grafted, “the branches.”

5:8-25 The prophet Isaiah describes their sins: greed (v. 8); love of pleasure (v. 11); indifference to God (v. 12); intentional evil acts (v. 18); mocking God (v. 19); perversion of truth (v. 20); vanity and conceit (v. 21); dishonesty (v. 23); and finally, rejecting God's **law** and despising His **word** (v. 24).

5:26-30 These verses describe the historical consequences of the sins laid out in vv. 8–23.

6:1 **The year King Uzziah died**: Certain biblical scholars date this event at 734 BC. The Fathers teach that the sins of the king caused prophecy to cease for a time (see 2Ch 26:18ff).

6:6, 7 **A live coal** touching the **mouth**: Isaiah experiences a symbol of the Eucharist, which is taken from the altar to be served to the faithful. In fact, after an Orthodox priest receives communion, he quietly quotes the seraphim's proclamation (v. 7).

6:1-6 Isaiah's vision has strongly influenced the development of Orthodox Christian worship. For the Church, like heaven, has an **altar**, a **throne**, **smoke** from the incense, and believers singing “**Holy, holy, holy**,” the Thrice-Holy Hymn.

6:9-13 People sin by choice, not by nature, volitionally stopping **their ears** and closing **their eyes**.

7:3-4 The Hebrew phrase **Shear-Jashub** means, “A remnant shall return.” Thus, Isaiah's **son** is a symbolic confirmation to King **Ahaz** of the Lord's promise to heal and save a remnant. The **firebrands** are an expression of contempt for the kings of Israel and Syria, but they will do no permanent damage.

7:13-16 The **sign** was not given to Ahaz, who had doubted the earlier prophecy, but to all the Hebrew people (JohnChr). This messianic prophecy is fulfilled when the **virgin** Mary gives birth to Christ. The Hebrew word *almah*, “unmarried woman,” designates “a hidden virgin, shut off from the occasional sight of men” (Jerome). The Greek word used in the LXX is *parthenos*, which means “virgin.” **Immanuel**, meaning “God with us,” refers to Christ's divine nature. Messiah coming as a **Child** (v. 16) refers to His human nature.

7:23-25 The Jews should have been rich and fruitful, but in their rebellion and disobedience they became **barren**. Nevertheless, after God has chastised them, He will restore them to good **pasture**.

8:1 Here God uses three different methods to declare His prophetic warning to the people: the **book**, the two **witnesses**, and Isaiah's **son**. **The prophetess** is Isaiah's wife.

8:11-15 Those who **fear** God will not know Christ as a **stumbling stone** when He comes, but those who succumb to the enemy will **fall and be broken** against Christ, the “precious cornerstone” (see 28:16; Rom 9:33).

8:16 The **law** given to Moses will be closed with the teachings of the apostles.

8:17-18 **The children** are interpreted as Christ's apostles and disciples, who performed many **signs and wonders**.

8:19 Compare the prophet's question, **Why do they seek the dead on behalf of the living?** to the angel's triumphant statement to the myrrhbearing women in Lk 24:5: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

8:20-22 God gave men and women a natural **law** within them—the ability to choose the good and avoid the evil—but they chose selfishness. Then God gave the law of Moses, and it too was broken. Great **darkness** falls upon the soul that is without the light of the commandments.

9:3 **The day of Midian** refers to the defeat of the Midianites by Gideon and his men without the use of weapons (see Jdg 7:9–25). These men prefigure the apostles, who spread the gospel throughout the world with only “the weapons of peace,” the preaching of the Cross.

9:5 **A Child is born** speaks of Christ's human nature; and **a Son is given** unites His two natures in one Person. The Son of God is also the Son of the Virgin.

9:8-4 The prophet warns of God's judgment against Israel's **pride and arrogance** (9:8); its **elder** and **prophet who teaches lawlessness** (9:14, 15); its self-destruction through civil conflicts (9:18–20); and its judicial leaders (10:1, 2). This section is laid out in four stanzas separated by the refrain repeated in 9:11, 16, 20, and 10:4: “**His anger is not turned away**.”

10:5-20 Isaiah predicts the coming attack by **the Assyrians** and their defeat during the siege on **Jerusalem**. He also reminds the people that God, not Assyria, controls history (v. 14). **The Light of Israel** (v. 17) that will sanctify God's people speaks poetically of the Holy Spirit.

10:24-27 The **Assyrian** king attempted to attack **Egypt** by way of the coastline and failed. In this way, the **yoke** that was threatening Jerusalem was **destroyed**.

11:2-5 At the Baptism of Christ, the Holy **Spirit** . . . **shall rest upon Him** (see Mt 3:16). The righteous and faithful Messiah **will judge** people by what is in their hearts; His teachings **shall strike the earth**; and **His breath—**a metaphor for the Holy Spirit—will destroy **the ungodly**.

11:6-9 The uncreated Son of God will assume created human flesh, restoring the relationship with Him that mankind lost as a result of the Fall (see Rom 8:19–23). **The whole world shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord**.

11:10 **His resting place** is interpreted by some of the Fathers to be the tomb of Christ, an **honorable** place of veneration. It is also true that Christ finds His "rest" in His saints, in whom He dwells.

11:11-12 Salvation will come first to the Jewish **remnant**, and then to **Gentiles . . . from the four corners of the earth** (see Acts 1:8; Rom 1:16). The teaching of the apostles will spread like a mighty wind, destroying idols and correcting error, even into **Egypt**. The Cross is the **sign**. Our Lord said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself” (Jn 12:32).

11:16 The **highway** that once led **Israel** out of captivity in **Egypt** will later be opened for Mary and Joseph to bring the Child there for protection from Herod, and for the apostles to return there with the Gospel of Christ.

12:4-6 Compare this song of praise to the Song of Mary in Lk 1:45–55.

13:1-22 This passage has several layers of meaning: (1) It prophesies the ultimate downfall of Babylon; (2) it prophesies Christ's Passion and Resurrection, when Christ will be lifted up on the cross and the hosts of heaven will gather to battle the powers of darkness (compare vv. 9–13 to Mt 27:51–54; Lk 23:44, 45); (3) it describes the anger of Christ at the Last Judgment.

13:19-22 **Babylon** was a **glorious** city which will be utterly destroyed. It is also a metaphor for sin. **Demons** who **will dance** in the **desert** present a stark image of hell, the ultimate place of rebellion. (See also 14:23; 34:14; Rev 18:2.) The **donkey-centaurs**, from Greek mythology, are from the waist up a man, from the waist down a horse, and they often function as symbols of rebellion against divine order and hostility to civilization. The phrase is usually translated “wild beast” and is likely a symbol for demons.

14:1, 2 In 586 BC, Cyrus of Persia allowed **Israel** to return home **in their land** and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The **sojourner—**the Gentiles**—will be added** to **Israel**, the Jews, when the Church is established (see Rom 11:23).

14:4 The **king of Babylon** is compared to Lucifer (v. 12) or Satan.

14:12-14 Note the five times Lucifer says **I will** in this passage. In this five-step process, he fully intends to take the place of the One True God! Likely the **mountains toward the north** are those to the north and east of Jerusalem.

14:32 God accomplishes these things in history to show **the nations** that **Zion**, symbolic of the Church, has been established by the God of Israel as a place of refuge where **the humble of His people shall be saved**.

15:1 **The night** is a metaphor for spiritual blindness, and **Moab** is a metaphor for souls lost in a land of darkness.

16:1, 2 The idolaters **of Moab** who mocked the God of Israel have now been **taken away**, while **Mount Zion** is a protected **rock**.

16:4-5 The Moabite **outcasts** are a type of the Gentiles who will abandon their idols to worship Christ. Eusebius interprets the **tabernacle of David** as the Church of Christ established in Moab, which is modern-day Jordan.

17:1-3 Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria conquered **Damascus** in 732 BC (see 4Kg 16).

17:8 **Their trees** is a reference to the cult of Asherim, which worshiped wooden poles.

17:9 **The Amorites and the Evites** were the indigenous peoples of Palestine who lost their land when the Hebrews came up out of Egypt.

18:1-3 The king of Damascus sent **ships** with **messengers** to Egypt and **Ethiopia** to appeal for help against the Assyrians. A Christological interpretation may be applied: The first messengers to bring Christ to this region were the Holy Family (see Mt 2:13–15). Tradition holds that the Evangelist Mark established churches there.

18:5 **Before the** . . . **harvest**, God will use the Assyrians as **sickles** to force the vine to produce **grapes**. The branches that are **cut off** will be discarded (see Jn 15:1–8).

19:2-15 This prophecy was fulfilled historically a few years later in 714 BC, when Piankhi's 25th Dynasty rose to power, causing widespread domestic strife in **Egypt**.

20:1 **Tartan** was the official title of the leader of the armies of Assyria. **Sargon** captured **Ashdod** in 711 BC.

20:2-4 Isaiah's shame is a sign of the greater shame that will befall Egypt and Ethiopia, and it also prefigures the Messiah to come. The Son of God, taking the form of a **servant**, humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death (see Php 2:8). Christ ministered on earth **three years** and fulfilled all by hanging **naked** on the Cross—the shameful death that put death to shame.

21:6-12 **A watchman** is appointed to guard a city. Similarly, a Christian must remain ever vigilant to guard the soul against the onslaught of sin.

21:9 When the Assyrians conquered **Babylon** in 689 BC, they smashed the idols of the Babylonians. This verse can be interpreted to mean that God uses even adversity to destroy sin.

22:1-5 A prophetic scene of anarchy unfolds: the people **wander** in the **Valley of Zion** (v. 5). Panic, fear, cowardice, and chaos overtake them. They refuse to seek refuge in Mount Zion and run to **worthless houses** instead (v. 1). Jerusalem fell to the Assyrians, and the people were taken captive into Babylon in 587 BC.

22:12-13 The enemy is at Jerusalem's gates, yet the people answer the call of the **Lord of hosts** for repentance by throwing a drunken feast. “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17).

22:15 **Shebna** was likely a Hebrew priest who had neglected his priestly duties because of his pride.

22:20 **Eliakim** replaced Shebna before the attack on Jerusalem. Yet, by the end of his administration, Eliakim too would fall (v. 25).

23:1-4 **Tyre** and **Sidon** were the leading coastal cities of Phoenicia (modern Lebanon). **Carthage**, a city in North Africa, was founded by Tyre and maintained commercial relations with them and with **the Citaeans** (Cyprus).

23:7-9 The Lord will judge **Tyre** and Sidon (v. 4) because of their **arrogance**. Eventually, the Light of Christ will come to Tyre and Sidon, and multitudes from there will follow Him (see Mk 3:8).

23:17-18 **Seventy years**: Even though the people of **Tyre** had been sinning against God for “a multitude of generations,” God, in His mercy, will limit His chastisement to one man's lifetime (Theod). This prophecy was fulfilled in full when the Church was established in Tyre (see Acts 21:3–5).

24:1-6 The Fathers associate this chapter with the end of this present age. At the Last Judgment, **the inhabited earth** in its **desolate** state will, in effect, be turned right side up, for “the last will be first, and the first last” (Mt 20:16). The **curse** has alienated all of creation from the Creator. God intended for man to offer up creation to Him, but instead, man has **plundered** the world (v. 3; see also Rom 8:18–22).

24:14-17 This passage is also a picture of the Book of Acts, where the apostles will **cry aloud**, proclaiming **the name of the Lord** wherever they go. **The islands** are the churches that will be established in the midst of the **sea** of lost humanity, **rejecters** of the natural **law** written on their hearts (see Rom 2:14, 15).

24:18 God will **shake** the heavens and the earth “that the things which cannot be shaken may remain” (Heb 12:26, 27).

24:21-23 At the end of the age, **God will bring His hand upon** those who will not be humbled of their own free will.

25:1 **An ancient and true counsel**: Isaiah praises God for “the mystery which has been hidden from ages” (Col 1:26)—a mystery that the prophet knows will someday be revealed in full, which is Christ in His saints, the Church. And Isaiah responds with total obedience: **So be it, O Lord.**

25:2-3 God stops the **ungodly** not simply to punish sinners but to bring them to repentance. The **poor** and **wronged**, not the **strong** and proud, will **bless** and **praise** Him.

25:8 Humanity's rebellion against **God** has given **death** the power to prevail, but Christ will destroy death and then **wipe away every tear** (see Rev 21:4).

25:9 **This is our God**: The Apostle Thomas fulfills this prophecy when he sees the resurrected Christ and cries out, “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:28).

25:10-12 The King of Glory will **spread forth His hands** upon the cross in order to **humble** the **arrogance** of all men.

26:5-6 Compare with what Virgin Mary sings in her hymn: “He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones, / And exalted the lowly” (Lk 1:52).

26:7-8 **The godly** are being **prepared** to follow Christ when He comes. Compare to Christ's parable of the virgins (see Mt 25:1–13).

26:16 **Hard circumstances** are seen by the righteous as a reason to remember the Lord. The holy prophet calls them a **small affliction**; or as St. Paul writes, “our light affliction, which . . . is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory” (2Co 4:17).

26:19 **The dead shall rise up**: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life” (Paschal Troparion; see also 1Co 15).

26:20-21 Isaiah is a powerful “prophet of doom,” but he is also a good shepherd to his people. After spending the night in prayer, he consoles them with these words.

27:1 The **sword** is Christ, the Incarnate **God**, who will slay **the dragon**, Satan. “He who follows the serpent shows that his life is crooked, uneven, and filled with contrariness; but he who follows after the Lord makes his paths straight and his footprints right” (BasilG).

27:6 Those who are left will **bud** and bear fruit. These are the true **children of Jacob**.

27:9 King Hezekiah destroyed the **idols** in Jerusalem temporarily (see 2Ch 31:1; 4Kg 18:4); but Christ will permanently destroy the idolatry of sin for all mankind.

27:10-11 This prophecy concerns Jerusalem's captivity.

27:12-13 **The sons of Israel** are symbolic of the apostles, who will **blow the great trumpet** of truth, gathering Christ's scattered sheep together in a single flock **on the holy mountain**, the Church.

28:1 This passage is interpreted by Eusebius and Cyril as relating to the downfall of the Pharisees and chief priests, who are the **crown of arrogance**, and to the specific treachery of Judas, who was descended from the tribe of **Ephraim**.

28:4-6 Just as the **the fig** replaces the fading **flower**, Christ will supersede the fading law and become **the crown of hope, woven of glory**.

28:16 As a **cornerstone** unites two walls, Christ will unite Jew and Gentile believers (see 1Pt 2:6).

28:21 The reference is to the battle of Joshua against the Gibeonites, during which God destroyed the enemy with large hailstones (see Jos 10).

29:1 **Ariel**, which means “Lion of God,” is Jerusalem. After David was anointed king over Israel, he besieged Jerusalem and took it (see 2Kg 5:3–7).

29:13 A right heart before God in prayer is even more important than right words, for God hears our “groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom 8:26; see also Mk 7:6, 7).

29:15 The wisdom and **counsel** of the proud is but foolishness in God's eyes.

29:23 Godly **works** will help identify the Messiah when He comes.

30:2-5 **Those who trust in Egypt** or in any human government will **labor in vain**. “It is good to trust in the Lord / Rather than to trust in man” (Ps 117:8).

30:6 Jerusalem is **the desert**, which will be devastated by the **nation** of Nebuchadnezzar. The **quadrupeds** are the foolish and rebellious people.

30:9-11 When God's **children** refuse to listen to the prophets, they are attempting to stop the very mouth of **the Holy One of Israel**, Christ Himself.

30:15 **Return and groan**: After warning them of their imminent destruction, **the Lord** exhorts the people to repent and **be saved**. Still, they **did not will to listen**.

30:18 **God will wait** for His people, testing their hearts, and giving immediate grace and **mercy** to **those who abide in Him**.

30:20-23 **Affliction** is given by the Lord, the Physician of souls, to open blind **eyes** and deaf **ears** to the truth.

30:31-33 The king of **the Assyrians** thought he would **reign** over Jerusalem, but because of Hezekiah's prayers the angel of the Lord slew Sennacherib's army (ch. 37).

31:1, 2 The people continue to **trust** in **horses** and **chariots** rather than in God. The prophet Isaiah says **He wisely** sends evil to them (see Pr 3:11, 12).

31:4 God watches over His people as a **young lion** watches over **his prey**.

31:8 God will deal an invisible blow against the Assyrian army when it is overthrown by an angel of the Lord (37:36).

32:1 According to the Fathers, **a righteous King** prefigures Christ, and **rulers** prefigure the apostles.

32:2 Christ will **hide His words** by speaking in parables to the multitudes, but will explain Himself in private to His disciples, for out of their hearts will flow **a glorious river** of living water (see Jn 7:38).

32:15 After Christ ascends to heaven, the Holy **Spirit** will come upon the believers at Pentecost, and the Church, **a fruitful field**, will be established.

32:20 **Those who sow** are those who teach salvation. **All waters** prefigure holy baptism. The Church will be formed from both Jew (**the ox**) and Gentile (**the donkey**).

33:1 The enemy may **distress** the believer physically, but not finally. In Christ the enemy **will be conquered** by his own treachery.

33:2 The faithful offer a prayer of thanksgiving for what the Lord has done, for through **affliction** they have learned to put their **trust** in God.

33:5 According to the Fathers, the saints, who dwell with God **in the heights**, have also become the dwelling place of God (1Co 3:16). **Zion** here represents the Church.

33:14 **Who will tell you a fire is burning?**: Christ Himself will tell His people about the **eternal place** of torment for the **lawless** and **ungodly**.

33:16 The **mighty rock** is a symbol of the Church, which will offer Christ, the **bread** of life, to the believers. And in the Church, the **water** of baptism into Christ **will be plentiful**.

33:17 **Eyes** set on the kingdom of heaven will behold Christ in **His glory** (Mt 24:30).

33:22 A marvelous summary of how God reveals Himself to His people.

34:1-4 These verses are echoed in Christ's teaching about the end times (see Mt 24:7–29).

34:11 Reference to **the measuring line** is also found in Lk 6:38: “With the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

35:8-9 The **dispersed** will **walk** the holy way—a highway of holiness, carrying the Light of Christ to the world.

36:1 An ancient Assyrian account of the events surrounding the siege of Jerusalem affirms that forty-six **fortified cities** in Judah had already been taken by **Sennacherib**.

36:3 **Shebna** and **Eliakim** are mentioned in ch. 22.

36:4 **The Rabshakeh** was a chief officer in the Assyrian army.

36:4-6 The Rabshakeh warns that the time for diplomacy has passed, and that Egypt, weak as a **broken reed**, will be more likely to hurt than help Judah. The situation for Jerusalem seems hopeless. But Assyria's pride in its own power, mockery against God's people, and blasphemy against God will be met with a punishment equal to the sin (37:36–38).

36:21 Just as Christ remained silent before His accusers, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah made no reply to the Rabshakeh's blasphemous claims against God.

37:1-4 When King Hezekiah **went into** the Temple, he did not pray for deliverance, despite his distress. Instead, he asked Isaiah to pray that God **rebuke** the enemy's blasphemy, and to pray for the **remnant** in Jerusalem.

37:8-9 Isaiah's prayers are answered when, for the time being, **the king** of Assyria halts the siege on Jerusalem in order to deal with the threat from the **Ethiopians**.

37:10-20 Even from a distance, the enemy continues to blaspheme the God of Israel. But note how Hezekiah's attitude has changed. This time (in contrast to 37:1–4), he prays directly before the Lord, asking Him to secure Jerusalem so that **all the kingdoms** will see and know that the God of Israel is **Lord** of all (v. 20).

37:22 The mighty King of Assyria will be **laughed . . . to scorn** by vulnerable **Jerusalem**, because she is God's **daughter**.

37:36-38 **The Angel of the Lord** steps in. God will utterly annihilate the enemy without a weapon, and the king will die at the hands of his own sons.

38:1-6 At the time of his physical affliction, **Hezekiah** had also become afflicted with pride (see 2Ch 32:25, 26). By telling him of his imminent death, the **Lord** revealed Himself to Hezekiah, who **wept loudly**. He humbled himself and prayed, and immediately, Isaiah was given a new **word** for the king: healing and another **fifteen years** of **life**.

38:7-8 This miracle of the **sun** moving **back . . . ten steps** is a **sign** for Hezekiah of God's faithfulness. But it also prefigures Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. He will turn **shadow** into day and darkness into light, for the turning back of the human heart from death to life is His greatest miracle of all (see vv. 16, 17).

39:1-4 Hezekiah put his entire nation at risk by parading all the **treasures** and wealth of **his house** before the foreign king.

39:5-8 Showing no apparent concern for his people and their posterity, King **Hezekiah** seems concerned only for **peace and righteousness** during his own times.

36:1-8 The Fathers agree that the prophet adds these narratives (which are almost identical to 4Kg 18:13–20:19) in order to emphasize that his prophecies are from God, as evidenced by their fulfillment in history.

40:1, 2 God raises up **priests** to **comfort** and strengthen the people, whose hearts are weighed down by **sin**, which is **pardoned**.

40:3-5 This passage is a prophecy of John the Baptist, who will be **the voice** proclaiming the coming of **salvation** through baptism into Christ **our God** (see Jn 1:23).

40:9 **You who bring good tidings** prophesies the preaching of Christ and His Apostles.

40:10 This prophecy is fulfilled in Christ: “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works” (Mt 16:27).

40:11 Christ's own words bear witness to the fulfillment of this prophecy in Himself: “I am the good **shepherd**; and I know my sheep, and am known by My own” (Jn 10:14).

40:22 Over 2000 years before science proclaimed the earth was round and revolved around the sun, Isaiah spoke of **the circle of the earth**.

41:2-7 This is a messianic prophecy, but it also may refer to Cyrus of Persia, who will conquer Babylon in 539 BC, allowing the captive Jews to return and rebuild the temple. Cyrus is named in 44:28 and 45:1.

41:4 **I Am**, repeated twenty-seven times in chs. 41–49, means “I am the existing One.” This phrase is traditionally written in Greek in Christ's halo on Orthodox icons (OWN). This is how the Son and Word of God revealed Himself to Moses (Ex 3:14).

41:5-7 When I Am becomes incarnate in Christ, **the Gentiles** will recognize the truth, and **they shall not be moved**. The Church will be **put together well**, for “unless the Lord builds the house, / Those who build it labor in vain” (Ps 126:1).

41:8-20 This prophecy will be fulfilled not only at the fall of Babylon and the return of the Jews from exile, but also through the Apostles and the Church, which will prevail against every type of persecution.

41:14-16 **Israel, few in number**: This also looks ahead to the Church, established at Pentecost with just twelve apostles.

41:20 **The Lord's hand** (or “arm”) is Christ Himself (see 26:11; 52:10; 53:1; 59:1; 66:1, 2).

42:1 **I put My Spirit upon Him** mentions all three Persons of the Holy Trinity. “I” and “My” speak of the Father; “Him” is the Son; “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit.

42:8 Christ does not share His **glory** with **another**, whether it be **carved images** or people who take personal credit for things God has done.

42:10-12 In Christ, the glorified Church will **sing** . . . **a new song** (see Rev 5:9).

42:13-17 This passage prophesies Christ's mighty acts of vengeance against **His enemies** at the Judgment. He will **turn darkness into light** (v. 16) for the faithful.

42:25 **Fire all around:** This prophecy was fulfilled historically when the Romans sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in AD 70.

43:1-4 **The Lord** names His people **you are Mine** because He, together with His Father and the Holy Spirit, created man and will assume human nature. Christ will **pass through** every affliction with us: taking sin, suffering, and death on Himself; overthrowing our adversaries; and offering us His salvation.

43:5-15 God will **gather** His Church from all **nations**. Christ is the **Servant** (v. 10), **chosen** by the Father to bear **witness** to all mankind (Jn 8:18).

44:3 God promises to **put My Spirit** on Israel's **seed**, the Apostles, at Pentecost (see Acts 2:17).

44:6 Christ declares in the Book of Revelation, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End” (Rev 1:8).

44:7-17 St. Paul writes that God has declared Himself since creation. But men **hide** themselves from God, making and worshiping idols, changing “the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things” (Rom 1:22, 23).

44:21-23 Here again is the message of salvation: God **formed** man in His own image, but we strayed from Him. Christ **blotted out** our **sins**, that we might **return** to Him. His promise to us is, **I will redeem you**. And thus we, His people, **will be glorified**.

44:28 Around 539 BC, **Cyrus** will conquer Babylon and send the Jews back to **Jerusalem**, where they will rebuild God's **holy house**, the temple.

45:1, 2 **Cyrus**'s work will be temporary; Christ's will be eternal.

45:6 Christ Himself echoes this promise in His High Priestly Prayer: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (Jn 17:3).

45:9, 10 **What are you making**: The lesson here is clear: like **clay** which is molded by the **potter**, we do not demand an accounting from our Creator.

45:25 **The children** are the blood descendants of **Israel**, but the apostles and the Church are their **seed**. It is the seed who **shall be made righteous** and **glorified**. Interestingly, the Masoretic Text omits the phrase “the seed of.”

46:3-4 An encouraging promise to believers in **old age**, reminiscent of Ps 70:17, 18.

46:10 There is no greater prayer than “Thy will be done,” for God does all things for our good (Rom 8:28), and His **counsel** (or will) **shall stand**.

47:1 The **virgin daughter of Babylon** is an image of a nice person without God: **comfortable** and **prosperous** on the outside, empty on the inside, and full of shame.

48:1, 2 The people, **called by the name of Israel**, “having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2Ti 3:5), cannot lay claim to a true inheritance of **truth** or **righteousness**. This is also a warning to the Church never to be Christians in name only.

48:5 Not only did God make it **well known** the people must not worship idols, He also warned the people against blaming the idols when things went wrong, saying, **My idols did them**.

48:15 **I have spoken**: In Christ, the Word is made man.

48:16 **The Lord and His Spirit have sent Me**: A reference to all three Persons of the Holy Trinity, in which the Son reaffirms the prophecy made in 9:5, naming Him “the Angel of Great Counsel.”

48:17-18 **The way** in which the people were called to walk is the law, God's **commandments**. To do so brings **peace . . . like a river**.

49:1 The promise of the coming of the Messiah **will stand for a long time**, until it is fulfilled when He is revealed **from** His **mother's womb** in the Incarnation. For the angel Gabriel said to the Virgin, “You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS” (Lk 1:31).

49:2 Christ will come, not to “bring peace, but a **sword**” (Mt 10:34). In some patristic writings, the **chosen arrow** is a metaphor for the divinity of Christ, and the **quiver** a metaphor for His humanity.

49:3-6 In Christ's divinity, the Father **will be glorified** on earth (v. 3); and in Christ's humanity, those who are brought **back to Him** will be joined to Him and know His **strength**. In this way, creation will be reconciled to God.

49:16-18 The **walls** of the earthly Zion, the Jewish nation, will be **laid** . . . **waste**, but the heavenly Zion, the Bride of Christ, will be **rebuilt quickly** by both Jewish and Gentile believers on Zion's desolate foundation.

49:22 The message of the cross will be **set up** as the **signal** of salvation.

50:6, 7 The Word became flesh and **gave** Himself over to violent suffering so that He might take our suffering and destroy it. This remarkably detailed prophecy was written over 700 years before the Crucifixion.

51:1, 2 The promise given to **Abraham** and **Sarah** will be fulfilled when the resurrected Christ bursts out of the tomb **hewed** from a **rock**.

51:3-5 The prophecy of **comfort** for God's people promises that **salvation will go forth** from God through His Incarnate Son, who is the Messiah of Israel and the **light of the Gentiles**.

51:5 Christ is often referred to in Scripture as the **arm** of the Father.

51:6-8 This promise is echoed in Christ's teaching found in Mt 24:35: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

51:12-16 The people are **fearful of mortal man**, but forgot the **God who made** them**.**

51:17-23 Christ said, “I did not come to judge the world but to save the world” (Jn 12:47). God judges sin and shows mercy to those who repent. The **cup of destruction** is God's chastisement.

52:1-3 The people are called for the third time to **awake** (see 51:9, 17). Note the progression: (1) awake and remember God's faithfulness (51:9–16); (2) awake, for you have been forgiven (51:17–22); (3) awake, for **you shall be redeemed** (52:1–3). Only Christ is able to redeem the soul. Christ will offer Himself as a sacrifice, paying the price, so to speak, to “reality itself” (GrgTheo).

52:3 “It is due to their sins that they have been sold, but it is by the benevolence of God that they have obtained deliverance” (Theod).

53:2 **He had no form or beauty:** “He sat upon the foal of an ass; He was despised among the people and humbled Himself even unto death” (Iren).

53:3-4 God became **dishonored**, for Christ assumed a true human nature. “O marvel at the loving kindness of the Word, that for our sakes He is dishonored, that we may be brought to honor” (AthanG).

53:5 Christ, who was free from sin, took our **chastisement** and gave us **peace.** By **His bruise** we are saved from an eternity of suffering and estrangement from God.

53:6 **The Lord**, God the Father, **delivered Him**, God the Son, to die **for our sins**. This is the message St. Paul proclaims in 2Co 5:21.

53:7 “The shepherd of Israel, and now of the whole world also” (GrgNa) became “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29).

53:8 Christ **was led to death**, yet death could not hold His perfect, sinless body (see Acts 2:24).

53:9 **He committed no lawlessness:** See Heb 4:15.

53:10 **The Lord**, God the Father, cleansed **Him**, God the Son, **of His wound** because His body could not remain subject to corruption and death. The **offering** made by Christ enables man to receive the same healing and eternal life.

53:12 **He was considered among the lawless** is a reference to “the robbers who were crucified with Him. . . . Both of them were before this transgressors, but one was so no longer” (CyrJer).

54:1 The Gentiles were once **barren** and **desolate**, but the Church of the Gentiles will give birth in the Spirit to many **more** . . . **children** than Israel has in the flesh.

54:2-3 **Enlarge** and **spread out further** suggests that the Church of **the Gentiles** will be much greater and larger than the tabernacle constructed by Moses.

54:9, 10 God's **covenant** with Noah was made on behalf of the whole world, and God will **no longer be angry** so as to cause another flood. **Noah's Flood** prefigures the waters of baptism, and the ark, not mentioned here, is a type of the Church.

54:11-15 According to some of the Fathers, **choice stones** represent those who lead holy lives filled with virtuous deeds. The **foundations** are the prophets, apostles, and evangelists.

55:1 **Eat and drink without money**: “Christ does not ask money, but faith—which is more valuable than money” (AmbM; see also Rev 21:6, 7).

55:8-9 **Neither are your ways My ways**: See 40:13 and 1Co 16. Reason alone will never bring us to God. Rather, we confess that we are finite; He is infinite. Thus we come to Him by faith.

55:10-11 **My word** is the gospel of Jesus Christ, which will **accomplish** God's will. There are times the preaching of the Gospel seems to bear no fruit, but God is at work whether or not we see visible results.

56:1, 2 **My mercy shall be revealed**: God's word to the prophet reveals the future, but also interprets the past.

56:4-5 The righteous **eunuchs** will have an **eternal name** in heaven (v. 5), **better than** an earthly family. “They will pass from the old shadows of time into the new lights of eternity” (Aug).

56:6, 7 **The foreigners** are the Gentiles, who are welcome at God's **holy mountain**, the Church**.**

57:1, 2 **The righteous** is Christ (Cyr, Theod).

57:3 The **lawless** people are no longer considered children of Abraham, but of the **prostitute** (see 1:21).

57:14 This prophecy is fulfilled in John the Baptist (see 40:3).

57:15 God is at once **the Lord Most High**, inconceivable and unknowable, and the **Holy One** who dwells **among His saints** and strengthens the **fainthearted**.

58:1 God calls Isaiah to rebuke the people loudly, **like** the **trumpet** that was traditionally blown when a fast was called (Joel 2:15). The people display an outward religious piety that hides the wickedness in their hearts.

58:2-5 Fasting and other ascetic acts do not necessarily indicate virtue. Blessed Augustine reminds us that even heretics fast! God will **not see** these actions if we **mistreat** others. God chooses rather that we **humble** our own **soul**. “A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit” (Ps 50:19).

58:7-8 The gospel is both social and redemptive. First, the physical needs must be met, and then the spiritual needs can be satisfied.

58:9 **I am here**: God is instantaneous in answering the prayers of the righteous. Sometimes He will reveal His presence through circumstances, and sometimes with a still, small voice, but always He will help us to know He dwells with us.

58:11 **Generations of generations**: The inheritance of the faithful will never be cut off.

58:12 Just as Israel was called to be **built** on unchanging **ancient foundations**, so is the Church. What makes the Orthodox Church orthodox is its commitment to remain faithful and unaltered **from generation to generation.**

59:1, 2 God is able **to save**, but He will not **have mercy** where there is no repentance. “Remember God at all times, and He will remember you whenever you fall into evils” (IsaacS).

59:3-4 “For persevering with delight in wicked actions, they hasten thereto without turning back, even treading under foot the commandment with regard to neighbors, and instead of loving them, desire evil against them” (AthanG).

59:12-13 This passage offers the words that can be spoken to show repentance and receive forgiveness from God (Theod).

59:17 Paul uses this verse in his passages on spiritual warfare (Eph 6:13–17; 1Th 5:8).

59:20-21 Christ **who delivers** will come to **Zion**, “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 15:24). **Turn back ungodliness**: Then the Holy **Spirit** will be given to the Church at Pentecost, and the proclamation of the Gospel will be established **forever**. “Since we too delight in this grace, let us therefore celebrate in our hymns Him who is the dispenser” (Theod).

60:1 This is the hymn we sing at Pascha (Easter) in the liturgical services. “On this day, the whole creation rejoices and exults, for Christ is risen and Hades despoiled” (JohnDm).

60:4 For St. Cyril, this passage refers not only to the return of the Jews from exile, but also to the assembling of the Church from all nations.

60:6-9 **Midian**, **Kedar**, and **Ephah** are nations of nomads descended from Ishmael, and **Sheba** is an Ethiopian tribe. Eusebius sees these nations, along with their **camels, sheep, rams**, and wealth, as metaphors for the spiritual gifts and sacrifices which will be offered on God's **altar**. In this way, His **house of prayer**, Christ's Church, will **be glorified**. Gregory of Nyssa comments that “virtue is a light and buoyant thing,” and those who live virtuous lives **fly like clouds** (v. 8).

61:1, 2 It is this passage to which Jesus referred in Lk 4:16–21 when He stood in the synagogue and read from the prophet Isaiah. He told the people, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Jesus made it very clear that He is the **Lord** God of whom Isaiah wrote. “Christ said: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.’ And rightly did He say ‘upon Me,’ because He was speaking as the Son of Man. For as the Son of Man, He was anointed and sent to preach the Gospel” (AmbM).

61:3 Many in **Zion** awaited the Messiah, **glory instead of ashes**. One thinks of the aged Simeon (Lk 2:22–35), who was "waiting for the Consolation of Israel," and the prophetess Anna (Lk 2:36–38), "who looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

61:7 **Eternal gladness** or joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22, 23). The “seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” is given to the believer at chrismation, which is also called the “oil of gladness” (v. 3).

61:10-11 St. John Chrysostom teaches that **the garment of salvation** is Christ Himself, as do others of the Fathers. This explains why St. Paul wrote that in baptism we “put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).

62:3-5 Christ's **crown of beauty** is those who keep themselves pure, like the wise virgins waiting for the **bridegroom** (Mt 25:1–13). Christ **rejoices** over His **bride**, the Church (see Eph 5:22–33).

62:6 The **guards**, according to some Fathers, are the priests. Others see them as angels who continually guard and watch over the Church.

62:7 The prophecy refers to the Incarnation, when the Son of God takes on human flesh, becoming **like** us. Similar passages are Ex 15:11; Ps 85:8; Jer 10:6, 7.

62:8-9 **Grain** and **wine** are the fruits of righteousness, given to the faithful—both righteous Jews and foreigners—in the Holy Eucharist.

62:10-12 The **standard for the Gentiles** is the Cross, the **Savior** is Christ, and the **redeemed of the Lord** are the Church.

63:2-3 Christ is clothed in the flesh of His humanity and stained with the blood of His Passion. Having been **crushed** by His enemies in His death, He in turn has crushed them under His feet.

63:7-10 Judgment and **mercy** are bound together, but by God's grace, “mercy triumphs over judgment” (Jam 2:13). God so **loved** the world that **the Lord Himself saved them**. But note how their rebellion **grieved His Holy Spirit**, causing Him to turn **against them**.

63:11 Note how this verse parallels Heb 13:20: “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep . . .”

63:12-14 **Moses** prefigures Christ, for just as Moses was raised up to lead the people through the Red Sea, Christ passed through death and was raised up into life, that He might lead all His **people** from death to life.

63:15 Isaiah begins his prayer for God to remember the inheritance (v. 17) promised to His people long ago with the word **return,** which is echoed in the final words of Revelation: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20).

63:17 God **hardened** their **hearts** with His patience. He allowed them to continue in their disobedience. Thus, when the chastisement comes, it will be fully justified.

64:1-3 If God's **presence** causes His **adversaries** to **be troubled**, how much more will His **mercy** help those who **wait** for Him? (See also 1Co 2:9.)

64:4 God is **angry** because sin has caused us to go **astray**. He will **meet** with **mercy** those who do true **righteousness** and **remember** Him (v. 4).

64:5 The **filthy rag** is a woman's soiled menstrual cloth. And note it is representative not of our unrighteousness, but of our **righteousness**! (See also Rom 3:10 and Tts 3:57.)

65:2 **I stretched out My hands**: This phrase points to “the salvific Passion on the Cross on which He extended His hands” (Theod).

65:3-8 The people violate the law deliberately and continually, and therefore deserve God's **anger** (v. 5); yet because of the intercession of even one, God declares that He will **not destroy them all** (v. 8). “If, within the cluster, a single mature seed is found, it is a cause for saving the entire cluster for the purpose of offering the first fruits to God” (Theod).

65:16 Orthodox faithful **bless** themselves with the sign of the cross of Christ, in the name of the **true God**: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

65:17-25 This prophecy is partially fulfilled in this age, where those who have been united to Christ are a “new creation” (2Co 5:17); but it will be fulfilled completely in the age to come, when Christ comes again with **a new heaven and a new earth** (see Rev 21:1–4).

66:1 “God, then, being immaterial and uncircumscribed, has no place. For He is His own place, filling all things” (JohnDm; see also Jn 4:20–24).

66:5-6 Believers are reminded that even those who **hate** them are still **brethren**, for God alone **repays His enemies** with justice.

66:7 According to the Fathers, this prophecy is fulfilled first in the Virgin Mary, and also in the Church. “He who was of the Father, yet without mother, was born of a woman without a father's cooperation. . . . For, as pleasure did not precede it, pain did not follow it” (JohnDm).

66:8-9 The Church will indeed be born **in one day**, at Pentecost (see Acts 2:41; 4:4), and she will in turn **give birth to** a **nation**, whereas the old covenant of the law will be **sterile**.

66:10-14 Christ the Bridegroom is describing the glorious union of Himself with His Bride, the Church. Regarding verse 12, St. Ambrose says, “The Holy Spirit is the river.”

66:15-16 Here the Second Coming of the Lord and the Last Judgment are depicted.

66:19 The cross is the sign of salvation which the apostles **shall declare . . . among the Gentiles** (see Mt 8:19).

66:20-21 Worship, **sacrifices with psalms**, will be open to both **Gentiles** and Jews, and Christ will choose **priests** to serve His Church from the Gentile believers.

1:1 **Jeremiah** means “God appoints or exalts.” **Anathoth** is his hometown, within the **land of Benjamin**.

1:2-3 Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of **Josiah**, **Jehoiakim**, and **Zedekiah**.

1:5 God's foreknowledge and His calling are here woven together.

1:6 Like Moses before him (Ex 4:10), Jeremiah claims he does not **know how to speak**. As with all the prophets, God put His words in Jeremiah's mouth (v. 9).

1:16 Note the three sins of Judah, and of all mankind: (1) forsaking God; (2) false worship; and (3) preoccupation with themselves.

2:2-3 This is ironic, since Israel never was committed entirely to the Lord. Yet in the faithfulness of the patriarchs and prophets, Israel can be said to have been faithful. Ultimately, however, the passage depicts God's relationship with all nations. Although they were taken over by enemies, God redeemed them through **the Holy One of Israel**, who is Christ.

2:10 **Chettim** is Cyprus and other Greek **islands**; **Kedar** is a region in northern Arabia.

2:13 In both the old covenant and the new, the problem is the same: people **forsake** God, the **living water**, and damage the **cisterns** or containers, the places of God's dwelling. As Orthodox believers, therefore, we adhere both to Christ and His Church.

2:23 **Baal** was the idol-god of neighboring nations, and the unfaithful Jews became his **disciples.** Following this or any false god leads to death, a **common burial place**.

2:36 **Repeat your ways** is literally “redouble your path.” When we sin, we usually do the same things over and over again.

3:6-10 Israel's apostasy from God is described as **fornication** (v. 7), **adultery** (v. 8), and being **faithless** (v. 10). These words are those of **the Lord** (v. 6). This is not only bodily sin, “but any sin you have committed” (GrgNa).

3:15-18 This is the first great messianic prophecy of Jeremiah. It finds its fulfillment in: (1) faithful **shepherds** (v. 15), the apostles; (2) **the Holy One of Israel** (v. 16), our Lord Jesus Christ; (3) **Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord** (v. 17), which looks ahead to the eternal Kingdom (Rev 21:2; 22:1); and (4) the inclusion of **the Gentiles** (v. 17), which speaks of the Church.

3:19 The God of Israel is here prophetically called **God of the Gentiles**, who is the **Father**. Thus, when the disciples ask Jesus how to pray, His answer begins with “Our Father” (Lk 11:1, 2).

4:4 **Circumcise . . . your heart**: St. Cyprian tells us “the first circumcision of the flesh is made void, and the second circumcision of the spirit is promised instead” (see Col 2:11). He further notes, “Then, because that sign did not avail women, but all are sealed by the sign of the Lord” (that is, Holy Baptism).

4:14 **Wash the vices from your heart**: “It is not the filth of the body, but the impurity of the soul, to which God is averse” (JohnChr).

4:22 The Lord specifies that those most responsible for Israel's apostasy are her **leaders**. What is wrong? They **do not know Me**. Throughout Christian history there have been many secular and religious leaders open to the same charge. St. Paul advises, “from such people turn away!” (2Ti 3:5).

5:1 The implication is, there are none to be found in **Jerusalem** seeking **faithfulness** to whom the Lord can be **merciful**.

5:4 **Poor** . . . **do not know the way of the Lord**: “The poor man is . . . he who lacks the great doctrines, as is the view also of the prophet” (BasilG).

5:10 The **foundations . . . belong to the Lord**: Despite her faithlessness, still the foundations of the city are established by God.

5:13 **Our prophets were as wind**: In modern idiom, they were full of hot air! St. Jude called them “clouds without water” and “autumn trees without fruit” (Jude 12).

5:19 **Foreign gods**: The Greek word used to describe false gods suggests “strangeness” or “an alien disposition.” Here, the Lord uses that meaning to promise Judah that the kinds of gods they worship will determine the kind of life they live. This is true for all people, not just Judah.

5:23-28 When God's people have an **inattentive and disobedient heart** (v. 23), they not only miss the **good things** He offers (v. 25), they neglect **the orphan** and **the widow** (v. 28). When dedication to the Lord is compromised, social justice is not to be found.

6:1 **Beth Haccerem**: St. Jerome taught this was located between Tekoa, Amos' birthplace, and Jerusalem.

6:5 **Destroy her foundations**: The ancient method of leveling a city was to uproot its very foundations.

6:9 See Lam 1:22. To **glean** a **vine** is to strip it of all its fruit, leaving it desolate, as is promised with the coming attack on **Israel**.

6:10 As in 4:4, circumcision was always understood to be a spiritual act. Without a circumcised heart, circumcision is in vain—just as an unbaptized heart pollutes our baptism.

6:16 St. Athanasius connects this passage with Jn 14:6, where Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

6:17 The **watchmen** are the prophets, as distinguished from the shepherds who led the communities.

6:18 Ironically, the call to holiness is heard outside Israel, pointing to the opening of Israel to **the Gentiles**.

6:20 Although sacrifice to God was still practiced in Israel, it was compromised by their idolatry, just as our worship is polluted if we participate in the liturgy, yet habitually do what it forbids. “For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness” (Iren).

7:2 The captivity of Judah was not fated, but was God's appropriate response to the freely made decisions of a disobedient people.

7:10 Jesus cited this verse when cleansing the temple (Mt 21:13), suggesting that while in Jeremiah's day the question of the temple being a **den of robbers** was preposterous, by Christ's time it was a sad fact.

7:17 **Cake dough**: the Hebrew word *chavon* is transliterated into Greek. These were sweet breads dedicated to pagan **gods**, **the host of heaven**.

7:21-22 The Lord highlights their obedience as more important than adhering to the letter of the **command.**

7:30 **Tophet**: The place where children were being sacrificed to Molech (4Kg 23:10). The sad end of this child sacrifice will be cannibalism, effected during the siege of Jerusalem (Bar 2:3).

7:32 The places of pagan sacrifice are prophesied to become a killing field.

8:1, 2 This desecration of the **graves** of the patriarchs and kings was executed by the Babylonians. The drying here refers to the heat of the **sun.** Although the saints whose bones were exposed were in no way to be worshiped, God desired that their exposure to the elements would finally convince Israel of her error.

8:8 These are apparently popular sayings, widespread among the people.

8:12 **Gall to drink**: Unsanitary water, the only kind to be had then in the city. While this was a proper corrective response to Israel's sin, they went far beyond this, later in time, by giving Christ, who knew no sin, “wine mingled with gall” (Mt 27:34).

8:17 **Vanities** is another term for idols.

8:18 The seasons of the siege, carried through the summer, not only match well the chronology of the Babylonian invasion (probably that of 597) but highlight how devastating a siege can be. No crops could be grown and harvested that year, while all the inhabitants of the greater territory crowded into the city walls to be **saved** from the terror.

8:20 **Balm**: A resin of mastix or terebinth, used for perfumes, medicines, and ointments. **Gilead** is sometimes a symbol for Israel, an area east of the Jordan River bordered by desert.

8:21 Jeremiah's **tears** remind us that God's punishments were not without purpose. God deeply cares for all whom He disciplines (Heb 12:5, 6), and He sends His rebuke to correct and transform us.

9:1 Jeremiah seeks to withdraw from his people since he is exasperated by their disobedience. “Thus, for wickedness and falsehood, and for deeds, in which they [proceed] from iniquity to iniquity, he reproves their practices; but, because they knew not the Lord, and were faithless, he charges them with unrighteousness” (AthanG).

9:10 **Dwelling place of serpents**: An especially diabolical image, given the habit of dragons or serpents to persecute the saints (Rev 12:7–9).

9:22 Boasting in oneself and one's capabilities is here forbidden. In our devotion to God, we are called to boast only in the glory of God or, in the words of the Apostle Paul, “Christ . . . crucified” (1Co 2:2).

9:25 “And to show how those from among the Gentiles were foretold as more true and more believing, we will cite what was said by [Jeremiah] the prophet; for he spoke as follows: ‘Israel is uncircumcised in heart, but the Gentiles are uncircumcised in the flesh’” (Justin).

10:7 **The gods that did not make heaven**: “For ‘by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made,’ which His Father also everywhere by the Prophets declares to be especially characteristic of His own Essence. And the Prophets are continually busy on this kind of demonstration, not only of itself, but when they contend against the honor shown to idols; ‘Let the gods perish,’ says one, ‘who have not made heaven and earth’” (JohnChr).

10:8 **The inhabited world**: The Greek term *oikoumene* refers to the extent of the world that was civilized, not necessarily everywhere people lived. God is therefore the One who makes possible political stability, education, and other blessings of life.

10:16-17 **My tabernacle . . . is ruined**: Mourning the loss of right worship, the Lord depicts His house in terms of the ancient tabernacle instead of Solomon's temple, which is about to be destroyed. Led by foolish **shepherds** who no longer **seek** Him, the people had shunned the pattern of worship that God had given to Moses on the mountain long ago (Ex 25:40). Those who would worship God “in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24) must not neglect the gift of Holy Tradition handed down in the Scriptures and the Church, lest we be led astray and **scattered**.

10:20-21 This prayer of Jeremiah is ultimately to be answered at the Judgment. But for now, Jews and **Gentiles** alike are invited to **call** upon the **name** of the Lord.

11:13 “Wherefore to Jeremiah also He said, ‘Pray not for this people, for I will not hear thee,’ not as wishing to stop his praying (for He earnestly longs for our salvation), but to terrify them: and this the prophet also seeing did not cease praying” (JohnChr).

11:18 Jeremiah here, as elsewhere, serves as a foreshadowing of Christ, the truly **innocent lamb** who was **sacrificed** by those who planned to exterminate His entire legacy.

11:20 **Anathoth**: See 1:1. This explains, in part, Christ's saying regarding the rejection of a prophet in his hometown (Lk. 4:24).

12:1 Here Jeremiah takes up a theme dealt with far more extensively in Job (see, for example, Job 12:6).

12:5 If we **grow weary** in the trials of ordinary life, how do we expect to handle swift **horses** or **floods**? The answer is, through Christ.

12:7-8 The suffering of the Incarnate God. “Look with awe then at the Lord who was judged. He suffered Himself to be led and carried by soldiers. Pilate sat in judgment, and He who sits on the right hand of the Father, stood and was judged” (CyrJer).

12:14-16 Jeremiah quickly changes his audience to the Gentiles, promising them inclusion among the people of God should they learn to worship Him. The full reality of this was not encountered until the coming of Christ.

13:1 A **linen sash** was used as a loincloth.

13:4 **The Euphrates**: Although residing in Judah, Jeremiah is commanded to go to Babylon to **hide** the sash, then return later to uncover it. Although it is feasible Jeremiah took such a trip before the destruction of the city, it is more likely that God transported him. Whether this happened in the body or in the spirit is unclear.

13:7 **Behold**: The surprise is ironic. Jeremiah knew very well the cloth would be **rotted**, just as he knew Judah would be ruined by her pride. The rotten sash is a picture of Judah (vv. 10, 11).

13:17 This passage may be alternately translated, “If you will not hear it secretly, your soul will weep for your pride.” That is, if you do not read the Law and the covenants spiritually, your soul will be left barren.

13:19 This verse suggests that **Judah** was so completely conquered, she provided a classic example of how a country would be deported from that time on.

13:26 **I will uncover your backside to your face**: Physically speaking, this is an impossibility—and therefore we must take it as a spiritual warning. Our backside is uncovered to our face when we become aware that our sins and faults are seen by the whole world!

14:1-10 The prophecy of a **drought** can refer to either a period without **rain** (v. 4) or the judgment of God (v. 10), or both.

14:13 Their prophets: Jeremiah identifies here a group of prophets who generally told the ruling class what they wanted to hear. **Their** prophets, not “our” prophets, suggests distance between them and the Lord.

14:22 Returning to the theme of the drought, Jeremiah identifies God with the coming of the **rain,** which He **made.**

15:1 God refuses Jeremiah's intercession, but this is not to suggest His punishment was irreversible, since Judah herself, by obeying the Lord, could have averted her own destruction.

15:3 **Four ways**: See Ezk 14:21. The inclusion of **beasts** highlights the fact that when the Creator is incensed against sinners, not even creation itself can hold back from rising against them.

15:9 **The sun set** . . . at **noonday**: “ . . . plainly announced that obscuration of the sun which at the time of [Christ's] crucifixion took place from the sixth hour onwards, and that after this event, those days which were their festivals according to the law, and their songs, should be changed into grief and lamentation when they were handed over to the Gentiles” (Iren).

15:18 **Deceitful water**: St. Cyprian calls this “the resemblance of baptism,” done under “a shadowy pretense.” Presumably, this is a reference to baptisms performed by those who stand outside of communion with the Church.

15:19-21 God answers Jeremiah's prayer (vv. 15–18) for protection from his persecutors very graciously: **I am with you to save you** (v. 20).

16:1 Here Jeremiah serves as a model for virginity, a virtue to be fully enshrined in Christ and His Mother. While in the case of Jeremiah, the virginity undertaken highlights the imminence of captivity, in Christ's time it revealed the imminence of salvation.

16:5-7 **Mourning** and **consolation** are forbidden to Jeremiah. But whereas this was commanded to Jeremiah because of the disgrace of the nation, in Christ we will cease to mourn because of the glory of the Resurrection.

16:7 It is in light of the glory of the Resurrection that we Christians mourn the dead in Christ with the **bread** and **cup** of the Eucharist.

16:15 The Lord promises a restoration to **the house of Israel** that would eclipse the Exodus from Egypt. In like manner, our delivery from sin by the work of Christ eclipses both!

16:16 The **fishermen** and the **hunters** are the Babylonians and the Romans.

16:19-21 The repentance of **the Gentiles** is here foretold, a constant theme in the Book of Jeremiah.

17:1, 2 The **shrub** here is the tamarisk. St. Basil the Great notes, “it is an aquatic plant [it needs water], and yet it covers the desert. Thus Jeremiah compares it to the worst of characters—the double character.” Later, St. James would write, “a double-minded man [is] unstable in all his ways” (Jam 1:8).

17:5 **The heart is deep beyond all things**: St. John Chrysostom labors the point that only God can know men's hearts, citing Ps 7:9; 1Kg 16:7; C2hr 6:30; and Mt 9:3, 4.

17:15-23 Jeremiah delivers the word of the Lord that Israel should stop violating **the Sabbath.** The reward for obedience is a gathering of the nations into Jerusalem to offer sacrifice (vv. 21, 22). Although this was done after the exile, it was not completely fulfilled until the Gentiles joined the procession on the Day of Pentecost.

18:1-10 This is the passage referred to by St. Paul in Rom 9:21, and it highlights the Apostle's intention. The ability of the potter to do what he wants with his pots is always present. But God, as the good potter, does with His vessels according to the obedience or disobedience of the vessels. He makes good vessels, but vessels can choose evil and crumble in His hands without His intervention. But out of the rubble, the potter is able to recreate something beautiful.

18:18 As the Jews sought to **devise a plan against Jeremiah** to **strike him down**, so they also plotted against Christ, to destroy Him (Mk 3:6).

19:2 **Graveyard**: So called because the Israelites had offered their children to Baal and Molech there (vv. 4, 5). Also, this is the place where the people of Judah were to be buried after the siege.

19:9 The sin of cannibalism was later confessed by the people of Judah (7:31; Bar 2:3).

20:1 **Pashhur**: A **priest** and the first civil authority to try to coerce Jeremiah into giving false prophecy.

20:7-18 This is the song of complaint that Jeremiah offers to God from prison. Although tempted to neglect his call as a prophet, Jeremiah cannot help but act on it (v. 9).

20:13 A burst of exaltation in the midst of depression. Jeremiah exemplifies the attitude of hope found among martyrs. In facing **evil** persecution, the saints were always aware of the overwhelming power and authority of God.

20:15 **Who brought the good news**: This is the same concept as expressed in the NT when **a boy** was **born**, that is, the gospel.

20:17 **Unending conception**: Jeremiah wishes that his mother had simply carried his fetus with her to the grave.

21:1 **Pashhur**: A priest; a different Pashhur from the one mentioned in 20:1.

21:2 **King of Babylon**: Although rarely named in the LXX, Nebuchadnezzar is the one referred to.

21:8 The declaration of two paths of **life** and **death** was to remind Israel they had abandoned the Law, which also set forth these two ways for the people of Israel (Dt 30:15).

21:13 **Sor**: The same people who were the recipients of Ezekiel's prophecy in Ezk 26.

22:6 **Gilead/Lebanon:** The former was famous for its spices (8:20); the latter was renowned for its fine cedars.

22:11 **Shallum**: An alternative name for Jehoahaz. The custom of calling one person by different names is found throughout Scripture.

22:12 **In the place**: Egypt (4Kg 12:31–34; C2hr 36:1–4).

22:15 **They**: Not only **Ahaz,** but all the deceased kings.

22:19 The type of death he incurred is recounted in C2hr 36:6.

22:30 Zedekiah, the successor to Jeconiah, was his kinsman (C2hr 36:10).

23:3 God promises the **increase** of His flock without the assistance of the negligent shepherds.

23:4 This verse was fulfilled only in Christ, who puts an end to all **fear** and terror. He is love, and in perfect love there is no fear (1Jn 4:18).

23:5 **Behold, days are coming**: This phrase indicates the next prophecy deals with a great future event. **Raise up for David the Righteous Orient**: Christ is the Orient, the perfect light from the East whose Incarnation, death, descent, Resurrection, and Ascension rises to David. We sing of Christ at the sacraments of marriage and ordination, “Orient is His name.”

23:6 **The Lord our Righteousness** is Jesus Christ, who will come that **Judah** and all people **will be saved.**

23:16 **Speak from their own heart**: The ultimate hallmark of a false prophet is that he is the source of his own “divine teaching,” just as heretics are the human inventors of their own novelties.

23:17 **Error of his heart** is literally, “things they want,” emphasizing that the fault lies in the decisions of the false prophets, not in some outside, compulsory force.

24:1-10 By distinguishing **two baskets of figs**, the Lord makes it clear that not every single person in the land was to be taken away into captivity, but only the worst. In fact, it seems that as some were to be deported, others of those already exiled were brought back. It may have been in light of this passage that our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to judge a tree by its fruit (Mt 7:16–20).

25:1 **Fourth year**: 606/605 BC.

25:3 **Thirteenth year**: 605/604 BC. **Twenty-third year**: 595/594 BC.

25:14 Here begins the series of prophecies delivered against various nations surrounding Judah. **Elam**: A country east of Babylon.

25:18 **My throne**: Generally, the throne of a foreign power, but here the throne of God when He comes to include Elam in His inheritance.

26:1 **By the River Euphrates**: This took place when the army of **Egypt** came against **Babylon**, but was later defeated in Syria in the **fourth year**, or 606/605 BC.

26:7 Hoping to imitate the **river** Nile, the king of Egypt planned to **cover the earth** with Egyptian power.

26:8 **Ethiopia/Libya/Lydians**: Vassals and allies of Egypt.

26:13 **Migdol/Memphis**: Cities in Egypt. Migdol is on the northeast border of Egypt near the delta; Memphis is close to modern-day Cairo**.**

26:14 **Apis** is the bull god or **chosen calf** of Memphis.

26:15 **Greek sword**: Interestingly, the LXX translators deemed it right to use an image of their own time (200 BC) to convey the meaning behind the Hebrew term (600 BC) for a “fierce army.” This sword symbolized the swift ferocity of any ruler who would be comparable to Alexander the Great.

26:24 **Ammon** is the chief god of Thebes, located in upper Egypt.

26:26 God does not discipline His children without purpose, but does so with healing in view. Although most of the Book of Jeremiah deals with Judah's punishment, God always points out that it is righteous and purposeful correction.

27:1 This chapter and the following are the longest in Jeremiah and fall at the center of the book. Thus, the promises of the destruction of Babylon evenly split the warnings to Israel, showing that the Book of Jeremiah is not about the destruction of the people of God, but their restoration; not about the triumph of God's enemies, but their demise. After dealing with Egypt, which exiled Jehoahaz, Jeremiah deals with **Babylon**, which conquered Egypt.

27:2 **Bel** and **Merodach** are two famous Babylonian deities or idols.

27:3 Just as destruction came on Israel from **the north**, Babylon also falls at the hand of a power from the north: Persia.

27:4-5 The demise of Babylon comes in the repentance of **the children of Israel**. In like manner, when we repent, our enemy and his demonic forces are routed.

27:25 The **vessels of His wrath** are political powers with whom God is angry, yet whom He nevertheless uses to accomplish His will on earth. It is in this sense that the same phrase is used by the apostle Paul in Rom 9:22, likely reflecting on the way God used Babylon.

27:34 Redemption is carried out by the **Lord Almighty**, so it should be no wonder that Christ, our Redeemer, is Lord and God.

27:39 **The islands** are either the colonies of Babylon in the Mediterranean, or a reference to her ultimate expansive size.

28:11 **King of the Medes:** possibly King Cyaxares, later conquered by Cyrus the Great in 500 BC.

28:13 Babylon's fall comes through her own gluttony, a reminder to us all that we place our end in the things we crave, whether God or material goods.

28:27 **Ararat** is an area in modern-day Turkey, where the ark rested (Gn 8:4). The **Ashkenaz** are the Scythians, a people then located in modern-day Armenia.

28:55 **Fourth year**: 593 BC. **Quartermaster**: Literally, “governor of the gifts.”

28:60 Just as he did with Judah, God sends His messenger to **Babylon**, about to **sink** or be destroyed, which dramatizes the threat.

29:1, 2 **The Philistines** were also called “foreign tribes” who inhabited **the land** of Canaan. This descriptive title foreshadows the eventual gathering of all nations, tongues, and tribes as the people of God. St. Ambrose reminds us that calling the Philistines by this name teaches us to love our enemies, since there were far worse names an enemy could be called.

30:1 **Teman** was a grandson of Esau (Gn 36:15).

30:2 **Dedan**: A town in the desert toward the Arabian peninsula.

30:8 **Messengers** may also be translated “angels.” Either is appropriate, given that the struggle of **war** was occurring on the spiritual level as well as the political.

30:22 **Kedar**: The descendants of the son of Ishmael (Gn 25:13). **The sons of Kedem** were associated with the Ammonites (see Ezk 25:4, 10).

30:28 **Hamath** is where King Zedekiah would be sentenced by Nebuchadnezzar (52:27).

30:32 **Ben-Hadad** is a king in **Damascus** who plundered Israel (4Kg 13:3).

31:12 **Horns** are a dual symbol of power and of a wine cup. God intends to put an end to both their power and their merriment.

31:13 **Bethel** is a reference to the golden calf set up as an idol in Israel (3Kg 12:29).

31:18 Although once entrenched in **glory** and security, **Moab** will soon be entrenched in a **damp place**, likely a swamp.

31:33 This **shout** is a cry of dismay made by workers at the **winepresses**.

32:1 Here Jeremiah sums up the previous six chapters, the natural place for such a passage. God's judgment is **prophesied** for **all the nations**, including Israel and Judah.

32:20 **The day of the Lord** comes at the end of the age, when judgment is accomplished. This passage must therefore be understood prophetically, since there has never been a time in history when the Lord has judged His people completely over all **the earth**. Every sin will be **slain**, every demon vanquished, at the final coming of Christ our King.

33:1, 2 This prophecy was given before the destruction of the Temple, **the house of the Lord**.

33:14-15 Here Jeremiah foreshadows Christ, who was also unjustly slandered, yet allowed the wicked and unjust to have their way with Him and shed **innocent blood**.

33:16 **Rulers**: This is the first indication in the book that the leadership is beginning to hear Jeremiah's message.

33:18 This refers to the prophet **Micah** (Mic 1:1). The prophecy in question comes from Mic 3:12.

33:20-23 Micah's example of fair treatment is now contrasted with the case of an otherwise unknown prophet who was persecuted to the ends of the earth. As we listen to the prophets of Israel, we likewise read the writings of the Fathers of the Church who faithfully proclaimed God's oracles, interpreting rightly the Holy Scriptures.

34:7 This is sound advice for those who **give heed** to the fortune tellers, **false prophets**, and cult leaders of our day.

34:14 This does not mean that **the vessels** will never be returned, for they were (Bar 1:8). The false prophets were delivering a false word.

35:1 **Fourth year/fifth month**: 593 BC.

35:10 **Hananiah** symbolizes an early return of the exiles by breaking Jeremiah's **yokes** or shackles. Implied here as well is that he freed Jeremiah from his confinement, an act that was calculated to win Jeremiah's support. The true prophet, unlike Hananiah, refuses to heed the flattery and vain promises of men.

36:1 **The words of the letter**: A similar letter was sent by Jeremiah in the Epistle of Jeremiah.

36:3 King **Zedekiah** could send this **letter** safely since he was essentially a vassal of **Babylon** at that time.

36:5-7 This passage beautifully summarizes the Christian struggle in this life. We live in a dry and barren **land**, in exile from our true homeland, which is Christ's holy kingdom. But we learn to live within our exile, enlarging the Church and becoming a blessing even to those hostile to us. The **gardens** are literally “paradises.” Hence, the passage admonishes planting and cultivating a life that resembles heaven on earth.

36:10 **Seventy years**: Jeremiah speaks both historically and mystically. There was a return of exiles under Cyrus after seventy years. During His earthly ministry, Christ chose seventy men to be heralds of the Gospel (Lk 10:1–20). These seventy lived a godly life of obedience to Christ, suffering martyrdom and spreading the Kingdom—the true regathering from exile in the world.

36:14 A prophecy of the Incarnation, when God the Son truly **will appear** to us in His flesh.

36:24 The suggestion seems to be that Jeremiah had **Zephaniah** read aloud his very own rebuke.

37:8 This, of course, never happened to fleshly Israel. Only with the coming of Christ were God's people liberated from the control of **foreigners**.

37:9 **David their king** is a reference to the Messiah, both the Lord God and the final king of David's line.

37:15-20 A prophecy of the coming of Christ and His judgment. The **children** (v. 17) are the faithful who **enter** the Church. **Testimonies** (v. 17) translates the Greek word *martyria*, pointing to the martyrs of Christ.

38:1-14 An extended prophecy of the compassion of Christ for the Church.

38:4 **O virgin of Israel**: The renewal of Israel includes moral purity, pointing to the Virgin who truly sanctified Israel by giving birth to Him who is the source of true purity, Christ our God.

38:5 The **vineyard** in **Samaria** speaks of the establishment of the gospel among the Gentiles.

38:8 The **Passover**, later to be known as Pascha or Easter. This is an explicit prophecy of the crucifixion of Christ, which happened on the Passover, thereby bringing a **great multitude** into the kingdom of God.

38:12 The **fruitful tree** speaks of the cross.

38:15 Here we are reminded of the slaughter of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem (Mt 2:18).

38:22 The **new planting** is the Church, the new Israel, as well as the New Testament (1Co 3:6–8).

38:30 In the gospel it is made clear that no one person will be guilty of the sins of another, only of **his own sin**.

38:33 The implanting of the new **covenant**, the law in the heart, was clearly effected with the coming of Christ (2Co 3:3; Heb 10:15–18).

38:34 The prophet points to the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Church so that knowledge of and communion with God can be for all men, not just for holy prophets and kings as in the old covenant.

39:1 **Tenth year**: 587 BC, the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem.

39:6-12 This incident reveals that the prophet had hope in the **field** he purchased, even though he was aware of the impending disaster. But **the purchase** took place outside of Jerusalem in an unprotected area, revealing that the Jews were to leave Jerusalem and become servants in Babylon.

39:35 The Greek word translated **to offer** has a sacrificial connotation, the exact word used in the anaphora of the Eucharist. This makes the deed all the more horrible, that Israel saw the death of their children to be an acceptable sacrifice to a god.

39:40 **Everlasting covenant**: After this prophecy, only the covenant of Jesus Christ was of an eternal nature.

39:41 Jeremiah emphasizes that the new covenant will be made on the basis of **faithfulness**, not the letter of the Law.

40:6 Christ alone brings **healing for** our **wounds**. The service of healing is a sacrament in the Church (see Jam 5:14–16).

41:5 The LXX transliterates a generic Semitic word for **lord** to prevent any confusion resulting from a use of the Greek word *kurios*, translated "Lord," a reference to God.

41:8-11 Jeremiah reiterates the prophecy of the coming destruction of the land, linking it this time to slavery and servitude. For Christians, this is a lesson in forgiveness and becoming the **servants** of others. For, if we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us (Mt 6:14, 15). If we want to become great in the kingdom of God, we must become servants to others (Mk 10:43, 44).

41:9 Setting **his servant free** comes in obedience to the Law (Dt 15:12–15).

42:2 The **Rechabites** were a nomadic people who had been forced by the approaching Babylonian troops to enter Jerusalem, meaning they would endure the siege of the city.

42:3 This **Jeremiah** is different from the prophet, who was commanded not to marry (16:1, 2).

42:18-19 God promises to bless those who obey **their father**, a point which highlights the apostle Paul's reflection on those who live without the Mosaic Law, yet nevertheless have a law of their own (Rom 2:14, 15).

43:1 **Fourth year**: 606/605 BC.

43:2 This chapter chronicles the writing of the **words** of the Lord that came to Jeremiah on a **scroll**. This event came early in Jeremiah's ministry.

43:4 Jeremiah enlists **Baruch** as his scribe to record **the words of the Lord** on the scroll.

43:5-6 For a reason not known, Jeremiah was not permitted to enter the **house of the Lord**. Thus, he asked **Baruch** to **read** the **scroll** in his stead.

43:14-15 Sometime after the scroll was read to the people, it was **read** by **Baruch** to the **rulers** of Judah.

43:16-19 Upon hearing the message from the scroll, the rulers' response was twofold: (1) they wanted the **king** to hear the message; (2) they sent Baruch and Jeremiah into hiding.

43:23 The message troubled the king to the extent that he **cast** the **scroll** into the **fire** page by page.

43:27-32 Jeremiah conscripts Baruch to rewrite the **scroll**, using the occasion to predict the death of King **Jehoiakim**.

44:1 **Zedekiah** replaces **Jehoiakim** as ruler in **Judah**.

44:7-10 The image here plays off the earlier deliverance of Jerusalem under Hezekiah, when 185,000 Assyrians were killed (4Kg 19).

44:12 **Buy**: Probably the purchase of property mentioned in 39:6–25.

44:15 The Greek word here translated **embittered** is identical to that found in the famous Paschal sermon of St. John Chrysostom: “It [death] was embittered!” From the vantage point of those familiar with that homily, we see the embitterment of death foretold in the anger of the **rulers**.

45:7-13 Interestingly, it is a Gentile, not a Jew, who pulls Jeremiah from the pit. Throughout the OT we see the willingness of the Gentiles to respond to a servant of the Lord.

45:14-28 Zedekiah is eager to receive Jeremiah's secret counsel, but whatever gratitude he has is not enough to free Jeremiah from **prison** (v. 28).

46:1-3 **Ninth year**: 588 BC. These verses are a summary of 52:2–20.

46:4 Jeremiah is released from **prison** in the custody of **Gedaliah**, the newly appointed governor of Judah.

46:5-8 **Ebed-Melech** is rewarded for his service to Jeremiah (see 45:7–13).

47:1-6 **Freed** from prison, Jeremiah is allowed to remain in Judah **among the people who were left** there (v. 6). **Mizpah**, a town seven miles to the north of Jerusalem, becomes headquarters for Gedaliah's regime.

47:13-14 **Johanan** warns **Gedaliah** that **Ishmael** seeks his life, but the governor does not believe him.

48:1 **Seventh month**: Probably the same year Jerusalem was sacked, 586 BC.

48:2-3 The death of **Gedaliah** will mark the end of the five-year stay of **the Jews** in Judah.

48:5 **Shechem, Shalem, and Samaria**: Three areas near Israel in the north of Judah, which had already changed in ethnic composition after the Assyrian deportation.

48:5-8 Hence, **Ishmael** killed seventy men. **Gedaliah** himself was mourned by the exiles for those seventy years of exile by an annual fast (Zec 7:5).

49:1-6 Just as Jeremiah was sought out for guidance and to seek God's will, so today the faithful in Christ are encouraged to seek spiritual direction. It appears that at this point, **Johanan** and his group were serious: **We will heed the voice of the Lord our God.**

49:7 **After ten days**, the prophet received **the word of the Lord**, and it was clear: Do not go to Egypt (v. 19).

50:1-4 It appears that in the ten days that elapsed between their question (49:3) and Jeremiah's answer (49:7), **Johanan** and his followers had decided not to stay in Judah. For as soon as **Jeremiah ceased speaking**, they said, **That is a lie**. Recall that in Gn 3:1, the devil called God's direction into question.

50:7 **Tahpanhes** is an Egyptian city bordering Sinai. Johanan and his followers took Jeremiah with them (v. 6) and **entered Egypt**.

50:10 The mention of **Nebuchadnezzar** puts Johanan and his followers on notice that even Egypt is not a safe haven from **the king of Babylon**.

51:8 Not only are Jews disobedient to God for entering Egypt, now they revert to worshiping **other gods**, namely the “queen of heaven” (the goddess Ishtar; see v. 17 and note).

51:16 The rebellion of those in Egypt reaches its lowest ebb when they announce to Jeremiah, **We will not listen to you**.

51:17 Just as the Scriptures speak of “false christs and false prophets” (Mk 13:22), here we have a counterfeit **queen of heaven** (see note at v. 8). The true queen of heaven is the Mother of God, seated at the right hand of her Son and King (Ps 45:9).

51:24-30 This is Jeremiah's final warning to those in Egypt, and it is not good news. The Lord makes a promise to them: **I will visit you for evil** (v. 29).

51:30 **Hophra** was an Egyptian **king** who reigned 589–570 BC.

51:31-35 Like Jeremiah, **Baruch** was evidently taken to Egypt against his will. The Lord assures him, **I will give you life** (v. 35).

52:1 This chapter is a summary of the rise and fall of Zedekiah (vv. 1–9), the destruction of Jerusalem (vv. 10–20), the captives in Babylon (vv. 21–24), and the release of Jehoiachin from prison (vv. 25–28). It parallels almost verbatim 4Kg 24:18–25:30.

52:2 These dates place the siege of **Jerusalem** in early January, 587 BC.

52:21 The two priests were Seraiah and Zephaniah (4Kg 25:18).

52:25 **Thirty-seventh year**: Spring 560, in anticipation of the Babylonian new year. **Jehoiachin** was then 55 years old. **Evil-Merodach** was the successor (562–560 BC) to Nebuchadnezzar.

52:26-27 Although told that no successor would occupy David's throne (22:30), **Jefhoiachin** is treated **kindly** by the Babylonians. This event occurred more than 25 years after the sack of Jerusalem.

1:2 The LXX dates put this event at 581 BC, five years after **the Chaldeans** sacked **Jerusalem**. Most scholars believe the Book of Baruch was written about him, not by him, at a time much later than the events the book describes, to honor him.

1:3-7 **All the people** (v. 4), from noblemen on down, when they heard **the words of this book** (v. 3), not only experienced repentance, but **took up a collection** for those who remained in **Jerusalem**.

1:9 The **exile in Babylon** is noted in Jer 24:1.

1:10 The money was for **offerings** (see also Jer 17:25; 48:5).

1:11 God's people have always been called to **pray for the** . . . **king** and all who are in authority (see Jer 27:6–8; 36:4–7; Rom 13:1–7; 1Ti 2:1, 2).

1:15 The prayer that begins here and goes through 3:8 is quite similar to a prayer in Dan 9:7–15. This prayer is offered by those who stayed behind in **Judah** (see also 2:4).

1:19-20 **Out of** . . . **Egypt**: Though over 1000 years had passed since the children of Israel under **Moses** escaped from Pharaoh and crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, this miraculous event was a benchmark in their history. Here, the descendants of the **fathers** of the Exodus confess their national sins since that point in time.

1:22 One of the consequences of sin is evil **imaginations**. In 2Co 10:4–6, St. Paul instructs us to cast them down and bring our thoughts captive to Christ our God.

2:3 The cannibalism admitted here includes the children the Jews ate when Jerusalem was besieged; they also sacrificed children to the god Molech (see Jer 7:31; 19:9; Lam 2:10; 4:10; Ezk 5:10; 4Kg 23:10; Dt 28:53).

2:5 See Dt 28:13.

2:9 The **Lord brings** calamities **upon us** in His righteousness for our good, that we might turn back to Him.

2:14-15 When Israel—and the Church—receive God's **mercy**, the news spreads quickly (see Acts 17:4, 12). The prayer for **the whole earth** is a prayer for the Church **to know** . . . **the Lord our God**.

2:24-25 **Bones . . . carried out**, prophesied in Jer 8:1–2, suggests the Babylonians desecrated the reliquaries of the patriarchs.

2:24-25 **Bones . . . carried out**, prophesied in Jer 8:1–2, suggests the Babylonians desecrated the reliquaries of the patriarchs.

2:26 God allows His **house** to be **laid to waste** as part of His sinful people's punishment and their restoration (see Jer 7:13–14).

2:35 The **everlasting covenant** is fulfilled in Christ and His new covenant (Jer 32:38–41; Ezk 36:26–29; Am 9:15; Heb 13:20).

3:4 **The prayer of the dead of Israel** suggests the intercessions of the departed saints with the Lord (see Lk 16:22–31).

3:12 The **fountain of wisdom** is a likely reference to God the Father (see Jer 2:13, where the Father and Son are together depicted as a fountain and living water). In WSir 1:5, the Word is described as the fountain of wisdom (see Lk 2:40, 52; 21:15; Jn 4:13, 14).

3:17-18 Christ alludes to these truths in Mt 6:26–34.

3:20 The young **have seen the light**, i.e., have been born alive (see Job 3:16).

3:24-25 Here the cosmos is **the house of God**.

3:26-28 **Giants**: See Gn 6:4; WSir 16:7.

3:29-36 This is a description of the Wisdom of God (1Co 1:24).

3:29-36 This is a description of the Wisdom of God (1Co 1:24).

4:9 Here a song begins, continuing through v. 29. Jerusalem appeals to the exiles to endure the punishment until God delivers them from Babylon, symbolizing the coming of Christ “your Savior” (v. 22).

4:24 **The Eternal One**: Although the immediate object of this prophecy is the return from exile, the only **glory** and **radiance** that are eternal are those of Christ Himself (see Is 61:1–3).

4:30 **He who named you**: Scripture does not describe a precise naming of Jerusalem; this refers to the renaming described in 5:4 (see Is 60:14; 62:4; Jer 33:16; Ezk 48:35).

4:35 See Is 13:19–21; Jer 51:58; Rev 18:2.

4:36-37 Verse 36 describes the salvation of God as coming from the east, symbolizing the coming of Christ. Verse 37 refers to the return of the exiles.

5:1-9 This discourse points to the glory of the Church in **every nation under heaven** (v. 3).

5:2 **Double robe of righteousness**: God's righteousness comes to those living in shame (see 2:6).

5:7 See Is 40:4, 5; Eph 5:21–33.

1:1 **The city** is Jerusalem, once **full of people** but now in captivity in Babylon.

1:5 During Lent we pray, “O Lord and Master of our lives . . .” Here, the **oppressors have become the master**. This captivity is the result of the **ungodliness** of God's people. A stark picture of life outside of fellowship with God.

1:7 **Jerusalem remembers** tells us the author is looking back to the fall of the city and the grief of **her people** as they endured **deportation** to Babylon.

1:8 **Jerusalem sinned grievously** sums up the cause of God's discipline of His people.

1:11 Tragically, the phrase **the objects of their desire for food** is a reference (as in 2:4) to the eating of their own children **to stay alive**. We ask incredulously, how could they possibly do that? But remember: in our time, we do not eat them; we abort them.

1:18 **I provoked His mouth** is a reference to breaking the laws God spoke to Moses and thus to His people. From 1:18–22, the “I” is the city of Jerusalem, and the warning for her disobedience was issued and recorded in Dt 28:15–68.

2:2 **He brought them down:** The Greek word suggests a violent smashing.

2:5 **The Lord became like an enemy** is a warning of the gravity of the dread judgment seat of Christ.

2:9 When God's people turn on Him, **her prophets see no vision from the Lord**. Bluntly, heaven shuts its mouth (see Pr 29:18).

2:12 This verse is likely another reference to cannibalism (see 1:11; 2:20, 4:10).

2:15 See Jer 33:16 and Bar 5:4.

2:22 In God's judgment, **no one** will escape.

3:2-17 These verses either start with or contain the word **He**, a direct reference to God. There is no doubt in the writer's mind: judgment comes from God, and He is not passive.

3:22-62 Here we see an abrupt change in tone which acknowledges the goodness (v. 22) and mercy (v. 28) of God. The message: No matter the gravity of our sins, or what our enemies have planned for the demise of our souls, our hope is always in the love and mercy of God.

4:1 Chapter 4 returns to the distress of Jerusalem. The **gold** has lost **its brightness**.

4:3 A powerful contrast: **Even the serpents**, symbolic of the devil and his hosts, **nurse their young**, but captive Israel is **cruel**.

4:6 Here, Israel is worse than **Sodom**.

4:7-8 Not only did the people apostatize, **the Nazirites** became **blacker than soot**. The Nazirites (Nm 6:2, 19, 20) were the “monks” of Israel who never cut their hair, refused wine, and devoted themselves entirely to God. By this we see that Israel was utterly desolate.

4:13-14 The theme of desolation continues. The **prophets**, the **priests**, and the **watchmen** have all forsaken God.

4:16 A barometer of indifference toward God, in both Israel and the Church, is lack of **respect** for **the priests** and disdain for **the elders**.

4:20 The Greek word for **Anointed** is *Christos*. Christ is symbolized as a victim of the destruction of God's people brought on by their disobedience.

4:21-22 For the punishment of **Edom**, see Jer 30:1–16.

5:1 **What happened** to Israel can happen to Christians who **disgrace** themselves in the sight of God.

5:2 The **foreigners** are not just the Babylonians, but could also be a reference to idols (Jer 5:19).

5:5 In the old covenant and in the new, when we depart from God's will **we have no rest**.

5:19-22 This prayer offers a glimmer of hope to close the Book of Lamentations. The phrases **turn us back to You** and **we shall be converted** tell us this is not merely the request of an individual, but that of a nation.

1:3 This verse describes a pagan religious procession such as someone like Daniel would daily witness (see Dan 3:1–7).

1:4 Israel must keep her identity pure and distinct. In the same way, the Church, the new Israel, is called to separate herself from the heretics or those willfully estranged from Christ (see 2Co 6:14–17).

1:6 This verse describes the important role of the guardian **angel**, who watches and guides us through the day. For other examples, see Ex 23:20–23; 32:34; Ps 90:11.

1:34-37 The idols are said to be unable to do the very things that the Gospels show Christ doing.

1:38 **Plated** is a reference to wood overlaid **with silver and gold**.

1:43-44 The petty rivalries and jealousy show that this is just common prostitution masked by false religion.

1:45-46 These verses portray the irony of a mortal creature fashioning his own gods.

1:48-49 These verses portray the irony of powerless gods being saved by the priests who pray to them for blessings and protection.

1:55 Revealing the foolishness of their faith, the priests will sacrifice their gods to save their own lives.

1:59-64 Being real and serving a practical purpose makes everything from a **king** to a **pillar** to a forest **fire** superior to a false **god** and **idols** that do nothing.

1:68 Compare note on vv. 48, 49.

1:72 **Purple**: Valuable dyed cloth that was a sign of wealth or power.

1:73 The one **who is righteous** turns from idolatry (see 1Jn 5:21).

1:1 St. Gregory the Great comments that after establishing the time and place in history, the Prophet Ezekiel mystically “shows forth the Lord,” for in Christ's **thirtieth year** He was baptized and the **heavens were opened** (see Mt 3:17).

1:3-4 St. Gregory writes that **Ezekiel** recognized the Incarnation of the Only Begotten when he saw the **hand of the Lord.** The **amber** signifies Christ, who "tempered" His divinity by taking on humanity, that humanity by grace might take on divinity. "Like amber in the fire, God is made man in persecution."

1:5-9 Ezekiel identifies the **four living creatures** as cherubim (10:9–16), the guardians of the throne of God (Ex 25:10–22; 3Kg 6:23–28). Like those of St. John's vision (see Rev 4:6–9), they are seen by the Fathers to typify the Four Evangelists, while their unity in the spirit (vv. 12, 20) illustrates the spread of the gospel.

1:10 St. Gregory the Great comments that the **man** is Matthew, because he begins his Gospel with Christ's genealogy (Mt 1:1). The **lion** is Mark, “because of the crying in the wilderness” (Mk 1:1). The **ox** is Luke, “because he started with a sacrifice” (Lk 1:8). The **eagle** is John, who “stretched toward the very substance of divinity” (Jn 1:1). Gregory also sees in them types of Christ, who became a man in the Incarnation, an ox on the Cross, a lion in the Resurrection, and an eagle in the Ascension. Finally, says Gregory, they symbolize “every one of the elect, who are perfect in the way of God,” whose virtues are reason, self-sacrifice, fortitude, and contemplation of heavenly things.

1:13 The **burning coals** (v. 13), writes St. Gregory, are "holy men" (see Is 6:6 and note). The **lamps** signify the light of the gospel (see Jdg 7:16).

1:14-21 The **wheels** signify Holy Scripture, and the **wheel within a wheel** illustrates that “the New Testament lay hidden by allegory in the letter of the Old Testament” (GrgGt).

1:22 St. Gregory sees in the **wings** an image of the virtues of the righteous.

1:25 The **man** on the **sapphire . . . throne** prefigures the Incarnation of the Son of God from the Virgin Mary.

1:27 The **rainbow** images the new covenant (see Gn 9:13–15).

2:9, 10 The **roll of a book** signifies Holy Scripture, which Christ **unrolled** (Mk 4:34; Lk 24:25). Scripture “is written within by allegory, and without by history; within through spiritual understanding, but without through the plain sense of the letter still befitting the weak” (GrgGt). **Lamentation and mourning** indicate repentance, while **woe** points to the Final Judgment (Lk 6:25).

3:1-3 For the faithful, the taste of Christ the Word in our mouth is even sweeter than **honey** (see Ps 18:10; 118:103; Jer 15:16; Zec 5:1–4; Rev 10:8–11).

3:6 Israel rejected Christ, but the Gentiles received Him (Lk 11:29–33).

3:13 The gospel spread first by preaching **the sound**, and later by the Holy Scriptures (the **wheels**).

3:15 The **captivity** is an icon of the world held captive to sin. Here the prophet foreshadows John the Baptist preaching repentance and baptizing the Jewish faithful at the Jordan. **Seven days** signifies a time of completion.

3:17-19 The **watchman** must **warn the lawless** of the coming judgment, or he will be held accountable for his silence.

3:20 The **righteous man** images the Old Testament faithful, who heeded the prophets' **warning** and recognized Christ when He came.

3:22-27 After the gospel was preached to the Jews, it was taken to **the plain**, i.e., the whole world. Ezekiel's being **shut** up and put in **chains** points to the cutting off of prophecy to make way for Christ. Note that John the Baptist, the last Old Testament prophet, was put in prison (Mk 1:14); and his father, Zacharias, had his **tongue** bound (Lk 1:20).

4:1 St. Gregory the Great comments that the Prophet is called **son of man** so that when he is exalted, he might remember his fallen state.

4:4-11 Ezekiel lying bound on his **side** images the death of Christ, the Lamb of God, who bore the **acts of unrighteousness** of all humanity.

4:12-17 It would have been unthinkable for Ezekiel to carry out this command as first given. The Apostle Peter made a similar protest (see Acts 10:9–16). But in a striking reverse parallel, Christ made Himself to be sin for our sakes (2Co 5:21), so that all who **waste away in their wrongdoings** (v. 17) might partake together of the **bread** of heaven and the **water** of eternal life.

5:1-4 The **hair** and its destruction by **fire**, **sword**, and **wind** all point ultimately to the final judgment (compare Job 1:13–22; Is 7:20). The hair sewn into the **garment** illustrates the faithful remnant who have bound themselves to Christ.

5:5-6 **Jerusalem** is the Church, which was indeed **put** . . . **in the midst of the nations** that she **shall speak** the gospel of truth.

5:7 Even **the nations** that did not know God had **ordinances**. This verse points to the presence of the natural law, or free will, in man. See Rom 2:14, 15.

6:1-3 The final fulfillment of this judgment was carried out in the Incarnation, when Christ came to wield the **sword** of the Spirit against all idolatry.

7:1-6 The Lord's judgment against sin is to withhold **mercy**, thus allowing the **abominations** of sin.

8:1-4 Scholars date this Sept. 17, 592 BC. It takes place in exile, in Ezekiel's house near Babylon. His **vision of God** gives us a heavenly perspective of the **glory of the Lord**.

8:6 The remainder of this chapter concerns **great acts of lawlessness** done on temple grounds. Present are idolatry (v. 10), hypocrisy (v. 12), preoccupation with Tammuz, a false god (v. 14), and lastly, sun worship (v. 16). God's verdict? No mercy (v. 18).

9:2 These **men** are messengers of God, and the **one man** among them prefigures Christ our High Priest, **clothed** in vestments of righteousness, carrying out the command (v. 11) of the Father.

10:1, 2 As the **man** in **the long robe** went **between the wheels**, so Christ permeates all of Holy Scripture, the Old and New Testaments alike. St. Gregory the Great sees in the **coals** a type of holy men. See Is 6:6, 7.

10:4 The **brightness of the Lord's glory** refers to His uncreated energies, in which He reveals Himself. These Old Testament theophanies (see Ex 40:34; 3Kg 8:11) are fulfilled and perfected in the glory of the divinity of Christ (Jn 1:14).

10:8-17 See ch. 1 and notes.

10:13 **Wheel** translates the word *Gelgel*, used in the LXX as a proper noun, a transliteration of the Hebrew *glgl*. In the Vulgate, St. Jerome translates it “turnings.”

10:17-18 As the **glory of the Lord** passed from the **house** to the **cherubim**, so God's glory **departed** from the earthly **Israel** to the heavenly Jerusalem, **over and above them**.

11:1 Ezekiel's miraculous prophetic appearance in Jerusalem must have given Israel's **princes** quite a shock; even so, they refused to repent. Indeed, **Pelatiah** dropped dead on the spot (v. 13). Ananias and Sapphira met a similar fate in the New Testament (Acts 5:10). The apostle Philip was transported in a similar way, but this time his audience, a Gentile eunuch, listened and was converted (Acts 8:26–39).

11:17-25 **I will give them the land**: This prophecy is being fulfilled in the New **Israel**, which is the Church, composed of both believing Jews and Gentiles (**the nations**).

12:1-3 Jerusalem was destroyed and its inhabitants **taken into captivity** in 586 BC, about six years after this prophecy was given.

12:12 The **ruler** is Zedekiah, who ruled from 598–587. He fled Jerusalem by night through a break in the city **wall**; then he was taken captive and his eyes put out (see 4Kg 25:7 and note).

12:18-19 Compare to Gn 3:17–19.

12:21-28 Christ echoes this passage in His parable of the good steward (Lk 12:42–48).

12:25 **I, the Lord, shall speak My words** points to Christ, the *logos* of God.

13:1-3 Israel's false **prophets** in reality **see nothing at all**.

13:4-5 Self-appointed **prophets** have no **firm** foundation of truth, but run after “every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14). True prophets discern when a message is from God and not “from their hearts” (v. 3).

13:10-11 Christ condemns the Pharisees with similar language, calling them “whitewashed tombs” (Mt 23:27), while Paul calls the high priest Ananias a “whitewashed wall” (Acts 23:3).

14:12-14 God sometimes uses evil to bring good. For instance, God will **cut off** the **supply** of food so that hardship might bring His people back to Him. None but the likes of righteous **Noah, Daniel, and Job**—all of whom typify Christ—would listen. Yet in His mercy, the Lord leads “sons and daughters” (v. 22), who typify the Church**,** to salvation.

15:1, 2 Chapters 15–17 reveal the passing away of the old covenant and the coming of the new covenant in Christ. Chapters 15 and 17 are parables, while ch. 16 speaks of God's love for lawless Jerusalem. The **vine** is an image of Israel under the old covenant, which was replaced when Christ, the “true vine,” came (see Jn 15:1–6). The **branches in the forest** typify the Gentile nations from which believers will be “grafted into” the vine (see Rom 11:17–25).

16:4-10 A moving account of God's mercy upon a people stricken with **perversity of . . . soul** (v. 5). **Water**, **oil**, and **fine linen** are Old Testament images pointing to baptism.

16:44-46 **Like mother, like daughter!** A sobering parable of how ungodly parents beget lawless children.

16:59-63 Though we have **dishonored** God, still He will **remember** us when we turn to Him. This calls to mind the repentant thief who called out to Christ, “Remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Lk 23:42).

17:1 This **parable** was fulfilled historically when Israel went into the Babylonian captivity. Some scholars say that the first **great eagle** is Nebuchadnezzar (v. 3), the second (v. 7) Pharaoh.

17:22-24 As the **branches** were planted on Israel's **mountain**, so the Gentile Church (the **humble tree**) grew out of earthly Israel (the **high tree**).

18:1-32 This chapter deals with our relationship with God. **The soul who sins, he shall die** (v. 4): Each person is guilty only of his or her own sins. Man inherited death and a tendency to sin from Adam (Rom 5:12); but human nature, though stained by the fall, remains in the image of God (v. 19). A man may turn **away** from **righteousness** (v. 24), but he is also capable of seeking God's grace and experiencing a **new heart and a new spirit** (v. 31; see 11:17–25).

18:32 See 1Ti 2:4.

19:1-14 The **mother** lion refers to Judah. The two **young lions** (v. 5) are Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, the last kings to reign in Judah (4Kg 23:34; 24:12). The **lamentation** is taken up because the Davidic line, through which the Messiah was to come, was feared to end. But the faithful Jews would have found renewed hope in this amazing prophecy, for it had been promised long ago by their father Jacob that the **rod of strength**, the scepter (vv. 11, 14), would not depart from Judah until the Messiah came (Gn 49:9–12).

20:1-4 This is the introduction to a chapter that describes Israel's history of **lawlessness**.

20:29 **Bamah**: There is a play on words here: *abamah* means “high place” in Hebrew; *bema* in Greek means the same. St. Jerome translates this as *excelsum* (“the exalted place”), reflecting this connection. But Israel used this **high place** for idolatry (v. 28) and abominations (v. 30).

20:33-44 A prophecy fulfilled ultimately in the Church. The **scepter** (v. 37) promises Christ, a new king for the people of God. **Those who revolted** (v. 38) will be culled out, while those who **know** . . . **the Lord** will find the way (v. 44).

21:8 To be sure that **Israel** understands, the Lord restates His warning to the **unrighteous** and **lawless**, saying **I will draw my sword**.

21:23-25 The **king of Babylon** is Nebuchadnezzar, who will use his **sword** against **Rabbath**, the main city of **Ammon**, and against **Jerusalem**.

22:1 The **city of blood** is Jerusalem, an especially tragic description since the literal meaning of Jerusalem is “possession of peace.”

22:7 From here to v. 12, seven times the phrase **within you** is used, underscoring not only the grievous sins, but the fact that these were committed in the Holy City.

23:1-49 These two sisters image all who turn from God to satisfy their own desires. **Oholah** (i.e., Samaria) is like those who do not have the Law (Rom 1:23), yet despise the natural law within them (Rom 1:32). **Oholibah** (i.e., Judah) is like those who have the Law, yet “dishonor God through breaking the law” (Rom 2:23). The **righteous men** (vv. 45–49) typify the apostles, who preached to both Jew and Gentile (Rom 3:30).

24:1-14 This **parable** speaks the coming judgment of Jerusalem, **the house which provokes**.

24:15-27 Ezekiel's loss of his **wife** (v. 18) speaks of the passing away of **Israel**, whose husband was the Lord (Is 54:5). See 33:21–33 and note.

25:1-35 These chapters describe God's judgment on five Gentile nations: **Ammon**, **Moab**, **Edom** (all in modern-day Jordan); **Tyre** (Lebanon), and the **Cretans** (Crete). The gospel of Christ was later brought to these places, and the Church is present in these countries to this day.

26:7 Nebuchadnezzar may be **king of kings**, but Jesus Christ is KING OF KINGS (Rev 19:16).

27:1 Some Church Fathers interpret this **lamentation** (through 28:26) as imaging the fall of Lucifer and his angels (also see Is 14:12) and the overthrow of pride by the preaching of the gospel. King Hiram of Tyre had been friendly with Israel (3Kg 5); yet by the time of the captivity Tyre was set against Jerusalem (26:2). Christ began to fulfill this judgment when He cast the demon out of the Syro-Phoenician's daughter (Mk 7:24–30). After Pentecost, the gospel spread rapidly to this region (Acts 21:3–5).

29:1-21 The judgment against **Pharaoh** and **Egypt** illustrates the destruction of demonic strongholds through baptism. As the **rivers** (v. 3) belonged to Pharaoh, so the **dragon** (v. 3), the devil, held sway on the earth until Christ destroyed him in the waters of the Jordan (see also Ex 14:27–30). The **horn** (v. 21) is a symbol for Christ.

30:1-18 In the days of the Captivity, **Egypt** and **Ethiopia** stood against God's purposes. But after Pentecost, these nations were blessed with the establishment of the Church among the Gentiles. Indeed, the Ethiopian eunuch confessed that “Jesus Christ is the Son of God” when Philip appeared to him (Acts 8:26–39).

31:2-9 These verses are a description of **Pharaoh**, set forth as a tall tree in **Lebanon**. Some scholars believe that **Assyria** is a copying error, and that this word should be “cedar,” as the two words are very similar in Hebrew.

31:10-14 Pharaoh's sin was pride (**he was exalted**), and the **ruler of the nations** is Nebuchadnezzar.

32:1-32 The lamentation primarily for Pharaoh comes first (vv. 1–16); the lament primarily for Egypt in her descent into the pit closes this chapter (vv. 17–32).

33:1-9 Ultimately the **trumpet** is the preaching of the gospel and the **watchman** is the preacher. Those who know the truth and do not **warn** others will be judged more harshly than those who die in their **lawlessness** because they have not heard.

33:10-20 “For the goodness and the loving-kindness of God, and His boundless riches, hold righteous and sinless the man who, as Ezekiel tells, repents of sins; and reckons sinful, unrighteous, and impious the man who falls away from piety and righteousness to unrighteousness and ungodliness. Wherefore also our Lord Jesus Christ said, ‘In whatsoever things I shall take you, in these I shall judge you’” (Justin; compare Jn 12:47, 48).

33:21-33 Ezekiel's **mouth was opened** (v. 22) when Jerusalem was **taken** captive, while the kingly line of Judah went silent until the coming of Christ (see Gn 49:9–12). St. Zacharias, the priest who was made mute because of his unbelief, was given back his voice when his son John the Baptist was born (Lk 1:5–20, 57–79). Also see 3:22–27; 19:1–14 and notes.

34:1-31 It is appropriate that immediately after regaining his voice, the prophet condemns the false **shepherds** and prophesies the coming of the Good Shepherd, Christ, and the establishment of His **sheep** (v. 31), the Church. Compare Jn 10; Lk 15:4–7; 19:17.

34:11-16 Here is an image of Christ shepherding His **sheep**.

34:17-22 Compare Mt 23:32, 33, where Christ echoes His own words given here to the prophet.

34:23 **My servant David** clearly images Christ the Good Shepherd.

35:1-15 **Mount Seir** is **Edom** (v. 15), where Esau, brother of Jacob, settled (Gn 36:8). See Dt 2:1–6 and note.

36:1-7 The judgment continues against **Edom**, which today is southern Jordan.

36:8-15 This prophecy is ultimately fulfilled in the Church, which is the New Israel.

36:16-38 The earthly Israel is also representative of fallen humanity, which has **desecrated** God's **holy name** (v. 21). But the Lord will **gather** (v. 24) both Jew and Gentile from among the **nations**, and with them establish His Church.

37:1-14 This passage is the Great Doxology read at Matins on Great and Holy Saturday. The Fathers teach that it prophesies the Final Resurrection. “Great is the lovingkindness of the Lord, that the prophet is taken as a witness of the future resurrection, that we, too might see it with his eyes. . . . We notice here how the operations of the Spirit of life are again resumed; we know after what manner the dead are raised from the opening tombs. . . . And finally, he who has believed that the dead shall rise again ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound). . . . shall be caught up among the first in the clouds to meet Christ in the air’; he who has not believed shall be left, and subject himself to the sentence by his own unbelief” (AmbM).

“As we at once perceive that the Creator (Demiurgo) is in this passage represented as vivifying our dead bodies, and promising resurrection to them, and resuscitation from their sepulchers and tombs, conferring upon them immortality also (He says, ‘For as the tree of life, so shall their days be’), He is shown to be the only God who accomplishes these things, and as Himself the good Father, benevolently conferring life upon those who have not life from themselves” (Iren).

37:15-28 “Ezekiel put together the sticks, the two in one: in the two beams of the Cross, their staves have ceased. The two sticks, as it were wings, bore the people: lo! his two staves were broken, even as his wings. The bosom and wings of the Cross, He opened in mercy: its pinions bowed and bore the nations, to go to Eden. It is akin to the Tree of Life, and unto the son of its stock: it leads its beloved that on its boughs, they may feed on its fruits” (EphS).

38:1-29 The names of these nations are not meant to lead us to specific historical circumstances or places, whether past, present, or future; rather, they should be viewed as representing all the enemies of God, which have been persecuting His Church since the beginning. Indeed, St. Gregory the Great remarks that, where that which comes from the south is taken to be a symbol for the warmth of the Holy Spirit, that which comes from the **north** is taken to mean the devil, "because the former loosens with heat and the latter constrains with cold." The Church takes the biblical term **the last days** (38:16) to mean the time since Pentecost, the Church age, though there will be a final battle at the end of the age, after which Satan will be cast into the abyss forever (Rev 20:10). **Gog** and **Magog**: See Rev 20:8–10 and note.

40:2-3 St. Gregory the Great sees Christ in both the **high mountain** and the **man**. The **city** is the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church (Heb 12:22). The **builder's cord** symbolizes the truth taught by the apostles. The **measuring rod** signifies Holy Scripture. Christ **stood at the gate** “because in His humanity He appeared visible, and in His divinity He remained unseen” (GrgGt). Compare Rev 21:9–27.

40:5-7 St. Gregory the Great sees in the **wall** a type of the Incarnation in the womb of the Virgin (see Is 26:1); indeed, Church hymns to the Theotokos call her “a wall unshaken.” **Six cubits** represent the active life, “because God completed all His works on the sixth day.” A **handbreadth**, which is “from the seventh, but falls short,” signifies the contemplative life.

40:6-9 St. Gregory the Great interprets the meaning of the gates in four ways: as signifying Christ (Jn 10:1, 2), the preachers of truth (Rev 21:21), the Scriptures, and the faith. The **seven stairs** (v. 6) signify the “sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit” (see Is 11:2, 3). The chambers are “the hearts of those whose soul is joined through love with the Unseen Bridegroom.” The length, he writes, signifies longing for God, and the breadth is love for neighbor. **Five cubits** (v. 7) signifies the five outer senses. **Eight cubits** (v. 9) signifies spiritual perfection and the final day of resurrection. **Two cubits** illustrates a life that is “led daily through charity to love of God and neighbor alike.”

40:10-12 **Three** . . . **chambers** on each **side** signifies that the hearts of both Old and New Testament faithful are “kindled with the love of the Trinity” (GrgGt). The **ten cubits** (v. 11) points to the perfection of the Law as seen in the Ten Commandments, while the **thirteen cubits** (v. 11) illustrates the increased knowledge of the Trinity revealed in Christ.

40:15 **Fifty** (seven squared plus one) signifies eternal rest, “because our every perfection will be in the contemplation of the One in the vision of whom there will be for us no lack of salvation and joy. Hence the Jubilee, i.e., the fiftieth year, was also given for rest” (GrgGt; see Lv 25 and notes).

40:16 **Hidden windows**, like icons, provide glimpses of heavenly glory, which enlighten the soul through contemplation; while **palm trees** signify the rewards of victory (Jn 12:13; Rev 7:9).

40:20-28 St. Gregory sees the **north** gate as being for the Gentiles, beginners, and repentant sinners; while the **south** gate is for believing Jews who had the Law, as well as “the fervent in spirit who, kindled by the heat of the Holy Spirit, grow up in virtues as in the noonday light.”

40:27 St. Gregory sees the outer gates as imaging the Old Testament prophets, and the **inner** gates as imaging the Holy Apostles.

40:31-33 The **east gate** signifies Christ's entrance into the world through the womb of the Theotokos (see 44:1–4 and note). **Eight steps** “signify the mysteries of that life which the perfect understand in their secret hearts; those who already know how mentally to transcend all temporal things; who wholly despise the present life which turns through a cycle of seven days; who feed on inward contemplation” (GrgGt).

40:39-48 Here the vision concerns the heavenly **altar** (v. 46), imaged in the Divine Liturgy, where the saints offer their whole being to God in praise and worship. See Heb 13:10–19 and notes. The **court** is the **foursquare** fullness of the Church, which operates in faith, hope, charity, and good works.

41:1-6 The prophet is brought into the inner **sanctuary**, which is an image of the human soul. The **temple** is a type of the Theotokos, who held God the Word in her womb. For more on this imagery, see Heb 9. The untouched **wall** also images the Theotokos. See 40:5–7; 43:1–3 and notes.

41:7 The **side chambers** that became **wider** as they **went up** illustrate the heart that grows by grace into the likeness of God, as well as the growth and unity of the Church united in Christ.

41:11-12 **North** . . . **south**: See 40:20, 27 and notes. The **light** is the light of Christ present in every human being (Jn. 1:9). The **open space** within the house brings to mind a hymn we sing to the Theotokos: “Your womb is more spacious than the heavens.”

41:16 The **shaded light** illustrates that the light of Christ's glory is revealed to man as far as he is able to bear it; for while we are on this earth, we see as in a mirror dimly (1Co 13:12). Compare the term **fishnet** to 47:10; Jn 21:3–6. The **wood panels** point to Christ's humanity (see Ex 25:10, 11 and note).

41:17-19 The **two faces** of the **cherubim** signify Christ as **man** and as **lion** of Judah (see Gn 49:9–12 and note).

41:21 The **wooden altar** is symbolic of the Cross.

42:1-8 **Five halls** in the **outer court**, **to the east**, illustrate the five human senses directed toward Christ. The **halls** of **ten** (i.e., the Law) by **one hundred** (i.e., perfection) **cubits**, together with the **upper walkways**, illustrate a lifetime of obedience, good works, and repentance leading upward to heaven. **Fifty**: See 40:15 and note.

42:9, 10 Christ is the Door, the Orient (**east**), the **light**, the **head**, and the **way** for all who enter the heavenly places.

42:13-14 Under the Law, the **holy place** was accessible only to the **priests**, but in Christ, all who **draw near** in faith and love may partake of the **most holy** things.

42:15-20 **He measured** the **house all around**: Compare Rev 21:9–27.

43:1-12 The prophet was **led . . . out** from the **east gate**, the **glory of the Lord entered**, and then the gate was shut (44:1). According to the Fathers, this passage, together with 44:1–5, foreshadows the Incarnation, when the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin in the Temple and the Son of God was conceived in her womb (Lk 1:26–38). **The sound of many voices** (v. 2) is echoed by the “multitude of the heavenly host” announcing the Advent of Christ to the shepherds (Lk 2:13).

43:13-17 The **altar** here, as well as the altar in the Church, images the heavenly altar. The **altar** is “the soul of the righteous man, which lays upon itself before His eyes as many sacrifices as it has done good deeds. And what is the drain of the altar but the patience of good men, which, while it humbles the mind to endure adversities, shows it to be placed low down after the manner of a ditch? . . . Well, too, this same trench is directed to be of one cubit, because, if patience fails not, the measure of unity is preserved” (GrgGt). The **great mercy seat** is clearly a type of Christ.

43:18-27 The **Levites** typify the clergy who serve at the altar in the Church (see Nm 8:5–25 and note). The **burnt offerings** point to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for our salvation (v. 27).

44:1-4 The eastern **outer gate** is seen by the Fathers as the womb of the Virgin, which was **shut** because the **Lord God** had **entered by it**. The Church sees this passage as describing the ever-virginity of Mary. Though many modern denominations reject this doctrine, it was held to be true by Luther, Calvin, and John Wesley. St. Jerome writes that the **east gate** images the Virgin Mary, whose womb is “always shut and always shining, and either concealing or revealing the Holy of Holies; and through her ‘the Sun of Righteousness,’ our ‘high priest after the order of Melchizedek,’ goes in and out.” At the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple we sing, “Today the house of God receives the Gate through which no one may pass; so it has brought an end to the worship commanded by the shadow of the Law.” See 43:1–12 and note.

44:6-9 The Law was broken by the Jews, but under the New Covenant, **foreign sons**—uncircumcised Gentiles (v. 7)—became baptized Christians.

45:1-25 These physically impractical divisions of **the land** and the instructions concerning liturgical worship make sense only in the light of their fulfillment in Christ and His Church. The **one sheep** (v. 15), the **young bull** (v. 18), and the **prince** (v. 16) are all types of Christ, our **possession** (v. 8), who made **atonement** (v. 18) for His Church. **The Paschal Feast** (v. 21), or Passover (see Nm 28:16 and note), is fulfilled whenever we celebrate Christ's Resurrection.

46:1-24 With the Resurrection of Christ, **the Sabbath**, which was the seventh day, has become the day of rest and preparation for the Eighth Day, or Sunday (see Acts 20:7). During the Divine Liturgy, the **people** gather to **worship** (v. 9) the Lord and to make a **grain offering** in the form of bread and wine. The **oil** (v. 14) signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit. In response, Christ the **Prince** (v. 8), the Lamb of God**,** enters and is in our **midst** (v. 10). Just as the Prince goes **in** and **out** (v. 8) by the east gate, so Christ came into the world by taking His flesh from His Mother, the Most Holy Theotokos (see 44:1–4 and note).

47:1-23 A vision applying to holy baptism, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the apostles (compare v. 10 to Jn 21:6), and the growth of the Church from both Jew and Gentile believers (**resident aliens**, vv. 21–23). “In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there is seen above the cherubim a crystal stretched forth, that is, the compressed and denser waters. The first living beings come out of the waters; and believers soar out of the laver with wings to heaven [1:22–25]. . . . In Eden a garden is planted, and a fountain in the midst of it parts into four heads [Gn 2:10]. This is the same fountain which Ezekiel later on describes as issuing out of the temple and flowing towards the rising of the sun, until it heals the bitter waters and quickens those that are dead” (Jerome).

47:12 See Rev 22:2.

48:1-35 This chapter has been and continues to be fulfilled since Pentecost, when the Church was established and began to “inherit the land,” growing with Christ in its **center** (v. 10) until it fills the earth on the final day. The **Levites** typify the clergy of the Church, and the **workers** (v. 19) are the faithful. These **cultivate** the land by good works, bringing the **firstfruits** of their labor into the Lord's house whenever we gather together to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

48:35 **The name of the city** is the New Jerusalem (Rev 3:12), the Church, which has been and is now “continuing” (Heb 13:14) **from the day on which** Christ took His **place** in her midst. On the final day, when the Lord comes for His Bride, those who overcome will receive a “new name” (Rev 2:17)—the name of Christ revealed—on their foreheads (Rev 22:4).

1:1, 2 **Susanna**, like so many other Old Testament heroines, can be seen to typify the Church, and Daniel (v. 44), her deliverer, typifies Christ. The two elders (v. 5) are like the powers of darkness, which seek to lead the godly astray.

1:7 **Susanna** in the **garden** echoes Eve in the Garden of Eden, but her righteousness surpasses Eve's because she resists temptation.

1:7-9 St. Hippolytus of Rome sees **Susanna** as a type of the Church, the Bride of Christ, persecuted by **the two elders**, representing the Jews and the pagans. In his commentary on Daniel he writes, “And [Susanna] said to her maids, ‘Bring me oil.’ Indeed, faith and love prepare oil and cleansing unguents for those who are washed. But what were these unguents if not the commands of the Holy Word? And what the oil, if not the power of the Holy Spirit? It is with these, after the washing [that is, baptism], that believers are anointed as with a sweet-smelling oil. All these things were prefigured through the blessed Susanna for our sakes, so that we of the present time who believe in God might not regard as strange the things which are now done in the Church, and that we might believe that all of them have been set forth in figures by the patriarchs.”

1:34 The elders played the role of witnesses and **laid their hands** on the head of the accused in accordance with the Torah (Lv 24:14).

1:45 St. Ignatius argues from this passage that the age of a bishop is immaterial; a young bishop must be reverenced like an older one, since **Daniel** was given a **holy spirit** at only twelve years of age, enabling him to convict the elders of false witness and of lusting after the beauty of another man's wife.

1:1 **The third year** in the rule of **Jehoiakim** puts this book at 606 BC.

1:4 The Gentiles in Daniel's time taught the Jews their Babylonian **language** and literature that they might serve Nebuchadnezzar.

1:8 The Church takes note that the Hebrew youths were blessed by God through holy fasting. During Great Lent we sing, “What quenched the fire [see 3:21–27]? What stopped the mouths of the wild beasts [see 6:16–23]? It was fasting that delivered the children from the furnace and Daniel the prophet from the jaws of the lions. Brethren, let us also fast like them.”

1:21 **King Cyrus**'s **first year** of reigning over **the Persians** is 538 BC.

2:1 **Second year**: 604 BC. Nebuchadnezzar's **dreams** could not be told or interpreted by the Chaldean sorcerers, just as man's wisdom can neither tell nor interpret the mystery of his own existence.

2:25-28 Daniel, who both tells and interprets the dream, is a figure of Christ, who alone is able both to reveal and to solve man's predicament.

2:31-49 Both Hippolytus and Eusebius see parallels between Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's vision (see ch. 7). Eusebius comments that it is fitting for a proud, earthly-minded king to “compare the life and substance of all men to a great image.” The dream was given to teach him to “lay aside his pride in himself, that he might understand that there is nothing stable among men, but only that which is the appointed end of all things—the kingdom of God.”

According to the Fathers, the golden **head** (v. 32) was Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. The silver **chest and arms** (v. 32) represent the 245-year supremacy of the Medo-Persians, beginning with Cyrus in 539 BC. The **stomach and thighs of copper** (v. 32) represent Alexander the Great and his Greek empire, established about 330 BC. Next came the brutal Roman Empire, represented by the **legs** of **iron** (v. 33). According to Hippolytus, the **feet of iron and clay** (v. 33) correspond with the “ten horns” in Daniel's vision, and represent ten nations after Rome (see 7:8, 24, 25 and note). Just as the stone **struck** the **feet** and overtook these governments, so the gospel spread to all the nations of the Gentiles (vv. 34, 35). Finally this **stone**, the Church, becomes **a great mountain** as the gospel fills **the earth.**

2:35 Blessed Augustine writes that the mountain which grew out of a small stone is the kingdom of God, present in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Church's beginnings were indeed small, yet the Church has spread throughout the world.

2:46 St. Hippolytus sees in Daniel a type of Christ. “How great is the power of God, beloved, that one who a little before was doomed to death with the other wise men of Babylon, should now be worshiped by the king, not as a man but as God!”

2:48 Like Christ's, Daniel's humility (v. 30) brings him favor with God and men.

3:1-18 This passage contains a striking reverse parallel. Under the Old Covenant, the whole world (represented by Babylon), except for the Jewish faithful (represented by the three youths), was filled with idolatry, but under the New Covenant, the Gentile nations will come to worship the one true God of Israel.

3:19-23 A Nativity hymn in the Church reveals the profound typology in this passage: “The children of the Old Covenant who walked in the fire, yet were not burnt, prefigured the womb of the Maiden, which remained sealed when she gave birth in fashion past nature.” St. John Cassian likens **the furnace** (v. 19) to the passions of our flesh, which constantly threaten to destroy us; however, these flames can be extinguished through zeal for God, continual repentance, and fasting.

3:25 In the LXX, the Prayer of Azariah and the Hymn of the Three Young Men are placed after 3:24. Hananiah, **Azariah**, and Mishael are the original Hebrew names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (1:6, 7).

3:26-45 This prayer is liturgical in nature and includes verses and phrases from throughout the Old Testament. It includes praise to God (v. 26), acknowledgment that God's judgment is true (vv. 27, 28), confession of sin (vv. 29, 30), request for deliverance in remembrance of the covenant (vv. 34–36), a plea for mercy (vv. 38–43), and for victory over enemies (vv. 44, 45).

3:46-50 This brief commentary between the Prayer and the Hymn is repeated and expanded in vv. 91–97. “See how even the fire appears intelligent, as if it recognized and punished the guilty. For it did not touch the servants of God, but it consumed the unbelieving and impious Chaldeans” (Hippol).

3:52-90 A fragment from the Fathers remarks that we may marvel at the Hymn of the Three Young Men, “how they enumerated all created things, so that not one of them might be reckoned free and independent in itself. But, summing up and naming them all together, both things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, they showed them to be all the servants of God, who created all things by the Word, that no one should boast that any of the creatures was without birth and beginning.”

3:86 The **spirits and souls of the righteous** dead continue to give praise to God forever, throughout **the ages**.

3:91-92 St. Hippolytus writes that the king's recognition of **the fourth** man in the furnace was a sign that the Gentiles would recognize the Incarnate Word when He came. “The three youths he thus called by name. But he found no name by which to call the fourth. For He was not yet that Jesus born of the Virgin.” St. Jerome comments that the presence of the Son of God in the furnace is a type of Christ's descent into Hades, where the souls of the dead were imprisoned, that He might deliver the righteous faithful by breaking the chains of death.

4:5 Both Nebuchadnezzar's **dream** and his experience that follows reveal how God humbles the proud and then raises him up again. Fear and terror can be seen as God's mercy, for the “fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Pr 1:7).

4:10-17 This passage brings great comfort to believers: The **Most High** God reigns over the affairs of rulers and nations, for the tree to be cut down is the king (see v. 25).

4:27 The mark of a true prophet is that he tells the unadulterated truth at the risk of his own discomfort and his very life.

4:34-37 The king's change of heart is encouragement to intercede “for kings and all who are in authority” (1Ti 2:2).

5:2 St. Jerome remarks that “vice always glories in defiling what is noble.” He sees in Belshazzar's blatant misuse of the holy **vessels** a type of the misuse and twisting of Scripture by heretics for the purpose of drawing others into false doctrine and worship.

6:2-3 **Governors** were provincial rulers, often despotic. **Daniel** was one of **three administrators above these** who reported directly to **Darius**.

6:5-6 The enemies of God historically have stopped at nothing to try to overthrow His kingdom and His servants. St. Paul calls such schemes “the wiles [strategies] of the devil” (Eph 6:11).

6:17-25 St. Ephraim of Syria writes that both the OT Daniel and the NT Lazarus (see Jn 11:1–45) illustrate Christ in His tomb. “A type of You therefore was Daniel, and also Lazarus; one in the den, which the Gentiles sealed up, and one in the sepulchre, that the people opened. Lo! their signs and their seals reproved them. Their mouth would have been open, if they had left Your sepulchre open. But they went away because they had shut Your sepulchre and sealed it, and closed up their own mouths. Yes, they closed it, and when they had senselessly covered Your sepulchre, all the slanderers covered their own heads. But in Your Resurrection You persuaded them concerning Your Birth; since the womb was sealed, and the sepulchre closed up; being alike pure in the womb, and living in the sepulchre. The womb and the sepulchre being sealed were witnesses unto You.”

6:19 Note how a pagan **king** kept vigil and fasted while his friend **Daniel** was in danger.

6:20-25 Signs are performed by God among unbelieving peoples so that the worship and word of the one true God may be proclaimed with power, as shown by Darius's new decree (vv. 26, 27).

7:1-8 St. Aphrahat comments that the **great sea** (the Mediterranean Sea) is symbolic of the world, and “these four great beasts (v. 3) are the four kingdoms signified above” (see text and notes at 2:25–49). The **lioness** with eagle's **wings** (v. 4) is the Babylonian Empire; the **bear rose up on one side** (v. 5) because when the kingdom of Media and Persia arose, it arose in the east. Hippolytus sees the **three ribs** as being the Medes, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. They are also often identified with Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt, all of which were conquered and reduced to a single realm by the Persians under Cyrus and his son, Cambyses. The Fathers agree the **leopard** is Alexander the Great, and the **four wings** and **four heads** (v. 6) are his four generals (see 8:5–14 and note). The **fourth beast** (v. 7) is seen to be the Roman Empire, which subdued the world with its strength. Note that the four heavenly beasts of St. John's vision far surpass these temporary, earthly beasts (see Rev 4:6, 7 and note; see also Ezk 1:5, 21). Some of the Fathers say that the **ten horns** prophesy nations that will rise up in the last days.

7:8 Dan 7:8, 24, 25: The **little horn** is seen to be the antichrist, an eleventh king who shall appear suddenly in the midst of the ten horns, seizing power through magic and sorcery. He will exalt himself as God and make war on the Church (v. 11). But Christ will deliver the Church and establish God's everlasting kingdom. The Orthodox response to the prophetic teaching of the Scriptures is not to fear, or to try to second-guess God's timetable, but rather to practice repentance and watchfulness against sin and to engage in spreading the gospel.

7:9-12 Daniel's vision is similar to several aspects of St. John's Revelation, including the **thrones** (see Rev 4:2–6 and notes), the multitude of worshipping angels and other creatures (see Rev 5:11), and the **books** (v. 10; see also Rev 20:12 and note).

7:13-14 Daniel's vision of **the Ancient of Days** is that of the Second Coming of Christ, **the Son of Man**, in glory.

7:25 **A time, times, and half a time** refers to the “short time” (three and a half years) of tribulation that will befall the faithful just prior to the end of the age (see 12:7 and note; Rev 12:7–16 and notes).

8:1-27 Daniel's vision occurred about 551 BC. The **ram** (v. 3) represents Darius and the rule of the **Medes and Persians** (v. 20), which ended with the death of Belshazzar in 538. The **male goat** (v. 5) represents the conquests of **the Greeks** (v. 21) up until the time of the Romans, about 64 BC.

8:5-14 When Alexander's rule was **broken** (v. 8) when he was only 33, his **four** generals divided up his empire among themselves: Ptolemy I in Egypt; Seleucus I in Asia; Lysimachus in Asia Minor; and Cassander in Macedonia. The **strong horn** (v. 9) is seen to represent Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who took the Seleucid kingdom in 175 BC. He put an end to temple sacrifice and set up a statue of Jupiter in the holy temple in Jerusalem.

8:10-26 The temple was **cleansed** (v. 14) under Judas Maccabeus after he had led the Jews to victory over the Syrians. St. Jerome says that most church commentators see a partial fulfillment of these events in the persecution of Antiochus, but that the passage also points to the antichrist, the **king** who **shall arise** (v. 23). The antichrist is himself a type of all those who raise themselves up against Christ. Thus, his downfall at Christ's Second Coming symbolizes the final destruction of all evil and the realization of Christ's eternal kingdom (see 2Th 2:3–12 and note).

8:26 **Seal the vision**: “The things, therefore, which of old were sealed, are now by the grace of God the Lord all open to the saints, for He was Himself the perfect Seal, and the Church is the key. . . . But to Christ it was not said ‘seal,’ but ‘loose’ the things bound of old; in order that, by His grace, we might know the will of the Father, and believe upon Him whom He has sent for the salvation of men, Jesus our Lord” (Hippol).

9:3-5 **We sinned**: In the spirit of true intercessory prayer, Daniel takes on himself the sins of the people and repents before the Lord, begging His mercy for their sakes.

9:8-11 This is as clear in defining sin as any passage in the Scriptures. St. Paul offers a summary of Daniel's words: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

9:24-27 The Epistle of Barnabas (ch. 16) observes that this passage was fulfilled when the temple (**the sanctuary**, v. 26) was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. But Barnabas also points out that a true temple remains, the Body of Christ, a spiritual temple in which God truly dwells. **Seventy weeks** is interpreted to mean seventy weeks of years, or 490 years (seventy times seven years). This prophecy applies also to Jeremiah's “seventy years” (see 9:2; Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10).

According to Hippolytus, Daniel's vision concerned the time when the temple would be rebuilt, as well as the time of the coming of the Messiah. First, the Jews would return and resume sacrifice after seventy years of captivity. “Having mentioned therefore seventy weeks, and having divided them into two parts, in order that what was spoken by him to the prophet might be better understood, he proceeds thus, until Messiah the Prince there shall be seven weeks, which make forty-nine years. It was in the twenty-first year [of Nebuchadnezzar's reign] that Daniel saw these things in Babylon. Hence, the forty-nine years added to the twenty-one, make up the seventy years, of which the blessed Jeremiah spoke” (Jer 25:11). Second, Jesus the Messiah would be crucified in AD 30, about 490 years (seventy weeks) after Artaxerxes commissioned Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem in 458 BC (2Ez 7:7, 8).

9:27 Hippolytus comments that after “Christ is come, and the gospel is preached in every place, the times being then accomplished, there will remain only one week, the last, in which Elias will appear, and Enoch. And in the midst of it the abomination of desolations will be manifested, that is, Antichrist, announcing desolation to the world. And when he comes, the sacrifice and oblation will be removed, which now are offered to God in every place by the nations” (see Mt 24:15 and note).

10:1 **The third year of Cyrus** was 533 BC.

10:2-3 Daniel's season of fasting and **mourning** is echoed by the faithful during the time of Great Lent, a season of “bright sadness.”

10:5 St. Hippolytus writes that the Father “sent His own Word to show what should happen by Him. And that took place, indeed, by the great river. For it was meet that the Son should be manifested there, where also He was to remove sins.” Other commentators see this figure as the Archangel Gabriel (9:21).

10:12 “Behold how much the piety of a righteous man avails, that to him alone, as to one worthy, things not yet to be manifested in the world should be revealed” (Hippol).

10:16 As with Isaiah's vision (Is 6:7), the phrase **touched my lips** has eucharistic overtones.

11:1 Daniel's prophecies in this chapter were fulfilled with astonishing **power and strength** in the centuries after he lived.

11:1, 2 Four **kings** indeed arose in Persia after Cyrus: Cambyses, Smerdis III, Darius IV, and Xerxes, who led the Persians against the Greeks in about 485–465 BC.

11:3-4 After his death in 320 BC, the **kingdom** of Alexander the Great was **divided** among his **four** generals.

11:5 Ptolemy I Soter was the **king of the south**, or Egypt. **One of his rulers** may refer to Ptolemy's son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, or else Seleucus Nicator, another of Alexander's generals, who allied with Ptolemy I Soter and later gained power over him.

11:6 This verse prophesies Bernice, **daughter** of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. She could **not retain** her **power** when her father died, and was assassinated along with those **who strengthened her**. It was under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, king of Egypt from 287–247 BC, that the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was begun.

11:7-9 **Her root** refers to Bernice's brother, Ptolemy III Evergetes. He avenged her by killing her assassin, Seleucus Callinicus, **king of the north**, after which he carried their Syrian **gods** back **to Egypt**.

11:10 The **sons** of Seleucus Callinicus of the north were Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus III. They did indeed **assemble** . . . **great forces**, but it was Antiochus who passed through and invaded the south.

11:11-14 Enraged, Ptolemy IV Philopator did **fight** with the **king of the north** in about 218 BC, but he did not gain supremacy. Antiochus III of Syria in the **north**, having mustered a **greater** army, did defeat the forces of his infant son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes, in 204 BC, with the help of **troublemakers** among the Jews.

11:16 Antiochus III took Judea in battle with Scopus of the south. This included a siege of Scopus' garrison at Jerusalem. Thus, Antiochus III did indeed **stand in the Land of Beauty.**

11:17 In an effort to ally himself with Egypt, Antiochus III married off his child **daughter**, Cleopatra, to seven-year-old Ptolemy V Epiphanes, but in the end, they did **not remain with him.**

11:18-19 Having assailed the coasts and **islands** of Asia Minor, and having later met with several defeats, Antiochus III could **not be found**. He disappeared and was not heard from again.

11:20 Antiochus's **root** most likely refers to one of his sons, Seleucus Philopator. He confiscated treasures from the temple in Jerusalem, but performed no great deeds and died without fighting a single battle.

11:21-24 These verses prophesy Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BC), another son of Antiochus III. The Fathers see in him a type of the antichrist who will arise at the end of the age. Antiochus overcame the Ptolemies by feigning clemency, that is, **by intrigue**. He reigned in Syria for eleven years after Seleucus, and he seized Judea as well. He defiled the temple in Jerusalem, thus provoking war with the Maccabees, who fought for Jewish self-rule. The **ruler of the covenant** (v. 22) prophesies Judas Maccabeus. Antiochus was able to take over Egypt as well as Syria with only a small force of men, enabling him to **do what neither his fathers or forefathers have done** (v. 24).

11:30-35 The Romans came **against** Antiochus and made him leave Egypt in 168 BC. **Enraged**, he began his persecution of the Jews and his desecration of the temple. **Help** (v. 34) came from the Maccabean revolt, led by Mattathias and Judas Maccabeus. Many early Christians also saw the destruction of the temple by the Roman general, Titus, in AD 70, as well as the persecutions of Christians by the Roman emperor Nero, as fulfillments of these verses. Indeed, Daniel's prophecies have been fulfilled many times over the course of history, as God's people have endured persecution and testing at the hands of those who blaspheme God in their pride.

11:31-13 This passage concerns the future time of the antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the end of the world.

12:1-3 At Christ's Second Coming, the antichrist will be crushed, the **tribulation** will end, and all the dead will **awake** (v. 2). Resurrection **to everlasting life** is the destiny of those who have endured to the end. Resurrection to **everlasting shame** is the destiny of those who, in the end, are found outside of Christ.

12:7 “But he who reads this passage, even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of Antichrist shall fiercely, though for a short time, assail the Church before the last judgment of God shall introduce the eternal reign of the saints. For it is patent from the context that the time, times, and half a time, means a year, and two years, and half a year, that is to say, three years and a half” (Aug). See also 7:25 and note; Rev 12:7–16 and notes.

12:11 Hippolytus writes that this prophecy concerns the three and a half years —“the one thousand two hundred and three score days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church.”

1:1-42 These verses comprise the final section of Daniel concerning Bel and the Serpent. “He unquestionably made it clear, that He who spake to Moses out of the bush, and declared Himself to be the God of the fathers, He is the God of the living. For who is the God of the living unless He who is God, and above whom there is no other God?” (Iren).

1:1 **Cyrus** began his reign in **Persia** in 538 BC.

1:3 Historians describe **Bel** as chief among the Babylonian gods.

1:5 “He said that what we are able to speak and to answer is given to us in that hour from heaven, and supplied; and that it is not then we who speak, but the Spirit of God our Father, who, as He does not depart nor is separated from those who confess Him, Himself both speaks and is crowned in us. So Daniel, too, when he was required to worship the idol Bel, which the people and the king then worshiped, in asserting the honor of his God, broke forth with full faith and freedom, saying, ‘I worship nothing but the Lord my God, who created the heaven and the earth’” (Cyp).

1:7 **Daniel smiled**: It is indeed very humorous that a king or anyone could believe an idol of **clay** and **bronze** could eat (see also v. 19).

1:10-21 How could **seventy priests** and their families—and a king—indulge in such blatant deception? St. Peter gives the answer concerning the allure of the false teachers: “Many will follow their destructive ways” (2Pt 2:2).

1:23-24 In contrast to the clay and bronze statue of Bel, this idol **lives**, **eats**, and **drinks!**

1:26 Likely, **the king** gave **permission** because he saw the serpent as an immortal god.

1:33-39 **The prophet Habakkuk**, for whom the OT book is named, had lived a century earlier. So there would be three miracles here: (1) being carried by the hair, as Ezekiel was (Ezk 8:3); (2) being translated from one place to another, as Philip was (Acts 8:39, 40); and (3) being brought back from the dead, as Moses and Elijah were (Mt 17:3).

1:40-42 Once again, **Daniel** is vindicated.

1:1 **Jesus** means “O Lord, save,” referring to His role as Savior (v. 21). **Christ** means “Anointed One,” the Messiah, the One who is filled with the Holy Spirit (see Jn 1:33). Though the Son alone became Man, God the Father and the Holy Spirit work in Jesus Christ to save us.

Jesus became Man as a Jew, from the lineage of **Abraham**, the father of all Jews, and of **David**, Israel's greatest king and the prototype of the royal Messiah. This **genealogy** reveals that the Son of God so identifies with the human condition that He takes it all on Himself and becomes part of it. Christ's ancestry includes both righteous and wicked people, faithful kings and murderers, Jews and Gentiles, kings and peasants.

1:2 While Luke's genealogy runs from Jesus back to Adam (Lk 3:23–38), Matthew's list descends from **Abraham**, with whom God established the Old Covenant of circumcision, to Jesus, the author of the New Covenant. God promised to bless all the tribes of the earth in Abraham (Gn 12:3; 28:14); this promise is fulfilled in Abraham's greatest Son, Jesus Christ.

1:3 Jewish genealogical lists normally included only men. The mention of women (**Tamar**, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba) is unusual. Each one was either a Gentile or a sinner. The inclusion of these women declares God's graciousness and prefigures the calling of Gentiles into the Church. It also underscores the role of women in God's plan of salvation and anticipates the special place of the Virgin Mary in that plan.

1:6 Through anointing by Samuel, David was made king. Through his psalms, David was revealed as a great prophet. Thus, David foreshadows both the royal and the prophetic nature of Jesus Christ (Ps 109). As an adulterer and a murderer, David also functions as a type for all repentant sinners.

1:16 **Joseph** can be named as Jesus' immediate predecessor since OT marriage laws confer hereditary rights on adopted as well as biological sons. The church fathers teach, Mary also was descended from David; **of whom** is feminine in Greek, referring only to Mary. Thus, Jesus is shown to be born of Mary, and not begotten of Joseph. (See also note on Lk 3:23–38.)

1:17 Christ's ancestors are arranged in three groups of fourteen generations. Fourteen is the numerical equivalent of the consonants in the name **David**, underlining Jesus' descent from David. This also shows the division of the leadership of the Jews, being under judges until David, under kings until **Babylon**, and under priests until Christ.

1:19 The righteousness of **Joseph** consisted of a mercy that transcends the Law (Hos 6:6). Joseph showed this mercy by his unwillingness to expose Mary's supposed sin, even though he was obliged by the Law to do so. **Her husband**: The Bible calls engaged couples husband and wife before their marriage (Rachel was called the wife of Jacob before marriage by virtue of their engagement in Gn 29:21; see also Dt 22:23, 24). Thus, Joseph is called the husband of Mary, and Mary is called his wife (vv. 20, 24). In the Church, Joseph is remembered as the Betrothed, pointing out Mary's ever-virginity. (See also note on Est 2:7.)

1:20 An **angel** (or “messenger”) **of the Lord** dispels Joseph's false reasoning by announcing the utterly unreasonable: the pregnancy of the Virgin is by the Holy Spirit. Being born of a virgin proves Christ's divinity; only a revelation by God could serve as adequate evidence of this miracle.

1:22 Matthew repeatedly uses the formula **that it might be fulfilled which was spoken** (see 2:15, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:56; 27:35). This underscores the intervention of God throughout history, demonstrates the continuity between the Old and New Covenants, and indicates the beginning of the new creation.

1:23 The conception of Jesus fulfills Is 7:14, where we are told that a **virgin** would conceive and **bear a Son**. He who is conceived in Mary is not a new Person coming into existence but the eternal Son of God now using her womb as His throne. Both the virginal conception by means of the Holy Spirit and the name **Immanuel**, **God with us** declare Christ's divinity.

2:2 The **star** proclaims the extraordinary birth of Christ. To ancient pagans, a star signified a god, a deified king (Nm 24:17). Christ being born under this star fulfills the prophecy in Ps 109:3 and shows all of creation participating in the Incarnation. (See also Pss 18:2; 148:3.)

2:4 Herod had to summon the Jewish leaders because he knew little about the Jewish Messiah and he feared losing his throne to this newborn King. The **chief priests** were the political and religious leaders of the Jews, and the **scribes** were high cabinet officers. They knew where the Messiah was to be born, but in spite of all the signs being in place, they had no idea that He had come (see 16:3).

2:11 **Into the house**: Whereas the Jewish shepherds worshiped the Savior in the cave on the day He was born (Lk 2:8–20), the Gentile magi came to worship Him some time later. By then, Joseph and Mary had found a house in which to dwell. This indicates that Christ first came to the Jews and then afterward was worshiped by the Gentiles. The significance of the Magi's **gifts** is revealed in a hymn sung at Compline of the Nativity: “**Gold** is for the King of ages. **Frankincense** is for the God of all. **Myrrh** is offered to the Immortal One, who shall be three days dead.”

2:14 **Egypt** is where Israel once took refuge; as Joseph of the OT once saved God's people by bringing them to Egypt (Gn 39–47), now Christ's stepfather Joseph finds safety for the Savior in Egypt. It is probable that the gifts of the magi paid for this journey.

2:15 **Out of Egypt I called my Son** refers first to Israel being brought out of captivity (Hos 11:1). In the OT, “son” can refer to the whole nation of Israel. Here Jesus fulfills this calling as the true Son of God by coming out of Egypt.

2:16 The cruelty of **Herod** was prefigured by Pharaoh, who, in an attempt to destroy the power of Israel, commanded the death of all the newborn Jewish boys (Ex 1:16, 22).

2:17-18 **Jeremiah** recorded the people of Jerusalem being led away to exile (Jer 38:15). On their way to captivity, they passed **Ramah**, which was near Bethlehem, where Jacob's wife **Rachel** lay buried. In his prophecy, Jeremiah saw Rachel, even from the grave, moved with compassion for the fate that had befallen her descendants. Here Rachel is again **weeping for her children**, showing that the saints in heaven have awareness and compassion for those yet on earth. These slaughtered children are regarded as saints and martyrs in the Church and are known as the Holy Innocents. Just as Rachel was told that her children would return from exile in Babylon (Jer 38:16, 17), so Jesus will return from His exile in Egypt.

2:19 According to historical records, **Herod** the Great died in 4 BC. The date of Christ's birth on which our current AD (*Anno Domini*, Latin for “year of the Lord”) calendar is based is off by four years.

2:22 Augustus Caesar banished **Archelaus** for his cruelty in AD 6. This cruelty was revealed as a warning to Joseph; hence the detour to Nazareth (v. 23). This town was in Galilee and was governed by another son of Herod the Great, whose name was Herod Antipas (see Lk 3:1).

2:23 The prophecy here cannot be exactly identified. It has been taken as a reference to the rod (Heb. *neser*) in Is 11:1, and to the Nazirite (Heb. *Nazir*) of Jdg 13:5. Matthew may also have been alluding to passages in which the Messiah was despised, since Nazareth did not have a good reputation (Jn 1:46).

3:1-3 **The wilderness of Judea** is the barren region descending from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. The preparation for the Savior's ministry begins with John the Baptist's call to **repent**. Repentance, which accompanies faith, is a total about-face. The word in Greek literally means to change one's mind, or more generally, to turn around. Repentance is a radical change of one's spirit, mind, thought, and heart, a complete reorientation of the whole of one's life. It is the necessary first step in **the way of the Lord**. It is accompanied by the confession of sins and the act of baptism (v. 6), and is followed by a life filled with fruits worthy of this change (v. 8).

3:4 John's ascetic life conformed to that of the Jewish sects such as the Essenes, who lived in the wilderness and whose purpose was to prepare for the coming Kingdom of God. John's clothing was typical of a prophet (4Kg 1:8). The monastic movement in the early Church was patterned after John's manner of life.

3:6 The confession of sins is essential to baptism under both the Old Covenant and the New. John's baptism, however, was a sign of repentance and the forgiveness of sins only. It did not confer the power of total regeneration nor adoption as a child of God as does Christian baptism (v. 11).

3:7 **Sadducees** were members of the high-priestly and landowning class who controlled the temple and the internal political affairs of the Jews. They denied the resurrection of the dead and had no messianic hope beyond this life. The **Pharisees** formed a lay religious movement centered on the study of the Law and on strict observance of its regulations. They believed in the resurrection of the dead and cherished a messianic hope, but taught that righteousness is attained on the strength of one's works according to the Law, and that the Messiah would be merely a glorious man. John's title for them, **brood of vipers**, is later used by Jesus (12:34; 23:33). It indicates their deception and malice and their being under the influence of Satan.

3:8 Repentance, confession, and baptism lead to **fruits worthy of repentance**, a way of life consistent with the Kingdom of God (see Gal 5:22–25). If a fruitful life does not follow, sacramental acts and spiritual discipline are useless. Thus in many icons of the Baptism of Christ, an ax is pictured chopping a fruitless tree (v. 10).

3:9 The warning that **from these stones** (Heb. *'ebanim*) God can raise up children (Heb. *banim*) is a play on words. God will not admit fruitless children into His house, but adopts other children from the Gentiles.

3:11 Christ baptizes in the **fire** of the Holy Spirit, the power and grace of God divinely poured out on all believers at baptism. (See also fire in v. 10; note at Lk 3:16, 17.)

In John's culture, a slave would carry the king's **sandals**; thus John declares himself to be even lower than a slave of Jesus. John's inability to carry Christ's sandal has a second meaning, for carrying another's sandal once meant taking someone else's responsibility (Ru 4:7). Here it shows that John could not have carried the responsibility that Christ carries, and that the Law could not redeem the world as Christ has come to do.

3:12 **Winnowing** the threshed grain from the **chaff** is a metaphor for the divine judgment, which will separate good from evil.

3:15 Jesus does not need purification. By making the purification of humanity His own, He would wash away humanity's sin, grant regeneration, and reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Thus, His baptism was necessary for the fulfillment of God's righteous plan of salvation. “Jesus enters the filthy, sinful waters of the world and when He comes out, brings up and purifies the entire world with Him” (GrgNy; see also note on Lk 3:21).

3:16 The **Spirit of God** hovered over the water at the first creation (Gn 1:2). Now, the Holy Spirit comes in the form of **a dove** to anoint the Messiah, the Son of God, at the beginning of the new creation. Jesus does not become the Son of God this day; rather, He is revealed to all as the Son of God on this day. The Holy Spirit has always rested on Him. The feast day of Epiphany (a manifestation or revelation) or Theophany (a manifestation of God), celebrated on January 6, commemorates this day and points to the age to come.

3:17 This quotation is from Ps 2:7, “You are My Son, / Today I have begotten You.” Note how the Baptism of Jesus reveals the great mystery of the Trinity: the Father speaks; the Holy Spirit descends; the Incarnate Son is baptized.

4:1 To be **tempted** is to be tested in fundamental areas of faith. As in Mark, the **Spirit** leads, or “throws,” Jesus into **the wilderness** after His Baptism to be tested by a struggle with **the devil**. We who are baptized in Christ need not be defeated by temptations because we too are aided by the Holy Spirit. The wilderness is a battleground, an image of the world, both the dwelling place of demons and a source of divine tranquility and victory.

4:2-10 Jesus reverses Israel's falling to temptation in the wilderness. The Israelites were tested forty years in the wilderness and proved disobedient and disloyal. God humbled them by first letting them go hungry and then feeding them with manna to help them learn to be dependent on Him (Dt 8:2–5). Here, Jesus is tested with hunger for forty days, but He does not sin. His answers to Satan are from Deuteronomy, and all call for loyalty to God.

Jesus **fasted** to overcome temptation, giving us an example of our own power and limitations in the face of temptation. The hunger of His flesh does not control Him; rather, He controls His flesh. Our Lord's fast of **forty days** is the foundation of the Church's forty-day Lenten fast before Holy Week and of the fast before Christmas.

4:3 The devil challenges Christ's relationship to the Father. **If You are the Son of God** calls into question the Father's declaration at Christ's Baptism (3:17). The devil wants Jesus to act independently and to detach Himself from the will of the Father. In His divine nature, Christ shares one will with the Father and the Holy Spirit; He can do nothing of Himself (Jn 5:30), apart from the Father. But in His humanity, He possesses free will and at all times must choose to remain obedient to the divine will of the Father.

4:4 By rejecting the first temptation, Jesus rejects an earthly kingdom and shows us not to pursue earthly comfort in the “food which perishes” (Jn 6:27). While Adam disregarded the divine word in order to pursue the passions of the body (Gn 3), the New Adam—Christ— conquers all temptation by the divine word, giving human nature the power to conquer Satan.

4:5 The **holy city** is Jerusalem.

4:6 Seeing that Christ had defeated him through the power of the Scriptures, Satan vainly tries to use the Scriptures to put God's power of protection to the test. (See also 2Pt 1:19–21.)

4:7 Trials and temptations come on their own; we should never intentionally expose ourselves to danger in order to test or prove God's protection. To do so is to **tempt the Lord**.

4:8-10 God's Kingdom is not one of earthly power and possessions. In the devil's test, Jesus was being asked to choose worldly power over the Kingdom of God. The devil is the “ruler of this world” (Jn 12:31), “the god of this age” (2Co 4:4), because the whole world is in his power (1Jn 5:19). Jesus refuses the road of earthly glory, which would lead Him away from His suffering and death for the redemption of the world.

4:15 The term **Galilee of the Gentiles** indicates that many non-Jews lived in the region. Having a mixed population, it was not considered a genuinely Jewish land, even though many Gentile residents had converted to Judaism during the Maccabean period. Because many of the Jews there had been influenced by the Greek culture and its customs, they were generally considered second-class citizens by the Jews of Judea.

4:16 **Darkness** means ungodliness. Here it represents the Gentiles' unawareness of God and the Jews being under the shadow of the Old Covenant. To sit in darkness means to be overcome by spiritual ignorance. The **great light** is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

4:18-22 These first disciples had already heard the preaching of John the Baptist and were prepared to accept Christ **immediately**. Though illiterate and unlearned in religion, these “people of the land” whom Jesus calls will be revealed at Pentecost to be the wisest of all.

4:23-25 Note that the crowds do not swarm Jesus when He commands repentance (v. 17), but only when He begins to heal and work miracles. This fact shows that the people misunderstand the true nature of His Kingdom. It also shows Christ's concession “to give credibility to what He teaches” among the fickle **multitudes** (Theoph).

5:1, 2 In the OT, only a select few were chosen to hear God directly (see Ex 19:3–13). Here, God Incarnate speaks to the **multitudes** face to face. The **mountain** is a place where divine action enters human history, the place where God reveals Himself to man (17:1; Gn 22:2; Ex 3:1; 19:2; 3Kg 18:20). **Seated** is the traditional Jewish position for teaching with authority. Some early Christian preachers (for example, St. John Chrysostom) sat while the people stood. Matthew mentioning that Jesus **opened his mouth** emphasizes this teaching is "one-way," that Jesus has come to speak with authority (7:29), and the disciples are there not to discuss or debate, but to listen.

5:3 **Blessed** in this context indicates heavenly, spiritual exaltation rather than earthly happiness or prosperity. In Hebrew, “poor” means both (1) the materially poor and (2) the faithful among God's people. The **poor in spirit** are those who have the heart of the poor, the same attitude as the poor, and are totally dependent on God.

5:4 **Those who mourn** sorrow over the sufferings of this life (9:23), the sufferings of others (Jn 11:35), the state of the world (Lk 19:41), and their own sins (Lk 7:36–38). All of these are **comforted** by the power of God both in this world and in the age to come. Holy sorrow is part of repentance, conversion, and virtuous action, and is the firstfruit of infinite joy. It is to be distinguished from ungodly sorrow, a sadness that leads to despair (see 2Co 7:10).

5:5 Meekness is an attitude of being content with both honor and dishonor. It is an imitation of Christ, who said, “Learn from Me, for I am gentle [meek] and lowly in heart” (11:29). The **meek** are God-controlled and have mastery over their passions, especially anger. Meekness is not passive weakness, but strength directed and under control. The **earth** that the meek will **inherit** is not power or possession in this world, but the new earth, which is everlasting (Rev 21:1).

5:6 Those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness** see the presence of God and His Kingdom as the most important thing in life. They have a desperate craving for what is right before God, comparable to a starving person's craving for food (see 6:33).

5:7 **Mercy** is love set in motion, expressed in action. God's mercy in taking our sufferings on Himself in order to grant us His Kingdom sets us free from captivity to the evil one. In view of God's mercy to all, we in turn are to be **merciful** to all.

5:8 “Pure” means unmixed with anything else. The **pure in heart** are completely devoted to the worship and service of God and accept no compromises. With the aid of the Holy Spirit, those who achieve purity practice all virtue, have no conscious evil in themselves, and live in temperance. This level of spirituality is attained by few, but all may strive for it. When the soul's only desire is God, and a person's will holds to this desire, then that person will indeed **see God** everywhere.

5:9 Being the source of peace, Christ found no price sufficient for peace other than shedding His own blood. In doing so, Christ reveals Himself to us as the Reconciler, the Prince of peace (Is 9:6; Eph 2:14–16). The Holy Spirit gives peace to those who imitate Christ. Thus, **peacemakers** share God's peace with those around them, imitating Christ's sacrificial love and participating in His work. By God's grace, peacemakers become **sons of God** themselves.

5:10 Children of God uphold truth, refuse to compromise with the ways of the world, and give themselves to no other (6:24, 33; see 1Co 6:19, 20). Like Jesus, these will be **persecuted for righteousness' sake** (see Jn 15:18–20). Christ's **kingdom** is the crown awaiting the righteous.

5:11-12 Those who suffer persecution for Christ walk the road of the prophets, saints, and martyrs. The Greek for **be exceedingly glad** means to “leap exceedingly with joy.” (See Acts 5:40, 41.)

5:13-16 **Salt** and **light** illustrate the role of disciples in society. Because of its preservative powers, its necessity for life, and its ability to give flavor, salt had religious and sacrificial significance (Lv 2:13; see also Nm 18:19; 2Ch 13:5). To eat salt with someone meant to be bound together in loyalty. As the salt of the earth, Christians are preservers of God's covenant and give true flavor to the world.

God is the true and uncreated Light. In the OT light is symbolic of God (Is 60:1–3), the divine Law (Ps 118:105), and Israel in contrast to all other nations. In the NT, the Son of God is called “light” (Jn 1:4–9; 8:12; 1Jn 1:5). Light is necessary both for clear vision and for life itself. Faith relies on this divine light, and believers become “sons of light” (Jn 12:36; 1Th 5:5) who shine in a perverse world (Php 2:15). In many parishes, the Pascha (Easter) Liturgy begins with a candle being presented and the invitation to “come receive the Light which is never overtaken by night.”

5:16 Christian virtues have both a personal and a public function, for our virtue can bring others to **glorify** the **Father**.

5:17 Jesus fulfills **the Law** in Himself, in His words, and in His actions by: (1) performing God's will in all its fullness (3:15); (2) transgressing none of the precepts of the Law (Jn 8:46; 14:30); (3) declaring the perfect fulfillment of the Law, which He was about to deliver to them; (4) granting righteousness—the goal of the Law—to us (Rom 3:31; 8:3, 4; 10:4). He fulfills **the Prophets** by both being and carrying out what they foretold.

5:18 **Assuredly** (Gr. *amen*) means “truly,” or “confirmed,” or “so be it.” Jesus uses it as a solemn affirmation, a form of oath. Christ's use of this word at the beginning of certain proclamations (rather than at the end) is unique and authoritative: He declares His words affirmed before they are even spoken.

Ajot (Gr. *iota*) is the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet; a **tittle** is the smallest stroke in certain Hebrew letters. Thus, the whole of the Law is affirmed as the foundation of Christ's new teaching. **All is fulfilled** refers to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.

5:19 Righteousness according to the Law is a unified whole. The observance of all the **least** commandments is to observe the whole Law, while the violation of the least commandment is considered a violation of the whole Law.

5:21-22 The repeated formula **but I say to you** is a statement of total, divine authority (7:29). As the Creator of man and the Author of the Law, Christ can speak with this authority. While there is anger which is not sinful (Ps 4:5; Mk 3:5), here Jesus forbids sinful anger, identifying it with **murder**. The **council** is the supreme legal body among the Jews. **Hell** (Gr. *Gehenna*; see 10:28 and note) is the final condition of sinners who resist God's grace.

5:23-24 Peace with other believers is a requirement for worship (Mk 11:25). The liturgical “kiss of peace” at the beginning of the eucharistic prayer is a sign of reconciliation and forgiveness, preparing the faithful to **offer** the holy gifts at **the altar** (1Co 16:20; 1Pt 5:14).

5:25-26 Luke places this teaching in the context of the end of the age (Lk 12:57–59); here it is in the context of reconciliation surrounding the Liturgy. Delay in reconciliation allows for the spread of animosity and other evils (Eph 4:26, 27).

5:27-28 The issue here is not the God-given mutual attraction of men and women, but the selfish promptings of **lust**. Sin does not come out of nature, but out of the distortion of nature for self-indulgence. Thoughts that enter the mind involuntarily are not sins, but temptations. They become sins only when they are held and entertained.

5:31-32 In contrast to the easy access to **divorce** under the Mosaic Law, and because of the misuse of divorce in that day, Jesus repeatedly condemns divorce (19:8, 9) and emphasizes the eternal nature of marriage. The possibility of divorce on the grounds of **sexual immorality** shows that marriage can be destroyed by sin. While recognizing divorce as a serious sin, the Orthodox Church allows divorce and a second marriage as a concession to human weakness and as a corrective measure of compassion when a marriage has been broken. A third marriage is permitted only under specific, limited circumstances, and a fourth marriage is never permitted.

5:34-37 Trust cannot be secured by swearing an oath by things that are not in man's possession anyway, but only by simple integrity.

5:39-42 In contrast to the OT (Ex 21:24; Lv 24:20; Dt 19:21), Jesus warns us **not to resis**t violence with more violence. **Evil** can only be overcome by good, which keeps us free from compromise with the devil and can bring our enemy under the yoke of God's love. A saint of the desert once found his hut being looted of its paltry possessions, and he knelt in the corner praying for the bandits. When they left, the monk realized they had not taken his walking stick. This monk pursued them for many days until he was able to give them the stick as well. Seeing his humility, the bandits returned everything to him and were converted to Jesus Christ.

5:44-47 Freed from hate, sadness, and anger, we are able to receive the greatest virtue: perfect love. The **love** of **enemies** is not merely an emotion, but includes decision and action. It is to treat and see our enemies as the closest members of our own family. (See 1Jn 4:7–21.)

5:48 The summary statement of all that has preceded. The Christian can indeed grow in the perfection of the **Father** (Eph 4:13; see also the article, “Deification,” at 2Pt 1), which is shown by imitating His love and mercy (compare Lk 6:36).

6:1 In this chapter, Jesus presents the three most basic aspects of spiritual living: (1) charitable giving (vv. 1–4), (2) prayer (vv. 5–15), and (3) fasting (vv. 16–18). These three disciplines relate directly to God's righteousness.

6:2 The original meaning of “hypocrite” was “actor.” **Hypocrites** are play-actors practicing piety for show, desiring to please men rather than God. Wearing masks of compassion, inwardly they are heartless. Their **reward** is the applause of men and nothing more.

6:3-4 God is not impressed with what others think of us, nor by what we think of ourselves. God will **reward** good deeds when they are based on pure motives of the heart.

6:5-8 **The hypocrites** miss the spirit of prayer, which is an intimate, personal communion with God that leads to the vision of His glory (1Co 2:9). Hypocrisy blocks out this communion and this vision. **Vain repetitions** cannot establish this communion, for God does not need our "babble." To partake of this communion, both silence and words are necessary. Therefore, we pray always (Lk 18:1) and without ceasing (1Th 5:17).

Christ does not condemn the use of **many words** per se, but teaches that words must express the desire for communion with God. Jesus gives us specific words to repeat (vv. 9–13). It is not repetition itself that is condemned, but vain repetition. Many psalms, prayers, and hymns of the Church have been repeated for countless generations in the worship of God "in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23).

True prayer is not telling God what He already knows and then telling Him what to do about it, nor is it appearing pious in front of others. True prayer is (1) humble (**go into your room**, v. 6), (2) personal (**pray to your Father**, v. 6), and (3) sincere (**do not use vain repetitions**, v. 7).

6:9 The Father-Son relationship within the Trinity reveals our potential relationship with God. Christ, the Son of God, grants us the privilege of calling God **Our Father** by the grace of adoption (Gal 4:4–7). As a “son of God,” the Christian is called to love, trust, and serve God as Christ does the Father. We must note that God is not our Father simply because He created us. He is only Father to those in a saving and personal relationship with Him, a communion that only comes by the grace of adoption (see Jn 1:13; Rom 8:14–16).

6:11 *Daily* is a misleading translation of the Greek *epiousios*, which is literally “above the essence,” or “supersubstantial.” The expression **daily bread** indicates not merely bread for this day, for earthly nourishment; it is the bread for the eternal day of the Kingdom of God, for the nourishment of our immortal soul. This living, supersubstantial bread is Christ Himself. In the Lord's Prayer, then, we are not asking merely for material bread for physical health, but for the spiritual bread of eternal life (Jn 6:27–58).

6:12 The request to be forgiven is plural, directing us to pray always for the forgiveness of others. The term **debts** refers to spiritual debts (see 18:21–35; also note on v. 14).

6:13 God tempts no one to sin (Jam 1:13); temptations are from **the evil one**, the devil. Temptations are aimed at the soul's giving in to the sinful passions of the flesh (Rom 7:5). No one lives without encountering temptations, but we pray that great temptations, tests beyond what we can bear (1Co 10:13), should not come to us.

6:14-15 Jesus insists on mutual forgiveness between people as a precondition of God's forgiveness. Those who do not **forgive** are not forgiven—period. This teaching is repeated in the parable of the unforgiving servant (18:21–35), which concludes with the same teaching. To not forgive others is to willfully flee from the forgiveness of God for ourselves.

6:16-18 Keeping a **sad countenance** to show off one's fasting is mere external display. Jesus rejects such hypocrisy. For the one who fasts, the compassion of God outshines the physical discomfort. During the fasting seasons of the Church, the hymns call the faithful to **wash** and **anoint** their faces (thus, there is no “Ash Wednesday” in the Orthodox Church). Fasting is for spiritual growth and the glory of God, not to be seen by those around us.

Fasting also is not merely abstinence from food, but consists of self-denial in all areas of life in order to escape the control of the passions. On the eve of Great Lent, we sing, “Let us abstain from passions as we abstain from food.” St. John Chrysostom writes, “What good is it if we abstain from eating birds and fish, but bite and devour our brothers?”

6:19-21 By attaching themselves to **treasures on earth**, people cut themselves off from heavenly treasures. They become slaves to earthly things rather than free in Christ. The heart of discipleship lies in (1) disentangling ourselves from the chains of earthly things, and (2) attaching ourselves to God, the true **treasure** (v. 21).

6:22-23 The mind (Gr. *nous*) is the spiritual **eye** of the soul; it illuminates the inner man and governs the will. Keeping the mind wholesome and pure is fundamental to the Christian life.

6:24 As slaves serving **two masters**, people attempt to maintain an attachment to both earthly and heavenly things. But this is impossible, since both demand full allegiance. Jesus calls **mammon** ("riches") a master not because wealth is evil by nature, but because of the control it has over people.

6:25-27 Jesus is warning against anxiety, not against thoughtful planning. Our physical well-being is directly dependent on God, and only indirectly on **food**, **drink**, and **clothing**. Anxiety over earthly things demonstrates a lack of faith in God's care.

6:32 Because **the Gentiles** served pagan idols, they remained consumed by dependence on earthly **things**. Those who follow God can be freed from this dependence.

6:33 **The kingdom of God** is the central theme of Jesus' teaching, and **His righteousness** is the subject of the Sermon on the Mount. Calling us to be free from anxiety about earthly things, Jesus directs us to look to heaven, secure in the faith that God will provide needed earthly blessings.

7:2 We will be judged with our own level of **judgment** because we are guilty of the very things we judge in others (Rom 2:1). We ourselves have failed in repentance and in fleeing from sin. To pass judgment is to assume God's authority. The second part of this verse is found in Mk 4:24 and in Lk 6:38, each in a different context, as Jesus no doubt repeated this particular message many times.

7:6 **Dogs** and **swine** refer to heathen peoples (Php 3:2; Rev 22:15), but would also include Jews who do not practice virtue. According to the Fathers, *dogs* are those so immersed in evil that they show no hope of change, while *swine* are those who habitually live immoral and impure lives. The **pearls** are the inner mysteries of the Christian faith, including Christ's teachings (13:46) and the great sacraments. These **holy** things are restricted from the immoral and unrepentant, not to protect the holy things themselves, for Christ needs no protection. Rather, we protect the faithless people from the condemnation that would result from holding God's mysteries in contempt (see note on Lk 23:8, 9).

7:7-11 The verbs **ask**, **seek**, and **knock** are present progressives: “be asking,” “be seeking,” “be knocking.” Note the synergy: our effort is commanded, but never apart from the immediate help of God. We ask in prayer; seek by learning God's truth; and knock by doing God's will.

7:11 Man is called **evil** not to condemn the whole race, but to contrast the imperfect goodness that is in people (that is, our goodness is mingled with sin) with the perfect goodness of God (see 19:16, 17). If imperfect and even wicked people can do some **good**, all the more will God work perfect good.

7:12 The “Golden Rule” fulfills the demands of **the Law and the Prophets** and is a practical application of the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself (22:39, 40). It is a first step in spiritual growth. The negative form of the Golden Rule (“Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you”) was well known in Judaism. Jesus' form is positive: this is the action that begins to draw us toward God (see note at Lk 6:31).

7:13-14 The description of the two ways was widespread in Judaism (Dt 30:15–20; Ps 1; Pr 4:17, 18; 12:28; 15:23; WSir 15:17) and in early Christian writings (Didache, Barnabas). Luke's version (Lk 13:24–30) is more eschatological, referring to the end of the age. Because we wrestle against sins and human weaknesses as well as spiritual forces of evil (Eph 6:12), entering the Kingdom is the more **difficult** way.

7:15 Because they can easily deceive others, those who put on a show of virtue or religion are more dangerous than those who are evil outright. Thus, we must be all the more cautious among those who are outwardly virtuous.

7:19 John the Baptist made the same statement in 3:10.

7:21-22 A threefold testimony of the deity of Christ: (1) He calls Himself **Lord**—which refers to the divine name "Yahweh" of the OT; (2) He speaks of the **will of My Father**, which He fully knows and shares; (3) as judge, Christ is revealed as God, for only God can execute true judgment. **In that day** refers to the final judgment.

8:1-4 The biblical law concerning **leprosy** is found in Lv 13; 14. Dt 24:8 describes the purification of lepers and leprous houses, which was a duty entrusted to the priests. Leprosy was considered a direct punishment for sins, and as lepers were unclean, they were not permitted to live in the community or to worship in synagogues or the temple. Touching the unclean was forbidden (Lv 7:21), yet Jesus **touched** the **leper**, showing His compassion, and showing that He is not subject to the Law but over it. To the clean, nothing is unclean. (See also note at Lk 5:14.)

8:5 A **centurion** (a Gentile) commanded 100 men in a Roman legion. Jesus is the Savior of all, and in Him ethnic distinctions are void.

8:7 **I will come** has been read as a question by many Greek scholars: “Shall I come?” Regardless, Jesus is ready to deal graciously with this Gentile and even to enter his house, which would make Him unclean in the eyes of the Jews.

8:8-9 **The centurion** expresses unusual faith in calling Jesus, who is a Jew, *Lord*. The statement, “**Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof**,” is frequently quoted in liturgical texts as an ideal expression of humility.

8:10 Twice in the gospels it is said of Jesus that **He marveled**: (1) at the unbelief in His hometown of Nazareth (Mk 6:6), and (2) at the belief of this foreigner.

8:11-12 Here Jesus nullifies any ideas of ethnic superiority. The rejected **sons of the kingdom** are both the Jews who deny Christ and those raised in the Church who do not live their faith; **outer darkness** and **weeping and gnashing** are descriptions of the state of the unrighteous dead in Sheol (Hades) in the Jewish tradition (Enoch 103:8). They are common expressions in Matthew (13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), and also occur in Luke (Lk 13:28).

8:14-17 This passage and 1Co 9:5 (where Peter is called Cephas) indicate Peter was married. Our Lord's healing miracles are diverse. In this case, He heals by touch; in v. 13, He healed by a word. This healing is immediate and complete; others are gradual (Mk 8:22–25) or require the cooperation of the person healed or of his loved ones (Lk 8:54, 55). As the quotation in v. 17 indicates, all of Christ's miracles manifest His redemption of ailing humanity.

8:20 Since the term **Son of Man** refers to the Messiah (Dan 7:13), it expresses both His humanity and His divinity. Here it refers to Christ's human condition; in 25:31–33 it describes His divine authority.

8:21-22 Jesus is not negating the command to honor parents, but is teaching us to put the things of the Kingdom as the highest priority. Those who ignore this priority are spiritually **dead**.

8:23-27 The Lord's mastery over creation is another sign that He is the Messiah and is divine. Commands to the **sea** and **waves** (v. 24) can only be issued by God (Job 38:8–11; Ps 65:5, 6; 106:29). Jesus **was asleep** because, as a man, he needed rest. In His Incarnation, He assumed all the natural actions of the flesh, of which sleep is one. The image of Christ and His disciples in a boat is traditionally used to illustrate the Church. God both permits storms and delivers us through them, so that we can see His protection more clearly. Christ's rebuke of the storm is also an illustration of His calming the tempests in the human soul.

8:28-34 The demons, recognizing Jesus as the **Son of God**, are surprised that their power is being terminated **before the time** of the last judgment. Though the malice of the demons is great, they can do nothing against the will of God, and thus can only enter the **swine** at Christ's command. The immediate destruction of the **herd** shows that the men had been protected by God's care; otherwise, they would have perished under the demonic influence. Further, it reinforces that swineherding was not lawful for the Jews, and shows the incomparable value of human beings, whose salvation is worth every sacrifice.

9:1 Jesus' **own city** is Capernaum (4:13).

9:2-8 As shown by the healing of the **paralytic**, faith is an indispensable condition for salvation. Faith is collective as well as personal, for the faith of the paralytic's friends helped in his healing (v. 2). Three signs of Jesus' divinity are shown: (1) He knows the secrets of hearts (see 1Kg 16:7; 2Ch 6:30); (2) He forgives sins, a power which belongs to God alone; and (3) He heals by the power of His word.

9:9-13 **Matthew** is also named Levi (Mk 2:14). Roman overlords assigned specific areas to Jewish tax collectors, who were free to collect extra revenues for their own profit. Their collaboration with the occupying Romans, their fraud, and their corruption caused other Jews to hate them and to consider them unclean (11:19). Jesus dining with them and accepting a tax collector as a disciple ("**Follow Me**") offends the Pharisees, yet Christ's defense is simple: He goes where the need of the **physician** is greatest. "**I desire mercy and not sacrifice**" (v. 13; Hos 6:6) is not a rejection of sacrifice per se, but shows that mercy is a higher priority (see Ps 50).

9:14-17 The Jews typically fasted twice a week (Lk 18:12), on Monday and Thursday. In addition, public fasts were regularly observed or occasionally proclaimed (2Ch 20:3; 1Ez 8:49, 50; Est 4:16; Joel 2:15), especially on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:31–34) and in times of mourning (Zec 7:5; 8:19). But the Jews saw the day of the Messiah as a wedding feast—a time of joy and gladness. Jesus here proclaims that day, declaring Himself to be the Messiah/Bridegroom. For Christians, fasting is not gloomy but desirable, a bright sadness, for by fasting, they gain self-control and prepare themselves for the Wedding Feast.

The **old garment** and **old wineskins** stand for the Old Covenant and the Law, viewed as imperfect and temporary; the **new wineskins** are the New Covenant and those in Christ. The **new wine** is the Holy Spirit dwelling within renewed people, who cannot be constrained by the old precepts of the Law.

9:18-26 Authority over life and death is in the hand of God alone (Dt 32:39; 1Kg 2:6). Being of one essence with the Father, Jesus has this authority (Jn 5:21). The healing of this woman demonstrates Christ's power to cleanse and heal (see 8:1–4). In the OT, hemorrhage caused ceremonial defilement, imposing religious and social restrictions, for contact with blood was strictly prohibited (Lv 15:25). This suffering woman, accounting herself unclean, nevertheless approaches Jesus secretly and with great faith. In v. 22, Jesus (1) brings her **good cheer** because of her faith; (2) corrects her thinking, for neither could she hide her touch from Him, nor is she excluded from Him because of her illness; and (3) exhibits her **faith** to all, so that they might imitate her.

9:27-33 According to Isaiah, the messianic age is signified when “the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear” (Is 35:5). These healings are a sign that Jesus is the awaited Messiah, as is the use of the title **Son of David** by the **blind men**, which expresses their faith in this truth.

9:34 To cast out demons **by the ruler of demons** is impossible, for the aim of the devil is to consolidate power, not destroy it. Further, Jesus cleansed lepers, raised the dead, and remitted sins—works demons could not perform.

9:36 Jesus does not condemn sinners, but sees them as lost sheep to be found and brought home. **Compassion** means “suffering with.” The illustration of **sheep having no shepherd**, drawn from the OT (Nm 27:17; 3Kg 22:17; Ezk 34:5), is an accusation against the Jewish leaders who, charged with the duty of shepherds, acted as wolves.

9:37-38 **The harvest** suggests the abundance of those who are ready to accept the Kingdom. Jesus is both the Sower and the **Lord of the harvest**. His disciples are sent not to sow, but to reap what He had sown by the prophets (see note at Jn 4:36–38). How many are sent to harvest is less important than with what power they go into the harvest (10:1).

10:1-4 **Disciples** (v. 1) and **apostles** (v. 2) are often used interchangeably for the **twelve**. Disciple means "learner," and apostle means "one sent out." Jesus **gave them power** to perform miracles, while He performed them by His own power. The names of the Twelve are not the same in all lists, as many people had more than one name. The names here are given in pairs, suggesting who may have traveled together on this "first missionary journey," as Mark reports they were sent out two by two (Mk 6:7).

10:5-10 The disciples' mission is like Christ's: to **preach** (v. 7) and to **heal** (v. 8). Note that Jesus sends them only to the Jews. Christ's earthly ministry was focused on the Jews (15:24) so that, after the Resurrection, the Jews could not blame the disciples for going “to uncircumcised men” (Acts 11:3). Jesus prepares them to be single-minded in their mission to preach and heal: (1) He reminds them that His power is free—a gift from God (v. 8); and (2) He instructs them to carry no money (v. 9) so that they could not be accused of greed, and so they would learn dependence on God.

10:12-13 Christ commissions His servants to give a greeting of **peace**, the same peace that was proclaimed by the prophets (Is 52:7), that He would offer to the disciples (Jn 14:27; 20:19), and that would be revealed as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). To this day, Christ's peace is offered to the faithful in the Liturgy with the words, “Peace be to all.”

10:16 Jesus instructs the disciples to be **wise as serpents** so that they might not be unnecessarily wounded and that they might take all advantage in the spread of the gospel. He also tells them to be as **harmless as doves** so that they should not retaliate against those who do them wrong, and should be blameless in their witness of the gospel.

10:23 Persecution must not cause the disciple to quit, but simply to move forward in his mission. According to St. John Chrysostom, **before the Son of Man comes** is not a reference to the Second Coming, but merely means that before the disciples could visit all the cities in Palestine, Christ would rejoin them, thus more quickly ending the hostility they would encounter.

10:26 **Them**: persecutors of the disciples (see v. 17). **Do not fear** is repeated three times (vv. 26, 28, 31) to embolden the witness of the gospel in the face of adversity. Christian believers, then and today, must neither be intimidated by persecution nor fail in their mission to preach.

10:28 That there is no need to fear the killing of **the soul** shows the immortality of the human soul, which is ours by grace. **Fear Him** is a command to fear God (Pr 9:10; Lk 1:50; 23:40; Acts 10:2; Col 3:22; 1Pt 2:17), for only God has the power to judge the soul. Christians are instructed to resist the devil (Jam 4:7), but not to fear him.

Hell is literally “Gehenna.” In Jewish history, Gehenna (the Valley of Hinnom) became a place of forbidden religious practices (2Ch 28:3; Jer 39:35). King Josiah put an end to these practices (4Kg 23:10). By Christ's time, the valley had become a garbage dump that smoldered ceaselessly. Because of these associations, Gehenna acquired the connotation of eternal punishment in the afterlife.

10:34 Just before His most violent death on the Cross, Christ promised peace to His disciples. But the existence of evil necessitates spiritual warfare. The **earth** to which Christ came was under the authority of Satan (Jn 12:31; 2Co 4:4). It is therefore essential that Christ wage war against the leader of vice with weapons of virtue (Eph 6:11–18). See also note at Lk 12:51.

10:40-42 Apostles are ambassadors who represent the Lord. Therefore, all who extend help to them are showing mercy directly to Christ and will receive God's **reward** (see 25:40).

11:3 According to the Church Fathers, John the Baptist asks this question in order to guide his own disciples to Jesus. Undoubtedly, John's own faith was also strengthened through Christ's response (vv. 4–6).

11:5 Isaiah predicted that these signs would accompany the coming of the Messiah (Is 61:1). Jesus performed these miracles in the presence of John's disciples (Lk 7:21) so they could see with their own eyes works that only the Messiah could do.

11:11 In terms of the OT Law, **John the Baptist** is the greatest prophet. The New Covenant is of such incomparable value that those who share in the New Covenant are greater than John was without it (see note at Lk 7:28).

11:12 Several interpretations have been given to the idea that the **kingdom of heaven suffers violence**. Some say that it refers to the Jewish opposition to the gospel. Others have said that it refers to the Kingdom breaking into the world “violently,” that is, with great power and force. Still others have said that the Kingdom of heaven refers to Christ Himself, who has been incarnate since the **days of John the Baptist**, and who will suffer the violence of the Cross. According to St. John Chrysostom, the **violent** who take the Kingdom **by force** are those who have such earnest desire for Christ that they let nothing stand between themselves and faith in Him.

11:13-14 **John** does not ascribe to himself the role of **Elijah** (Jn 1:21), but Jesus does. John fulfilled the mission of Elijah (Lk 1:17, 76) and his destiny was similar. Yet John is honored over Elijah (v. 11) because John prepared the way for the advent of Christ Himself.

11:16-19 A reference to a game played among Jewish **children** who would divide into two groups: those pretending to play musical instruments or singing, and the others responding in a manner opposite of what would have been expected. Christ draws a parallel to the Jewish leaders who responded wickedly both to John the Baptist as being too ascetic (v. 18) and to Christ as being too liberal in mercy and joy (v. 19).

11:20-24 It is a far greater sin to have seen Christ's works and rejected Him than never to have known Him at all.

11:25 Blessed Theophylact notes that God has **hidden** the mysteries from the wise of the world, not out of malice toward His creatures, but because of their own unworthiness; it was they who chose to trust their own fallen wisdom and judgment rather than God. Furthermore, it is out of love that God withholds this revelation from those who would scorn it so that they do not receive an even greater condemnation (see notes for vv. 20–24; Lk 8:10).

11:28-30 Jesus' **yoke** is submission to the Kingdom of God. A yoke could be seen as a sign of hardship, burdens, and responsibilities (3Kg 12:1–11; Jer 34:1–11; WSir 40:1), but in Christ, the yoke is **easy**, for the power of God works in each person. Furthermore, the reward is infinitely greater than any effort man puts forth. **Gentle** (v. 29) is literally “meek” (see note on 5:5).

12:1, 2 The Pharisees are rigid in their legalism. While the Law allowed plucking a few **heads of grain** in a neighbor's field (Dt 23:25), they consider it “reaping” and therefore unlawful **on the Sabbath**.

12:3-5 Providing OT examples of **blameless** “violations” of the **Sabbath**, Jesus demonstrates the **law** is not absolute over human need or service to God. The partaking of the **showbread** by **David** and his men (1Kg 21:5–7) prefigures the Eucharist, which in the OT was forbidden to anyone except the priests, but in Christ is given to all the faithful.

12:6-8 As the Author of the Law, Jesus is **Lord** over all of it. As Lord, He teaches that **mercy** takes precedence over regulations, ordinances, and ritualistic observances.

12:16-21 Our Lord's refusal to fully disclose His identity as Messiah is foreseen by Isaiah (Is 42:1–4). The reasons for secrecy include: (1) the growing hostility of the Jewish leaders; (2) the people's misunderstanding of the Messiah as an earthly, political leader; and (3) our Lord's desire to evoke genuine faith not based solely on marvelous signs. The **Servant** (v. 18) refers first to Christ, and by extension to all who follow Him.

12:21 The mission to the **Gentiles** after Pentecost was foreseen by Isaiah (Is 42:4).

12:22-30 **Beelzebub**, or Baal, was the prince of “the dung heap” or lord of “the flies”—a god worshipped by the Philistines (4Kg 1:2–16). Here, he is called **ruler of the demons** (v. 24). The impossibility of demons fighting against themselves illustrates the irrational pride and envy of the Pharisees in their opposition to Jesus.

12:32 Blasphemy **against the Holy Spirit** is blasphemy against the divine activity of the Spirit, blasphemy against pure goodness. A sin **against the Son of Man** is more easily forgiven because the Jews did not know much about Christ. But blasphemy against the Spirit, whose divine activity they knew from the OT, will not be forgiven because it comes from a willful hardness of heart and a refusal to accept God's mercy.

The Fathers are clear that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not an “unforgivable sin”; nor does Jesus ever call this sin “unforgivable.” St. John Chrysostom teaches that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would be forgivable if a person were to repent of it. Jesus makes this declaration knowing that those who blaspheme the Spirit are calling pure, divine goodness “evil,” and are beyond repentance by their own choice.

12:35 The **heart** in Scripture refers to the center of consciousness, the seat of the intellect and the will, and the place from which spiritual life proceeds. When God's grace permeates the heart, it masters the body and guides all actions and thoughts. On the other hand, when malice and **evil** capture the heart, a person becomes full of darkness and spiritual confusion.

12:39 **Adulterous generation** echoes the illustration used for Israel by the prophets when Israel was unfaithful to God (Jer 2; Hos 2:2–13).

12:43-45 When the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt, they did not repent of their impure ways, and an **unclean spirit** took up residence in their hearts (Dt 31:20; Ps 105:34–39). Thus, we guard our hearts. Unless there is full repentance and the Holy Spirit dwells in a person, an expelled demon will return with others and reoccupy its abode.

12:46-50 Christ's relatives have not yet understood His identity and mission. He points to a spiritual family based on obedience to **the will of My Father** (v. 50).

In Jewish usage, **brother** can indicate any number of relations. Abram called his nephew Lot “brother” (Gn 14:14); Boaz spoke of his cousin Elimelech as his “brother” (Ru 4:3); and Joab called his cousin Amasa “brother” (2Kg 20:9). Christ Himself had no blood brothers, for Mary had but one Son: Jesus. The brothers mentioned here were either stepbrothers, sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, or cousins. Indeed, Jesus commits His mother to the care of John at the Cross (Jn 19:25–27), which would have been unthinkable if Mary had had other children to care for her.

13:3-9 In the OT, metaphors of sowing and harvesting are common (Ps 125:5; Jer 38:27–30; Hos 2:21–23; Joel 3:12–14), as this was a part of daily life. Here, Jesus reveals Himself as the promised Messiah, the **sower** in the **earth**, who had been foretold in Is 55:10–13.

13:11 **The mysteries of the kingdom** are not merely obscure concepts or some religious truths only for the elite, nor is the understanding of the parables simply an intellectual process. Even the disciples find the message hard to understand. While Jesus taught the same message to all, it is the simple and innocent who are open to its message.

13:24-30 This **parable** builds on the previous parable of the sower. Here Christ gives attention to the **enemy** who has sown his seed among the **seed** of Christ. As falsehood came after truth and false prophets came after the true prophets, so the Antichrist will come after Christ. Just as the weeds first appear similar to wheat, so the devil fashions his lies to resemble the truth. That the devil sows while **men slept** indicates that heresy and lies creep in when people are apathetic.

This parable also explains why the Church neither condemns nominal members, nor judges those outside the Church (1Co 5:12, 13). Just as **wheat** would be destroyed in weeding out the **tares**, so also, many people who might ultimately find salvation would otherwise be lost if condemned before Christ's judgment.

13:31-33 The **mustard seed** and the **leaven** represent the disciples who, according to Theophylact, began as just a few men, but “soon encompassed the whole earth.” These also stand for faith entering a person's soul, which causes an inward growth of virtue. This soul will become godlike and can receive even angels.

13:44-46 The parable of the **treasure hidden in a field** illustrates those who unintentionally stumble onto Christ and His Church, yet receive Him with great eagerness. The parable of the **pearl of great price** illustrates those who have been searching in their hearts for Him and finally find Him and His Church. The other pearls represent all the various teachings and philosophies of the world. These treasures are hidden in that they are neither recognized nor valued by those immersed in worldliness. In both parables, receiving the treasure requires that everything else must be **sold**, that is, a person must surrender all things in order to receive Christ.

13:47-50 The image of the fishing net gathering the good and wicked together is similar to the parable of the wheat and the tares (vv. 36–43). This parable further emphasizes that even those gathered into the Church are subject to judgment.

13:52 St. John Chrysostom notes that Jesus does not exclude the OT, but rather praises it as a **treasure**. Those who truly write or speak of the **kingdom of heaven** will draw from the unity of the **new and old** Testaments, for both are holy, with the New being the fulfillment of the Old. This indeed is how Matthew composed his gospel (see note 1:22).

14:13 According to Theophylact, **when Jesus heard *it*** refers not to John's death, but to Herod's comment that Jesus was John raised from the dead (v. 2), since the account of John's death is given parenthetically.

14:14-21 This miracle, reported by all four evangelists, shows **Jesus** feeding **a great multitude** of His people as He fed the Israelites in the desert (see Ex 16). The Church Fathers see in this an image of the Eucharist, an idea made clear in Jn 6. In 15:32–39, another miracle is mentioned in which Jesus feeds four thousand people with seven loaves and a few small fish. While certain modern scholars have attempted to say that these are merely the same story, the witness of the gospel is clear that they are two distinct accounts, with Christ Himself referring to both of them separately (16:8–10). **Moved with compassion** is used frequently concerning the Lord (20:34; Mk 1:41; 6:34; Lk 7:13), showing that His power and authority are extended to those who suffer.

A spiritual interpretation given by the Fathers teaches that the **five loaves** indicate the five books of the Law (Genesis through Deuteronomy), which are broken open in Christ and thus feed the universe. The **two fish** represent the Gospel Book and the Epistle Book, the teaching of the fishermen. The gathering of the leftovers by the apostles (v. 20) shows that the teachings the faithful are unable to grasp are nevertheless held in the consciousness of the Church.

14:19 Jesus shows us that we should never eat without first giving thanks to God. The terminology points to the Last Supper (26:26) and leads to a eucharistic interpretation of this miracle. Just as the **disciples** distribute the bread **to the multitudes**, so also Christ feeds the Eucharist to His flock through the hands of His bishops and presbyters.

14:22-33 Only God has dominion over nature; thus, this miracle confirms the divinity of Christ. See also the notes at 8:23–27 and Lk 8:22–25.

14:27 This is the second time Christ permits His disciples to be caught in a storm (see 8:23–27). The first time He was with them; here He had left them alone. In this way, Christ strengthens their faith that He will always be with them in the midst of the storms of life. **It is I** is literally translated “I Am,” which is the divine Name of God (see Jn 8:58); Christ reminds the fearful disciples of His absolute and divine authority over their lives.

14:28-30 Peter's faith allows him to walk **on the water**. Note that Peter does not ask to walk on water per se, but to come to Jesus; his desire is not to perform miracles but to be with the Lord. Peter is able to participate in this divine miracle as long as he keeps his focus on Christ. As soon as he is distracted, he begins **to sink**.

14:31 The Greek term for **doubt** here means “wavering” or “hesitation.” The cause of Peter's sinking was not the storm, but the doubt; thus Christ does not rebuke the wind, but Peter.

14:33 This is the first time the disciples confess that Jesus is **the Son of God**. Knowing that only God can be worshiped, they confess Christ's divinity by worshiping Him. **The boat** is symbolic of the Church.

14:36 Christ permits miracles through **touch** to show that His very body is life, and that contact with His flesh is life-creating (see 9:20–22).

15:1-20 **The tradition of the elders** (v. 2) refers to the interpretations of the Law by Jewish teachers. Jesus refutes their views that ritual purity depends on outward actions. Rather it is the state of the **heart** (v. 8) that determines a person's purity.

15:3-6 Christ shows that **the commandment of God** cannot be superseded by man's religious traditions. Devotion to God includes both obedience to His commandments and service to others—these two cannot be separated (see also Jam 2:14–18; 1Jn 4:7–21).

15:21-28 The story of ministry to this Gentile woman illustrates the Jewish orientation of Matthew's gospel. This account is also mentioned in Mk 7:24–30, but with two major differences: (1) Matthew records Christ's words concerning **the lost sheep of the house of Israel** (v. 24), while Mark does not, and (2) Matthew records the woman using the title **Son of David**, a Jewish term for the Messiah, while Mark does not. Christ went to the Gentile cities not to preach, but to withdraw from the faithless Pharisees. This is confirmed in Mark's gospel, where we read that Christ “wanted no one to know” He was there, and here, where Christ says that He was only sent to the house of Israel.

15:22 This woman shows immeasurable love—she so identifies with the sufferings of her daughter that she cries “**Have mercy on me**,” for she sees her daughter's well-being as her own and her daughter's sufferings as her own.

15:23 Christ refuses to answer, not only because she is a Gentile and His ministry before His Passion is first to the Jews, but also to reveal this woman's profound faith and love. Several of the Fathers see the disciples' request to **send her away** as an attempt to persuade Jesus to heal the daughter, as if to say, “Give her what she wants so that she will leave.” Christ's response indicates this interpretation is correct, for He again refuses to heal the daughter.

15:26-28 Having evoked this woman's love and persistent faith, Christ now reveals her humility. She accepts her place beneath the Jews, who were the chosen people of God, yet still desires a share in God's grace. Christ's hesitancy was not a lack of compassion, but a conscious means of revealing the virtues of this woman, both to the disciples and for her own sake.

Her ultimate acceptance by Christ also points to the gathering of the Gentiles into the Church after Pentecost, no longer as **dogs**, but as **children** who are invited to eat the **bread** of eternal life.

15:29-31 Christ's healing of the multitudes here shows that these Jews actually had less faith than the Canaanite woman (vv. 21–28). Christ healed the woman “with much delay, but these immediately, because she is more faithful than they. He delays with her to reveal her perseverance, while here He bestows the gift immediately to stop the mouths of the unbelieving Jews” (JohnChr).

15:32-39 This second feeding of a multitude should not be confused with the first (14:22–33), for they are two distinct miracles (see 16:8–10). The variance in the number of loaves is significant. In the first instance, there were five loaves, symbolizing the Law, while here, there are **seven** (v. 34). Seven symbolizes completeness and here indicates spiritual perfection. Thus, in the first instance, Christ reveals Himself as fulfilling the Law, while here He shows that it is He who grants spiritual perfection. Note also these crowds had been with Christ for **three days** (v. 32), the number of days He would rest in the tomb. Participation in His perfection can only come through being united to Christ's death (see Rom 6:3–5).

16:1-3 **A sign from heaven** means a spectacular display of power. The time of the Messiah among the Jews was expected to be accompanied by signs, but these **hypocrites** have not recognized the signs already being performed because their hearts were hardened, and they ignored the works happening all around them.

16:5-12 **The leaven of the Pharisees** (v. 6) is their **doctrine** (v. 12) and their hypocrisy (Lk 12:2). The reason the disciples are painfully slow to understand is that they have such **little faith** (v. 8); they would not fully grasp Christ's teachings until Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given.

16:13-20 “**Who do you say that I am?**” (v. 15) is the greatest question a person can ever face, for it is the question that defines Christianity. Peter's correct answer to this question prevents the Christian faith from being seen as merely another philosophical system or path of spirituality, for it names Jesus as the one and only **Son of the living God**. This position excludes all compromise with other religious systems. Peter's understanding cannot be achieved by human reason, but only by divine revelation through faith (1Co 12:3). **Christ** means “Anointed One,” and is equivalent to the Hebrew title “Messiah.”

Note that Christ first draws out erroneous opinions about Himself (vv. 13, 14). He does this to identify these incorrect ideas, as a person is better prepared to avoid false teachings when they are clearly identified.

16:18 **Peter/rock** is a play on the word for “rock” in both Aramaic and Greek (*petros*/*petra*). This rock refers not to Peter per se, but to “the faith of his confession” (JohnChr). The true Rock is Christ Himself (1Co 10:4), and the Church is built on the faithful confession of Christ.

Gates of Hades: powers of death. In the OT, gates suggest a fortified city (Gn 22:17; 24:60; Is 14:31). By shattering its gates, Christ opens the stronghold of death to set free the souls of the righteous. So also, the Church shall not be stopped in her proclamation of salvation.

The term **church** is mentioned only twice in all the gospels, here and in 18:17. This Church is the true Israel and the Body of Christ; her citizenship is heavenly.

16:19 **Keys of the kingdom** refers to a special authority that will be given to both Peter and the other apostles after the Resurrection (see 18:18; Jn 20:23). Peter was not a leader over the others, but among them. This truth was confirmed at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) where the apostles and presbyters met as equals, and where Peter advised, but James presided. Papal claims in later centuries must not be confused with the NT witness regarding Peter, nor should the role of Peter be diminished in opposition to these claims.

Binding and loosing is a reference primarily to the authority “to absolve sins” (JohnChr; see Jn 20:23), but it also includes all the teaching, sacramental, and administrative authority of the apostles. This authority was in turn transmitted to the bishops of the Church and continues in effect to this day.

16:21-23 After Peter's confession, Jesus reveals the true nature of His messiahship: the mystery of His Passion. It was expected that the Messiah would reign forever, so the idea that Christ would die was perplexing to **Peter** and remained scandalous to the Jews even after the Resurrection (1Co 1:23). Peter unwittingly speaks for **Satan**, as the devil did not want Christ to fulfill His mission and save mankind through suffering and death.

16:24 The **cross**, a dreaded instrument of Roman punishment, is also a symbol of suffering by Christians in imitation of Christ. We practice self-denial for the sake of the love of God and the gospel. Accepting this suffering is not a punishment, nor is it an end in itself, but a means to overcome the fallen world for the sake of the Kingdom and to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5:24).

16:25 The central paradox of Christian living is that in grasping for temporal things, we lose the eternal; but in sacrificing everything in this world, we gain eternal riches that are unimaginable (1Co 2:9).

16:26 **What will a man give in exchange for his soul?** This question emphasizes the utter foolishness of accumulating worldly wealth or power, for none of this can redeem man's fallen soul, nor benefit a person in the life to come.

16:28 This is a reference to those who would witness the Transfiguration (17:1–9), as well as those in every generation who will experience the presence of God's Kingdom.

17:1 **A high mountain** is often a place of divine revelation in Scripture (5:1; Gn 22:2; Ex 19:3, 23; Is 2:3; 2Pt 1:18).

17:2 See the article, “The Transfiguration”; see also note at Lk 9:31.

17:14-16 Sickness in Scripture is often connected to demonic activity. By **kneeling**, this father shows humility, but he lacks faith. While the **disciples** also lacked faith (v. 20), Christ rebukes the man for placing the blame on the disciples when it was his greater lack of faith that prevented the boy's healing. In effect, Jesus defends His disciples in front of the multitudes but later rebukes them privately (vv. 19–21), teaching us that we ought first to correct people in private (see 18:15–17).

17:19-21 St. John Chrysostom notes this rebuke is directed at the nine disciples who could not cast out the demon, whereas “the pillars” of faith—Peter, James, and John (Gal 2:9)—were not included in the rebuke, as they had been on the mountain with Christ (v. 1).

This kind (v. 21) refers to all powers of darkness, not simply those that cause a particular illness. The banishment of demons requires **faith** (v. 20), **prayer**, and **fasting** (v. 21), for there is no healing and no victory in spiritual warfare without all three. Beginning with the Didache, the Fathers have taught that both the person in need of healing and the person performing the healing must believe, pray, and fast. On moving a mountain, see note at 21:21.

17:22-23 Jesus predicts His death and Resurrection a second time (see 16:21) to show that He is going to His Passion freely and not being taken against His will.

17:24-27 **The *temple* tax** was an annual head tax on all male Jews (except the priests) over twelve years of age for the maintenance of the temple (see Nm 3:43–51). Since Jesus is the Son of God, He is both High Priest and “proprietor” of the temple, and thus is exempt from the tax. Nevertheless, He pays it anyway, both to avoid unnecessary offense and to show that He has totally identified Himself with mankind.

18:1-4 This question indicates a selfish interest in worldly power. Pointing to a **little child** as the model of true discipleship, Jesus emphasizes the virtues required for entrance into the **kingdom of heaven**: humility, dependence, lowliness, simplicity, obedience, and a willingness to love and be loved. In Orthodox iconography, St. Ignatius of Antioch is depicted as this child. In certain legends of saints, he is the boy who gave the loaves and fishes (Jn 6:9).

18:6 **Little ones** include all who have childlike humility and simplicity, all who are poor in spirit.

18:8 See also 5:29. The reference to mutilation is an illustration of decisive action to avoid sin and does not advocate literal amputation. This also refers to harmful relationships that must be severed for the salvation of all parties (see Lk 14:26; 1Co 5:5).

18:12 Unlike earthly shepherds, Christ sees such value in **one** sheep that He will leave the others at risk to save it. The **ninety-nine** sheep represent the righteous who remain faithful to God (Lk 15:7). According to certain Fathers, this is also an image of the Incarnation in which the ninety-nine represent the angels in heaven; Christ descended from heaven to pursue the one sheep—man—who had fallen into corruption on earth.

18:15-20 Church discipline is based on mutual correction in three expanding stages. Sin and correction are to remain private unless the offender refuses to repent. All correction must be done with great care and humility, with the highest concern being the salvation of the offender (see 1Co 5:5; Gal 6:1). Nevertheless, correction must take place so that the sin does not spread to others as well.

18:17 **Church**: See the glossary.

18:18-20 The authority to **bind** and **loose** sins is given to the apostles and transmitted to the bishops and presbyters they ordained. This authority is given for the sake of the salvation of the sinner. The sinner, “seeing that he is not only cast out of the Church, but that the bond of his sin will remain in Heaven, he may turn and become gentle” (JohnChr).

18:21-35 **Seventy times seven**: Symbolic of an unlimited amount. This parable illustrates the need for unlimited forgiveness. **Ten thousand talents** (v. 24) is an impossible sum, more than a laborer could earn in several lifetimes. **A hundred denarii** (v. 28) is a significant amount from an earthly perspective (about three months' wages), yet it is a pittance when compared to the debt owed the **king**. God not only stays the punishment we deserve, but forgives us the entire debt as well (v. 27). Because God forgives us, we in turn are required to grant the gift of forgiveness to others.

18:25 Certain Fathers give a spiritual interpretation to the punishment described here. The man represents the soul, the wife represents the body, and the children represent a person's deeds. Thus, the body and the deeds are given over to slavery, that is to Satan, so that the soul might possibly be saved (see 1Co 5:5).

19:10-12 Christ steers the disciples toward understanding the holiness of virginity, not as a rejection of marriage, but as a special calling for those **to whom it has been given**. **Eunuchs** were men who had been castrated, whether by birth defect, disease, or mutilation, and were often employed to guard women of nobility. Here, Jesus uses the term figuratively for those who freely choose lifelong celibacy for the sake of **the kingdom of heaven**. This consecrated virginity is not to be confused with self-mutilation, which the Church condemned at the First Ecumenical Council (AD 325). See also 1Co 7:7, 25–38.

19:16-17 This man does not come to test Jesus, but to seek advice from one he considers no more than a **good Teacher**. Christ's response (v. 17) does not deny that He is God, but is designed to lead the rich man to this knowledge.

19:20 Formal observance of commandments does not make one righteous before God. This man had an earnest desire for eternal life and sensed that he still lacked something; thus, he continues to press Jesus for the answer.

19:21 **To be perfect**, one must willingly sacrifice all and **follow** Christ. Nothing is gained unless this sacrifice is given freely. The specifics of how one follows Christ will be different for each person. Because wealth had such a grip on this rich man, his only hope was to **sell** and **give** away all his possessions. St. John Chrysostom tells us that giving away possessions is the least of Christ's instructions here; following Him in all things is a far greater and more difficult calling.

19:23-26 Various interpretations have been suggested for the impossible image of a **camel** going through **the eye of a needle**: e.g., that the word was not *camel*, but “rope”; or that the *eye of a needle* was a city gate through which a camel might barely squeeze if it were first unloaded of all its baggage, symbolizing wealth. Even the Talmud uses the expression “for an elephant to go through the eye of a needle.” Whatever the phrase refers to, it displays the impossibility of salvation for those who are attached to riches. This is clearly evidenced by the disciples' response, “**Who then can be saved?**” Yet by God's grace, even what is **impossible** to man can come to pass.

19:29 Christ is not commanding believers to divorce spouses and abandon children. According to St. John Chrysostom, this refers to keeping faith under persecution even if it means to lose one's family. It also means to accept that unbelieving family members may cut off ties because of the believer's faith (see 1Co 7:12–16). Believers are promised a **hundredfold** of **houses** and relatives not in an earthly sense, but in a spiritual sense—the fathers and mothers of the Church, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and houses of worship and fellowship.

20:1-16 In this parable, the **vineyard** is life in this world. The **day** refers both to the span of a single person's life and to the whole of human history. The **laborers** are all the people in every nation. Each **hour** can refer to times in a person's life, whether infancy, youth, adulthood, maturity, or old age. It also has a second meaning in the span of history, referring to those called during the covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and finally Christ.

God's generosity provides equal reward for both early and late comers. Jesus teaches that the former should not be proud of their long service nor resent those called at the **eleventh hour**. To the latecomers, He teaches that it is possible even in a short time or at the end of one's life to recover and inherit everything.

In the early Church, this message applied specifically to the Jews (the first-called) and the Gentiles (those called later). In our day, it can be applied to those raised in the Church and to those who find the Church later in life, both of whom receive an equal reward. St. John Chrysostom's renowned paschal sermon is based on this parable, applying it to the preparations of each person in approaching the paschal Eucharist.

20:17-19 Christ's repeated prediction of His Passion was meant to encourage and strengthen the disciples for the terrifying events they would face. It is as if Christ were saying, “Think on all these [words and miracles], so that when you see me hanging on the Cross, you will not imagine that I am suffering because I am powerless to do otherwise” (Theoph).

20:20-23 This quest for temporal power and glory is unfitting for a disciple and shows an earthly misunderstanding of the Kingdom of God. Matthew reports that **the mother of Zebedee's sons** requested this honor, but John's and James' own involvement is revealed by the plural **you** in v. 22, and in Mk 10:35.

Christ calls His Crucifixion a **cup** and His death a **baptism**. The Cross is a cup because He drank it willingly (Heb 12:2). His death is baptism, for He was completely immersed in it, yet it cleansed the world (Rom 6:3–6). Christ's prophecy of John and James participating in the same cup and baptism shows the life of persecution and martyrdom they would lead after Pentecost.

Christ declaring that the places of honor in the Kingdom are not His **to give** does not mean that He lacks authority. Rather, it means that they are not His to give arbitrarily. Instead, He will give them to those for whom God has prepared them. Note also that with regard to sitting as equals on the right and left hand of Christ in His Kingdom, St. John Chrysostom teaches that no one could possibly occupy such a position. With regard to the highest places of honor that can be given to man, the icons of the Church universally depict the Virgin Mary (the most blessed among women—Lk 1:28) and John the Baptist (the greatest born of women—11:11) holding these places.

20:30 The **two blind men** greet Jesus as **Lord**, the common title for God, and **Son of David**, a title deeply associated with the Messiah. Even though Jesus knows what we want before we ask, He calls us to ask freely so that we might learn of His mercy.

The Fathers also give a spiritual interpretation to this miracle, with the blind men symbolizing future generations who would come to faith only by hearing, without the benefit of seeing Christ in person (see Jn 20:29). Those who tried to silence the blind men are persecutors and tyrants who, in every generation, try to silence the Church. Nevertheless, under persecution, the Church all the more confesses Jesus Christ.

21:1-11 Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is celebrated by the Church on Palm Sunday. By Christ's time, Jewish nationalism had led to the expectation of a political Messiah to deliver them from Roman control and to reestablish David's kingdom. In humility, Jesus shows that He has not come to establish an earthly kingdom. He does not ride on a horse nor in a chariot, but on a **donkey**—a sign of humility and peace (Zec 9:9). This entrance into the Holy City declares the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It is also a promise of Christ's final entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem with all believers and of His accepting the New Jerusalem as His pure Bride (Rev 21:2).

21:2 Matthew reports a **colt** as well as a **donkey**. The Fathers see the two animals as representing the faithful Jews and the Gentiles who are brought together in the Kingdom. At Vespers of Palm Sunday, we sing, “Your riding on a foal prefigured how the untamed and uninstructed Gentiles would pass from unbelief to faith.”

21:8 The people who **spread their clothes** before Jesus did so as paying reverence to a King. It is spiritually interpreted as our need to lay down our flesh, and indeed our very lives, for Christ.

21:9 This cry comes from Ps 117:25, 26, which was associated with messianic expectation. It was recited daily for six days during the Feast of Tabernacles, and seven times on the seventh day as branches were waved. **Hosanna** means, “Save, we pray!”

21:12-13 **Those who bought and sold** were trading in live animals to be used for sacrifices. **The money changers** traded Roman coins for Jewish coins since Roman coins, which bore the image of Caesar, were considered defiling in the temple. The cleansing of the temple also points to the necessity that the Church be kept free from earthly pursuits. As each person is considered a temple of God (1Co 3:16; 6:19), it is also a sign that our hearts and minds must be cleansed of earthly matters.

21:15-16 “Keep the feast with the **children**, and holding branches in your hands, sing ‘Hosanna’”—so we declare at Vespers of Palm Sunday. Many liturgical hymns of this day emphasize the perfect praise of the children, which unlike that of the adults, was innocent, fitting, unashamed, and from hearts of pure love. We are called to glorify Christ in the same spirit (see 18:1–4). In contrast, the adults' praise carried earthly expectations and agendas which, when left unfulfilled, led them to rebel against Jesus just five days later (27:20–23).

21:19 The **fig tree**, a symbol of prosperity and peace, withers because it is fruitless. This is a prophetic act directed toward the Jews, since after three years of Christ's preaching, teaching, and healing, both the leaders and the crowds were destitute of spiritual fruit. He curses the tree also to warn those in every generation of what will befall anyone who fails to listen to His message.

21:21 While it is not recorded that an apostle literally moved a **mountain**, the Fathers are clear that they had this authority if the need had arisen (certain saints did make crevices appear in mountains). Furthermore, not everything the apostles accomplished was written down. Beyond the literal meaning, this promise is also an illustration of the power of faith and prayer in all areas of life. “Whatever we ask, without hesitation and believing in God's power, we shall receive” when we ask for spiritually profitable things (Theoph).

21:23-27 Since Christ is not a Levitical priest, the **chief priests and the elders** challenge His **authority** to cleanse the temple. As Christ is careful not to reveal Himself to scoffers, He confounds them with a different question about **John**. Both the elders' question and Christ's question require the same answer, and thus would lead a person to confess that Jesus has come from heaven. By not answering them directly, Christ teaches us not to answer people who come asking about holy things with a malicious intent.

21:31 Using their own principles, the elders convict themselves in their answer to Christ's parable.

21:44 **This stone** is Christ. According to St. John Chrysostom, this saying illustrates the two ways of destruction. Those falling on the stone are people who suffer the consequences of their sins while yet in this life, whereas those on whom the stone falls are unrepentant people suffering utter destruction in the final judgment.

22:1-14 Like the preceding parables, this one also proclaims the transfer of the Kingdom from the faithless Jews to the Gentiles. It is set as a joyful wedding banquet (v. 2; see 25:1–13), for Christ is often called the “Bridegroom” (9:15; Jn 3:29), and St. Paul uses a marriage analogy for the Kingdom (Eph 5:21–33).

The repeated sending out of **servants** shows the Father's great desire to have His people with Him in the Kingdom. The first group (v. 3) is interpreted to be Moses and those with him, while the second group (v. 4) is composed of the prophets. These groups call those initially invited—the Jews. The third group (v. 9) represents the apostles sent to the Gentiles, those not initially invited, but now called.

22:4 The **oxen** represent the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, while the **fatted cattle** represent the eucharistic bread of the New Covenant. (*Fatted* is better translated "wheat-fed," or even more literally "formed from wheat"; see note at Lk 15:23.) Thus, both the Old and New Covenants are fulfilled at the wedding of Christ and His Church.

22:7 **Burned up their city**: St. John Chrysostom teaches that Christ is prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, and thus attributes this destruction to an act of God rather than simply to that of men. Nevertheless, God showed His patience by waiting some 40 years from the time of Christ, giving the entire generation a chance to repent.

22:11-13 The **wedding garment** would have been provided by the king, and therefore the man had no excuse for not wearing one; thus he is **speechless**. His refusal to wear the garment that was provided is an illustration of those who refuse God's hospitality, or who want His Kingdom on their own terms. Specifically, the garment refers to the baptismal garment, and by extension, a life of faith, repentance, virtue, and charity. Without these, a person will ultimately be **cast into outer darkness**.

22:23-33 **You are mistaken** (v. 29): Christ confirms that there will be a resurrection, but not of the sort the Sadducees are imagining. They consider the resurrection to be a continuation of earthly life (including earthly marriage), and thus mock such a doctrine with an absurd scenario. However, they are ignorant of **the Scriptures**, which reveal a complete transfiguration of life in the resurrection, making such earthly questions irrelevant. Furthermore, they fail to understand how **Abraham** and his sons can be alive in God even if they are physically dead. It is the clear teaching of Christ that the souls of the faithful who have departed this life are sustained before the face of God in anticipation of the final joy of the resurrection.

22:35-40 The Pharisees had found 613 commandments in the Scriptures and debated about which one was central. Jesus sets forth the **first** and the **second**, which constitute the grand summary of the Law. Though the **lawyer** has come with malice to test the Lord, we know from St. Mark's account that this man is converted by Christ's answer (Mk 12:28–34).

22:39 This **second** commandment must be understood as written: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself**, or more clearly, “as being yourself.” It is often misinterpreted, “You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself,” which destroys the force of the statement. How much we love ourselves is not the standard by which Christ is calling us to love others. Rather, we are called to love our neighbor as being of the same nature as we ourselves are, as being created in God's image and likeness just as we are. As the Fathers teach, we find our true self in loving our neighbor.

22:41-46 Christ asks this question to lead the Pharisees to the only logical conclusion: that He is God incarnate. They supposed the Messiah to be a mere man, and therefore reply that the Messiah would be a **Son of David**. David, as king of Israel, could not and would not address anyone as "Lord" except God. Yet in Ps 109:1, David refers to the Messiah as "Lord." Therefore, the Messiah must be God. The only possible conclusion is that the Messiah is a descendant of David only according to the flesh, yet is also truly divine, sharing His Lordship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees do not **answer** because they realize the implications and are afraid to confess Jesus to be the Son of God. See also note at Lk 20:41–44.

23:1-39 **Jesus spoke** His final public sermon, a grand critique of the ways of the scribes and Pharisees. Several themes include: (1) The Jewish leaders have God-given authority and teach God's Law, but are personally ungodly and cold-hearted. Their teaching is to be honored, but they are not to be imitated (vv. 2–7). (2) God is our true Father and Teacher. A teacher or father on earth is one who leads people to God. The scribes and Pharisees do the opposite, placing themselves in God's position (vv. 8–12). (3) In His eightfold indictment of the scribes and Pharisees (vv. 13–36), Jesus charges them with inverting God's values and with being mean-spirited, judgmental, greedy, ambitious, absorbed in externals, and blindly self-righteous. While these charges were directed against the Jewish leaders of the day, every word applies equally to those in the Church who behave in this way.

23:2-3 To **sit in Moses' seat** means to hold the succession of office down from Moses himself. In the synagogue, the teacher spoke while seated as a sign of this authority. St. John Chrysostom notes that the scribes were depraved in thought and in heart, yet Jesus still upholds the dignity of their office, for they speak not their own words but God's. Likewise within the Church, the clergy are to be shown respect because they hold the apostolic office, even though they too are sinners. Furthermore, the sins of the clergy do not relieve the people from their responsibilities before God.

23:5 **Phylacteries** are small leather pouches containing passages of Scripture worn on the arm or forehead. The idea was to keep God's Law always in mind (see Ex 13:9), but the Pharisees had used them as a show of false piety, making them increasingly larger and more noticeable.

23:8-10 Christ's warning against calling hypocrites **father** and **teacher** is not an absolute prohibition against using these terms, as some teach. These terms are applied to men many times in the NT, all of which usages are inspired by God. *Teacher* is used in Jn 3:10; Acts 13:1; 1Co 12:28; Eph 4:11; and 2Ti 1:11. *Father* is used in Lk 16:24; 1Co 4:15; and Col 3:21. Since the very early days of the Church, bishops and presbyters have been called “father” not because they take the place of God, but because in their fatherly care for their flocks, they lead people to God, and they exercise fatherly authority within the community.

23:13 Because the example of a leader can be so influential, leaders who do not love God can hinder others from finding Him as well. Thus, leaders are held to a higher standard (Jam 3:1).

23:23-33 These warnings are especially important to Orthodox Christians. The Church has maintained the ancient practices of tithing (**These you ought to have done**, v. 23; see also St. John Chrysostom's homily on Eph 2 and ch. 9 of the Didascalia Apostolorum); sacred vessels (v. 25); holy rites (v. 27); and following the tradition handed down from our fathers. These practices can be expressions of deep faith, lead a person to deeper commitment to God, and safeguard our life in Christ, or they can be observed without ever taking them to heart and lead to condemnation.

23:24 The Pharisees would attach strainers to the mouths of decanters in order to avoid accidentally consuming a ritually unclean substance.

23:37-39 God's deepest desire is the reconciliation of His people, yet most do not want Him. The desolate **house** (v. 38) refers both to the temple and to the nation itself, for *house* can be used to mean “family” or “tribe” (see Ps 113:20; 134:19). Both the temple and the nation will be without God's presence once Christ departs.

24:1, 2 Christ's prophecy of the destruction of **the temple** was fulfilled in AD 70, when the temple was destroyed by the Romans (see note at 22:7).

24:3-31 The Scriptures describe the end times in a variety of ways, so that no precise chronology can be determined (see Dan 7–12; Mk 13; Lk 21; 1Co 15:51–55; 1Th 4:13–17; 2Th 2:1–10; and the Book of Revelation). The Lord's emphasis is on watchfulness and the practice of virtue rather than on constructing timetables of things that have not yet happened. In Matthew's account here, the end is described as encompassing (1) the initial sorrows (vv. 4–14), (2) the great tribulation (vv. 15–28), and (3) the coming of the Son of Man (vv. 29–31). The period of the great tribulation includes the entire Christian era and is not limited to the final years before Christ's return.

24:4-5 The warnings against deception are given the most emphasis. Of particular importance is the warning against following a false **Christ**, which Jesus stresses again in vv. 11, 23–27.

24:6 The **wars** here refer first and foremost to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, but certainly include subsequent wars. Wars are not a sign of the imminent end, but of the opposite—that the **end is not yet** (see 1Th 5:1–3).

24:14 All these calamities and all this opposition cannot stop the spread of the **gospel**, and indeed, persecutions against the Church often increase the number of souls being converted. St. John Chrysostom marvels that while the Romans subdued countless Jews in a political uprising, they could not prevail over twelve Jews unarmed with anything except the gospel of Jesus Christ.

24:15 Daniel's prophecy of the **abomination of desolation** (Dan 9:23) was fulfilled in AD 70, when the Roman general Titus entered the Most Holy Place and had a statue of himself erected in the temple before having the temple destroyed. The Lord's phrase **when you see** indicates that many of the disciples would still be alive at that time. The words **whoever reads, let him understand** are commonly understood to be inserted by Matthew into Christ's address as an encouragement to his early Christian flock, who may have witnessed this event.

24:20 The severity of **winter** weather or respect for the **Sabbath** would prevent many faithful from fleeing quickly in a time of desperation. A spiritual interpretation given by the Fathers sees the Sabbath as symbolizing idleness with regard to virtue, and winter as indicating fruitlessness with regard to charity. Thus, the person who departs this life in such a spiritual state will suffer judgment.

24:27 In what manner will Christ come back? The event will be unmistakable to the whole world. If there is any question or doubt, that alone is evidence that He has not returned. As Christ's return will shine **from the east**, so Orthodox Christians whenever possible worship facing eastward in symbolic hope and anticipation of His second and glorious coming.

24:29 According to the Fathers, the **sun** will not be destroyed, but **darkened** in relation to the glory of Christ. In other words, the sun will appear to be dark by comparison when Christ returns in the fullness of His splendor.

24:30 The **sign of the Son of Man** is the Cross, which will be revealed as the standard for Christ's impending judgment. While at His first coming, Christ came in humility and mortality, at His second coming, He will be revealed in **power and great glory** (see note at Est 6:6–9).

24:31 **They will gather**: See 1Th 4:13–18.

24:34 **This generation** refers to all believers at all times, the generation of the Church, and not merely to those alive at the time of Christ.

24:36 According to St. John Chrysostom, Christ tells of the **angels** being unaware of the exact day of His return “so that men should not seek to learn what angels do not know,” and to forbid them not only from learning the day, but from even inquiring about it.

According to Mk 13:32, and in Chrysostom's Matthew text, Jesus declares that the Son also does not know the day of His own return. Chrysostom teaches this is not to be understood literally, but is a figure of speech meaning that Christ, though He revealed all the signs that will accompany His return, will not reveal the exact day to anyone, and that believers should not be so brazen as to inquire of Him.

24:37-41 The second coming of Christ will entail a sudden revelation of judgment. **One will be taken** to heaven and **the other left** for eternal condemnation. This separation of the saints from the wicked will occur at **the coming of the Son of Man** (v. 39), and not, as some teach today, at a certain time before His second coming.

24:42-44 The Lord's purpose in this discourse is not to make people experts on end-time prophecy. Rather, it is so they may **watch** (v. 42) and **be ready** (v. 44), continuing in virtue and obeying Christ's commandments. This warning is illustrated in the parable of the returning master (vv. 45–51).

25:1-13 This parable illustrates the need for being spiritually prepared **while the bridegroom**—Christ—is **delayed** in His return (v. 5). The Kingdom is often portrayed as a marriage (see 22:1–14 and note) between Christ and His Church. The marriage will be consummated at the end of the age when the Bridegroom returns to escort His Bride—the Church—into the eternal wedding banquet.

This parable is primarily about the virtue of charity and almsgiving, as **oil** and "mercy" have the same root in Greek. The **wise virgins** are those who practice charity and mercy in this life, while the **foolish** are those who squander God's gifts on themselves.

The fact that **all** the virgins **slumbered and slept** indicates death: in this world the virtuous will die alongside the wicked. The **cry** at **midnight** indicates the Second Coming, when the wicked will arise with the righteous for judgment. The inability of the righteous to share their oil is not to be interpreted as a lack of generosity. Rather, it is an illustration of (1) the impossibility of entering heaven without one's own faith and virtue, and (2) the impossibility of changing one's state of virtue after death (see Lk 16:26).

The themes of this parable and the one before it (24:45–51) are woven together in the liturgical hymns of Holy Week, particularly in the troparion hymn for Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, which begins, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching."

25:14-30 This parable illustrates the use of gifts given by God. Even one **talent** was a great sum of money; here it represents the goodness God has bestowed on each person. The amount each receives is based on that person's abilities (Rom 12:4–7). God does not show partiality in the ultimate reward, for all are invited to share the same **joy** (vv. 21, 23).

The **wicked and lazy servant** (v. 26) could not evade responsibility for ignoring his talent, for idleness is as much a rejection of God as outright wickedness. Burying the talent **in the ground** (v. 18) is an illustration of using one's God-given gifts for earthly pursuits. The **bankers** (v. 27) represent other faithful people to whom the man could have turned to help him use his talents wisely. Since help was available to him in the Church, the man has no excuse.

25:31-46 Here is the majestic climax of the discourse, which is not simply a parable, but a prophecy of the universal judgment that will indeed come. Since the Cross is now near to Him, Jesus raises the hearer to the sight of the glory of the Son of Man on His judgment seat and the whole world before Him.

The standard of judgment is uncalculated mercy toward others. The works produced by faith are emphasized, for saving faith always produces righteous works. What we do reflects our true inner state. **The least** (v. 40) refers to all the poor and the needy. The needs described in this parable include both physical and spiritual needs. Thus, the **hungry or thirsty** (v. 44) are not only those who need food and drink, but also those who hunger and thirst for the hope of the gospel.

25:32 Christ uses **sheep** to illustrate the righteous, for they follow His voice and are gentle and productive. **Goats** indicate the unrighteous, for they do not follow the shepherd and they walk along cliffs, which represent sin.

25:34 **Inherit** is a term used with regard to sons and daughters rather than strangers or servants, for the righteous become children of God by adoption (Gal 4:4–7).

25:40 To see Christ in everyone is the fulfillment of the great commandment to love your neighbor as yourself (22:39).

25:41 That the **fire** was **prepared for the devil** shows that God did not create hell for man; rather, people choose this torment by their coldness of heart.

26:2 Jesus is **delivered up** to His Passion by His accusers, yet He goes willingly. Unless Christ had willed to go, His accusers could never have taken Him. After His Resurrection, many saints imitated Christ by willingly going to martyrdom.

26:6-13 Jesus accepts this honor from the woman in her newly found faith. In particular, He accepts it as a sign of His coming **burial** (v. 12). Nevertheless, according to St. John Chrysostom, the **disciples** were not wrong in principle: mercy shown to the **poor** is more fitting than outward signs shown even to God (25:40; Jam 1:27). However, they did not understand that once the gift had been given, it was a greater mercy to accept it with love. “If anyone had asked Christ before the woman did this, He would not have approved it. But after she had done it, He looks only to the gift itself. For after the **fragrant oil** had been poured, what good was a rebuke? Likewise, if you should see anyone providing a sacred vessel or ornament for the walls of the church, do not spoil his zeal. But if beforehand he asks about it, command him to give instead to the poor” (JohnChr).

26:6 **Simon the leper** must have been healed by Jesus earlier, for lepers were forbidden to live in towns.

26:13 Because of her fervent faith, Jesus promises perpetual public memory of **this woman**. There is no consensus among the Fathers as to her identity in relation to accounts of similar events in Mk 14:3–9; Lk 7:36–38; and Jn 12:1–8. Some Fathers say that there were three different women in these four accounts, others that there were only two.

26:14-16 **Judas** on his own initiative seeks to betray Jesus. His motives have been debated, but the Fathers and the liturgical hymns declare that greed was his primary motive. This is revealed in Jn 12:4–6, where Judas was particularly upset about the “waste” of myrrh in the preceding story because he was a thief (see also 1Ti 6:10).The phrase **one of the twelve** is not used so much to identify Judas, who was already known by Matthew's hearers, but to emphasize the depth of the betrayal—that it was one of Christ's closest followers.

26:17-19 The **Passover** commemorates God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt to the Land of Promise. It prefigures the Passion of Christ, the new Passover (Gr. *Pascha*), God's redemption of all humanity from sin and death, and entrance into the promised Kingdom. Whether **the first *day* of the *Feast*** was Passover or the day before Passover is debated among the Fathers (see also note at Jn 19:14). What is certain is that Jesus regarded the meal with the disciples to be the Passover meal.

26:24-25 That **it is written of Him** does not cancel Judas' responsibility. God foresees but does not cause the evil actions of humans, who always have free will (see also note at Lk 22:3). Jesus lets Judas accuse himself, yet even hearing that Christ knew of his deception, Judas does not repent.

26:29 The Fathers teach that Jesus also drinks the cup of His own Blood. This He does to lead all believers into participation in His heavenly mysteries. **In My Father's kingdom** relates to the time after His Resurrection, when Christ will eat and drink to show the reality of His victory over death (Lk 24:41–43). Furthermore, it points to the eternal banquet of the Kingdom in the age to come.

26:39 **This cup** refers to Christ's impending death. According to His divine nature, Jesus willingly goes to His death. As a man, He wishes He could avoid it, for it is the mark of humanity to abhor death. He prays **if it is possible** that it be taken from Him, thus giving abundant proof of His human nature. Nevertheless, Jesus is without sin and completely subjects and unites His human **will** to the Father's divine **will**.

26:41 **Watch and pray**: The key to Christian spirituality and our struggle against temptation. By this, the Lord's human soul is strengthened, and He faces death with divine courage. In contrast to our Lord's vigilance, the disciples sleep. Since body and soul are united, the **spirit** is paralyzed by a lethargic body. A **willing** spirit, recognizing the weakness of the **flesh**, struggles against its weakness, relying on God's presence and power.

26:52-54 Jesus rebukes Peter (identified in Jn 18:10) for using **the sword**, for he still does not understand that Christ is going to His death willingly, that salvation for mankind might be **fulfilled**. A legion is 6,000 soldiers, so **twelve legions** equal 72,000 **angels**. That this death was foretold in **the Scriptures** served to strengthen the disciples at their hour of greatest test.

26:61 The people misunderstand the Lord's words reported in Jn 2:19–21. Some Jews believed **the temple** would be destroyed and a new one built by the Messiah.

26:64-66 Quoting from Ps 109 and Dan 7:13, Jesus confesses that He is the Messiah, both fully **Man** and fully God, for only a divine One could sit **at the right hand of the Power**, sharing authority with the Father. This statement was clearly understood by **the high priest** to be a claim of equality with God the Father (v. 65). For a mere man to claim this was punishable by death (Lv 24:16), but Christ is no mere man, and thus this declaration of equality is not **blasphemy**.

27:2 While the religious Law dictated the death penalty for blasphemers (Lv 24:16), under Roman occupation, the Jews were prohibited from carrying out an execution. Thus, they had to get permission from **the governor**.

27:3-5 In contrast to Peter, who repented in his sorrow (26:75), **Judas** is **remorseful** but does not repent. Suicide is not a sign of repentance but of being self-absorbed. Two accounts of Judas' suicide are given in the NT, here and in Acts 1:16–19.

27:11-14 The **chief priests** hide their real charge against Jesus—the claim of equality with God—because this would not persuade **the governor** to sentence Him to death. Instead, they present a charge of treason—that Jesus called Himself **the King of the Jews**. This crime would carry the death penalty, for it was a challenge to Roman rule.

27:16 Jesus is the true Son of the Father, yet the name **Barabbas** means “son of the father.” Ironically, the crowds must choose between one Son of the Father and the other. By influencing the crowds to choose Barabbas (v. 20), the chief priests indicate to which father they belong—the devil (Jn 8:44).

27:25 This verse has been used by certain groups to try to justify persecuting Jews, which is a grave and terrible sin. What was seen by many as a curse is in fact a blessing invoked unwittingly, for the Lord's **blood** is the source of their redemption. Furthermore, these words are implicitly spoken by anyone who sins. St. John Chrysostom teaches that even though these Jews “acted with such madness, so far from confirming a sentence on them or their children, Christ instead received those who repented and counted them worthy of good things beyond number.” He then notes the thousands who were converted in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) as evidence of Christ's mercy.

27:27-31 Every king is proclaimed by his **soldiers**. Even though the intention was mockery, it is prophetic that Jesus should be crowned and hailed as **King** by soldiers of the governor (see also Jn 11:49–51, where Caiaphas unwittingly prophesies of Christ's redemptive work). This mockery shows Jesus as the One despised and rejected by men who bears the iniquity of us all (see Is 53:3–9). Jesus is clothed in **scarlet**, representing both His royalty and the sins of humanity which He has taken upon Himself.

27:32-44 Jesus accepts mockery and endures the weakness of our body in His own to take upon Himself our sufferings. This He accomplishes by uniting His divine nature to our human nature. His humanity is indeed our humanity. Although He has no sin, He was made to be sin for us, that through His flesh He might condemn sin itself (Rom 8:3; 2Co 5:21; Heb 2:9). **Two robbers** (v. 38): Although one would later repent (Lk 23:39–43), at first both criminals mock Jesus (v. 44).

27:45 **Darkness**: See Zec 14:6, 7; Am 8:9.

27:46 Jesus prays Ps 21, which foretold the very details of the Crucifixion. Taken without the rest of the psalm, His cry of “**Why have You forsaken me?**” could be misinterpreted as a cry of despair. Since He took on our nature, Jesus experiences our alienation from God in His humanity, knowing our suffering and distress, yet He does not despair. He speaks these words in the name of humanity, completely identifying with us in our condition, for in His divinity, He is never forsaken by the Father.

27:50 **Yielded up His spirit**: Christ's death was voluntary to the very end, for even on the Cross, His life could not be taken from Him against His will. Christ accepts death on the Cross neither to receive the Father's punishment on our behalf, nor to satisfy the Father's need for blood-justice (as if God would demand such things), but so that by entering death as the divine Son of God, He can destroy this last enemy, which is death itself (1Co 15:20–28; see note at Lk 23:46).

27:51 The **veil** that separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the temple was a symbol of the separation between God and man. Christ's death opens the way into the presence of God for all people, giving people access to that which is the most holy of all: God Himself. In many Orthodox churches, there is a curtain between the altar and the nave which is drawn open during liturgical services to emphasize that communion with God, which was at one time sealed off from humanity, is now available to all who approach in faith.

27:52-53 The completeness of the salvation won by Christ is signified in the resurrection of **the saints** from the OT. This guarantees the promise given to Ezekiel that God can and will one day open the graves of all mankind (Ezk 37:1–14). The saints entering the **holy city** is an icon of resurrected humanity entering the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 11:10; 12:22, 23; Rev 21:2–22:5).

27:54 **The centurion**, a Gentile, realizes Jesus has dominion over nature, and therefore acknowledges Him as **the Son of God**. Tradition knows this soldier as St. Longinos.

27:56 **Mary the mother of James and Joses**: Most Fathers teach this was the Virgin Mary, being in fact the stepmother of James and Joses (see 13:55; compare Mk 15:40, 47). Theophylact summarizes the teaching of the Fathers in this way: “James and Joses were sons of Joseph by his first wife. And since the Theotokos was called the ‘wife’ of Joseph, she is rightly called the ‘mother’ of his children, meaning ‘stepmother’.”

27:57-58 To ask for **the body of Jesus** is a bold public act for this wealthy man, showing that his faith has overcome any fear.

27:60 He is buried in a **new tomb** so that no suspicion might later arise that another had risen instead of Christ.

28:2 The **earthquake** is a sign of our Lord's great victory over death, foreshadowing the general resurrection of all humanity. Note that the **angel** does not roll **back the stone** to let the Lord out, for in His glory, Christ could pass through solid rock (see Jn 20:19). Rather, this allows the witnesses in to see that He has already risen.

28:5-6 These **women** are the first witnesses of the supreme event in all history: the Resurrection of Christ and the destruction of death. The **angel** refers to Christ as the One **who was crucified**, teaching us not to shy away from His death, but to glory in the Cross (1Co 2:2; Gal 6:14), which is the weapon Christ used to destroy death and the trophy of His victory. At the liturgical services of Pascha (Easter), Orthodox Christians sing the following hymn hundreds of times: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.” As St. Paul says, “If Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile” (1Co 15:17).

28:13 This lie is absurd, in that **His disciples** were afraid and had gone into hiding. Furthermore, most of them went on to suffer terrible persecution and martyrdom. It is unthinkable that they would willingly endure such sufferings over a known fallacy.

28:18 **All authority has been given to Me**: Christ declares that the authority that was His by nature in His divinity is now also possessed by His glorified human nature. This human nature has now trampled the final enemy—death (1Co 15:20–28).

28:19 This Great Commission—our Lord's final commandment given on earth—is to be lived out in the Church until He returns again. Making **disciples** cannot be done in the strength of man, but only in the power of God. The power of the Resurrection is not only for Jesus Himself, but is given to all believers for Christian life and mission.

28:20 Christ Himself is present in each believer and in the Church **always**, both personally and in the Holy Spirit, for neither can be separated from the other. **To the end of the age** does not by any means imply that we will be separated from Him at the end of the world. He is with us now, and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

1:6 John is **clothed** in a manner similar to that of Elijah (4Kg 1:8), which helps to show that he fulfills the prophecy of Elijah's return (see article “John the Baptist”).

1:14-15 Mark's written emphasis on **John** being **put in prison** before **Jesus** begins **preaching** reveals that a key purpose of the old covenant—to prepare the people for Christ—had been completed (Gal 4:1–5). Once Christ came, the time of preparation was **fulfilled**. To **repent** is to do a total “about-face.” The word in Greek literally means to “change one's mind.” Repentance is a radical change of one's spirit, mind, thought, and heart—a complete reorientation to a life centered in Christ.

1:16-20 On the calling of the first disciples, see notes at Mt 4:18–22.

1:21 The word **immediately** occurs almost forty times in Mark's Gospel, nearly all of them before our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem. The sense of urgency and purpose as Christ journeys toward Jerusalem to fulfill His mission of redeeming the world helps make Mark's account not only the shortest but also the most direct of the four Gospels.

1:35 Jesus sets forth for us an example of spiritual life. Though God incarnate, He **prayed** continually, often finding a **solitary place** to be free from distraction, despite the multitude's need of Him. Our Lord's ministry comes forth from His communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit and flows to people in their needs. His praying **in the morning** teaches us that we must put as first priority our commitment to God, and only then will we be equipped to serve others.

1:40-45 On the cleansing of the **leper**, see notes at Mt 8:1–4 and Lk 5:12–16.

3:5 Righteous **anger** is a natural human emotion experienced in the face of sin. While there is anger that is certainly sinful (Mt 5:22), there is also anger that is God-given and proper to humanity (Ps 4:4). Christ's anger here is in response to people professing God, yet having such **hardness** in **their hearts** that they could not rejoice in the healing of one of their brothers.

3:7 **Jesus withdrew** both because the Pharisees were planning to destroy Him (though it was not time for Him to die) and in order to preach in other places.

3:13-19 On the **twelve** disciples, see note at Mt 10:1–4.

3:28-30 On the blasphemy against **the Holy Spirit**, see note at Mt 12:32.

4:2 **Parables**: See the article “Parables” at Mt 13.

4:13-20 In **this parable**, our Lord reveals Himself as the promised Messiah, the **sower**, who had been foretold in Is 55:10–13. See also note at Lk 8:5–15.

4:24 This is a call to attentive listening and discriminating response. We must not only **hear**, but hear properly. **More will be given** to those who respond to Christ with open hearts; they will grow in understanding. “Do the good you know, and what you do not know will be revealed to you” (MkAsc). See also note at Mt 7:2.

4:26-29 This parable occurs only in Mark. The **kingdom** refers to the whole span of God's dispensation or plan of salvation. The **man** is Christ, and the **seed** is the gospel (see vv. 13–20). His **sleep** indicates Christ's death, from which He will **rise**. That the man **does not know how** the seed grows shows Christ does not manipulate man's response to the gospel, but each person is free to receive it and to let it grow in his own heart. The **harvest** indicates the Second Coming, when all will be judged on their reception of the gospel.

4:33 To unbelievers, the **parables** remain bewildering. To those with simple faith, these stories using common images reveal truth in ways they can grasp, **as they were able.**

5:1-20 The **country of the Gadarenes** was in Galilee, an area with many Gentiles living among the Jews (see also note at Mt 4:15). Gentile influence on the Jews caused many of them to take on Gentile practices, such as raising **swine** (v. 11), forbidden by the Law (Dt 14:8). For more on this miracle, see notes at Mt 8:28–34 and Lk 8:33.

5:25-29 A spiritual interpretation of this encounter given by the Fathers is that this woman symbolizes human nature in general. Humanity is in constant suffering and subject to death, symbolized by the **flow of blood**. The **physicians** who could not cure her stand for the various religions of the world, as well as the OT Law, which were unable to grant life to humanity. Only through Christ are we freed from suffering and bondage to sin.

5:41 On Christ raising the dead, see note at Lk 7:11–17.

6:5-6 Jesus **could do no mighty work there**, not because He lacked power, but because of the **unbelief** of all but **a few** in Nazareth. While grace is always offered to all, only those who receive it in faith obtain its benefits.

6:13 Anointing the sick **with oil** has not only medicinal value but sacramental value as well. As God's healing power is bestowed through creation (5:27; Nm 21:8, 9; 4Kg 13:21; Jn 9:6, 7; Acts 5:15; 19:11, 12), so oil is a vehicle of God's mercy and healing in the Church (Jam 5:14).

6:14 This **King Herod** was the son of the one who slew the infants in Bethlehem (Mt 2:16). Though he was technically a governor, he was popularly called king. Knowing that John the Baptist had worked no miracles while living, Herod now believes John was raised from the dead (v. 16), thinking **powers are at work in him**. Thus, he fears John more dead than alive.

6:15 **Elijah** was expected to return and work signs before the second coming of the Lord (Mal 4:5). **The Prophet** is interpreted by some to be a reference to the Messiah, the One whom Moses foretold (Dt 18:15), while others interpret it as simply meaning a new prophet had arisen.

6:17-29 This account is given parenthetically, explaining John's earlier death so hearers would understand why **Herod** would think that **John** had risen from the dead. After this flashback, v. 30 picks up where v. 13 left off. The beheading of St. John is remembered in the Church on August 29 with a day of fasting. As part of God's plan of salvation, John's martyrdom allowed the coming of the Messiah to be announced to the souls in Hades, for John was the forerunner of Christ there as well as on earth. At Matins on this day we sing, “Your tongue, which constantly speaks of God, has preceded Christ into death and is sent to preach Him to those in Hades.”

6:20 That **Herod**, with his wealth and soldiers, **feared John**, a man who lived in poverty and was clothed in camel's hair (1:6), is a testament both to the power of personal holiness and integrity, and also to the people's perception of John, for they held him in the highest esteem (11:32).

6:30 This verse picks up where v. 13 left off, as the story of the beheading of St. John is given parenthetically (see note at 6:20).

6:31 Christ gives **rest** to His disciples to show those engaged in preaching and teaching that they must not labor continuously, but must also take rest.

6:52 Knowing Christ is a matter of the **heart**, not merely the intellect. When our hearts are illumined by faith in God, they are open to receive His presence and grace. In the ascetic writings of the Church, the heart is known as “the seat of knowledge.”

6:56 Christ permits miracles through **touch** to show that His very body is life-giving (see also 5:25–29).

7:1-13 The issue here is not the observation of Jewish customs or traditions, which Jesus certainly does not prohibit (Mt 5:17–19; 23:23). At issue is setting human tradition contrary to the tradition of God (v. 8). The **tradition of the elders** (v. 3) is a body of interpretations of the Law, which for **the Pharisees** and **the scribes** (v. 1) was as authoritative as the Law and often superseded it. According to this tradition, offerings (called **Corban**, v. 11) could be promised to God in such a way that property or earnings could still be used for oneself, but not for anybody else, including one's parents. Secondary traditions such as this obscure the primary tradition of the Law, which is contained in God's commandments.

7:15-23 Food cannot **defile** a person because it is created by God and is therefore pure. **Evil** things (v. 21) are not from God, and these are what defile a person.

7:34 **He sighed**: a sign of divine compassion for the sufferings of our fallen human nature.

7:36 Here, our Lord shows us we must not seek acclaim or praise when we do good to others. Interestingly, Theophylact upholds those who disobey Christ in this situation, seeing them as a good example, that we should proclaim those who have done good to us even if they do not want us to.

8:15 **The leaven of the Pharisees** is their doctrine (Mt 16:12) and their hypocrisy (Lk 12:1). In Scripture, *leaven* is used both positively (as in Mt 13:33) and negatively, as it is here. In either case, leaven symbolizes a force powerful enough (and often subtle enough) to permeate and affect everything around it (see 1Co 5:6–8).

8:22-26 The people of **Bethsaida** were unbelieving (Mt 11:21); thus, Jesus leads the blind man **out of the town** to heal him, so that the people would not scoff at the miracle and bring upon themselves greater condemnation. That the blind man was healed in stages (vv. 23–25) shows that he had only a small amount of faith, for healing occurs according to one's faith (6:5, 6); yet this little faith was enough, and it increased with the touch of Christ. Christ's command not to return to **the town** (v. 26) symbolizes that we must not return to our sins once we have been forgiven.

9:1 This is a reference to those who would witness the Transfiguration (vv. 2–13), as well as to those in every generation who will experience the presence of God's **kingdom**.

9:2-13 On the Transfiguration, see note at Lk 9:31, and the article “The Transfiguration” at Mt 17.

9:13 **Elijah**: See Mt 17:13.

9:30-32 Jesus predicts His death and Resurrection a second time (see 8:31) to show He is going to His Passion freely, and not being taken against His will.

9:42 **Little ones** include all who have childlike humility and simplicity, all who are poor in spirit.

10:32-34 Christ's repeated predictions of His Passion were intended to encourage and strengthen the disciples for the terrifying events they would face. They also confirms that Christ was going to His death of His own will and choosing.

10:45 The phrase **for many** is an Aramaic expression meaning “for all.”

10:46-52 The restoration of **sight** to **the blind** (vv. 51, 52) was a sign expected to be performed by the Messiah (Is 29:18; 35:4, 5), a power God had reserved for Himself (compare Jn 9:32). **Son of David** (vv. 47, 48) was a messianic title, showing that **Bartimaeus** (v. 46) had faith that Jesus was the Christ.

The Fathers give a spiritual interpretation to this miracle as well. **Jericho** was a low-lying city associated with sin (Lk 10:30; 19:1); here it symbolizes fallen humanity. Christ passing through Jericho is an image of His Incarnation. The Lord restoring sight to Bartimaeus parallels His restoring humanity to glory. Having been made whole by Christ, human nature can now follow Christ **on the road** to the Kingdom (v. 52), symbolized by our Lord's subsequent entrance into Jerusalem (11:1–11).

11:13-14 **It was not the season for figs** means that this **fig tree** had sprouted an early full foliage, indicating a first crop, but without bearing any fruit. Jesus, finding not even one fig, condemns it. In Scripture a fig tree is often a symbol of Israel (Hos 9:10). Her fruitfulness has ceased, so the Kingdom will be taken from her and given to another people, who are called to bear spiritual fruit (see Mt 21:43; Gal 5:22, 23; see note at Mt 21:19).

11:20-21 The cursing and withering of **the fig tree** is a prophetic act signifying the judgment of Israel. The disciples need to learn that the old covenant with Israel is becoming “obsolete” and will “vanish away” (Heb 8:13). They will establish His Church, ultimately to be filled with Gentiles and Jews, and need assurance that they are following His will. The fig tree will be an indelible image in their minds.

12:41-44 According to the Fathers, the Lord accounts the value of a gift not by how much is given, but by how much is kept back. Thus the **poor widow** is counted to have given a great gift, having kept nothing for herself. Those who give **out of their abundance** (v. 44) but keep plenty for themselves are counted by God to have given very little. In the conversion of Cornelius, we learn that God takes note of our giving (Acts 10:4).

13:1, 2 Christ's prophecy of the destruction of **the temple** was fulfilled in AD 70, when the temple was destroyed by the Romans.

13:30 **This generation** refers to all believers at all times (i.e., the generation of the Church), and not merely those alive at the time of Christ. Christ's prophecy is that the Church will continue to thrive until His return, regardless of how desperate things may sometimes appear.

13:32 Though Jesus declares that the Son does not know the day of His own return, St. John Chrysostom teaches that this is not to be understood literally, but as a figure of speech. The meaning is simply that Christ will not reveal the exact day to anyone, and that believers should not be so brazen as to inquire of Him.

14:1 **The Feast of Unleavened Bread** begins with **the Passover** meal on the evening of 15 Nisan (on the Jewish calendar) and lasts seven days (Ex 12:12–20). Together, these feasts commemorate Israel's liberation from slavery in Egypt. The word *Passover* refers to the angel of death “passing over” Hebrew homes when killing the firstborn of the Egyptians, for the Jews had put lamb's blood on their doorposts (Ex 12:13). Unleavened bread is a reminder of the haste with which the Hebrews left Egypt (Ex 12:39). This Passover was fulfilled in Christ, whose blood was shed to free humanity from bondage to sin and death.

14:10 **Judas** on his own initiative seeks to betray Jesus. His motives have been debated, but the Fathers and the liturgical hymns declare that greed was his underlying motive. This is revealed in Jn 12:4–6, where Judas was particularly upset about the “waste” of myrrh in the preceding story because he was a thief (see also 1Ti 6:10). The betrayal by Judas is remembered specifically on Holy Wednesday, as many of the liturgical hymns contrast his greed with the woman's generous anointing of Christ (v. 3). It is a tradition dating back to the first century (see the Didache) that Orthodox Christians fast on most Wednesdays of the year in remembrance of the ways in which we, like Judas, betray our Savior through our sinfulness.

14:13 The **two** disciples are Peter and John (Lk 22:8).

14:20 Christ emphasizes both that His betrayer is **one of the twelve** and that he is one **who dips with Me in the dish** not so much to identify the person as to emphasize the level of betrayal, that this was one of His closest friends (see Ps 54:13–15).

14:21 Divine foreknowledge of the betrayal takes away neither Judas' moral freedom nor his accountability. For God, all things are a present reality; He foresees all human actions, but does not cause them.

14:26 This **hymn** is a psalm from a group of psalms traditionally sung after the Passover meal (Ps 114–117).

14:36 **Abba** in Aramaic is the familiar form for **Father**, equivalent to “Papa,” indicating Christ's intimacy with God the Father. See also note at Mt 26:39.

14:51-52 To flee **naked** is a great shame and humiliation (Ezk 16:39; Am 2:16). Some teach this **young man** was James, the brother of the Lord (Gal 1:19), while others say that it was the apostle John, the youngest of the twelve. Most others believe this was Mark, the author of this Gospel, as it was a common literary device for a writer not to give his own name (see Lk 24:13; Jn 21:24). The other evangelists do not report this incident. They would not have been inclined to humiliate Mark, whereas Mark would have been more likely to relate such an event concerning himself.

14:62 **I am** (Gr. *ego eimi*) is the divine Name of God; its use indicates a theophany, or revelation of God Himself. The use of this Name by a mere man was considered blasphemy and was punishable by death (Lv 24:16; see Jn 8:58). However, because Jesus is fully God, His use of this Name cannot be blasphemy, but reveals His unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Only in Mark's account is Christ's answer so direct. To sit **at the right hand of the Power** means to share authority with the Father. This statement was clearly understood by the high priest to be a claim of equality with God (v. 64).

15:1 While the Jewish religious law dictated the death penalty for blasphemers (Lv 24:16), under Roman occupation the Jews were prohibited from carrying out an execution. Thus, they had to get a sentence issued by **Pilate**, the Roman governor.

15:2 Pilate's question, **“Are You the King of the Jews?”** comes from the political charges made against Jesus. Since **Pilate** would not execute a man over religious matters, the chief priests had to come up with a political crime that would guarantee the death penalty. Thus, they accused Jesus of making Himself an earthly king, which would be treason (see note at Jn 19:7–12).

15:3-5 That the Savior **answered nothing** fulfills the prophecy of Is 53:7, which portrays the Messiah being silent as He is led “as a sheep to the slaughter.”

15:15 Pilate's sin was less than that of the Jewish leaders who delivered Christ to him (Jn 19:11), for the Jews had the Law and the prophets to instruct them, and Pilate did not. Pilate was not without sin, however, for in his desire **to gratify the crowd**, he knowingly sent an innocent Man to death.

15:21 Mark mentions **Simon** was **the father of Alexander and Rufus** because they were likely still living, and possibly even known to Mark's hearers. The spiritual message is that we, like Simon (whose name means “obedience”), are not only called to carry the cross Christ sets on us, but seeing Christ in others, we are called to bear each other's burdens as well (Gal 6:2).

15:27-28 Christ being crucified between **two robbers** not only fulfills **the Scripture** (v. 28; Is. 53:12), but shows He is completely identifying with sinful humanity.

15:33 **Darkness**: See Zec 14:6, 7; Am 8:9.

15:39 **The centurion**, a Gentile, realizes Jesus has dominion over nature, and therefore acknowledges Him as **the Son of God**. Tradition knows this soldier as St. Longinos.

15:40-41 The faithfulness of the **women** shows that in Christ, divine order is being restored to the fallen world. Whereas Eve was created to complete Adam (Gn 2:18), but instead led him to sin (Gn 3:6), now the women disciples remain faithful while the men flee and hide. It is the women who bring the message of the Resurrection to the men (16:9–11; Lk 24:9–11), thus restoring that which had been broken through sin.

16:4 **The stone had been rolled away** not to accommodate the Lord's exit from the tomb, for in His resurrected body, He needs no such accommodation (Jn 20:19). Rather, this was to allow the witnesses—and us—to look in and see that the tomb was empty.

16:7 The specific mention of **Peter** reveals a special care for the one who had denied Christ. In the words of Theophylact, Peter would have said of himself, “I denied the Lord, and therefore am no longer His disciple.” The angel's command is a promise that Peter is forgiven.

16:8 **They said nothing to anyone** does not mean the women never said anything, but that they kept silent until Jesus appeared to them (vv. 9–11).

16:9-20 Two early manuscripts do not contain these verses as part of Mark's Gospel, while nearly all other manuscripts ever discovered have them. They are canonized Scripture and are considered by the Church to be inspired, authoritative, and genuine.

16:12 **Another form**: Our Lord's resurrected body transcends not only physical space and time, but appearance as well. He was sometimes recognizable to His disciples, while at other times He was not.

16:17 **New tongues** refers to the ability to speak in languages that one has not learned in order to edify others in worship (1Co 14) and to preach the gospel (Acts 2:1–11).

16:18 To **take up serpents** refers primarily to spiritual battle against demons (Lk 10:19). Thus, Christ is promising to deliver believers from the powers of sin. Furthermore, this would include certain physical protection as well. St. Paul was bitten by a serpent and suffered no harm (Acts 28:3–6), and according to tradition, Barsabas Justus (Acts 1:23) was forced by unbelievers to drink poison and survived. Nevertheless, while God's grace can protect believers from both physical and spiritual harm, to test God by deliberately committing harmful acts against oneself is a grave sin (Dt 6:16; Mt 4:7).

1:2-3 Luke was not a disciple from the beginning, yet he has perfect understanding of the gospel because his sources were the apostles themselves, the **eyewitnesses** of Christ. Luke wrote his Gospel to **Theophilus**, a prominent Gentile who had received Christian instruction (see also Acts 1:1). St. Ambrose notes that Theophilus can simply mean any “lover of God,” and therefore he writes, “If you love God, it was written to you.”

1:5 **Herod** ruled Judea from 37–4 BC. He was a great builder but a cruel leader. Luke mentions Herod to pinpoint the historical date of the birth of Jesus Christ. An ancient prophecy of Jacob indicated the Messiah would come when a king ruled who was not from the tribe of Judah (Gn 49:10). As Herod was a non-Jew calling himself **the king of Judea**, the coming of Christ was surely at hand. See also the note on v. 20.

1:6 Zacharias and Elizabeth are **righteous before God**, not merely in outward appearance, but to the core of their being. The holiness of John the Baptist came in part through the faith and piety of his parents.

1:7 To be barren was a public reproach (v. 25), but like Sarah (Gn 16:1), Rebekah (Gn 25:21), Rachel (Gn 29:31), Hannah (1Kg 1:2), and Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, Elizabeth's temporary barrenness was in fulfillment of God's plan for the salvation of His people.

1:8-10 Each priest was assigned to a **division** (see 1Ch 23:3–11; 28:13). There were twenty-four divisions in all, each serving a week at a time in rotation. The responsibilities in the division were decided by **lot**; Zacharias is here assigned the duties of the high **priest**. This event takes place at the time of the Atonement, when the high priest would enter the **temple** and make offerings for the sins of the people.

1:11 Angels minister continually at the **altar** of **the Lord**, though usually unseen. Those priests of pure heart, such as Zacharias, are occasionally chosen by God to witness this angelic liturgy (see also Is 6; Rev 7:9–17).

1:13 As high priest, **Zacharias** prayed not for **a son**, but for the atonement of the sins of Israel (Heb 9:7). Gabriel's (v. 19) announcement reveals both that Zacharias' prayer for atonement will be answered **and** that **Elizabeth** will conceive **a son**. This atonement will be announced by **John,** who will identify Christ as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29).

1:15 **He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb**: See v. 41.

1:17 **Elijah** is expected to reappear from heaven as the forerunner of the second coming of the **Lord** (Mal 4:5). John the Baptist fulfills the spirit of Elijah as he is the forerunner of the Lord's first coming (see Mt 11:14).

1:20 **You will be mute**: Zacharias is disciplined for his lack of faith, yet this also serves as proof that Gabriel's announcement (v. 19) is true. The silencing of the high priest also reveals a deeper mystery. The Messiah was expected to fulfill three crucial roles held by various people in the OT: prophet, priest, and king. Only Jesus Christ can be said to have fulfilled all three offices perfectly. He is the true Prophet (Dt 18:15–18), the true King (23:3; Is 9:6; Mic 5:1), and the true High Priest (Ps 109:4; Heb 4:14). In preparation for Christ's coming, God had silenced the prophets for many years (see note for v. 24), and also permitted an illegitimate usurper to occupy the position of king of Judea (see note for v. 5). Here, in the last days before Christ's coming, the high priest is also silenced. With these three roles vacant, illegitimate, and silent, all is ready for the Son of God to be revealed as Prophet, King, and Priest.

1:24 **Elizabeth conceived**: The conception of St. John the Baptist is celebrated liturgically on September 23, confirming the sanctity of marital relations for those past childbearing years. **Hid herself**: Since the time of Malachi, God had not sent a great prophet to Israel (see 1Mc 9:27). This silencing of the prophets served to heighten the anticipation of the Messiah and to make it all the more evident when He came. As John the Baptist was the prophet preparing the way for Christ, he was kept hidden until Christ was conceived. Once Christ was conceived, John was revealed through the prophetic act of leaping in Elizabeth's womb (v. 41). See also the note for v. 20.

1:26 **In the sixth month** means the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John (v. 36).

1:27 The name Mary means “exalted one.” When Joseph is referred to as **of the house of David**, it reveals Mary also was descended from David's royal lineage, for a righteous man would usually marry within his own tribe (see note at 3:23–38). Twice in this verse, and again by implication (1:34), Luke calls Mary a **virgin**.

1:28 While Eve brought forth children in sorrow (Gn 3:17), Mary, being the new Eve, will **rejoice** in bringing forth her Son; as Eve had been cursed, so now Mary is blessed. **Highly favored** (Gr. *charitou*) can also be translated “full of grace.” Mary is the most blessed woman who has ever lived because of her complete willingness to receive God's grace, or in the words of her Son, to “hear the word of God and keep it” (11:28).

1:31-33 Gabriel's announcement emphasizes two truths: (1) **you will conceive in your womb**: the Lord Jesus took His flesh—His human nature—from Mary herself; and (2) this is the divine **Son of the Highest** in Mary's womb. Thus the one Person, Jesus, the eternal Son and Word of God, is both fully human and fully divine. This truth was crucial in the defeat of the heretic Nestorius, who taught that Mary conceived a mere man who was later joined by the divine Son of God. The Church's true teaching is proclaimed in the festal hymn of Annunciation, which declares, “The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of grace.”

1:34 Mary's question, “**How can this be?**” does not indicate a lack of faith, as Zacharias' question did (v. 18). Rather, she is merely inquiring into the manner in which something so extraordinary would happen.

1:35 **Holy One** is a messianic title (see Ps 15:10). Note the revelation of the Holy Trinity: The Father (**the Highest**), **the Son**, and the **Holy Spirit**.

1:38 Mary's faithful response is that of highest obedience to God. The Incarnation is not only the work of God, but it involves the free response of mankind in the person of **Mary**. Whereas Eve once disobeyed, Mary now obeys; whereas Eve closed herself to God, Mary opens to His will. Mary's response says, “I am a tablet; let the Writer write whatever He desires on it” (Theoph).

1:41 Because Christ is now incarnate, prophecy resumes in Israel (see note on v. 20). The blessed John prophesies of the presence of Christ by leaping in the **womb** of Elizabeth. As he is God's prophet, John's recognition of Christ fulfills what was spoken of Jeremiah: “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you” (Jer 1:5).

1:42 Mary receives veneration from both angels and humans. As Gabriel had done (v. 28), so now Elizabeth declares Mary to be **blessed among women**.

1:43 Mary is confessed as **the mother of My Lord**. This confession, and others like it within the Church (“Theotokos,” “Mother of God,” etc.), confirm that the One in the womb of Mary is both human and divine—the very Son of God Himself. At Vespers of Annunciation we declare, “It is the Word of God who dwells within her.” Note that even though His physical body was not yet fully formed, Jesus is nevertheless fully and truly the Son of God incarnate, and Mary is already recognized as being His mother. This truth deals a fatal blow to the idea that abortion is justifiable because the fetus is not yet a person.

1:46-56 This passage, called the “Magnificat” from the first word of the song in Latin, comes from the heart of Mary, inspired by the song of Hannah (1Kg 2:1–10). It is normally sung at Matins in the liturgical cycle. From this inspired hymn, we are taught: (1) Christian believers for all time will honor and venerate the Virgin Mary, for she prophesied that **all generations will call me blessed** (v. 48); (2) it is impossible to believe in the inspiration of Scripture and not bless the Mother of God; (3) Mary ascribes the miracle of the Incarnation to God, and not to herself, showing both deep humility and the knowledge that God is the source of all grace (v. 49); (4) through the Incarnation, God reigns over all (vv. 50–55).

1:59 Circumcision was a sign of Israel's covenant with God and the means by which a male became a member of God's community (Gn 17:10–14; Lv 12:3). In Christ, circumcision is fulfilled in baptism (see Col 2:11 and the article, “Holy Baptism,” at Rom 6).

1:60-63 **John** means “grace of God.” By insisting on the name God chose for her son, Elizabeth affirms God has called John to a specific mission (see also 1:31; Gn 17:5, 15; 32:28).

1:64-79 When **Zacharias** assented to God's will, **his mouth was opened**. Just as prophecy is restored at the Incarnation of Christ (see note on v. 24), so Zacharias, as high priest, can speak again now that the Savior and His forerunner have come (see note v. 20). Note Zacharias immediately declares Christ (vv. 68, 69), and secondly declares the role of his own son as **prophet of the Highest** (v. 76).

1:80 Dwelling in the desert, away from the stains and wickedness of the masses, John is able to fight temptation and grow **strong in spirit**. According to the tradition of the Church, John was brought to **the deserts** by Elizabeth when Zacharias was martyred, and there was ministered to by angels.

2:1-3 God uses earthly rulers to accomplish His will. This **census** enabled Christ to be born in Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah (Mic 5:1). In the hymn by St. Cassiane sung at Vespers of the Lord's Nativity, **Augustus** ruling as the only emperor over many scattered cities is an icon of our one Lord gathering the scattered pagans of the world. Christ being **registered** in the fallen world enables the faithful to be registered in the name of God.

2:7 The term **firstborn** does not imply Mary had additional children, but only that no child was born before Jesus. The firstborn son is traditionally the primary heir and recipient of blessings. Christ is the firstborn over all creation, and thus the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:15, 18). In Orthodox icons of the Nativity, Christ's **swaddling cloths** are depicted as burial wrappings, affirming that one purpose of His coming was to endure death. The **manger**, or feed trough, would have been in a cave where animals were kept, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: “The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib” (Is 1:3).

2:8 **Shepherds** are chosen to hear the first announcement of the Nativity, as they are symbols of Christ the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11). Unlike the Pharisees, the shepherds were without guile and had simple faith.

2:13-14 The message of the first **angel** is confirmed by the **multitude**, fulfilling the Law in which every word is established with two or three witnesses (Dt 19:15). Christ Himself is our **peace** who has come to earth; in Him, man is no longer estranged from God (see Eph 2:14–16).

2:17-20 The **shepherds** are also images of the bishops and presbyters of the Church, who proclaim Christ to the world. St. Ambrose writes that Mary's own faith was strengthened by the news from the shepherds, and he asks, “If Mary herself learns from the shepherds, why do so many refuse to learn from the presbyters of the Church?”

2:21 Because Christ has come to perfectly fulfill the Law, He receives **circumcision** under the Law (see note on 1:59). In the Orthodox Church, it is ancient tradition to **name** a child **eight days** after birth, with a special blessing.

2:22-24 The Presentation of Christ (also called the Meeting of the Lord) is celebrated in the Church on February 2. Mary fulfills **the law** (Lv 12) by bringing Jesus to the temple on the fortieth day. (In the Orthodox Church, mothers and newborn children also receive a special blessing on the fortieth day.) The law required that an offering of an unblemished lamb be brought, or if the mother is not able to bring a lamb, then she brings **a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons** (Lv 12:6–8). Not only do Mary and Joseph offer turtledoves, but as Christ is the unblemished Lamb of God, they perfectly fulfill the precepts of the Law by offering Him as well. This also fulfills the prophecy spoken when Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac and said, “God will provide for Himself the sheep for a whole burnt offering” (Gn 22:8).

2:25-26 **Simeon** represents humanity in **waiting for the Consolation of Israel**. He fulfills Ps 90:16, in which God makes a promise to the one who loves Him: “With length of days I will satisfy him, / And show him My salvation.”

2:28 The hymns of the Church compare Simeon's reception of Christ to Isaiah's reception of the burning coal from the angel (Is 6:6, 7). In both cases, a prophet receives the life-giving fire of the offering—Isaiah received the type, and Simeon receives the fulfillment.

2:29-32 The Canticle of Simeon is sung daily at Vespers. Since **salvation** (v. 30) has been born into the world, **all peoples** can embrace death (see Php 1:23). For the Christian, death is no longer frightful, but a gateway to everlasting **peace** (v. 29).

2:34 The second coming of the Lord will be the reckoning of the world. For the believer, it will be a resurrection to life; for the unbeliever, it will be a falling into judgment (Jn 5:29).

2:35 The **sword** refers to the anguish that Mary will experience in witnessing her Son's death on the Cross. Her **soul** will be pierced in grief.

2:38 Both men and women are called to proclaim Christ's **redemption**, and women are the first to proclaim His Resurrection (24:9).

2:40 That Jesus **grew and became strong in spirit** does not imply that He was lacking divine perfection at any time. Rather, it indicates that in emptying Himself and assuming human nature (Php 2:7), He freely subjected Himself to human development and expression (see also v. 52).

2:41 Pilgrimages **to Jerusalem** on holy days like **Passover** were customary for Jews; often entire clans or villages would travel together.

2:46 In appearing to be lost for **three days**, Christ prefigures His rest in the tomb.

2:48 Joseph is honored with the title **father** for his care and upbringing of his adopted **Son**. This title further prefigures our adoption by God, whom by grace we call “Father” (Gal 4:4–7).

2:49-51 Christ's eternal generation from the Father is divine, while his maternal ancestry is human. Accordingly, Jesus was first obedient to the will of His Father, and then is willingly **subject to** His mother and father.

3:2 **High priests**: **Caiaphas** was now the sole high priest, but people also recognized the continuing power of his father-in-law **Annas**, a previous high priest deposed by the Romans.

3:3 The call to **repentance** was traditional for prophets. John's **baptism** did not grant **remission of sins** once and for all, but prefigured and prepared people for the baptism of Christ which was to come (see Rom 6:3–11). John is a figure of the Law in that, like the Law, he denounced sin but could not remit (lit. “put away”) sin. Both John and the Law point to the One who can remit sin.

3:4-6 **The voice**: John ascribes to himself this role in Jn 1:23.

3:8 While parents and ancestors help impart piety and holiness (see note on 1:6), ancestry itself does not make one worthy of God. Each person in every generation must **bear fruits worthy of repentance**. **Stones** symbolize the Gentiles who would become **children to Abraham** through faith in Christ (Rom 4:16–18).

3:16-17 **Fire** in this context has the primary meaning of the gift of the **Holy Spirit**, which is given to the world at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4). It further declares the judgment of Christ, in which the faithless will **burn** (see 2Th 1:6–10; 2:8). Note that this fire is one. It is the same Power and the same Spirit which both enlivens the faithful and destroys the faithless.

3:19 **His brother Philip's wife**: **Herod** had divorced his own wife and married Philip's wife Herodias while Philip was still living.

3:21-22 Jesus Himself does not need baptism. In being **baptized**, our Lord accomplished several things: (1) He affirmed John's ministry; (2) He was revealed by the Father and **the Holy Spirit** to be the Christ, God's **beloved Son**; (3) He identified with His people by descending into the waters with them; (4) He prefigured His own death, giving baptism its ultimate meaning; (5) He entered the waters, sanctifying the water itself; (6) He fulfilled the many types given in the OT, as when Moses led the people from bondage through the Red Sea (Ex 14) and when the ark of the covenant was carried into the Jordan so the people could enter the Promised Land (Jos 3; 4); and (7) He opened **heaven** to a world separated from God through sin.

3:22 The Baptism of Christ is celebrated on January 6 and is known commonly as Epiphany, or more properly, Theophany, which means "God revealed." The Son is revealed by the descent of the **Holy Spirit** and by the **voice** of the Father. This is the greatest and clearest public manifestation of God as Trinity in human history, as we sing, "The Trinity was made manifest."

The words spoken by the Father also apply to everyone who is baptized and lives faithfully, as sonship is bestowed by adoption (Gal 4:4–7). The Holy Spirit appearing as a **dove** is not an incarnation, but rather a visible sign for the people. This appearance further fulfills the type prefigured at the Flood: "Just as a dove announced to Noah that God's wrath had ceased, so too the Holy Spirit announces here that Christ has reconciled us to God by sweeping sin away in the flood waters of baptism" (Theoph).

3:23-38 The genealogy follows Joseph's ancestry, even though Jesus was only **supposed** to be the **son of Joseph** but was in fact humanly descended from Mary only. This is explained in two complementary ways: (1) Joseph was a righteous man and would have married within his tribe—thus Mary and Joseph would have largely shared a common lineage; (2) Jesus was born to bring all mankind into adoption by the Father, and thus He affirms that a lineage of adoption is as binding and receives the same inheritance as a lineage of blood (Gal 4:4–7).

3:38 **Adam** means “man”; thus Christ is declared to be both the “Son of Man” and the “Son of God.”

4:1 This exodus of Jesus **into the wilderness** following His baptism has a dual symbolism: (1) it fulfills the OT type, in which Israel journeyed in the wilderness for forty years after its “baptism” in the Red Sea; and (2) it prefigures our own journey through the fallen world after baptism as we struggle towards the Kingdom.

4:2-12 On the temptation of Christ, see notes at Mt 4:1–11.

4:4 Note each time Christ rebukes the devil, it is with the truth and power of Scripture. This teaches the faithful to become immersed in Scripture in order to resist and drive away every temptation (see Ps 118:11).

4:10-11 Satan vainly tries to use the Scriptures (as do the Pharisees in Jn 7:52), but understands neither their truth nor their power. Knowing and quoting Scripture without true understanding is worthless at best and ultimately condemnable. Without true understanding through the Holy Tradition of the Church, the Scriptures are robbed of their authority (see also 2Pt 1:19–21).

4:13 **Opportune time**: See 22:40–46; 23:35; Mt 16:21–23.

4:18 Being the eternal Son of God, Christ did not *become* the world's **anointed** Savior, but has always been our Savior from before the foundation of the world. It was Christ speaking through Isaiah who said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me” (Is 61:1). Note He does not say, “The Spirit *has come* upon Me.” When **the Spirit of the LORD** descended on Jesus at His baptism (see 3:22), this was a sign revealing an eternal, not temporal, truth to the people.

4:19 **Acceptable year**: The time of the Incarnation, when the Kingdom of heaven has come to earth (see 2Co 6:2).

4:22-30 This double response of marveling (v. 22) and rejection (v. 29) occurs frequently in those who encounter Christ (see 11:14–16; Jn 9:16). His being rejected in His own **country** fulfills the rejection of the OT prophets such as **Elijah** (v. 26) and **Elisha** (v. 27), and foreshadows His rejection by the whole Jewish nation at His trial before Pilate (Jn 19:14, 15). Christ accepts death according to the Father's will, not at the will of the Jews. Here, the hour of His Passion has not yet come (see Jn 8:20).

4:31 Christ begins preaching and healing **on the Sabbaths** to show that "the new creation began where the old creation ceased" (AmbM).

4:32 **With authority**: Unlike the prophets of old and the teachers of His day who taught in the third person (“The Lord says”), Christ taught in the first person (“I say to you”). See also Mt 5.

4:39 **Rebuked the fever**: “That which was rebuked was some living thing unable to withstand the influence of Him who rebuked it, for it is not reasonable to rebuke a thing without life and unconscious of the rebuke. Nor is it astonishing for there to exist certain powers that inflict harm on the human body” (CyrAl).

4:43 Christ's primary mission was to **preach the kingdom**. Miracles and healings testify both to the truth of the message and the identity of the Teacher (see 5:24). This same pattern holds true in the Church (Acts 4:29, 30).

5:1 The **Lake of Gennesaret** is also known as the Sea of Galilee. It is about 13 miles long and 7 miles wide.

5:3 Sitting was the traditional position for a teacher (see note at Mt 5:1).

5:4 **Launch out into the deep**: St. Ambrose sees the spiritual meaning of this command as an invitation to give one's life over to the deep mystery of the knowledge of the Son of God.

5:6 The Lord draws people to Himself by things that are familiar to them. As He drew the Magi with a star (Mt 2:2), as He would draw tax collectors by a tax collector (5:29), here He draws the fishermen with **fish** (see 1Co 9:19–23).

5:8 Peter's cry in the face of divine power is not a rejection of **Jesus** (contrast 8:37). Rather, being suddenly cast in the light of Christ, holy people such as **Peter** become keenly aware of their own unworthiness (compare Is 6:5; Rev 1:17).

5:10 The great **catch** of fish (v. 9) is an image of the apostles bringing mankind to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and it fulfills the prophecy of Jer 16:16. In the festal hymn of Pentecost we sing to Christ, “Through the fishermen, You drew the world into Your net.”

5:12 **Leprosy** was one of the most dreaded diseases of the time. It brought great physical suffering as well as total banishment and isolation from society. It is also a symbol of our sin.

5:14 **Show yourself to the priest**: Christ gives this command in order to convince the priests by a tangible miracle that He is superior to **Moses** (CyrAl). The priests hold Moses to be greater than Christ, yet Christ heals a leper immediately and with His own divine authority. However, when Miriam was struck with leprosy, Moses had to seek mercy from above, and still she was only healed after seven days (Nm 12:10–15).

5:27 **Levi** (Matthew) answers Christ's call, "**Follow Me**," and leaves his occupation to become a disciple. From the beginning of His ministry Christ has been a friend of tax collectors and sinners, which is one of the Pharisees' complaints against Him (v. 30). Levi may also have been one of the **tax collectors** prepared for Christ by John the Baptist (3:12).

5:29 This **feast** expresses Matthew's joy and gratitude. The guest register is a stirring demonstration of the fruit of Jesus' love and forgiveness.

5:33-39 Jesus' earthly life is a time of joyous blessings. But there will come a time when His followers will practice the **fast** (see notes on Mt 9:14–17; Mk 2:20).

5:39 This saying occurs only in Luke's account, and illustrates (1) the difficulty with which the Jews would accept the new covenant, (2) the inner resistance a person faces in turning from a sinful way of life, and (3) the general stubbornness of the human heart.

6:1-5 **Second Sabbath after the first**: This term was used when a Jewish feast immediately followed the normal Sabbath, for a feast was also known as a Sabbath. According to St. Ambrose, the term “second Sabbath” serves as an image of the new covenant and the eternal resurrection: the first Sabbath indicates the Law, while the second Sabbath indicates the gospel that follows it. Under the new covenant, the food which was at one time **not lawful** for anyone but the priests to eat is now freely given to all by the **Lord of the Sabbath** (v. 5). **David** prefigured this when he gave the **showbread** . . . **to those with him** (vv. 3, 4).

6:7 According to certain traditions that **the scribes and Pharisees** had built up around the Law, healing was considered work, and thus was not permissible **on the Sabbath**. They believed they served God by zealously keeping these peripheral traditions, but this legalism made them insensitive to God's mercy.

6:12-13 Jesus, being the Son of God, does not **pray** as if to obtain grace or revelation from the Father. Rather, as the Son of Man, He prays as the Advocate for humanity (AmbM; see 1Jn 2:1). Jesus spent **all night in prayer** before selecting the **twelve apostles** to teach us that before choosing a candidate for any spiritual ministry, we should pray that God will reveal to us the one suited for the task (Theoph).

6:24-26 Luke reports four “woes” not found in Matthew's account. **Woe** is an indication not merely of sorrow, but of unspeakable destruction (Is 5:18–24; Am 5:18, 19; Rev 12:12). Those who prize the vices listed here are liable to the “utmost misery”; however, they find hope when they sacrifice their earthly blessings in showing mercy to others (CyrAl).

6:31 This “Golden Rule” is a minimum of Christian virtue, as it places man's desire for goodness (“the natural law of self-love,” CyrAl) as a basic standard of how to treat others. It is but the first step on the path to the perfection of virtue; this perfection is found in v. 36, where God's mercy, rather than man's desire, is the standard.

6:37-38 Mercy precludes human judgment. **Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over** are descriptions of how an honest and generous merchant would measure bulk goods. Flour pressed down, for example, would yield a more generous amount than flour fluffed up. The blessings God intends to put into our hearts are more generous than we can possibly contain, yet this also depends on the spirit in which we ourselves **give** and **forgive**.

6:40 Christ does not judge anyone (Jn 8:15; 12:47). Therefore, “if the Teacher does not judge, neither must the disciple, for the disciple is guilty of worse sins than those for which he judges others” (CyrAl).

6:46-49 Hearing the gospel alone is not enough, for salvation is based not on hearing alone, nor on faith alone, but also on doing **the things** spoken by Christ (see Jam 2:24).

7:2-10 This **centurion**, a Roman Gentile, is unusual in his devotion to the Jews. His characteristics are notable: compassion (v. 2); love for God and His people (v. 5); humility (v. 6); and great faith (vv. 7–9).

7:11-17 This is one of three resurrections performed by our Lord as recorded in the Gospels (see also 8:41–56; Jn 11:1–44). They confirm the promise given to the prophet Ezekiel that God will one day open the graves and raise all the dead (Ezk 37:1–14). Many people have exercised authority over the living; only the Son of God “has power over both the living and the dead” (funeral service). While Christ has power through His word alone (Jn 11:43), here He also **touched** the coffin to show that His very body is life-giving. This event also prefigures Christ's own Resurrection. As Mary would weep for Jesus at the Cross, yet her tears would be turned to joy by the Resurrection, here a widow's **only son** is raised from the dead, putting an end to her weeping (AmbM).

7:18-23 **John** the Baptist was imprisoned soon after Jesus was baptized (Mk 1:14). Though John directed his disciples to follow Christ (Jn 1:29–31, 35–37), some remained with him. While John's own faith was undoubtedly strengthened by the signs Christ performed, the Fathers universally see this encounter as a means John used to convince his remaining disciples that Jesus was indeed the **Coming One**.

7:28 Though he was the greatest **prophet**, John's earthly life and ministry remained in the period of the old covenant. The new covenant so far surpasses the old that the **least in the kingdom** is **greater** than the greatest outside it. This does not imply John will not be resurrected to the Kingdom, but merely that his life on earth came before something far superior.

7:30 See Mk 11:27–33.

7:31-34 **Children** would play this game in two groups. One group would mimic musicians, while the other group refused to respond appropriately to the type of music being **played**. The Pharisees were so rigid in their religion that they were unable to respond to and engage the world around them. Thus, they rejected **John** as being too mournful and ascetic, and Christ as being too merciful and joyous.

7:35 In spite of being rejected by the Pharisees, both John and Christ are **justified**, not by the opinions of men, but by their **children,** those who would come to believe and be faithful.

7:36-50 This **Pharisee** was intrigued by Christ, as evidenced by his invitation, but he clearly does not believe in Him, as shown by his reaction to Christ's mercy (v. 39) and by his lack even of common hospitality (vv. 44–46). The encounter with the sinful **woman** is an icon of the grace found only in the Church. Through her, “the Church is justified as being greater than the Law, for the Law does not know the forgiveness of sins, nor the mystery in which secret sins are cleansed; therefore, what is lacking in the Law is perfected in the Gospel” (AmbM).

7:49 That a man could forgive **sins** was beyond the bounds of the Law as the Pharisees understood it (see 5:21). Yet Christ was not a mere man, but the very Lawgiver Himself. “Who could declare things that were above the Law, except the One who ordained the Law?” (CyrAl).

8:2 These **women** were faithful to Christ to the end (23:49, 55), and were the first to receive and proclaim the news of His Resurrection (24:1–10). In the Scriptures, the number **seven** often symbolizes totality and completeness, indicating that **Mary called Magdalene** had been thoroughly given over to darkness before her healing.

8:4 **Parable**: See the article “Parables” at Mt 13.

8:5-15 As the **sower** in this parable, Christ fulfills the prophecy in Is 55:10–13. Note that while some might teach a person is permanently saved at the moment he professes faith—a view never held by the historic Church—the teaching of Jesus is clear that it is possible to **believe for a while** and then **fall away** (v. 13).

8:10 **Mysteries** are not obscure intellectual concepts, but the presence of the Kingdom of God which cannot be defined. A person's unwillingness to understand Christ's parables is due to a rejection of His Kingdom. “If the blindness were natural, it would have been proper for God to open their eyes; but because it was a voluntary and self-chosen blindness, He does not overthrow their free will.” Doing so would have been not only to “no advantage for them, but an even greater condemnation” (JohnChr).

8:22-25 Christ deliberately permits the **windstorm** to arise while He is sleeping in order to perfect the disciples' faith and rebuke their weaknesses, so they would eventually be unshaken by life's temptations. Here their faith is still mixed with unbelief. They showed faith when **they came to Him**, but unbelief when they said, “**We are perishing**.”

8:33 Some teach that the presence of **swine** indicates a Gentile population. However, since our Lord forbade His disciples to go to the Gentiles (Mt 10:5) and was Himself reluctant to seek out the Gentiles (Mt 15:24), likely these were Jews engaged in a sinful occupation (see also the note at Mt 4:15).

The destruction of the entire **herd** reveals: (1) while animals are a venerable part of creation, man is of far greater value; (2) Christ removes a source of sin, for swine herding was an abomination to the Jews (Dt 14:8); (3) **demons** have no power over creation, but are subject to the will of God—they could only enter the swine at Christ's command; (4) people are protected under God's providence—otherwise, the demon-possessed man would have come to the same end as the swine; (5) the magnitude of the economic loss would remain as a sign for the hardhearted people who fled that region (v. 34).

8:43-44 For the Jews, contact with **blood** caused defilement and led to religious and social isolation (Lv 25). The **woman** displays bold faith by approaching both Christ and a ruler of the synagogue (v. 41) in a crowd, potentially defiling all of them and subjecting herself to ridicule.

8:45 **“Who touched Me?”** does not simply mean a physical touch, but rather, “Who touched me in faith?” Just as “the temple sanctifies the gold” (Mt 23:17), so also matter is sanctified by Christ's Incarnation, and the power of Christ works through even His garment. To touch Christ's garment in faith is to touch Him. In the Church, we touch Christ through icons, oil, water, bread, wine, etc. When this is done in faith, the power of Christ is received.

8:47 Jesus calls **the woman** forward both to take away her fear and **trembling** and to strengthen Jairus for the forthcoming news of his daughter's death (v. 49).

9:7-9 This is the same **Herod** to whom Pilate would send Jesus during His trial (23:7). He is the son of the Herod who slew the innocent infants in Bethlehem (Mt 2:16). The incident of the beheading of St. **John** is found in Mk 6:14–28.

9:11-17 Theophylact sees a liturgical parallel with the feeding of the **five thousand**. Here Christ first **healed** and **spoke** of the gospel, and then fed **the multitude** with the miraculous bread by the hands of His disciples. In the Church, a person is first healed through baptism; then at the Liturgy, the gospel is preached and the bread of life and the cup are received from the hands of the ordained clergy.

9:13 **You give them something to eat**: This commission is a type and preparation for the apostolic ministry the disciples will perform after Christ's Resurrection. They will feed the world with the word of God and with the Eucharist. **Five loaves and two fish**: Christ is the same Creator “of both the earth and the sea, who in the beginning brought fruit from the earth and life out of the water” (JohnChr).

9:16 Christ looked **up to heaven** “not as receiving power from elsewhere, but as honoring the Father who begot Him.” That Christ **blessed and broke** the bread teaches us “not to touch any meal until we have given thanks to Him who gives us food” (JohnChr). This blessing also presents a clear eucharistic image and directs us to pursue spiritual food greater than that which is earthly (see Jn 6:26, 27).

9:18-19 As in every generation, what **the crowds** have to say about Jesus is usually unpredictable and misguided.

9:20 **Who do you say that I am?** is the ultimate question in Scripture and in all theology. How this question is answered defines the universe. *Christ* (Heb. *Messiah*) means “Anointed One.” The declaration of **Peter** that Jesus is **the Christ of God** reveals Jesus is not merely another anointed king or prophet, but the long-awaited Savior.

9:21 Jesus desires to keep His identity as the Christ hidden to avoid popular political and theological misunderstandings. Only after His Passion and Resurrection can His identity as Messiah be understood (see note on Mt 12:16–21).

9:23 Note two things: (1) Each person must take up **his** own **cross**. The burden in this world is different for each person, and each has been chosen by God to bear certain struggles for his own salvation and the salvation of those around him. (2) The cross is to be taken up **daily**. Commitment to following Christ is not just a one-time event. Rather, it is the continual practice of faith and obedience, even to the point of being shamed and persecuted by the world.

9:27 This is a reference to those who will witness the Transfiguration (vv. 28–36), as well as to those in every generation who experience the presence of God's Kingdom.

9:28-36 See the article “The Transfiguration” at Mt 17.

9:31 Christ's **decease** (Gr. *exodus*, lit. “departure”) refers to His death. Christ's death is intimately connected to the glory of the Transfiguration, for Christ is glorified through His death (Jn 12:23). In the liturgical cycle, the Feast of the Transfiguration (Aug. 6) comes forty days before the feast of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14), showing the connection between Christ's glory and His Cross. The term *exodus* reveals that Christ's Passion is a fulfillment of the OT Passover and is the true exodus from enslavement into salvation.

This revelation of divine power also confirms Christ's upcoming death was not imposed on Him by outside forces, but was a voluntary offering of love, for no arresting soldier could withstand such glory if Christ had not consented (Mt 26:53). In a festal hymn (called the *kontakion*) of Transfiguration, we sing, “Your disciples beheld Your glory as far as they could bear it, so that when they saw You crucified, they would understand that Your suffering was voluntary.”

9:40-41 While the disciples' faith was incomplete (Mt 17:19, 20), Christ's rebuke is also to the crowds, whose faith was weaker still (see Mk 9:22–24).

9:44 Christ's repeated prediction of His Passion was meant to encourage and strengthen His disciples for the terrifying events they would face, and to assure them that Christ was not powerless but went to the Cross willingly.

9:57-62 **I will follow You**: There is a cost to discipleship. Jesus reveals three: (1) The disciple relinquishes personal or earthly security—if the Lord has **nowhere to lay *His* head**, neither will the disciple. (2) Nothing, not even the honor due to parents, can be an obstacle to serving the Lord. (3) A disciple cannot delay in accomplishing the good that Christ demands.

10:1 **Seventy**: See the article “The Seventy” in this chapter.

10:2 We are to **pray** not only for **the harvest** of converts to Christ, but also for **the laborers** who will reach them.

10:3 **Lambs** speak of the sacrificial life of the apostles and of all followers of Christ. The **wolves** are those who seek to frighten and devour those who follow the Lord (Jn 15:18).

10:7-8 Twice here Christ commands the apostles to **eat** whatever is offered to them. This has a twofold significance: (1) the apostles must be content with whatever is offered, even if the food is little and simple; and (2) the gracious reception of others' hospitality takes precedence over personal fasting or dietary disciplines.

St. Cassian the Desert Father notes that when he visited a monastery, the fast was always relaxed to honor him as a guest. When he asked why, the elder responded, “Fasting is always with me, but you I cannot always have with me. Fasting is useful and necessary, but it depends on our choice, while the law of God demands charity. Thus receiving Christ in you, I serve you with all diligence, and when I have taken leave of you, I resume the rule of fasting again.” In this way the ascetics would obey Christ's command here and His command that we not “appear to men to be fasting” (Mt 6:18; see also Rom 14:2–6; 1Co 10:27; Heb 13:2).

10:9 The gospel message is not simply that there is a Kingdom in the future, but that this **kingdom of God has come near**.

10:13-16 **Judgment** is severe for those who reject Christ after experiencing His grace. In contrast, those who have never known Christ due to genuine ignorance are without sin in that regard (Jn 15:22–24), and are instead judged by their God-given conscience (Rom 2:12–16).

10:18 **I saw Satan fall** describes an event that took place before the creation of the world. Five times Satan set his will against God (Is 14:12–15; see also Rev 12:7–12).

10:21 **Babes**: People of simple faith and open hearts (see 18:15–17).

10:30 **Jerusalem** is the place of peace, symbolic of communion with God. **Jericho**, on the other hand, was renowned as a place of sin (see 19:1). Falling **among thieves** speaks to the natural consequence of journeying away from God toward a life of sin (see Jn 10:10).

10:31-32 Titles and positions are meaningless in God's sight when good deeds do not accompany them: “The dignity of the priesthood means nothing unless he also excels in deeds” (CyrAl). That the **priest** and the **Levite** do not help the man also indicates the failure of the OT Law to heal the consequences of sin.

10:33 The **Samaritan**, while a despised foreigner, is an image of Christ (Jn 8:48), for He “came down from heaven” (Creed) to save even those in rebellion against Him.

10:34-35 The bandages, **oil**, and **wine** are sacramental images for (1) the garment of baptism, which delivers us from the wounds of sin; (2) the oil of chrismation, which gives us new life in the Holy Spirit; and (3) the communion of the divine Blood, which leads to eternal life. **His own animal** indicates Christ bearing our sins in His own body, and the **inn** reveals the Church in which Christ's **care** is received. He pays the price for that care (1Co 6:20; 7:23).

10:38-42 **Mary and Martha** are the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead (Jn 11:1). Martha is not rebuked for **serving**, but for complaining and for being **distracted, worried,** and **troubled**. In following Christ, we serve in order to facilitate the spread of the gospel (see Acts 6:1–4).

11:1 **Teach us to pray** expresses a universal longing to be in communion with God. For notes on the Lord's Prayer, see Mt 6:9–13.

11:5-8 This parable demonstrates God's faithfulness to those who are in need and who pray with **persistence** (v. 8). The Fathers interpret **midnight** as both the time of our death and a time of great temptation. The **friend** is Christ, who, as our only source of grace, provides everything we need.

11:9-13 In Greek, the verbs rendered **ask, seek,** and **knock** imply a continuing action and are better translated, “keep asking,” “keep seeking,” and “keep knocking.” God responds when we persistently ask for things that are good. **Bread, fish,** and **an egg** are all images of life and symbolize the gift of **the Holy Spirit** (see Jn 14:13, 14; Jam 4:3).

11:15 **Beelzebub**: A pagan god, derided by the Jews as “the Lord of the Flies.” Here it is a direct reference to Satan (v. 18).

11:16 **A sign** is never given to those whose motive is merely to test God (see 4:9–12).

11:20 **Finger of God**: the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:28).

11:21-22 The **strong man** is Satan, who holds sway over the fallen human race, while the **stronger** is Christ (see 1Jn 4:4).

11:23 It is the work of Christ to **gather** the children of God, while those who scatter are in direct opposition to Him. Those who work in opposition to Christ are different from those who work in good faith toward His purpose but are not yet united to the Church (see 9:46–50 and note). Only “good deeds done for Christ's sake bring fruit,” and thus deeds done for any other purpose, “even if they are good, are deeds that scatter abroad” (SerSar).

11:24-26 The **unclean spirit** refers to the rebelliousness cast out of the Jews by the OT prophets to prepare them to receive Christ. Those who refuse to receive Him are left open to the wickedness of **seven other spirits** or demons (JohnChr).

11:27-28 These verses are read on most feasts of the Virgin Mary. Jesus corrects the **woman from the crowd**, not by denouncing his mother, but by emphasizing her faith. People are **blessed** in God's eyes if, like Mary, they **hear the word of God and keep it.** The Greek word *menounge*, here rendered **more than that**, is translated “Yes indeed” in Rom 10:18. This word corrects by amplifying, not by negating.

11:29-32 The **sign of Jonah** is (1) the fact that the rebellious Ninevites were willing to repent at Jonah's preaching, and (2) that Jonah coming out of the great fish prefigures Christ rising from the tomb (Mt 12:40). In contrast to the Ninevites' repentance, the Jews' failure to repent at something far **greater**—Christ's preaching and Resurrection—will result in their **judgment**. **Queen of the South**: See 3Kg 10:1–10.

11:51 **Zechariah**: Some of the Fathers teach this was the prophet at the time of Joash the king (2Ch 24:20–22), while others say it refers to the father of St. John the Baptist, who, according to tradition, was also murdered in the temple.

12:5 **Whom you should fear** refers to God (Pr 9:10). The body will die eventually, one way or another. St. Ambrose even states that the death of the body is not itself a punishment, but rather it marks the end of earthly punishments. The soul continues for all eternity; since God is the judge of the soul, our efforts in this world are to please Him alone.

12:10 To say a **word against the Son of Man** is to reject Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus seemed to be a mere man to many people before their conversion. The scandal caused by the Incarnation and Crucifixion of the Son of God (1Co 1:23) makes this sin more easily **forgiven**. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is without bodily form and invisibly works divine goodness. According to St. John Chrysostom and many other Fathers, the blasphemy **against the Holy Spirit** would be forgivable if a person were to repent of it. Jesus never calls the sin itself “unforgivable.” Jesus makes this declaration knowing that those who blaspheme the Spirit are calling pure, divine goodness “evil,” and are beyond repentance by their own choice.

12:13-15 It was a custom for respected rabbis to arbitrate personal disputes. However, a dispute over an **inheritance** is detrimental to salvation. This greed is pure idolatry (Col 3:5) and unfitting for anyone who knows God. Notice how incompatible this question is with what the Lord had just finished saying.

12:20 **Whose will those things be which you have provided?** is the key to understanding the saving up of material goods. St. John Chrysostom writes that the only barns we need we already have: “the stomachs of the poor.” St. Basil the Great taught that the bread in our cupboard belongs to the hungry man; the coat hanging unused belongs to the one who needs it; the shoes rotting in our closet belong to the one who has no shoes; and the money we hoard belongs to the poor. St. Ambrose teaches, “The things which we cannot take with us are not ours. Only virtue will be our companion when we die.” Even when Joseph stored up grain in Egypt (Gn 41), it was for the benefit of the whole nation. These teachings apply to parishes as well as to each person.

12:32 **Do not fear** is a recurring theme in this discourse. **Little flock** refers to all believers. They are *little* in two ways: (1) they are insignificant in the eyes of the world, and (2) they are small in number when compared to the earthly and heavenly creation.

12:35-36 A call to be vigilant, echoing the imagery of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Mt 25:1–13). **Your waist be girded**: Be ready for virtuous action. **Lamps burning**: Have spiritual discernment.

12:37-48 See also Mt 24:45–51. The mark of a true disciple is vigilance in performing the work and exemplifying the virtue of the **master**.

12:38 **Second** and **third watch** is between 9:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m., interpreted as hours of heightened temptation. Thus, the **servants** are most **blessed** who remain faithful during the night.

12:40 It is not the place of anyone to try to predict the time of the return of **the Son of Man**, but rather to remain faithful and to be **ready** at every **hour**.

12:41 The previous parable (vv. 35–40) is **to all *people***, while the following parable (vv. 42–48) is to the apostles and their successors, the rulers (v. 42) and teachers of the Church. The exhortations to principles of virtue and the warnings against corruption apply specifically to those entrusted with spiritual leadership.

12:47-48 The judgment of the teachers of the Church will be strict (Jam 3:1). The **many *stripes*** given to those who are willfully and knowingly disobedient symbolize condemnation. The **few** stripes are for those disobedient out of ignorance and indicate chastisement or correction.

12:49 **Fire** references the proclamation of the gospel and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This fire both enlivens the faithful and judges the faithless; it purifies virtue and destroys sin (see 3:16; 1Co 3:12–15).

12:50 **Baptism** refers to Christ's Passion (see note at Mt 20:20–23).

12:51 There are two kinds of **peace**. False peace, to which Christ refers here, is a shallow harmony that results from ignoring issues of truth. Genuine peace is reconciliation to God through faith in Christ and surrender to truth. Genuine peace has **division** as a byproduct because not everyone wants truth. In the fallen world, divisions are necessary for truth to be manifest (see 1Co 11:18, 19).

12:53 This fulfills the prophecy of Mic 7:6. In addition to its literal meaning, which has been experienced in the Church since the time of Christ, the older generation being divided from the younger generation also symbolizes (1) the rejection of the new covenant by followers of the old covenant, and (2) the spiritual struggle between our old, sinful state and our renewal in Christ (see Eph 4:20–24).

12:56 **This time**: The revelation of the Kingdom of God in the first coming of Jesus Christ.

12:58 Just as a guilty person would attempt to reconcile with his opponent before facing an earthly **judge**, even more so should one be reconciled to God in Christ before facing His dread judgment.

13:1-5 These two historical incidents (vv. 1, 4) are only reported in Luke. The slain **Galileans** were probably Zealots, Jewish nationalists, who triggered some disturbance against the Romans. The collapse of the **tower in Siloam**, whether by accident or sabotage, was believed to be divine justice on sinners. Christ denies this suffering was God's judgment; instead, He uses these events as illustrations for those who **perish** because they will not **repent**.

13:6-8 The fruitless **fig tree** is universally interpreted in the Church to be fallen humanity. The **three years** represent God's covenants with His people through Abraham, Moses, and Christ, all of which are rejected, as well as the three-year earthly ministry of Christ. The **keeper** of the **vineyard** is Christ Himself, who intercedes on our behalf that He should suffer His Passion and send the Holy Spirit to us before the final judgment takes place.

13:16 **Think of it**: The Fathers see this command as directing us to a spiritual meaning for the **eighteen years**. As the Greek expression is literally translated “ten and eight years,” both St. Ambrose and Theophylact see ten as representing the Ten Commandments and eight as representing grace, for the day of Resurrection is often called the “eighth day.” Thus humanity is lifted up by faith in Christ, who fulfills both law and grace.

13:19 The **mustard** plant grows to a height of about 10 feet in Palestine (see note at Mt 13:31–33).

13:25-27 Neither verbal confessions (**Lord, Lord**; v. 25) nor sacramental experiences (v. 26) avail anything unless we also do the works of faith (see 6:46–49).

13:30 Theophylact sees the **first** who becomes **last** as not only faithless Jews, but those in the Church who “from infancy have put on Christ and have been taught the Word, but who become last by transgressing against it.”

13:32-35 This passage shows (1) Christ voluntarily going to His Passion, (2) His great love for Jerusalem in spite of its continual state of rebellion, and (3) His foreknowledge of how He will be received on the first Palm Sunday.

14:7-17 These parables are directed toward guests (vv. 7–11) and hosts (vv. 12–14). In imitation of Christ, perfect humility is expected of guests, and boundless charity is demanded of hosts (see Jam 4:6).

14:12-14 This instruction is based on the manner in which God treats us, even though not one of us could possibly **repay** Him (see 6:30–36). **You shall be repaid**: See 10:34, 35.

14:15 This man unwittingly declares the ultimate beatitude. The truth behind his words can come only through understanding the **bread** to be eternal communion with **God**.

14:16-17 This parable operates on two levels, illustrating both the first and second coming of Christ, who is the **servant** sent to gather many. **Supper** indicates evening, the end of the age. The people **invited** are first the Jews, then all mankind.

14:18-20 The Fathers see the three **excuses** as having both a literal meaning, that many are too attached to worldly cares to accept the Kingdom of God (v. 26; 18:29), and spiritual meanings. St. Ambrose sees the three excuses of **I cannot come** representing the Gentile, the Jew, and the heretic. The Gentile's devotion to earthly wealth is represented by the **piece of ground**, the Jew's enslavement to the five books of the Law by the **five yoke of oxen**, and the heretic's espousal of error by the man refusing on account of his **wife**. Theophylact more generally associates the excuses with people devoted to earthly matters, to things pertaining to the five senses, and to all pleasures of the flesh.

14:21-23 Those in the **streets and lanes** indicate (1) the Gentiles who accepted Christ after the faithless Jews rejected Him, and (2) those outside the Church replacing those within who have rejected their own baptism.

14:26 The command to **hate** one's kindred and **his own life also** is not to be taken literally. Rather we are to hate the way our relationships with others can hinder our total dedication to the Kingdom of God, which takes precedence even over family ties.

14:28 **Build a tower**: See 1Co 3:10–15.

15:2-12 Fellowship with **sinners** defiled pious Jews. The three parables in this chapter are Christ's answer to the **Pharisees and scribes**. The **man** (v. 4), the **woman** (v. 8), and the **father** (v. 12) are seen as representing Christ, the Church, and God the Father. “Christ carries the sinner, the Church seeks and intercedes, and the Father receives” (AmbM).

15:4 In the Fathers' spiritual interpretation, the **hundred sheep** represent all rational creation. The **one** sheep who goes astray symbolizes mankind, while the **ninety-nine** represent the angelic realm (see also note on Mt 18:12).

15:8 **Ten silver coins** comprise a single necklace worn by a married woman, a bride, which is an image of the Church (Eph 5:32). The lost coin (Gr. *drachma*), which carried the image of the king, symbolizes mankind who, though bearing the image of God, fell from grace. Through the Church, Christ enlightens the world, sweeps away sin, and **finds** His lost creation.

15:12-14 The son's request for his **portion of goods** (Gr. *ousia*, lit. “essence”) indicates man receiving his free will and his rational mind from God. As Adam did in Eden, the **younger** son uses these **possessions** to rebel against his **father**. The **far country** represents life in exile from God.

15:15 Feeding **swine** could rightly be called “Jewish Skid Row.” He could not sink much lower.

15:17 **Came to himself**: A person immersed in sin is living outside his true self (Rom 7:17–20). The prodigal realizes his hopeless condition. The **bread** symbolizes Christ, who is known through the Scriptures and the Eucharist.

15:20 Though it was considered unseemly in Jewish culture for an old man to run, the **father** did not passively stand by waiting for his son to return. He **ran** to him. This self-humiliation for the sake of the lost indicates the way in which our Father, through Christ's sacrifice, actively seeks those who stray.

15:22 The significance of the **robe** is righteousness granted by baptism (Is 61:10), the signet **ring** is family identity (Hag 2:23), and the **sandals** refer to walking according to the gospel (Eph 6:15).

15:23 **Fatted calf** is more closely translated “wheat-fed bull-calf,” or even more literally “a bull-calf formed from wheat.” This animal is a male calf raised on wheat in preparation for use as a religious offering. As the reconciliation of the prodigal son was not complete without the sacrifice of the calf, so man's reconciliation to God is not by his repentance alone, but by Christ offering Himself on the Cross. The festive dining on an animal offering “formed from wheat” is a clear reference to our partaking of the eucharistic bread (see also note at Mt 22:4).

15:25-28 The resentful **older son** illustrates the hardheartedness of the Pharisees to whom Christ was telling this parable (vv. 2, 3). God requires His followers to rejoice when even the most blamable man is called to repentance (CyrAl).

15:29 **I never transgressed your commandment at any time**: The failure of the older son to recognize his own sins leads to his self-righteous and merciless attitude. Contrast this with the contrition of the younger son (vv. 18, 19). “The one who seems to himself to be righteous, who does not see the beam in his own eye, becomes angry when forgiveness is granted to one who confesses his sin and begs for mercy” (AmbM). The older son's ingratitude is also apparent in his charge **you never gave me a young goat** to his father, who has given him all he has (v. 31).

16:1-9 A **steward** is responsible for managing his master's property and looking after the welfare of his servants. The point of this parable is that the unrighteous are better at using money to make friends in the world than believers are at using money to **make friends** for the Kingdom of God—which is accomplished by spending it on the needy. At death (**when you fail**) the needy will welcome their benefactors into the **everlasting home** (v. 9).

16:10-12 The test as to whether God will bestow heavenly blessings (**true *riches***) on a person is directly related to how that person spends his money. The money we consider our own is actually **another man's**, that is, belonging to God, or at least to the poor. The Fathers universally see a person's failure to give money to God's work as stealing: “nothing less than embezzlement of money belonging to someone else” (Theoph).

16:15 The things which are **highly esteemed among men** include money, power, position, and praise.

16:22 **Abraham's bosom** means heaven. Abraham is mentioned among all the righteous because, in stark contrast to the rich man, Abraham showed hospitality to strangers (Gn 18:1–8). The **rich man . . . was buried**: The Fathers see this as illustrating the state of his merciless soul, buried by the pleasures of the flesh. He was already buried in life by “couches, rugs, furnishings, sweet oils, perfumes, large quantities of wine, varieties of food, and flatterers” (JohnChr). That the rich man remains unnamed indicates that he is ultimately forgotten (see Ps 9:6).

16:24-26 The rich man's appeal to **Abraham** as a spiritual **father** is not rejected. Rather, Abraham accepts this role, calling the rich man **son** and showing himself to be compassionate even towards the most wretched of men. The **great gulf** is not a geographical divide, but the complete separation between virtue and wickedness, a separation that cannot be overcome after death. Note that torments have not changed the rich man's heart, as he still sees **Lazarus** as a servant existing for the sake of his own comfort. Finally, this account by Christ reveals the communion of the saints: a man, not even a believer, calls out from Hades and converses with Saint Abraham!

16:27-31 Some Fathers see this parable being set after the final judgment, citing the punishment and reward being received by the two men respectively. Others see this parable set at a time after death but before the second coming of Christ, as evidenced by the man interceding on behalf of his brothers who are still living. The torment he is experiencing would be but a foretaste of his final state. From this perspective, we learn that souls of the departed have awareness of and concern for the state of those still alive on earth (see 9:30, 31; 2Mc 15:12–16; Mt 2:18), but also that the intercessions of a wicked man are heard, but avail nothing (contrast Jam 5:16).

16:31 “The ignorance of Scripture is a great cliff and a deep abyss. It is impossible for anyone to be without benefit if he reads continually and with attention” (JohnChr). Furthermore, the rebellious were not persuaded even when people did **rise from the dead** (Mt 28:11–15; Jn 12:9–11).

17:2 **Little ones** refers primarily to children, and by extension to anyone whose heart is humble and dependent on God (see notes at Mt 18:1–4, 6).

17:6 Here, the **mulberry tree** is symbolic of the devil's works. It is on the leaf of this tree that silkworms feed, worms being an image of hell (Mk 9:42–48). This patristic interpretation is confirmed by numerous scriptural images of evil being destroyed **in the sea** (8:33; Ex 14:27; Mt 21:21; Rev 20:10).

17:7 The servant **plowing** is mentioned first and the one **tending sheep** second, showing that one must first work out his own salvation (Php 2:12) before he can become a shepherd of others.

17:10 **Unprofitable** (lit. “without merit”) does not mean without intrinsic value. Rather, it means everything we have comes from God and is owed back to Him. There is nothing we can offer God that is not already His.

17:17-19 **Where *are* the nine?** Christ came to heal all of fallen humanity, yet only a small portion receive Him in faith and thanksgiving **to give glory to God** (v. 18). Thus, “many are called, but few chosen” (Mt 20:16). The lesson for Orthodox Christians is that worship is the number one priority.

17:21 The **kingdom of God** is a spiritual reality present within the Christian believer and within the community of the Church. **Within you** can also be translated “among you” or “in your midst.”

17:26-30 The warning not to be preoccupied with worldly matters applies both to believers and to parishes.

17:34-36 Christ's second coming will entail a sudden revelation of judgment. **One will be taken** to heaven and **the other left** for eternal condemnation. The separation of the saints from the wicked will occur on “the day when the Son of Man is revealed” (v. 30) and not, as some speculate today, at an event that occurs before His return.

17:37 **The body** refers to Christ, while the **eagles** refer to the angels and the saints.

18:1 Persistent (v. 7) and faithful (v. 8) prayer is the remedy for the tribulation just described (17:22–37; see also 1Th 5:16–18 and note).

18:8 **Will He really find faith on the earth?** The Lord often uses this form of question when speaking of characteristics that are rarely found (see 11:11; 12:42).

18:10 The **Pharisee** is highly respected and a careful observer of the details of the Law, whereas the **tax collector** is despised as a sinner who collaborates with the occupying Roman forces, betraying and cheating his own people.

18:11-12 The practices of this **Pharisee** are worthy examples to follow. His good deeds (fasting and giving tithes) are the primary weapons against the passions of lust and greed (adultery and extortion). However, without a humble and repentant heart, these outward practices are worthless and lead only to pride and judgment of others. Note that he prays **with himself**, for God is absent where there is boasting.

18:13 The **tax collector** shows by his posture an awareness of the state of his soul, standing far from the altar of sacrifice with eyes cast downward. His prayer, **God, be merciful to me a sinner**, is the foundation of the Jesus Prayer (see note on 1Th 5:16–18), as is the refrain “Lord have mercy” that permeates Orthodox worship and personal prayer.

18:14 **Justified** means forgiven and set right with God, for inward humility is blessed while pride in outward deeds is condemned.

18:25-27 See 19:8–10.

18:34 The **saying was hidden** not by God, but because the disciples could not comprehend its meaning until the events of the Passion had taken place.

19:1 **Jericho** was notorious as a place of iniquity and is commonly associated with sinful living (see 10:30).

19:2 **He was rich**: See 18:24–27. This encounter between Christ and Zacchaeus demonstrates that grace can accomplish that which is impossible to man.

19:3-4 Many spiritual interpretations express the universal significance of this encounter. Theophylact sees the crowd symbolizing sins: “Crowded in by a multitude of passions and worldly affairs, he is not able to see Jesus.” St. Ambrose sees several parallels: (1) Zacchaeus being **short** is indicative of his being short on faith and virtue; (2) that Zacchaeus must ascend a **tree** shows no one attached to earthly matters can see Jesus; and (3) the Lord intending **to pass that *way*** reveals that Christ will approach anyone willing to repent and believe.

19:8 Zacchaeus uses the term **give** for his free and generous offering **to the poor**, and **restore** for what he owes those he had cheated, as this was not a gift but required by the Law (Ex 22:1). By doing both, Zacchaeus not only fulfills the Law, but shows his love of the gospel.

19:9 The title **son of Abraham** indicates Zacchaeus had become like this patriarch of Israel: he was counted righteous by his faith, he became generous toward the poor, and he was united to the people of God. Early records tell us he went on to be a bishop of the Church.

19:42 Jerusalem means “foundation of peace.” Only faith in Christ brings true **peace**—a truth **hidden** from a city that will soon rebel against its Savior (see note on 12:51).

19:43-44 The destruction of Jerusalem that Jesus foretells would occur in AD 70. This also describes the spiritual end of every person who lacks faith.

20:2 **These things** refers to Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as Messiah (19:35–38), the cleansing of the temple (19:45), and His preaching (20:1). The elders confront Jesus since it was the duty of the priestly descendants of Levi to manage the temple. While Christ was descended from Judah (3:33), yet He is the High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 109:4), a priestly line far greater than that of Levi, for His authority is from the Father.

20:9-16 In this **parable,** the **man** represents God the Father, and the **vineyard** refers to God's people. The **vinedressers** are the leaders of the Jews entrusted to care for the people. Each **servant** (vv. 10–12) **sent** by the owner stands for an OT prophet who comes to call people back to God, while the **beloved son** (v. 13) refers to Christ Himself. When the Son is cast **out of the vineyard** (v. 15) to be **killed**, this is understood on two levels: (1) that Jesus was killed outside Jerusalem; and (2) that Jesus was crucified by foreign soldiers, not by those of His own *vineyard*. The **others** (v. 16) who later receive the vineyard are the Gentiles brought into the Church.

20:17-18 **That stone** is Christ. This saying illustrates the two ways of destruction. Those falling on the stone are people who suffer the effects of their own sins while yet in this life, whereas those on whom the stone **falls** are unrepentant people who become **powder** in the final judgment (JohnChr).

20:20-26 This question on taxation is designed to trap Jesus: a “yes” would turn the Jewish people against Him, while a “no” would bring a charge of treason by the Romans. His answer defeats their cunning and shows that a believer can render the state its due while serving God (Rom 13:1–7). As the coin bears the **image** of the emperor and is properly paid to him, so each person bears the image of God and therefore belongs to Him. Conflict arises only when the state demands that which is contrary to God.

20:41-44 The first reference to **the LORD** applies to God the Father, while the term **my Lord** refers to Christ. This question is answered in that Christ is the Son of David in His humanity and David's **Lord** in His divinity (see note at Mt 22:41–46).

21:1-4 According to the Fathers, the Lord accounts the value of a gift not by how much is given, but by how much is kept back. Thus, the **poor widow** is counted to have given a great gift, having kept nothing for herself. Those who give **out of their abundance** but keep plenty back for themselves are counted by God to have given very little.

22:1 The **Passover** (Gr. *Pascha*) is the celebration of the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt and the deliverance of God's people from bondage (Ex 12–14). In remembrance of this, the Jews would slaughter an unblemished lamb and partake of it with unleavened bread. This prefigures Christ's Passion, in which the only-begotten Son of God is slain in order to deliver His people from their bondage to sin and death, and then is raised to lead them into the eternal Kingdom. Thus, *Pascha* is the primary term by which we refer to the death and Resurrection of Christ, known in the West as Easter.

22:3 **Satan** does not enter a man except by the man's consent. The reason Satan chose Judas and none of the others is that Judas had a place for Satan in his heart, while the others did not. Luke's mention of Judas being **numbered among the twelve** emphasizes the depth of the betrayal and shows that religious position is worthless if not accompanied by faith and virtue.

22:15 Christ has a ***fervent*** **desire** for **this Passover** because this meal will impart the mysteries of the new covenant to His followers, and because this event will inaugurate the great deliverance of humanity from sin through the power of the Cross.

22:17-18 This first **cup** concludes the OT Passover meal Christ eats with His disciples to fulfill the Law. **Until the kingdom of God comes** means until Christ's Resurrection; at that time He will again eat and drink with His disciples (24:43; Acts 10:41).

22:19-20 **Gave thanks** has at its root the Greek word *eucharist*, which immediately came to refer to both the Liturgy and the sacrament of Holy Communion. Before the end of the first century, a manuscript called the *Didache* refers to the celebration of the Liturgy as “the Eucharist,” and in the year AD 150, St. Justin says of Holy Communion, “This food we call ‘Eucharist,’ of which no one is allowed to partake except one who believes that the things we teach are true, and has received the washing [holy baptism] for forgiveness of sins and for rebirth, and who lives as Christ commanded us.” **This is My body**: The Orthodox Church has always accepted Christ's words as true, “that the food consecrated by the word of prayer which comes from Him is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus” (Justin). See Jn 6:51–66 and notes, and the article “The Eucharist” at 1Co 11.

22:21-23 Judas too is invited to the **table** for the mystical supper, Jesus seeking by all means to save him. His unworthy participation leads to his utter destruction (see 1Co 11:27–30; compare Est 7).

22:24-27 This small-minded **dispute** is out of place in the context of the mysteries Christ has just revealed. He corrects the disciples by first comparing them to the power-hungry **Gentiles**, whom they themselves considered an abomination, and contrasting them to Himself, who **serves** us even though He is Lord of all.

22:30 “Christ judges by discerning the heart, and not by examining deeds. So also the apostles are being shaped to exercise spiritual judgment concerning faith, and in rebuking error with virtue” (AmbM). The apostles will judge not with earthly judgment, but by the witness of their own lives. Since God's **kingdom** begins with the Resurrection of Christ, the authority of judgment has already been given to the apostles and their successors in the journey of the Church on earth (Mt 16:19; Jn 20:23).

22:31-32 The form of **you** in v. 31 is plural, indicating Satan **asked for** all the disciples, while the **you** in v. 32 is singular, indicating Jesus prayed especially for Simon Peter. Because Peter's faith was the strongest, he would be tested the most. **When you have returned to *Me***: See Jn 21:15–17. **Strengthen your brethren** refers not only to the other disciples, but to all the faithful until Christ returns.

22:35-38 The **sword** (v. 36) is not to be understood literally (compare vv. 49–51), but refers to the living word of God in the battle against sin (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). St. Ambrose adds an additional meaning: that giving up one's garment and buying a sword refers to surrendering the body to the sword of martyrdom. Because the disciples were thinking of swords literally, Jesus abruptly ends the discussion with the words, “**It is enough**,” or better translated, “Enough of this!” (see Dt 3:26; Mk 14:41).

22:41-44 Christ's **agony** (v. 44) was the product of His human nature. In asking that the **cup** be taken away, He reveals His human will. By submitting His human will to the Father, Christ reveals His divine will to be one with the Father's, and further shows that each person must submit his own will to God's will (11:2). Christ willingly takes in Himself the voice of weak humanity, thereby conquering weakness: “The words of weakness are sometimes adopted by the strong in order that the hearts of the weak may be strengthened” (GrgGt).

22:51 This healing is recorded only by St. Luke the physician. It indicates the manner in which we are to treat our enemies. The Fathers see a spiritual meaning in that it is Christ who gives people the ability to hear the truth and thereby come to salvation (see 8:8; 14:35).

22:53 **Darkness**: See Jn 3:19–21; 13:30.

22:56 A **girl** being the first to test Peter is an icon of the temptation of Adam by Eve (Gn 3:6). Our fallen state is overcome in Christ when women are the first to hear, believe, and proclaim the Resurrection (24:1–10).

22:61-62 Peter is so overcome with fear that neither Christ's prediction (v. 34) nor the crowing of **the rooster** calls him to repentance, but only the Lord's gaze causes him to weep **bitterly**. Nevertheless, “through tears, what cannot be defended can be purged, for tears wash away the offense which is shameful to confess out loud” (AmbM).

22:68 Jesus asked many questions of the Jewish leaders which they refused to answer because doing so would have meant confessing Him as the Christ (20:4–7; Mt 22:41–46; Mk 3:4).

22:69 By this claim, Jesus declares Himself to be equal with **God**.

23:2-4 The religious accusations against Jesus (22:66–71) would not be enough to justify a death sentence under Roman occupation. Therefore, the chief priests invent false (20:20–26), politically charged accusations in order to persuade Pilate to put Jesus to death. Pilate's question (v. 3) is more a mockery of the accusation itself than of Jesus, as he clearly does not take the political charges seriously (v. 4). Christ's answer, “**It is as you say**,” can also be translated with a more ambiguous, “You say so.”

23:8-9 **Herod** sees **Jesus** as a novelty. Christ's silence is an act of compassion, for revealing divine mysteries in the face of such blasphemy would have brought Herod even greater condemnation. St. Ambrose sees Herod as a figure representing all unrighteous people who, if they do not recognize Jesus as the Christ, will never understand His words nor recognize His miracles.

23:13-25 Three times **Pilate** attempts to release Jesus (vv. 16, 20, 22), and three times the **chief priest** and **the rulers** incite the people to demand He be put to death. In the end, they demand the release of a rebel like themselves. **Barabbas** means “son of the father” and indicates to which father these rulers belong—the devil (Jn 8:44).

23:26 **Simon** means “obedience”; this faithful man stands for all who desire to follow Christ and carry **the cross** He places on them (9:23; 14:27).

23:28 Weeping is not appropriate for the One who redeems the world through the Cross, but is suited for one's own sins and for the sufferings of others.

23:29 The blessing on **the barren** women is an acknowledgment of the overwhelming pain a mother endures seeing her children suffer (illustrated by the “woe” in Mt 24:19). “Mothers are held by the tie of feeling for their children, but cannot save them. How can one escape the bonds of nature? How can she who nurses ever overlook the one she has borne?” (JohnChr).

23:31 The **green wood** is Christ, full of virtue and truth. The **dry** stands for the Jews, barren of all life and of all righteousness. If the Romans eagerly destroy the righteous, what horrifying things await the unrighteous?

23:33 **Calvary**: lit., “the skull.” Being crucified between the two **criminals** shows Christ's complete identity with fallen humanity and fulfills the prophecy of Is 53:9–12.

23:34 This intercession is not only for those who sentenced and crucified Jesus, but for all of humanity—a people who have no insight into the profound mystery of God's salvation. Jesus speaks these words not as a request, but with divine authority. Their great sin would still have been forgiven them had they repented. Indeed, one of the soldiers did repent (v. 47) and is considered a saint of the Church.

23:35-37 **Save Yourself**: The continuing temptation of Satan to deter Jesus from completing His mission (see 4:9–13).

23:38 **An inscription**: What was intended as an accusation and a mockery became instead a triumphant symbol that all nations would come under the reign of Jesus **the King**.

23:39-43 The first **of the criminals** wanted to use Jesus to avoid responsibility for his actions, while **the other** accepts his sentence and asks simply to be remembered. This latter way is the path to **Paradise**. **Today**: To be reconciled to Christ is to be in paradise immediately. Furthermore, the souls of the departed are in the presence of God and experience a foretaste of His glory before the final resurrection.

23:46 Jesus does not have His life taken from Him, but will voluntarily **commit** it to the **Father**. His was the first human soul not to be taken to Hades; instead it was freely given into the hands of God. Thus, Christ frees all of humanity from death's grip. His death reconciles mankind to God, not by satisfying the Father's need for blood-justice as some might teach, but by causing every aspect of our corrupt human nature to be transformed, for whatever divinity touches is healed. Christ accepts human nature in order to sanctify human nature; He accepts our weakness in order to make us strong; He takes on our sin in order to free us from sin; He suffers in order to transfigure suffering; and He enters death in order to destroy it (1Co 15:20–28; see note at Mt 27:50).

23:47 Reflecting on the conversion of **the centurion**, St. Cyril of Alexandria notes, “Observe that no sooner had Christ endured the Passion on the Cross for our sakes than He began to win many unto knowledge of the truth.”

23:50-53 If the apostles had buried Christ, doubters could claim His body was simply hidden away. **Joseph** being both **a council member** and **a good and just man** refutes any possibility that the Lord's body was deceptively hidden by the apostles. The spiritual significance of a tomb **where no one had ever lain before** is that Christ died a death unlike any person had ever died: a death without corruption, a death leading to victory over the grave itself.

23:55-56 His rest in **the tomb** fulfills the image of His birth in a cave (see 2:7) and reveals the ultimate purpose of His coming. The faith of **the women**, while stronger than that of the hiding disciples, was still imperfect in that they **prepared** for the corruption of Christ's body. **Sabbath**: As God rested from His work of creation on the original Sabbath (Gn 2:1–3), so now Christ rests from the work of the new creation on the Sabbath. Thus He gives the Sabbath its ultimate meaning and fulfills the Law even in death. At Matins of Holy Saturday we sing, “This is the most blessed Sabbath on which Christ sleeps in order to rise on the third day.”

24:2 See Mt 28:2. The **stone** is **rolled away** not to let the all-powerful Lord out, but to let us witness His Resurrection.

24:4 These **men** . . . **in shining garments** were angels.

24:5-7 In order to dispel any doubt, the angel confirms his message by recalling Christ's own words. In calculating the **third day**, the first day is Friday, the day on which Christ died before sundown. The second is Saturday, the Sabbath on which Christ rested in the tomb. The third day, which begins after sundown on Saturday, is the day of Resurrection, Sunday.

24:10 Certain Fathers teach that **Mary *the mother* of James** was the wife of Alphaeus, and this James was one of the Twelve (6:15). Most, however, hold that this is the Virgin Mary, being in fact the stepmother of a different James, “the Lord's brother” (see Mt 13:55; compare Mk 15:40, 47). The Virgin Mary appears in certain icons of the Myrrhbearing Women, and in a hymn by St. John of Damascus, we sing, “The angel cried to the lady full of grace, ‘Rejoice, O pure Virgin: your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb.’”

24:13 The **two of them** are Cleopas (v. 18) and, according to tradition, Luke himself. It was a common literary device for a writer not to give his own name (see Mk 14:51; Jn 21:24).

24:16 The nature of the resurrected body is so different from its previous state that it is not immediately recognizable (Jn 20:14; 21:4, 12; see 1Co 15:35–44). It is also able to take different forms, which is what occurs here (see Mk 16:12 and note). **Their eyes were restrained**: Christ intentionally prevents them from recognizing Him in order to expose their doubting thoughts and then cure them by means of the OT Scriptures (v. 27).

24:21 The disciples' hope for redemption was still imbedded in a foolish (v. 25) misunderstanding of the Messiah as a political savior or deliverer. With Christ's death, this earthly hope had been dashed.

24:26-27 It is partial faith to believe either in a Messiah who only **suffered** or one that would only reign in **His glory**. Complete faith sees the Messiah encompassing both, for all of this was foretold in the Law and the Prophets (see also note for v. 16).

24:30-35 The Lord breaks **bread** in the same manner as at the Last Supper (22:19), imaging the Eucharist of the NT Church. All who commune with the Lord in His risen Body in faith have **their eyes opened** (v. 31) to know Him, for the Lord is **known** most perfectly **in the breaking of bread** (v. 35).

24:32 **Did not our heart burn within us**: The inescapable effect of hearing the Holy Scriptures taught correctly and with faith (see 2Ti 2:15). This burning is the conviction that the words and promises are true.

24:36 **Peace to you**: This resurrectional greeting of Christ is proclaimed by the priest or the bishop frequently in Orthodox worship services.

24:38-43 Christ eats not because He in His resurrected body needs food, but to prove to the disciples that He is truly risen in the flesh. The spiritual significance assigned to the **fish** is active virtue, and the **honeycomb** is the sweetness of divine wisdom.

24:47 **Remission of sins** refers to the putting away of sins in baptism, which is preached by St. Peter at Pentecost (see Acts 2:38).

24:49 **Are endued with** is literally “have put on” (the same verb found in Eph 6:11), indicating the complete protection of spiritual armor. **Tarry** is literally “sit down,” and is an instruction not only to stay in place, but also to take rest and prepare attentively before a great and difficult task (compare Mk 14:32). **The Promise of My Father** is the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:4).

24:51 The Ascension of Christ is celebrated forty days after the Resurrection (Acts 1:3). This event fulfills the type given when Elijah ascended in a fiery chariot (4Kg 2:11) and marks the completion of Christ's glorification and lordship over all creation. At the Incarnation, Christ brought His divine nature to human nature. In the mystery of the Ascension, Christ brings human nature to the divine Kingdom. He reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit in His glorified body, revealing His glorified human nature—indeed, human flesh—to be worshiped by the whole angelic realm. At Vespers of Ascension we sing, “The angels were amazed seeing a Man so exalted.” In some icons of the Ascension, Christ's white robes are tinted red to indicate the shedding of His blood for the redemption of the world and the ascent of that life-giving blood into heaven (Is 63:1–3; see also Ps 23:7–10).

1:1 **In the beginning** recalls the creation story of Genesis, but speaks more clearly of the Creator Himself. Furthermore, while Genesis spoke of the first creation, this “Prologue” of John (vv. 1–18) reveals the new creation in Christ.

Was the Word (Gr. *logos*): The Word is the eternal Son of God. *Was* indicates existence without reference to a starting point and emphasizes the Word's eternal existence without beginning. *Logos* can mean “wisdom,” “reason,” and “action” as well as “word,” all of which are attributes of the Son of God. **The Word was with God**: *With* shows that the Word—the Son of God—is a distinct Person from the Father and that He is in eternal communion with the Father. **The Word was God**: The Word—the Son of God—is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father; He Himself is God with the same divinity as the Father. Some twist and mistranslate this phrase “the Word was *a god”* in order to propagate their heresy that the Son of God is a created being, a creature not fully divine. Such a translation is unsupportable, false, dishonest, and deceptive.

1:3 The Word is the co-Creator with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Gn 1; Ps 32:6, 9; Heb 1:2) and not merely an instrument or servant used by the Father. Will, operation, and power are one in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, the heavens and the earth are the works of the One who made them, while the Son was not made but is eternally begotten of the Father.

1:4 Only God has **life** in Himself. Thus, the Word, being God, is the source of life, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. **The life was the light of men**: John now introduces mankind as receiver of the divine light. By participating in the life of the Son, believers themselves become children of the light (12:36; Eph 5:8; 1Th 5:5). Moses saw the divine light in the burning bush (Ex 3:2); the whole nation saw it at the Red Sea (Ex 13:21); Isaiah saw it in his heavenly vision (Is 6:1–5); and three apostles saw it at the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–5).

1:5 **Darkness** indicates both spiritual ignorance and satanic opposition to the light. Those who hate truth prefer ignorance for themselves and strive to keep others ignorant as well (3:19). The word translated **comprehend** means both “understand” and “overcome.” Thus, darkness can never overpower the light of Christ, nor can it understand the way of love.

1:6 This **John** is John the Baptist, not the author of this Gospel.

1:9-11 Christ offers **light** to every person, but **the world** and even many of **His own** refuse to **receive Him**; thus, they can neither **know** nor recognize Him. Those who accept Him have His light. In a hymn sung at the end of Liturgy, after hearing the Gospel and receiving communion, we sing, “We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit.”

1:12 **Right** also means “authority” and indicates a gift from God, not an inalienable right. Those who receive Christ become **children of God** by adoption (Gal 4:4–7) and by grace inherit everything Christ is by nature (see the article “Deification” at 2 Peter). To **believe in His name** means to believe and trust in Him who in His humanity took the name Jesus as Word, Son, Messiah, and Savior.

1:13 Adoption as a child of God is not a matter of ethnic descent (**of blood**) as it was in the OT; nor are we children of God simply by natural birth (**the will of the flesh**), nor by man's own decision (**the will of man**). Becoming a child of God is a spiritual birth by grace, through faith, and in the Holy Spirit. This is accomplished and manifested in the sacrament of Holy Baptism (3:5–8; see Tts 3:4–7).

1:14 **The Word became flesh** clarifies the manner in which the Son and Word of God came to His people (vv. 9–11), pointing specifically to His Incarnation. The Word became fully human without ceasing to be fully God. He assumed complete human nature: body, soul, will, emotion, and even mortality—everything that pertains to humanity except sin. As God and Man in one Person, Christ pours divinity into all of human nature, for anything not assumed by Christ would not have been healed.

Dwelt among us: In the OT, God's presence dwelt ("tabernacled") in the ark of the covenant and later in the temple. Here, the eternal Word comes to dwell in and among humanity itself. **His glory** refers both to His divine power shown by His signs and wonders (2:11; 11:4, 40), and to His humble service to mankind, shown most perfectly on the Cross (12:23–32; 13:31). In both ways, Christ reveals that He is the One sent from the Father.

Only begotten of the Father: The Son has no beginning, but has the Father as His source from eternity. He is called *only* begotten because there is no other born from the Father. (The Holy Spirit exists eternally from the Father through another mystery called "procession"; see 15:26.)

Full of grace and truth: This phrase qualifies both *the Word* and *His glory*. *Grace* is Christ's uncreated energy given to us through His love and mercy. *Truth* includes His faithfulness to His promises and covenants and to the reality of His words and gifts.

1:16 In saying we have all received **of His fullness**, the Scriptures confirm that God's grace can fill human nature to the extent of actually deifying it (see the article “Deification” at 2 Peter). In Christ, God's children become gods by grace (10:34, 35) without ceasing to be human. As metal thrust into fire takes on properties of fire (such as heat and light) without ceasing to be metal, so human nature permeated by God takes on properties of the divine nature. **Grace for grace** is a Semitic expression signifying an overabundance of grace.

1:18 **No one has seen God at any time**: No one can see the nature, or essence, of God, for to see God is to die (Ex 33:20). Only One who is Himself divine can see God, and thus the **Son** is the only One who can **declare** Him. This revelation of God's energies can be received by the faithful. Moses saw the “back” of God (Ex 33:21–23); Isaiah saw His glory (see Is 6:1; John 12:41).

1:19-12 Here the theological Prologue has concluded with 1:18, and the focus shifts to the beginnings of Christ's ministry: the witness of John the Baptist (1:19–34); the calling of the first apostles (1:35–51); Christ's first sign at Cana (2:1–11); and His rest at Capernaum (2:12). Just as John began his Gospel similarly to the opening of Genesis ("In the beginning"—v. 1; see Gn 1:1), so he parallels Genesis in this opening account, which covers seven consecutive days.

(1) The first day (1:19–28)—**John** the Baptist bears witness to the Light—**the Christ**—in the presence of the Jews. This parallels the creation of light on the first day in Gn 1:3–5.

(2) The second day (1:29–34)—John the Baptist declares that Christ **baptizes with the Holy Spirit,** which is greater than his own baptism of repentance, performed with water on earth. This parallels the separation of water above from the water below on the second day in Gn 1:6–8.

(3) The third day (1:35–42)—John the Baptist sends **two disciples** to Christ whom Christ gathers to be His own, one of whom He declares to be the foundation of the Church (v. 42; see Mt 16:18). This parallels the gathering of the waters and the establishment of growth on the land on the third day in Gn 1:9–13.

(4) The fourth day (1:43–51)—Jesus calls **Philip** and **Nathanael**, who see Christ as the true Light, the One who was revealed in the OT, a lesser light. This parallels the establishment of the lesser and greater lights governing the night and the day respectively on the fourth day in Gn 1:14–19.

(5) The sixth day (2:1–11)—John does not include the events of the fifth day, but jumps to the sixth. The phrase **on the third day** is an expression meaning "two days later," for it includes the current day in

the calculation (see 2:1 and note). On this sixth day, the **wedding in Cana** occurs, which parallels the creation of man and woman in Gn 1:26–31.

(6) The seventh day (2:12)—Jesus rests at **Capernaum** with **His mother, His brothers, and His disciples**, which parallels God resting on the seventh day in Gn 2:1–3.

1:21 John the Baptist is a prophet but not **the Prophet**, the Messiah, whose coming Moses foretold (Dt 18:15–19).

1:26 On John's baptism, see notes at Lk 3:3 and 3:16, 17.

1:29 John's declaring **Jesus** as the **Lamb of God** recalls Isaiah's “Servant of God” who dies for the transgressions of His people (Is 53:4–12). Christ, the true Paschal (Passover) Lamb, offers Himself for our deliverance from darkness and death (1Pt 1:18, 19). St. John Chrysostom teaches that Jesus came to John this second time in order for John to make this declaration and thus stop anyone from thinking that Jesus needed baptism to wash away sins.

1:32 That the Spirit **remained upon Him** was a sign that Christ possesses the Spirit in His fullness from all eternity. Christ did not *receive* the Holy Spirit at His Baptism; rather, this vision that John **saw** revealed the truth that the Holy Spirit has always rested on Christ.

1:35-45 The Lord's first **disciples** had been followers of **John** the Baptist. They were **Andrew** (v. 40); **Simon**, who was also known as Peter, or **Cephas** (vv. 41, 42); **Philip** (v. 43); **Nathanael** (v. 45), who was also known as Bartholomew; and an unnamed disciple (vv. 35–40), who some Fathers say was John, the author of this Gospel. It was a common literary device for a writer not to give his own name (see Lk 24:13).

1:47 **No deceit** means both having a pure heart and being straightforward with others.

1:48-50 What exactly occurred **under the fig tree** is not stated. St. John Chrysostom teaches this was the meeting place of Philip and Nathanael (vv. 45, 46), and that Jesus was praising Nathanael for being so diligent and careful in His search for the Messiah. Christ's foreknowledge and His ability to see into Nathanael's heart stir him to this confession of faith (v. 49).

1:51 The title **Son of Man** is a title of the Messiah that had a level of mystery in its meaning, indicating a man of heavenly origin who would usher in the Kingdom of God (Dan 7:13, 14). In an OT prophecy, Jacob dreamed of a ladder connecting earth to heaven, upon which **the angels of God** were **ascending and descending** (Gn 28:12–15). Jesus is this “ladder” who unites earth to heaven, and therefore is this Son of Man.

2:1-11 The **wedding in Cana** is the setting for the first of the seven **signs** (v. 11) performed by Jesus in the Gospel of John. John uses the term *signs* to show that these miraculous actions point beyond themselves to the truth that the Kingdom of God has come among us in the Person of Jesus Christ. The seven signs are (1) changing water into wine (2:1–11); (2) curing the nobleman's son (4:46–54); (3) healing the paralytic (5:1–15); (4) feeding the five thousand (6:1–14); (5) walking on water (6:15–21); (6) opening the eyes of a blind man (9:1–41); and (7) raising Lazarus from the dead (11:38–44).

The setting here is significant. In the OT, marriage feasts symbolized the union of God with His Bride, Israel. Jesus begins His ministry at **Galilee**, which had a large Gentile population; this was a sign of the spread of the gospel to all the world. That this wedding took place **on the third day** sets a resurrectional tone, showing that the marriage of God and His Church will be fulfilled in Christ's Resurrection. Other parallels between the marriage here and the Resurrection account in 20:1–18 are that both involve a woman named Mary who makes an appeal, and in both passages the disciples are invited to witness the event. Furthermore, the Resurrection account (20:11–18) has a striking similarity to SS 3:1–5, again showing the unity between marriage and our Lord's Resurrection.

By His presence at this wedding, Jesus further declares marriage to be holy and honorable (Heb 13:4); therefore, this passage is read at Orthodox weddings, and these images are incorporated into many prayers in the wedding service.

2:3-5 Here is an example of Mary's gift of intercession. Even now, Mary continually speaks to her Son on our behalf and is our preeminent intercessor before His Throne. This is declared in the words of an Orthodox prayer: “The intercessions of a mother have great effect to win the favor of the Master.” This is confirmed as Jesus grants her request here.

In this passage, **wine** is symbolic of life, and thus there are two levels of meaning to Mary's statement, **“They have no wine”**: (1) a marriage is not complete without the presence of Christ; and (2) the old covenant was unable to bestow life even on the most faithful people.

Contrary to certain modern usages, **Woman** is a sacred title in Scripture, an address conveying deep respect and distinction (4:21; 8:10; 19:26; 20:13; compare to Gn 2:23). **What does your concern have to do with Me?** is more literally, “What is that to Me and to you?” This answer is not a refusal of Mary's intercession, but a declaration that the time had not yet come for Christ to be revealed. That Christ fulfills Mary's request teaches several things: (1) Christ is Lord over hours and seasons and is not subject to them. (2) The wedding party needed to be aware of their lack of wine first so that they might learn that it is Christ who fulfills all needs. (3) We need to have perseverance in our petitions before God (Mt 15:21–28). (4) The intercessions of the righteous have great power (Jam 5:16).

2:6 **Waterpots** were made **of stone** because, according to rabbinical teaching, stone would not contract ritual impurity. That there are **six** (one less than the perfect seven) indicates that the Law, illustrated by water being reserved for Jewish **purification**, was incomplete, imperfect, and unable to bestow life. This water is changed into wine, symbolizing the old covenant being fulfilled in the new, which is capable of bestowing life. The overabundant **gallons** of wine illustrate the overflowing grace Christ grants to all.

2:9 The Fathers see this transformation as prefiguring the transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

2:18-21 Since Jesus is not a Levitical priest, His authority to cleanse the temple is challenged. The term **Jews** in John's Gospel often refers specifically to the leaders; in this case, it refers to the chief priests and the elders (see Mt 21:23). As Christ is careful not to reveal Himself to scoffers, He answers in a hidden way: the ultimate **sign** will be His death and Resurrection.

2:23 John reports three **Passover** feasts between our Lord's Baptism and Passion (see also 6:4; 11:55), showing that His earthly ministry lasted three years.

3:1, 2 **Nicodemus** believed Jesus was **from God** (v. 2), but his faith was still weak, as he was afraid of his peers and thus **came to Jesus by night** (v. 2). Following this conversation, Nicodemus's faith grows to the point of defending Jesus before the Sanhedrin (7:50, 51) and finally making the bold public expression of faith of preparing and entombing our Lord's body (19:39–42). His memory is celebrated on the third Sunday of Pascha (Easter) along with the Myrrhbearing Women and Joseph of Arimathea. According to some early sources, Nicodemus was baptized by Peter and consequently was removed from the Sanhedrin and forced to flee Jerusalem.

3:3 **Born again**: The word *again* can also be translated “from above” and clearly refers to the heavenly birth from God through faith in Christ (1:12, 13). This heavenly birth is baptism (v. 5) and our adoption by God as our Father (Gal 4:4–7). This new birth is but the beginning of our spiritual life, with its goal being entrance into **the kingdom of God**.

3:4 Nicodemus misunderstands, questioning the possibility of a **second** physical birth. Misunderstandings occur frequently in John's Gospel (see 2:19–21; 4:10–14, 30–34; 6:27; 7:37–39; 11:11–15). Christ uses these opportunities to elevate an idea from a superficial or earthly meaning to a heavenly and eternal meaning.

3:5 This birth **of water and the Spirit** is a direct reference to Christian baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit given at chrismation.

3:8 A play on words: the Greek word *pneuma* means both **wind** and **Spirit**. The working of the Holy Spirit in the new birth is as mysterious as the source and destination of the blowing wind. Likewise, the Spirit moves where He wills and cannot be contained by human ideas or agendas.

3:12 According to St. John Chrysostom, **earthly things** refer to grace and baptism given to man. These are *earthly*, not in the sense of “unspiritual,” but only in the sense that they occur on earth and are given to creatures. The **heavenly things** involve the ungraspable mysteries of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father; they relate to His eternal existence before all time and to God's divine plan of salvation for the world. A person first must grasp the ways in which God works among mankind before he can even begin to understand things that pertain to God Himself.

3:14 **Moses lifted up** an image of a **serpent** to cure the Israelites from deadly bites of poisonous snakes (Nm 21:4–9). This miracle-working image prefigured Christ being lifted up on the Cross. As believers behold the crucified Christ in faith, the power of sin and death is overthrown in them. Just as the image of a serpent was the weapon that destroyed the power of the serpents, so the instrument of Christ's death becomes the weapon that overthrows death itself.

3:16 To show the reason the Son must be crucified (“lifted up”—v. 14), Jesus declares God's great love not only for Israel, but for **the world**. This single verse expresses the whole of the message of John's Gospel, and indeed, of salvation history.

3:17-18 While Christ came to save and not **to condemn**, man has free will. Thus, he can reject this gift, and he becomes **condemned** by his own rejection.

3:22 **Baptized**: See 4:2.

3:26 **He is baptizing**: See 4:2.

3:29 John the Baptist is called the **friend** (the “best man”), while Christ Himself is the **bridegroom**. The **bride** is the Church, the people of God. John confesses his role in the coming of the Messiah—that he is witness to the wedding of Christ and His people, and thus he rejoices in that celebration.

3:30 John expresses a humility that serves as an example for all believers. He renounces all earthly glory and reputation for the sake of Christ. By allowing Christ to **increase** in him, John himself finds true glory. This statement further indicates the end of the old covenant. As the law vanishes, the grace of Jesus Christ abounds. John's declaration is revealed in the liturgical calendar, wherein his birth is celebrated at a time when the sun begins to **decrease** in the sky (June 24), while Christ's birth is celebrated when the sun begins to increase (Dec. 25).

3:36 John echoes the teaching of Christ Himself (v. 18). Note the absence of the word “alone” in this statement of faith. “We do not from this assert that faith alone is sufficient for salvation; the directions for living that are given in many places in the Gospels show this” (JohnChr). See also Jam 2:14–24.

4:4 **Samaria** was the region to the north of Jerusalem, between Judea and Galilee.

4:6, 7 The OT does not mention **Jacob's well**, though Jacob did dwell in the area (Gn 33:19). Wells were significant because of their rarity and their value in desert life. Therefore, wells came to symbolize life itself (Ps 35:9, 10; 45:4; Is 55:1). This particular well is maintained as a shrine to this day, and pilgrims can drink from it. Jesus is **wearied from *His* journey**, showing His complete humanity. The **sixth hour** is noontime. This **woman** is identified in church tradition as St. Photini (see note at 4:28–30).

4:9 The **Samaritans** were a mixed race and traditional enemies of the Jews. Although they worshiped the God of Israel and were also awaiting the Messiah, they accepted only the first five books of the OT (the Pentateuch) as their Scriptures. They had built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim, which the Jews destroyed in 128 BC.

4:10-14 **Living water** in the ordinary sense means fresh, flowing water, from a stream or spring rather than from a pond or cistern. Christ uses the term to mean the grace of the Holy Spirit that leads to eternal life (7:37–39). This gift not only remains in a person, but is so abundant it overflows to others. The woman misunderstands Christ and asks, "**Are You greater than our father Jacob**?" In the Scriptures, Jacob is a type of Christ, for he received the vision of the divine ladder (Gn 28:12), which Christ fulfills. Furthermore, just as Jacob gave this well for earthly life, now Christ gives the well of the Holy Spirit for eternal life.

4:16-19 Since Jesus perceived she was living with a man without being married, and as He knew of her string of husbands, the woman perceives He is a **prophet**. As the Samaritans did not accept any prophets after Moses, the only prophet they expected was the Messiah whom Moses foretold (Dt 18:15–18). Christ's insight into people's hearts, reported many times in the Gospels, underscores His divine nature.

4:20-24 If Jesus was indeed the expected Prophet (see previous note), then He could settle the historical argument about **where** worship was to take place. Jesus refuses to answer such an earthly question and elevates the discussion to the *manner* in which people ought to worship. Even more importantly, He turns the attention to the One we worship: God Himself. **The Father** is worshiped **in spirit**—that is, in the Holy Spirit—and in **truth**—that is in Christ Himself (14:6) and according to Christ's revelation. **God *is* Spirit**: God cannot be confined to a particular location. Those who receive the Holy Spirit and believe in Jesus Christ can worship God the Father with purity of heart.

Salvation is of the Jews (v. 22): The Lord affirms that true revelation comes from Judaism. “The commonwealth of Israel was the school of the knowledge of God for all the nations” (AthanG). More importantly, Jesus is testifying that the Messiah, who was prophesied among the Jews, has risen from among the Jews. While the gift of salvation in Christ is to all nations, it has come from within Judaism. The **hour** (v. 21) refers to the death and Resurrection of Christ and to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which inaugurates the worship of the new covenant.

4:26 **I who speak to you am *He*** is literally translated “I AM [Gr. *ego eimi*], who speak to you.” “I AM” is the divine Name of God; its use indicates a theophany, or revelation of God Himself. The use of this Name by a mere man was considered blasphemy and punishable by death (see 8:58; Mk 14:62). However, as Jesus is divine, His use of this Name reveals His unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit; indeed, He is God Incarnate.

4:27 **They marveled** not only that Jesus spoke with a Samaritan, but that He was speaking with an unaccompanied **woman**, which was potentially scandalous. For further instances of the Lord's dealings with women, see 7:53–8:11; 11:20–33; 20:11–18 (see also Lk 8:1–3).

4:28-30 The Samaritan woman becomes an early evangelist, testifying to the advent of Christ and bringing others to Him (v. 39). According to an early tradition, after the Resurrection she was baptized with the name Photini, “the enlightened one.” Along with her two sons and five daughters, she went to Carthage to spread the gospel. She was later martyred with her family under the emperor Nero by being thrown into a well. The Church remembers her on March 20 and on the fourth Sunday of Pascha.

4:31-34 On misunderstandings in John's Gospel, see note at 3:4. Christ fulfills His role as Messiah by doing **the will** of the Father; therefore this is His **food**. This also teaches us we are to perform the will of God in our lives without being distracted by earthly cares (6:27; see also Mt 4:4; 6:25–33).

4:35 **Behold**: According to St. John Chrysostom, this command to look was given because the townspeople were approaching, ready and eager to believe in Jesus. Christ compares these foreigners (relative to the Jews) to **fields** ready **for harvest**. This command is also to all believers to look to those around us and to share the gospel with anyone wanting to hear it, regardless of race or ethnicity.

4:36-38 St. John Chrysostom teaches those who **sow** and those who **reap** are the prophets of the OT and the apostles, respectively. The prophets sowed in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, but did not see His coming and thus did not reap. The apostles did not do the preparation, but would draw thousands to Christ in their own lifetimes.

4:42 That these foreigners are among the first to recognize Jesus as the **Savior of the world** shows the gospel is for all people in every nation.

4:44 **His own country** is Galilee (1:46; 2:1; 7:42, 52; 19:19).

4:45 **Galileans** were present at **Jerusalem** during the Passover (2:13–25), when Jesus performed many signs. While the Galileans **received** Christ having seen His signs, St. John Chrysostom gives greater credit to the Samaritans for accepting Christ based on words alone without the accompanying signs (see also 20:29).

4:46-54 This is the **second sign** (v. 54) reported in John's Gospel (see note at 2:1–11). Having revealed He can see into the hearts of people from a distance (1:45–48), the Lord now demonstrates He can heal from a distance, showing His divine power knows no earthly limits. While there are certain similarities between this sign and the miracle recorded in Mt 8:5–13, there are many crucial differences; these are clearly two different encounters.

4:48 Christ is admonishing the people in general (**you** in this verse is plural both times) and not merely the nobleman. Faith based on miraculous works alone is insufficient for salvation; this kind of incomplete faith quickly turns to scorn should the miracles cease (19:15).

4:49-53 The nobleman's concern is clearly for his **child**, though his faith in Christ is weak. He does not understand that Christ is Lord over illness even from a distance, nor does he grasp that Jesus would have the power to heal even if the child were to die. Finally, he inquires about the timing of the healing (v. 52), still not completely trusting the Lord's authority. Only after all is confirmed do he **and his whole household** believe (v. 53). Thus, in healing the child from a distance, Jesus heals not only the body of the child, but the soul of the nobleman.

5:1-15 This healing is the third sign in John's Gospel (see note at 2:1–11) and exemplifies the divine power to restore a person to wholeness. The Fathers teach this **feast** is the OT Pentecost (also called the “Feast of Weeks”), which celebrates the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai. The references to the Law of Moses later in this chapter confirm this interpretation.

5:2-4 This double-basin **pool**, believed to have curative powers, has been discovered about 100 yards north of the temple area, near the **Sheep *Gate***. The **water** for this high-ground pool came from underground springs and was used to wash down the sacrificial lambs before they were slain.

The pool functions as a type of Christian baptism. Under the old covenant, **a great multitude** (v. 3) waited to enter the water for physical healing after **an angel** touched it (v. 4). The waters were special in that they were a way of *indirectly* participating in the animal sacrifices of the temple, since the animals were washed in the same water. Yet the grace was limited to the **first** person to enter. Under the new covenant, baptism is given to all nations as a *direct* participation in Christ's own sacrificial death (Rom 6:3–6) without the mediation of angels. Baptism thus grants healing of the soul and the promise of eternal resurrection of the body, and its grace in inexhaustible.

5:5 According to St. John Chrysostom, Jesus singled out the **man** who had waited for **thirty-eight years** in order to teach us to have perseverance, and as a judgment against those who lose hope or patience in much lesser troubles lasting a far shorter time.

5:6, 7 The Lord's question is relevant for many reasons. (1) It made public the fact that **the sick man** kept his faith even in a situation that was seemingly hopeless, for how could a paralytic ever be the first into the water? (2) The Lord draws attention away from the water and toward the need we have for a **man** to help us. This is fulfilled in Christ Himself, who became Man to heal all. (3) Not everyone who is ill actually desires healing. Sadly, some may prefer to remain infirm in order to have license to complain, to avoid responsibility for their lives, or to continue exciting the pity of others.

5:10-12 Although the Law itself does not specifically forbid the carrying of burdens on **the Sabbath**, this is prohibited in Jer 17:23 and explicitly forbidden in rabbinical teachings. That Christ is Lord over the Sabbath is made clear by His command (v. 8) and by the man's obedience (v. 9; see also Mt 12:1–8 and notes). As is often the case in John's Gospel, the term **Jews** here refers to the leaders and not to the people in general (see note at 2:18–21). Notice the malice of these leaders, for they focus solely on the Sabbath violation, asking the man, "**Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed**'?" but ignoring altogether the miraculous healing.

5:14 That the man was found **in the temple** shows his great faith, for he had gone there directly to thank God for his cure rather than departing to someone's home or to the marketplace.

Sin no more: While there is a general connection between sin and suffering (Rom 6:23), this connection is not always one-to-one, for the innocent often suffer, and the guilty are often spared earthly sufferings (see also 9:1–3). Nevertheless, sometimes our sins lead directly to our own suffering in this world; according to St. John Chrysostom, this was the case with this paralytic. Christ's warning here, however, is that the sins that destroy the soul lead to a far **worse** result than an affliction of the body. The only hope is to flee from sin altogether.

5:15 **The man** does not report Jesus to the leaders of **the Jews** in a malicious way, but as a witness to Christ's goodness. For even though these leaders were only interested in the violation of the Sabbath (v. 12), the healed man emphasizes that **it was Jesus who had made him well**, saying nothing about carrying his bed.

5:16-30 When Jesus declares God to be **My Father**, **the Jews** clearly understand this implies absolute equality (vv. 17, 18). That the Son can do **nothing of Himself** (v. 19) proves that His every act and word is in complete unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This discourse reveals that the Father and the Son are completely united in nature, will, and action. Thus, the Son fully shares the divine attributes of both giving life and executing judgment. Christ's **judgment** (v. 22) is based on both faith (v. 24) and works (v. 29).

5:25 **The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God**: *The dead* refers both to the spiritually dead, who will find life in Christ, and to the physically dead, who will rise in the general resurrection. Christ confirms this statement by raising Lazarus from the dead (11:38–44) before going to His own death. Verses 24–30 are read at the Orthodox funeral service, confirming the same reward for those who fall asleep in faith.

5:30 The divine will is common to the three Persons of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—for all fully share the same divine nature. When the Son is said to obey **the Father**, this refers to His human will, which Christ assumed at His Incarnation. Christ freely aligned His human will in every aspect with the divine will of the Father (see note at 6:38), and we are called to do likewise.

5:31-47 How could Christ's **witness** ever be untrue? It cannot (see 8:14). Rather, Jesus is anticipating the argument and speaking the thoughts of the Jewish leaders (he does the same thing in Lk 4:23). In Jewish tradition, a valid testimony requires two witnesses (Dt 17:6). Jesus offers four witnesses to confirm His identity as Messiah and as Son of God: (1) God the Father (vv. 32, 37, 38); (2) John the Baptist (vv 33–35); (3) His own works (v. 36); and (4) the OT Scriptures, through which **Moses** and others gave testimony (vv. 39–47).

6:1-71 This chapter parallels the story of the Passover and Exodus of Israel from Egypt in several important ways.

(1) In the Exodus account (Ex 11–17), God first performed His signs against Pharaoh, then gave instructions on how to be saved at the time of the Passover (Ex 11:1–12:14). In this passage, the multitudes follow Christ because of His **signs** (v. 2), and this too takes place at **Passover** (v. 4).

(2) In the Exodus, the Jews were said to eat unleavened bread because they were hastily driven out of Egypt and had brought no provisions for themselves (Ex 12:39). Here, Jesus feeds the multitudes with earthly **bread** because they had brought no provisions, having rushed out to see Him (vv. 2–14).

(3) In the Exodus, Moses leads the people across the Red Sea, walking on dry ground in the midst of the water (Ex 14:15–31). Here, Christ sends His disciples across **the sea** (v. 17) and then walks **on the sea** (v. 19) as if it were dry ground.

(4) In the Exodus, God fed His people **manna** and gave them drink from a miraculous water source (Ex 16:1–17:7). Here, Christ declares Himself to be the true **food** and **drink**, the true **bread** that has come **down from heaven** (vv. 48–58).

These parallels show that Christ our God is the fulfillment of the old covenant, and that the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood, which free mankind from the slavery of sin, fulfill the sacrifice of the Passover lambs (1:29), which brought the people out of slavery into the Promised Land.

6:5-9 Christ tests **Philip** to increase his faith (v. 5), for Philip needed help in understanding Him (14:8–10). **Two hundred denarii** corresponds to over six months' wages for a laborer. **Andrew** has greater faith than Philip: knowing the prophet Elisha had multiplied bread for 100 men (4Kg 4:42–44), he offers the food brought by a certain **lad**. Nevertheless, Andrew is still weak in faith, questioning what a mere **five loaves** could do for the number of people there (v. 9).

6:14-15 Though Jesus had performed greater signs than this, these crowds were so desirous of an earthly Messiah that they declared Jesus to be the expected **Prophet** (Dt 18:15–19) only when they were filled with earthly things (see v. 26). Because of this misunderstanding, Jesus **departed** from them.

6:16-21 This is the fifth sign recorded by John (see note at 2:1–11). On the parallel between this sign and Israel's crossing of the Red Sea, see note on 6:1–71. See also note at Mt 14:27.

6:53-56 Christ was crucified in the flesh and His blood was shed on the Cross, and on the third day He was raised in a glorified state. We receive the grace of Christ's sacrificial offering by coming to Him in faith (v. 35) and by receiving Holy Communion in faith. In Communion, we truly **eat** His **flesh** and **drink His blood**, and this grants the faithful **eternal life** (v. 54), with Christ abiding in us and us in Him (v. 56). “There is no room left for any doubt about the reality of His flesh and blood, because we have both the witness of His words and our own faith. Thus when we eat and drink these elements, we are in Christ and Christ is in us” (HilryP).

7:1 This section (7:1–10:21) tells of our Lord's visit to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 2); the entire section covers eight days. At this festival during the last year of His earthly life, Jesus taught in the temple and attracted a great deal of public attention. Some thought Him mad (v. 20); others believed Him to be the Messiah (vv. 31, 40); and still others (such as the Sadducees and the Pharisees) considered Him to be a threat (vv. 32, 45–52). The **Jews** who **sought to kill Him** (v. 1) are the religious leaders and not the people in general.

7:2 The **Feast of Tabernacles** (Heb. *succoth*) is an eight-day autumn harvest festival commemorating the time when Israel wandered in the wilderness of Sinai and the people lived in tents, or *tabernacles*. Along with Passover and Pentecost, this was one of the three most important festivals of the ancient Jews; it included numerous sacrifices and celebrations (Lv 23:33–43). In later times, the final day of this feast also included drawing water from the pool of Siloam to be mixed with wine and poured at the foot of the altar, both as a purification and in remembrance of the water flowing from the rock that Moses struck (Ex 17:1–7). It further included the lighting of great lamps in the outer court of the temple (see notes for vv. 37–39; 8:12; see also 2Mc 10:5–9).

7:10 **Not openly** means not with a grand, public entrance as on Palm Sunday (12:12–16).

7:17 The simple desire to know and follow God's will is the key to understanding it. Spiritual blindness comes from unwillingness to **know** God or to recognize His authority. St. John Chrysostom paraphrases Christ in this way: “Rid yourselves of wickedness: the anger, the envy, and the hatred which have arisen in your hearts, without provocation, against Me. Then you will have no difficulty in realizing that My words are actually those of God. As it is, these passions darken your understanding and distort sound judgment. If you remove these passions, you will no longer be afflicted in this way.”

7:27 **We know where this Man is from**: The crowds are mistaken, both in an earthly sense and in a divine sense. Humanly speaking, they think of Jesus as being from Nazareth of Galilee; they are not aware that He was actually born in Bethlehem (v. 42; see Lk 2:1–7). Beyond this, they cannot comprehend that He has come from the Father in Heaven, eternally begotten before all ages, and thus His divine “origin” remains unknown to them as well.

7:30 **His hour** is the time of His suffering and death. Christ is the Lord over time, an authority possessed by God alone. He comes to His Cross of His own free will and in His time, and not according to the plots of men (see 8:20; 10:39).

7:33-34 This statement refers to the Lord's death, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven.

7:35 **Among the Greeks** means among the Gentiles. This unwitting prophecy points to the time after His Ascension when Christ's name will be preached among the Gentiles by the apostles.

7:37-39 The **last day, that great *day* of the feast** was the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The ceremony of the drawing of water (see note for v. 2) provides the context for the Lord's words, “**If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink**.” The **living water** (v. 38) is the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 39) and the new life that accompanies this gift.

7:40 **The Prophet** refers to the expected Messiah, the Savior Moses foretold would come (Dt 18:15–19).

7:41-43 **Bethlehem** was the **town** from which **the Christ** was expected to come (Mic 5:2; see note for v. 27).

7:45-49 The **chief priests** had sent **officers** of the temple to arrest Jesus in the middle of the Feast (v. 32). By the time the last day had arrived (v. 37), no arrest had been made, because these officers had been converted by the Lord's teaching. The **Pharisees** and the scribes who had "witnessed the miracles and read the Scriptures derived no benefit" from either. These officers, on the other hand, even though they could claim none of this learning, were "captivated by a single sermon." When the mind is open, "there is no need for long speeches. Truth is like that" (JohnChr).

7:50-52 **Nicodemus** had spoken with **Jesus** (3:1–21) and had increased in faith (see note for 3:1, 2). Yet his defense of Christ was still based on **our law** and was not yet a public profession of faith (see 19:38, 39). According to the law, Jesus must be given a hearing before He can be judged (Ex 23:1; Dt 1:15–17).

No prophet has arisen out of Galilee: The Pharisees show their blind hatred and their ignorance of the Scriptures, for the prophet Jonah came from Galilee, from the town of Gath Hepher, which was only three miles from Nazareth (4Kg 14:25).

7:53-11 This story of the **woman caught in adultery** is not found in several ancient manuscripts, nor is it covered in the commentaries of St. John Chrysostom and certain other Fathers. However, it is still sealed by the Church as inspired, authentic, canonical Scripture, and it bears the same authority as all other Scripture. It is read on one of the two days when St. Mary of Egypt, a reformed prostitute, is commemorated.

8:5-6 **The law** dictated the death penalty for adulterers (Lv 20:10). This ordinance was not observed to the letter in the days of Jesus; the Pharisees brought this particular woman because they saw an opportunity to test Him. If Christ objected to the punishment, He could be accused of opposing the Law; if He upheld the punishment, then He could be accused of showing no mercy to sinners.

This is the only place in the NT where our Lord **wrote** something. Several theories exist as to what He wrote. Some say He wrote out the Ten Commandments, which all the accusers had violated at least once. Others say He wrote the names of the accusers who had themselves committed adultery.

8:7-11 Christ's answer confounds the Pharisees, for He upholds a great principle of the Law—that the wages of sin is death (Gn 2:17; Rom 6:23)—without neglecting its greater aspect of mercy (Dt 13:17; Ps 116:2–117:4; Hos 6:6). This mercy is offered freely to all repentant sinners. In order for us to receive this gift, we must in turn flee from sin (v. 11).

8:12 **I am the light of the world**: Jesus spoke these words in the context of the great lamps being lit at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles (see note at 7:2). Thus He declares Himself to be the fulfillment and the divine object of all celebrations of light. In the Scriptures, God the Father Himself is light (1:4–9; 1Jn 1:5), an attribute He bestows on His followers (Mt 5:14; Php 2:15). Our Lord confirms His claim by performing the great sign of opening the eyes of a man born blind (9:1–7; see especially 9:5).

8:19 Because the Son and the **Father** share the same divine nature, one cannot be **known** apart from the other (14:7–11).

8:21 **Going away** refers to Jesus' death, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven.

8:28 **Lift up** has the double meaning of being nailed to the Cross and of being exalted by His **Father** upon the completion of His work.

8:31 **Jesus** expects all who follow Him to be **disciples**, that is, learners. Abiding in His **word** is the responsibility of all believers, not only of the clergy or of an elite class of zealots.

8:32 **The truth** refers both to the virtue of truth and, more importantly, to Christ Himself (14:6). Being **free** refers to the freedom from darkness, confusion, and lies, as well as the freedom from the bondage of sin and death.

8:37-40 To be a child of **Abraham**, it is not enough to be simply related by blood; rather, Abraham's true **children** share his faith and virtue (Lk 3:8). St. John Chrysostom teaches that our Lord wanted to detach the Jews from racial pride and to teach them no longer to place their hope of salvation in being of the race of Abraham's children by nature, but to come to faith by their own free will. Their idea that being a descendant of Abraham was enough for salvation was the very thing that prevented them from coming to Christ.

8:42 **Proceeded** refers not to the Son coming eternally from the Father, but to Christ being **sent** from the **Father** to His Incarnation on earth.

8:44 Just as being a child of Abraham is based on sharing his attributes (see note for vv. 37–40), likewise, those who reject Christ share the same attributes as **the devil** (in particular, a hatred for **truth**), and thus are rightly called the devil's children.

8:48 Unable to defeat Christ through logic or truth, these enemies resort to personal insult (see also 9:34).

8:58 **I AM** (Gr. *ego eimi*) is the divine Name of God in the OT, first revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3:13–15). To the Jews, this was a direct, explicit, and unmistakable claim to perfect equality with God, as evidenced by their reaction (v. 59; see also Mk 14:62–64). John places special emphasis on the use of this Name to clearly reveal Christ as God. This divine claim illuminates Christ's authority even over death (v. 52), a power belonging only to God the Father.

9:1-38 This healing is the sixth sign in John's Gospel (see note on 2:1–11). Of all the miracle stories in the Bible, this is the only one in which the person was **blind from birth** (see v. 32). The blind man is symbolic of all humanity: all need illumination by Christ, the Light of the world. This sign is an illustration of baptism, which is also called “holy illumination.” As Pascha (Easter) is the traditional day to receive catechumens into the Church, the lessons following Pascha reflect a baptismal theology. Thus, this passage is read on the sixth Sunday of Pascha.

9:3 The Savior rejects the assumption (common in the ancient world) that all troubles and maladies are necessarily the consequence of personal sin or even the sins of one's **parents** (see Ex 20:5; Dt 5:9; contrast Ezk 18:19–21). Though suffering can be the direct result of personal sin, this is certainly not always the case (see note at 5:14). In this instance, the man's blindness provided the occasion for **the works of God** to **be revealed**; it was not related directly to the man's personal sins.

9:4 The **work** that people do consists of faith (6:29), good deeds (5:29), and repentance (12:40). **The night** that comes refers both to the time after a person's death and to the age to come, when there is no longer an opportunity to express faith. On that day there will not be faith, but all will submit, whether willingly or unwillingly (JohnChr).

9:5 The unprecedented healing of the man born blind confirms Christ's claim that He is **the light of the world** (see 8:12 and note).

9:6 St. Irenaeus sees in this mixture of **clay** and **saliva** a type of the creation of humanity from the earth (Gn 2:7). Christ reveals His divinity by restoring part of creation using the same material with which He created humanity in the beginning.

9:7 **The pool of Siloam** was on the outskirts of Jerusalem, a considerable distance from the temple. From this pool water was taken for the rites connected with the Feast of Tabernacles (see note at 7:2). Siloam, **translated, Sent,** symbolizes Christ, the One sent by the Father (5:36; 20:21). Just as the healing of the blind man confirmed Christ's claim to be the light of the world (8:12), so also, His making use of the pool of Siloam confirms that He is the true purification of the temple and those who worship in it.

9:16 Just as **the Pharisees** had ignored the healing of the paralytic and focused only on the perceived violation of **the Sabbath** (5:10–16), here many of them cannot see the glory of **God** through their own prejudices.

9:24 With Jesus not present, the Pharisees call Him **a sinner**, but earlier when He asked them face-to-face, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (8:46), they evaded the question. **Give God the glory!** was an oath formula used before giving testimony. Nevertheless, the healed man will indeed give God glory (v. 38). The more he is pressed, the more fervent his faith becomes, while the Pharisees lapse into deeper darkness.

9:25 This healed man becomes a model of Christian witness. Many people do not bear witness to Christ because they fear they will be asked questions they cannot answer. This man's answer to people much more educated than he provides the solution: he admits what he does **not know**, but follows up with what he does know. The formula, “*That* I don't know, but what I do know is *this*,” is foundational to witnessing one's faith to others.

9:26-38 Having opened the blind man's eyes, the Lord also opens his heart and illumines his spirit. The man moves from knowing almost nothing about Christ (v. 25), through the conclusion that Jesus could not possibly be a sinner (v. 31), through confessing that Jesus must be **from God** (v. 33), to finally seeing Him as the divine **Son of God** and worshiping Him (v. 38). The Pharisees again cannot refute this man's logic nor the truth of what he reveals, and thus they resort to personal insult (v. 34; see 8:48).

9:32 The unprecedented nature of opening **the eyes of one who was born blind** is a confirmation of Christ's divinity. This was one of the signs of the coming Messiah (Is 35:5; 42:7) and a prerogative belonging solely to God (Ps 145:8).

9:39-41 Our Lord's coming brought judgment to the **world**, not because He came to judge (12:47, 48), but because of man's accountability **to Him**. Those who see and hear Him but do not believe are judged by their own faithlessness.

10:1-18 Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees continues, as there is no break between 9:41 and 10:1. All of this is taking place at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles (see note at 7:1). Christ is contrasting their leadership with His own. They have failed as pastors of God's people (“pastor” comes from the Latin word for “shepherd”). Their leadership has been marked by deceit and pride and has lacked compassion. Christ, on the other hand, fulfills all virtue.

According to St. John Chrysostom, the **door** is God's Word, meaning both the Scriptures and our Lord Himself (vv. 7, 9), since the Scriptures reveal God the Word. The one who tries to lead in a way that is neither in Christ nor according to the teaching of the Scriptures is **a thief and a robber**. Rather than using this door so all can see His works openly, these false shepherds use underhanded means to control, steal, and manipulate people, ultimately destroying their souls (v. 10). In contrast, those pastors who lead according to Christ will find eternal life (v. 9).

10:3-5 As Christ has intimate knowledge of every person, so also true pastors in the Church strive to know their people **by name**, that is, personally. These pastors endeavor to understand each person's situation and needs, from the greatest to the least, possessing Christlike compassion for each one (Heb 4:15). In return, the people will respond to a true leader, trusting he is a follower of Christ. “Where the bishop is present, there the people shall gather” (IgnAnt). Indeed, the response of the faithful can be a better indicator of who is a true shepherd than the claims of leaders (7:47–49).

10:8 The phrase **all who *ever* came before Me** does not refer to Moses or genuine prophets, but to people claiming to be the Messiah both before and after Christ, such as Judas of Galilee and Theudas (Acts 5:36, 37).

10:10 The ultimate **thief** is Satan, who spreads lies and heresies among the people of God, luring away both leaders and people. **Life** means living in God's grace here on earth, while the more abundant life indicates the Kingdom to come.

10:11-15 Christ reveals Himself as the **good shepherd**: (1) He enters by the door (v. 2), that is, He fulfills the Scriptures concerning Himself; (2) He knows and is known by **the Father** (v. 15); (3) He knows His people personally, and therefore is **known** by them (vv. 3, 14); and (4) He **gives His life** for the sake of His people (v. 11), which is a direct prophecy of His coming Passion.

10:16 **Other sheep** are the Gentiles, who will be brought into the **one flock** with the Jews under the **one shepherd**. Thus, for example, the Church transcends ethnic and racial lines. It has been the Orthodox teaching from the beginning that there be one bishop serving a city (*Canon 8 of I Nicea*), a principle affirmed in every generation. Writing in the early second century to a Church that held separate liturgies for Jewish and Gentile Christians, St. Ignatius taught, “Be careful to observe a single Eucharist, for there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup of His Blood that makes us one, and one altar, just as there is one bishop. . . . This is in line with God's will.”

10:17-18 **I lay down My life**: The Lord is clear that His life-giving death will be voluntary. He does nothing apart from the will of His **Father**. As He laid down His life for us, we lay down our lives for Him and for the sake of others.

10:21 Those who respond in faith are not merely impressed by the signs, but perceive the holiness of His **words**.

10:22 The **Feast of Dedication** took place approximately three months after the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1–10:21) and was known as the “Festival of Lights” (also called Hanukkah). It commemorates the rededication of the temple **in Jerusalem** after the Seleucid King Epiphanes desecrated it in 167 BC (see 1Mc 1–4). At this festival, the leaders of Israel's past were commemorated, many of whom were themselves shepherds.

10:25 Both what Christ **told** them and the **works** He had done have already answered their question. Only the Messiah could open the eyes of the blind (see note 9:32) or perform these miracles that bear **witness** to Him. Likewise, only the Messiah could speak to the hearts of people as Christ had (7:46; 9:21).

10:26 **As I said to you** indicates these are the same Pharisees whom Christ addressed three months earlier (10:1–5).

10:30-33 Responding to their question (v. 24), Jesus reveals Himself to be fully God: **One** means one in nature or essence. He is God before all ages, and He remains God after the Incarnation and for all eternity. The plural verb **are** indicates two distinct Persons, while confirming a continuous unity. The Jews clearly recognize this claim of divinity (v. 33) and thus accuse Him of **blasphemy**.

10:34-36 **You are gods**: People who receive God's grace in faith will partake of His divine nature (2Pt 1:4) and can rightly be called *gods* (see article “Deification” at 2 Peter). Christ is effectively saying, “If those who have received this honor by grace are not guilty for calling themselves gods, how can He who has this by nature deserve to be rebuked?” (JohnChr).

10:39 Because Christ is going to His Passion voluntarily and according to His own will (vv. 17, 18), His accusers cannot arrest Him until He is ready (7:30; 8:20; see Lk 4:28–30).

11:1-45 The resurrection of **Lazarus** is the seventh sign in John's Gospel (see note 2:1–11), the sign that sealed the Jewish authorities' decision to put Jesus to death (vv. 47–50). This event is celebrated liturgically on Lazarus Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday. **Bethany** is on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem (v. 18). Lazarus is the same name as “Eleazar” (lit. “God helps”).

11:4 This message is sent back to Mary and Martha to strengthen them so that when Lazarus dies, they may take confidence in Christ's words. The **Son of God** being **glorified** must not be understood to be the cause of Lazarus dying; instead, this indicates Christ will be glorified as a result of his **death** (which occurred from a natural illness) and his being raised from the dead.

11:6 The Lord delays in order for Lazarus to be dead long enough that the corruption of his body could set in (v. 39). Thus, no one could doubt the miracle, and the might of the Lord would be clearly seen by all.

11:8 See 10:29–39.

11:11 **Sleeps**: Compare to Acts 7:60; 1Co 11:30; 15:6.

11:16 Thomas's statement is an unwitting prophecy of his own future martyrdom. It also illustrates the path that all believers must take—that we **die** daily to the world for the sake of following Christ (Lk 9:23, 24).

11:17 There existed a rabbinical opinion that the soul lingered about the body for three days, but after **four days** resuscitation would be impossible.

11:19 Mourning began on the day of a person's death. Weeping and wailing lasted three days; lamentation lasted one week; and general mourning lasted 30 days.

11:20 Not unlike the incident of Lk 10:38–42, the two sisters react differently to Christ's arrival. **Martha**, being inclined to active service, rushes out to meet **Jesus**, while **Mary** remains in mourning until called by Christ (vv. 28, 29). **Sitting** was the traditional posture when mourning and receiving other mourners (Job 2:8, 13; Ezk 8:14).

11:21-22 While Martha possesses great faith, her statements indicate a lack of understanding about Christ. In saying, “**if You had been here, my brother would not have died**,” Martha reveals she does not fully see that Christ is God, thinking He needed to be present to effect healings (contrast 5:46–54). By saying, “**whatever you ask of God, God will give You**,” she shows her lack of understanding that Christ possesses full divine authority to act as He wills.

11:23-27 **I am the resurrection and the life**: To correct Martha's misunderstanding (see note above), Christ declares His divine authority to raise the dead **at the last day** (v. 24) as well as here in this world. Such is the power of these words that Martha is immediately led to her great confession of faith (v. 27). **Do you believe this?** is a question directed not only to Martha, but to all of us.

11:32 Mary approaches Christ with the identical words Martha used (v. 21). While Jesus engaged Martha with words, here He engages Mary with deeds—the raising of her brother from the dead (vv. 38–44).

11:35 John emphasizes that **Jesus wept** and groaned in spirit (vv. 33, 38) to show He had fully taken on human nature and was subject to grief as any man would be. Weeping is the natural response to the tragedy of death. At Compline of Lazarus Saturday, we sing, “Shedding tears by Your own choice, You have given us proof of Your heartfelt love.”

11:39-40 Though Martha's faith had increased (vv. 23–27), she still understood neither Christ's will nor His power. The spices and oils used to anoint a dead body would only hold the **stench** of decomposition at bay for a short time (see note at 11:6). Many icons of the raising of Lazarus show bystanders covering their noses, illustrating both the reality of his corrupted flesh and the fact that many did not believe Christ could raise the dead.

11:41-42 To show His divine will was one with the Father's, and that His human will was freely subject in every way to the Father's, Christ prays aloud for the sake of **the people**.

11:43 See 5:28, 29. Christ calls **Lazarus forth**, not in the name of the Father, but by His own authority. This shows the people that while Christ came from the Father, He fully possesses divine authority in Himself.

11:44 That Lazarus came out bound in his **graveclothes** is seen by many Fathers as an indication that he will need them again—that his resurrection continues an earthly life which will again end in death. The Savior's graveclothes, by contrast, would be left in the tomb (20:5–7). Unlike Lazarus's, Christ's Resurrection transfigures human nature; He will never die again.

This sign not only prepared the disciples to believe in Christ's Resurrection, but in the words of the hymn for the day, it also “confirmed the universal resurrection,” proving Christ has the power to fulfill the promise given to Ezekiel that all the dead will one day rise (Ezk 37:1–13).

11:49-52 **Caiaphas**, **being high priest**, is given the authority to speak prophetically. The failings and even wickedness of the officeholder do not diminish the grace of the office itself. Here, Caiaphas means only that the death of Christ will spare the Jews from Roman intervention. God's meaning, however, is that all **people** will be saved through the death of the Son.

11:55 Because Jesus is the Lamb of God (1:29), the connection between **the Passover**, when lambs were slaughtered to save **the Jews** from death (Ex 12:1–13), and the death of Jesus, which saves mankind from sin and death, is continually emphasized.

12:1 This **Passover** is the third mentioned in John (see 2:13; 6:4) and is the setting for the last week of Christ's earthly ministry, which is narrated in careful detail. **Jesus** had already been glorified through His signs and words; it remained for Him to be glorified through His death and Resurrection (see note at 1:14).

12:3-8 The other disciples said the same thing **Judas** said (v. 5), but with a very different motive (see Mt 26:6–13 and note). Judas spoke from greed, while the others spoke from the virtue of charity. That Jesus put **a thief** in charge of the money shows that by every means He attempted to save Judas: He fulfilled Judas' lust for money; He allowed Judas to exercise apostolic authority (6:11; see also Mk 6:7); He washed Judas' feet with the other disciples (13:5); and He allowed him to partake at the table of the Mystical Supper (13:26). Yet Judas could never overcome his greed (see note at Mt 26:14–16).

12:12-18 The Triumphal Entry into **Jerusalem**: See Mt 21:1–11 and accompanying notes.

12:20-23 These **Greeks** were Gentiles who believed in the God of Abraham, having come to participate in the Passover **feast.** That they were still called *Greeks* shows they were not yet full proselytes (converts). Since **Jesus** had taught His disciples not to go to the Gentiles (Mt 10:5; 15:24), the disciples approach Him before bringing these inquirers. **Glorified** (v. 23) refers to the Savior's death on the Cross. Christ's obscure response indicates two things: (1) the answer these Greeks are seeking will not be found in words, but in the Cross; and (2) the Cross will be the event that opens all manner of grace to the Gentiles.

12:24 The image of the **grain of wheat** dying in order to bear fruit signifies that Christ's death will give life to the world. In many Orthodox churches, boiled wheat that is sweetened and spiced is served at memorial services for the departed faithful to affirm God's promise that those who have died in Christ will rise again to life.

12:28 The Father's **name** is an extension of His Person. The Son's death completes the purpose of the **Father** and shows His love for all, thus glorifying Him. Christ is in effect saying, “Father, lead Me to the Cross.” This is the Lord's divine response to the human prompting to avoid the Cross (v. 27). The Father's response refers to the signs already performed by Christ and to the death and Resurrection to come.

12:29 Though the Father spoke clearly, some people heard indistinct sounds like thunder because they lacked faith. Those with a little faith heard the words but did not know the source, thinking it was **an angel**. The disciples knew the Father Himself had **spoken** (see v. 30).

12:31-33 **Lifted up** (v. 32) is a reference to Christ being hung on the Cross (see also 3:14, 15; 8:28). This **death** will bring salvation to **all *peoples***, while at the same time rendering **judgment** on the faithless and destroying once for all the power of Satan, **the ruler of this world**.

12:35-36 The **light** refers to Christ (1:4–9; 8:12). His teaching here has several facets of meaning. First, He will be completing His public ministry shortly. Further, our lives are very limited; we have but a short time to repent and **believe in** Christ before death. Finally, the second coming of Christ is but **a little while** when compared to eternity.

12:40 According to St. John Chrysostom, Isaiah's prophecy does not mean God causes spiritual blindness in people who would otherwise have been faithful. This is a figure of speech common to Scripture revealing God as giving people up to their own devices (as in Rom 1:24, 26). What is meant by **He has blinded** is that God has permitted their self-chosen blindness (compare Ex 8:15, 32 with Ex 10:20, 27). They did not become blind because God spoke through Isaiah, but rather Isaiah spoke because he foresaw their blindness.

12:41 **Isaiah** . . . **saw His** [Christ's] **glory** in about 700 BC (Is 6:1) and **spoke of Him** in many places throughout his lengthy prophecy.

12:42-43 These **rulers**, according to St. John Chrysostom, are in reality the worst of slaves in that they are enslaved by the opinions **of men**. This keeps them from leading as **God** would have them lead.

12:47-48 Christ does not **judge** with favoritism or partiality. He has spoken the **words** of life, words of love, forgiveness, repentance, virtue, and mercy. His words will be the unbending standard by which all people are judged on **the last day**.

13:1 John's account of our Lord's discourses during the Last Supper is contained in chs. 13–17. **The feast of Passover** commemorated God's passing over the Israelites when He killed the firstborn of the Egyptians (Ex 12). It is also linked with Israel's “crossing over” the Red Sea (Ex 14) from slavery to freedom. In Christ, we escape death and pass over from this world, which is enslaved to sin, and into the Kingdom of God. When Jesus had eaten the Passover supper with His disciples (v. 2), He made a new covenant in which eternal life is granted. **His hour**: the time of Christ's death, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven.

13:2 **Supper**: This account does not directly mention the Eucharist (which is clearly reflected in 6:51–59). John omits the specifics of both the Eucharist and our Lord's Baptism (see 1:19–36; 3:1–36), accounts with which his hearers would have been familiar by the time John wrote his Gospel (about AD 90). Instead, he focuses on the significance of these events. Our Lord's discourses and actions at the Last Supper reveal the mystery of His Incarnation, service, and mission to and in the world. He emphasizes in turn the disciples' own mission to the world.

There are two main ways **the devil** influences the human **heart**: (1) through ideas or thoughts; and (2) through conceptual images, as taught in 2Co 10:5. Satan influenced **Judas** in both areas. Christians are called to reject the thoughts and images suggested by the devil the moment they occur. Judas cooperated with the devil's will, not only by entertaining these thoughts, but then by carrying them out. Far from being a helpless victim, Judas was the devil's willing co-conspirator.

13:5 The foot-washing is an act of love and humility. It was a common expression of hospitality in the ancient Middle East, but was normally done by slaves or house-servants. Peter's response (vv. 6, 8) shows his shock at seeing the Master performing the duties of a slave.

13:6-10 **If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me** (v. 8) shows the cleansing power of Christ's death and Resurrection, for only by participating in Christ's death can we be raised with Him (Rom 6:3–11).

He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet (v. 10): This foot-washing also serves as an image of the sacrament of confession. Those who have completely bathed, that is, have been baptized, have no need ever to be baptized again, for baptism is indelible. The sins the believer assumes during his life must still be washed through ongoing repentance, just as the feet of a person returning from the public bath must be washed before entering the house. As Christians, we are bathed by Christ in baptism and have periodic washings in the sacrament of confession.

13:12-20 The command to **wash one another's feet** (v. 14) symbolizes that humble service is to be shown to all people. If Christ, who is Lord of all, humbly served not only His servants but even the traitor among them, then we must certainly do the same not only to our fellow servants, but also to our enemies. Within the Church, the clergy are seen first and foremost as servants of their flocks. To this day, the bishops of the Church (and in some places the presbyters) wash the feet of the faithful on Holy Thursday.

13:26-30 In the upper room, all was light, because Christ was present (12:46). **Judas'** exit from the Last Supper at **night** (v. 30) symbolizes his entrance into all-encompassing spiritual darkness (3:19).

13:31 After Judas **had gone out**, our Lord presents the final teachings of His earthly ministry (often called the “Farewell Discourse”) and offers His High Priestly Prayer (ch. 17). Calling His death “glorification” (vv. 31–33), Christ shows that He does not fear death and that He accepts it willingly. The Father and the Son are **glorified** through the death of Christ because His death destroys all powers of darkness.

13:34 Many religions and philosophies teach people to **love one another**. What makes this **commandment new** is the measure required of our love: we must love as Christ has loved us, laying down His life not only for His friends, but even for His enemies.

13:36 This is a prophecy of the martyrdom of **Simon Peter**, which he would suffer for the sake of Christ by being crucified upside down in Rome in about AD 67 (see 21:18, 19).

14:2 **Many mansions** is a word-picture of an abundance of living accommodations around a central courtyard. *Mansions* also speaks of the multitude of blessings that await those who enter the Kingdom of God.

14:6 **The way, the truth, and the life**: The way we reach the Father is forever established in the Person and work of the Son. The Son is the truth because He is the unique revelation of the Father. Christ is the life who became Man so we might have life, and as He is our life, not even death can hinder us from coming to Him. Only in Christ can one come to know the Father, for only in Christ is the way of all truth and all life found.

14:9 **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**: Our response to Christ determines our relationship with the Father. If we reject Christ then we will never find the Father; but if we believe in Christ and follow Him, then we ourselves will become “children of God,” living eternally in the love of the Father (1:12).

14:10 While human beings are made *in* God's image (Gn 1:26), the Incarnate Son *is* Himself the exact image of **the Father** (Col 1:15). Christ did not say, “I am the Father,” for He is not. Rather, He declares that He and the Father are one in essence and undivided in nature while being distinct Persons in the Godhead.

14:12 The **greater *works*** indicate that Christ's working through mere humans after Pentecost is greater than His performing signs and wonders directly. These works, attested to in the Book of Acts, include spreading the gospel throughout the world, miraculous healings, and raising the dead.

14:13-14 To pray in Christ's **name** does not simply mean to attach the phrase “in Jesus' name we pray” to the end of prayers. Rather, to pray in His name means to pray according to His will. Just as an emissary of a king can only be said to be speaking in the king's name if he says what the king would want him to say, so also we can only be said to be praying in the name of Christ when we pray according to what He wants. The purpose here is not to get God to do our will, but for us to learn to pray properly, according to God's will (Mt 6:10).

14:16 **Helper** (Gr. *parakletos*) refers to the Holy Spirit. This title also means “Comforter,” “Counselor,” and “Advocate.”

14:17 **The Spirit of truth** is in each believer, and we are called to **know Him**. The Holy Spirit prays in us and for us when we do not know how to pray, enabling us to pray in Christ's name (14:13, 14; Rom 8:26) and giving us words of witness when we speak the gospel (Mk 13:11).

14:19 The brief separation of Jesus from the disciples at His death will lead to a deeper mystical union after the Resurrection and to the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

14:20 **That day** refers to Pentecost, for as St. John Chrysostom notes, it is “the power of the Holy Spirit that taught them all things.”

14:27 **Peace** was the customary Jewish word of both greeting and farewell. Perfect peace is brought by Christ, who reconciles humanity to God (Eph 2:14). Peace is part of the traditional greeting of Christians to each other (Rom 1:7; 1Co 1:3), and the greeting "Peace be to all" is offered many times during the liturgical services of the Church.

14:28 **My Father is greater than I** does not mean greater in nature or essence, for the Father and the Son share one divine nature. Nor does it mean the Son is created, for the Son is begotten from all eternity. Rather, it means that the Father, as the Fountainhead of the Trinity, is the eternal cause of the Son.

14:29 **Before it comes** refers to our Lord's Passion. Telling these events beforehand strengthened the disciples' faith.

14:30 **The ruler of this world** is the devil, who dominates the realm of those who do not love Christ or keep His commandments. Jesus said the devil **has nothing in Me** because there can be no compromise between Christ or His followers and the devil. Jesus became Man, but was never stained with sin.

14:31 **Arise, let us go from here**: Christ takes His disciples to another room or location to complete His discourse in order to gain their undivided attention. According to St. John Chrysostom, their current location was susceptible to intrusions, and the disciples were likely to be distracted from fear.

15:1-6 The vine is a symbol of Israel (Is 5:1–7; Jer 2:21). In contrast to disobedient and unfruitful Israel, our Lord calls Himself the **true vine**, which together with the **branches** constitutes a new and fruitful people of God: the Church. At the Divine Liturgy, the bishop prays that the Lord will visit and confirm the vineyard, the local body of Christ, which He planted with His own right hand (Ps 79:15, 16).

To **abide** in this vine is to abide in Christ and His Church. The figure of the vine and the branches shows (1) our union with Christ is intimate and real; (2) life flows from the vine to the branches—abiding in Christ is dynamic and vitalizing; and (3) the fruit we bear is both good works and mission (v. 16; 17:18).

15:10 One cannot **love** God and disobey His **commandments**. To love God is to obey Him (14:15).

15:14-15 Friendship is higher than servanthood. **Servants** obey their masters out of fear or a sense of duty; **friends** obey out of love and an internal desire to do what is good and right. Abraham was called a “friend of God” (Jam 2:23) because he obeyed God out of the belief of his heart. The disciples, and indeed all the saints, are honored as friends of Christ because they freely obey His commandments out of love. Those who have this spirit of loving obedience are open to receive and understand the revelations of the **Father**.

15:18-25 The term **world** is used in several distinct ways in Scripture. In some cases, it refers to all that is glorious, beautiful, and redeemable in God's creation (3:16). Other times, it refers to that which is finite in contrast to that which is eternal (11:9; 18:36). In still other instances, as here, it indicates all that is in rebellion against God (see also 8:23).

The rebellion of the world against God reveals several things: (1) While union with Christ brings love, truth, and peace, it also brings persecution, because the world **hates** love and truth (v. 19). (2) The world hated Christ; therefore, it will hate all who try to be Christlike (v. 20). (3) The world hates Christ because it neither knows nor desires to know the Father (vv. 21–24). (4) Hatred for Jesus Christ is irrational and unreasonable, for Christ brings love and mercy; thus, Christ is hated **without a cause** (v. 25).

15:26 With respect to God's working salvation in the world, the Son sends the Holy Spirit **from the Father**. With respect to the divine nature, the Holy Spirit eternally **proceeds from the Father** alone. In other words, the Holy Spirit receives His eternal existence only from the Father. In conformity with Christ's words, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed confesses belief “in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father.” While the Son is begotten of the Father alone, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone; the source, the Fountainhead, of both Persons is the Father.

16:6 **Sorrow** here means “extreme grief leading to despondency or despair,” which is a sinful passion. “Great is the tyranny of despondency” (JohnChr). This sin is constantly referred to in the writings of the Desert Fathers. When the world persecutes the believer or when God seems to be absent, Christians are called to fight against this despondency, taking comfort from the presence of the Holy Spirit (vv. 5–15).

16:8-11 Through the illumination brought by the Holy Spirit, the world will be convicted, that is, proven wrong. It will be convicted concerning (1) its **sin**, the ultimate of which is denying Jesus Christ; (2) **righteousness** (v. 10), which it failed to accept from Christ with faith and thanksgiving; and (3) **judgment** (v. 11), for all who reject Christ will receive the same penalty that Satan, the ruler of this world, has already received (see Mt 25:41).

16:13 Because the Holy Spirit is the **Spirit of truth**, and because this Spirit abides in the Church, the Church is the guardian of **all truth**.

16:16 The first **little while** refers to Christ's arrest, death, and burial. The second is His time in the tomb until His Resurrection.

16:21 **No longer remembers** does not imply the faithful are to forget the Passion and Cross of Christ, any more than **a woman** "forgets" **labor**. Rather, we now see these sufferings in light of the victory of the Resurrection, and this victory transfigures our perception of sufferings. Christ's victory allows us to rejoice in **anguish** because of the infinitely greater good that comes from it (Rom 5:3–5; Php 3:10).

16:25 **The time** when Christ would speak **plainly about the Father** was during the 40 days following the Resurrection (Acts 1:3).

16:26-28 We know prayer is offered in the name of God the Father, for Christ taught us to pray that way (Mt 6:9), and He Himself prayed to the Father (11:41; 12:28; 17:1). In Christ, we have direct access to the Father, and thus we pray in the **name** of the Son as well (see note at 14:13, 14). After Pentecost, we learn the Holy Spirit Himself “makes intercession for us” (Rom 8:26), and we are instructed to pray always “in the Spirit” (Eph 6:18). Therefore, as Orthodox Christians, we pray continually and with confidence to all three Persons of the Trinity, “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

17:1-26 Christ's prayer is often called the High Priestly Prayer, as it contains the basic elements of prayer a priest offers to God when a sacrifice is about to be made: glorification (vv. 3–5, 25), remembrance of God's works (vv. 2, 6–8, 22, 23), intercession on behalf of others (vv. 9, 11, 15, 20, 21, 24), and a declaration of the offering itself (vv. 1, 5).

The passage that includes vv. 1–13 is read on the seventh Sunday of Pascha (Easter), a day remembering the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicea I) in AD 325. At this council the heresy of Arianism was condemned. This heresy taught that the Son of God was created by the Father and that there was a time when the Son of God did not exist. We find our Lord's words here bearing witness to His divinity and to His filial relationship with the Father. This testimony is sufficient in itself to dismiss Arianism.

The hour has come signifies Christ is Lord over time. “He voluntarily willed to ascend the Cross in the flesh” (hymn of Orthodoxy Sunday). **Glorify** refers to the redemption of all creation that will be accomplished through the Cross and Resurrection—the purpose for which Christ was sent into the world. In this redemption, the Father and the Son are glorified. This is why the Cross, which is a sign of death, is glorified in the Church as “life-giving” and the “weapon of peace.”

17:3 The knowledge of **the only true God** is far more than intellectual understanding. It is participation in His divine life and in communion with Him. Thus, **eternal life** is an ongoing, loving knowledge of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

17:4 Christ's **work** can never be separated from who He is. This verse is a statement each believer can make at the end of life, no matter how long or short that life may be.

17:6 **The men whom You have given Me** are the apostles. They are the ones through whom God's **word** comes to us. This handing down of God's word to successive generations is called apostolic tradition.

Isaiah prophesied that in the days of the Messiah, the knowledge of the Name of God would be revealed (Is 52:6). **Your name**: In the OT times, the phrase “the Name” was reverently used as a substitute for God's actual Name “Yahweh,” which was too sacred to pronounce. The fuller revelation of the Name was given to those who believe in Christ, for Christ **manifested** the Name not only by declaring the Father, but by being the very presence of God and sharing the Name with Him.

17:9 Christ first prayed for Himself (vv. 1–5) and secondly **for them**, the apostles (vv. 6–19). Only then does He pray **for those whom You have given Me—**all who will come to believe in Him (vv. 20–26). Here **the world** is the portion of humanity in rebellion against God, those who prefer darkness to His light.

17:11 **Holy Father** is echoed in the eucharistic prayer of Didache 10:2: “We give you thanks, Holy Father, for **Your** holy **name** which You have made to dwell in our hearts.”

17:12 **The son of perdition** (“destruction”) is Judas Iscariot (6:70, 71). OT prophecy alludes to Judas (Ps 40:10; 108:2–13; Zec 11:12, 13), and Judas becomes a type for all who will fall away in the last days (see 2Th 2:3, where “son of perdition” refers to the Antichrist).

17:14-15 Inasmuch as Christ is from heaven, those who are joined to Him become like Him. Thus, all believers attract the world's hatred. The second-century Letter to Diognetus (6:3) states, “Christians dwell in **the world** but do not belong to the world.” Reborn in Christ, Christians have their citizenship in the Kingdom of God (3:1–5), yet their vocation is in the world, where they are protected by God against **the evil one**.

17:17 **Sanctify**: To consecrate, make holy, separate, set apart from the world, and bring into the sphere of the sacred for God's use. St. John Chrysostom interprets this verse as saying, “Make them holy through the gift of the Spirit and by correct doctrine.”

17:20 **Those who will believe**: The Church in every generation participates in the life and glory of the Trinity. Christians enjoy two kinds of unity: with God and with one another, the latter being rooted in the former.

17:26 The ultimate goal of Christ's prayer, and indeed of life itself, is for **the love** of the Father to dwell in each person.

18:1 This **garden** was at the Mount of Olives (Mk 14:26).

18:2 That Christ intentionally came to **the place** known to His betrayer **Judas**, one of **His disciples**, shows He was going to His Passion willingly and voluntarily. It reveals Christ went to find Judas rather than Judas finding Christ.

18:4 That **Jesus** spoke first without waiting for them shows that in every step toward His arrest, He is Lord and in control (see vv. 8, 35).

18:5 That **Judas . . . stood with them** shows his allegiance to the priests and Pharisees (v. 3).

18:6 **I am *He*** is literally “I AM” (Gr. *ego eimi*), the divine Name (see note at 8:58). The power of this Name drives all His accusers **to the ground**. Even so, they do not repent.

18:8 Notice **Jesus** is giving commands at His own arrest, and they are being obeyed, showing He is Lord of His own Passion (see vv. 4, 35). The obedience of Christ's captors is particularly striking in that Peter was not arrested when he attacked the high priest's servant with a sword (v. 10). The command to let the disciples **go their way** also indicates His mercy toward them, as they were not yet strong enough to face martyrdom. God does not allow a burden beyond a person's spiritual strength (1Co 10:13).

18:13 **Annas** was the previous high priest and remained a force of power behind the religious establishment (see note at Lk 3:2). **Caiaphas** was **high priest** the **year** of Jesus' Crucifixion, holding the office from AD 18–36.

18:15 This other **disciple** is John, the author of this Gospel. It was a common practice for an author to conceal his name in the details of his story (see 13:23; compare Mk 14:51, 52; Lk 24:13, 18).

18:17 A **girl** being the first to test Peter is an icon of the temptation of Adam by Eve (Gn 3:6). This fallen state is overcome in Christ, when a woman is the first to hear, believe, and proclaim the Resurrection (20:1, 11–18).

18:19 The questioning of **the high priest** tries to uncover subversive activity that would not only violate the Law of Moses, but be reason enough to accuse **Jesus** of a political crime before Pilate. Note the two points of question put to Jesus concern **His disciples and His doctrine**, two essential components of Christ and His Church.

18:27 After his three denials, Peter will be restored through his three affirmations of love following the Resurrection (21:15–17).

18:28 St. John Chrysostom notes the irony that Christ's accusers did not fear being **defiled** by condemning an innocent Man to death, but would not set foot into a court of justice.

18:31 Since the chief priests of **the Jews** had no actual crime with which to make an accusation against Jesus (vv. 29, 30), **Pilate** refused to pass judgment. When the chief priests say, **“It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,”** they are not referring to the Law of Moses, but to the laws of Roman occupation, for the Romans reserved the right to execute people. Thus, the chief priests relied on Pilate to sentence Jesus to death.

18:32 The Jewish law prescribed stoning as the usual means of execution. However, Christ had prophesied He would be killed by being lifted up on the Cross (3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 33), having foreknowledge that **He would die**, not at the hands of the Jews, but by the Roman method of crucifixion.

18:35 It is unheard of that the accused would have to name the charges against himself in any court, since the captors would be the ones to name the crime. That **Pilate** has to ask Jesus what the charges are shows that **the chief priests** could name no crime He might have committed (vv. 29, 30). And more importantly, it shows Jesus was Lord over the events of His death (see vv. 4, 8). For even the governor has to come to Him in order for the trial to proceed.

18:38-40 Though **Pilate** knows Christ to be innocent of any crime, he attempts to strike a compromise with **the Jews** by declaring Christ guilty, but freeing Him on account of **Passover**. Thus, the chief priests would have an official declaration of guilt and Christ would not be unjustly punished.

19:1-6 Having failed to reach a compromise that would have released Jesus without punishment (18:38–40), **Pilate** has Him **scourged** (v. 1) and mocked (vv. 2, 3; see note at Mt 27:27–31). Scourging was a severe punishment using a whip that had bits of bone or metal imbedded at the tips. Pilate does all this in hopes of moderating the wrath of the chief priests so he does not have to execute a Man he knows to be innocent (v. 4). Instead of subsiding, the rage of **the chief priests** increases, and they begin demanding Pilate **crucify** Him (v. 6).

19:7-12 The chief priests finally reveal that their true charge against Christ is blasphemy (v. 7), which was not a crime under Roman law. According to Jewish Law, however, it deserved death (Lv 24:16). Under Roman law, the Jewish leaders could not put anyone to death. Since **Pilate** alone had the power to enforce the death penalty, he had to be given a serious political accusation. Therefore the Jews changed their charge from blasphemy (v. 7) to treason (v. 12), saying Jesus **speaks against Caesar**.

19:10 **Pilate** again looks to Christ to give him a way to avoid having to condemn Him. Once more, this shows Jesus is the true Lord over the events taking place (see 18:4, 8, 35), a truth Jesus states with perfect clarity (v. 11).

19:11 Since Pilate **had been given** authority **from above**, he shares in the sin of condemning **Jesus**. However, as he had no previous knowledge of Christ, nor was He a Jew with the advantage of the Law and the prophets, Pilate's sin was less. While **the one who delivered** Christ can refer either to Judas (18:3) or to Caiaphas (18:28), it also refers to all mankind, for all of us sin against Christ, and thus all of us have participated in delivering Him to the Cross.

19:14 While the synoptic Gospels date the Crucifixion on the first day of **Passover**, John dates it on the **Preparation Day**, the day before Passover. Thus, in the synoptic tradition, the Last Supper is the Passover meal, while in John's Gospel, Jesus, as the Lamb of God (1:29), dies at the exact time the Passover lambs are being slain in the temple. While it is impossible to determine which is historically accurate, both traditions are theologically accurate—the Mystical Supper is the fulfillment of the Passover meal (the synoptic tradition), and Christ's death is the fulfillment of the Passover lambs being slain (John's tradition).

19:19-22 A **title**: What was intended as an accusation and a mockery became instead a triumphant symbol. Pilate's act is prophetic, showing the Jews had risen against their own **King**, and that the **cross** was the means by which Christ established His Kingdom.

19:23 **The tunic** is interpreted as representing Christ's body in two ways. That it is **woven from the top** shows Christ came down from heaven; that it is **without seam** is a sign of the unity of the Church.

19:25-27 We see here several important truths concerning Christ's **mother**: (1) In calling Mary “**Woman**” (v. 26), Jesus is using a term of dignity and affection. Contrary to certain modern usages, this is a sacred title in Scripture, an address conveying deep respect and distinction (2:4; 4:21; 8:10; 20:13; compare to Gn 2:23). (2) In saying to John, **“Behold your mother!”** (v. 27), our Lord symbolically establishes Mary's role as mother of all faithful disciples in every generation. (3) If Mary had other children, Jesus would not have placed her in the care of John, for her own children would have cared for her. Thus the apostolic teaching that Mary remained ever-virgin is confirmed by His action. (4) Christ also demonstrates we must “even to our last breath show every care for our parents” (JohnChr).

19:28 **I thirst**: The Son of God assumed our human need for water in order that we might be delivered from spiritual thirst (4:13, 14; 7:37, 38). **The Scripture** refers to Ps 21:16.

19:30 **Finished** is better translated “accomplished” or “fulfilled”—not meaning Christ's life is ended, but showing His divine plan of salvation has now been completed. **Bowing His head, He gave up His spirit**: St. John Chrysostom writes that Christ did not die first, with His head falling as a result of death. Instead, as Lord even of His own death, Jesus first bowed His head, and then willingly gave up His spirit (see note at Lk 23:46).

19:34 The **blood and water** from Christ's body show the reality of the great sacraments. The water speaks of our baptism, which is participation in Christ's life-giving death (Rom 3:6–11). In Communion, we receive His life-giving Blood, “drinking from His very side” (JohnChr). It is literally the forgiveness of sins and the regeneration of mankind that poured out from our Lord's **side**.

19:38-39 **Joseph of Arimathea** was a hidden disciple, one who believed in Jesus but had made no public acknowledgement of faith. **Nicodemus** had come to Jesus by night (3:2) and later defended Him before the Pharisees (7:50–52). By burying Him, both show their devotion to our Lord publicly, in stark contrast to the fearful disciples, who had scattered. See also note at Lk 23:50–53.

20:1 **The first *day* of the week** is Sunday, or the Lord's Day. The remembrance of this day in Christian tradition does not replace the Sabbath, but completes it. Saturday still remains the Sabbath, the blessed day on which Christ rested in the tomb, just as He rested when He completed the creation of the universe (Gn 2:2). Because of the Resurrection, Sunday is also known in the Church as the eighth day, which symbolizes eternity, a day without end.

20:2 Though John does not mention the other myrrhbearing women (Mk 16:1; Lk 24:10), Mary's use of **we** indicates they were present.

20:3-8 The response of Peter and John (**the other disciple**) reveals each one's disposition. John's reaching the tomb **first** indicates his faith is lofty and full of understanding, and indeed, he is the first to have **believed** (v. 8). Peter's faith, on the other hand, is more direct and bold, shown by his immediate entrance **into the tomb** (v. 6).

20:7 The details John gives concerning **the linen cloths** confirm the Resurrection, for if thieves had taken away Christ's body as Mary initially thought (v. 2), they would not have taken the time to strip the body, nor to fold and place each piece carefully and separately.

20:9 **The Scripture** had foretold Christ could not remain **dead** (Ps 15:10).

20:11-18 The encounter between the risen Lord and **Mary** is reminiscent of the encounter between the bride and her beloved in the Song of Solomon (SS 3:1–4). This parallel teaches that through the Resurrection, Christ has taken the Church to be His eternal Bride (see note at 2:1–11; Eph 5:31, 32; Rev 21:9, 10).

20:16 That Mary **turned** again (see v. 14) shows she had been looking back and forth between the angels (v. 12) and her Lord, sensing the awe of the angels in the presence of their Ruler, but not yet recognizing **Jesus** herself. Through Christ calling **Mary** by name, her eyes and heart are opened, and she recognizes Him (see 10:3, 4). **Rabboni** is an affectionate term meaning “my dear **Teacher**.”

20:17 **Do not cling to Me**: Christ does not prohibit the touching of His resurrected flesh, for we commune with His flesh in the Eucharist, and He even commands Thomas to touch Him (v. 27). Here, Christ is instructing Mary to understand and accept that His life is not merely continuing in the same state as before, and that He will not remain with her as He did in the past, but is pressing forward to His Ascension to the **Father**.

20:18 **Mary Magdalene**, having remained faithful to Christ to the end, is the first person sent to proclaim the risen **Lord**, and thus is the first apostle of the Resurrection. She is known in the Church as “the apostle to the apostles.”

20:21-23 Christ commissions the disciples to continue His mission on earth, granting them **the Holy Spirit** (v. 22) and the authority to **forgive the sins** of others (v. 23). (See the articles “Ordination” at Acts 14 and “Confession” at 1Jn 1.) Through this direct consecration and through apostolic continuity, Christ's own Priesthood is communicated to the bishops and presbyters of the Church.

20:24-29 The doubt of **Thomas** is described in the Church hymns as “blessed,” for it was not a doubt of resistance to truth, but one that desperately desired a truthful answer—a “doubt which gave birth to faith” when the answer was revealed. In hymns of the Church, Christ says to Thomas, “Your doubt will teach My Passion and Resurrection to all,” and we affirm that his doubt “brought the hearts of believers to knowledge.” The conversion of Thomas' doubt into faith led him to the clearest confession of Christ's divinity, addressing Jesus as **my Lord and my God** (v. 28).

21:1 **The Sea of Tiberias** is another name for the Sea of Galilee. Because Christ's resurrected body was transfigured and incorruptible, it was not visible unless He willingly **showed *Himself***. His resurrected body is indeed human, but it is glorified in every respect and illustrates the kind of body each believer will have in the general resurrection (see 1Co 15:42–49).

21:6, 7 This is the second time Christ provided a **multitude of fish** for these men (Lk 5:4–6). Jesus often revealed Himself after the Resurrection through words and acts that were familiar (20:16; Lk 24:35). It is through this familiar grace that our Lord is recognizable to all His followers (see also note at Lk 5:6). John, the beloved **disciple**, is the first to perceive that the Man on the shore is **the Lord**, showing that love for Christ brings spiritual insight. **Peter** plunging **into the sea** demonstrates the boldness of his faith (see note at 20:3–8).

21:8 The great catch of **fish** is an image of the **disciples** bringing mankind to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and it fulfills the prophecy of Jer 16:16. In the festal hymn of Pentecost we sing to Christ, “Through the fishermen, You drew the world into Your net.”

21:11 **Peter** takes the initiative in dragging **the net to land**, an act symbolic of his leadership in the early Church. That the net **was not broken** shows the invincibility of the Church, while the number **one hundred and fifty-three** symbolizes all nations of humanity.

21:12 The disciples' inner desire to ask Christ, **“Who are You?”** shows His form was altered in a way that amazed them. Yet they did not ask because they knew even though His appearance was altered, **it was the Lord**.

21:13 This meal is reminiscent of the feeding of the five thousand and carries the same eucharistic significance (see note at 6:2–14). **The fish** became a symbol of identity for early Christians. The initials of the phrase “Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior” in Greek form the acronym *ICHTHYS*, which is Greek for “fish.”

21:15-17 That Christ singles out **Simon Peter** has a twofold significance: (1) Peter was the leader among the disciples, and thus had to be the first to confess his **love** for the risen Lord. (2) Peter had denied Christ three times (18:17, 25–27), and here Christ restores Him with a threefold confession of love.

It is important to note that the first two times Christ inquires of Peter, "**Do you love Me?**" He uses a form of the word *agape*, which denotes the highest form of sacrificial and self-emptying love, the kind of love God has for man and that man can develop only through maturing in God's grace. Each time, however, Peter is unable to claim such a lofty love. When Peter answers, "**You know that I love You**," he uses the term *philo*, which is a lesser form of love, akin to brotherly affection. When the Lord asks the third time, "**Do you love Me?**" He has changed to the term *philo*, condescending to Peter's weakness and accepting whatever love Peter is able to offer. Nevertheless, Christ knows that Peter will develop *agape* love for Him, as Peter will eventually accept martyrdom for His sake (vv. 18, 19). Peter **was grieved** both that the Lord had to condescend to his level of love and that this was a clear, though gentle, reference to his three denials.

21:18-19 This is Christ's second prophecy of Peter's martyrdom (see 13:36), which Peter would suffer under Nero in about AD 67 by being crucified upside down.

21:20-23 This **disciple** is John, the author of this Gospel. St. John lived a long life, dying at about the age of 100 (c. AD 98–108). Early Christians marveled at his longevity, and some thought he would not die before the return of Christ. John corrects this assumption by clarifying that **Jesus did not say to him that he would not die**.

21:24 John's use of **we** indicates he had an assistant. Tradition holds John used a scribe named Prochorus who wrote down his words and teachings; this scribe is shown in many icons.

21:25 Acknowledging his Gospel contains only a fraction of Christ's life, John has **written** his book to bring his hearers to faith (20:31). While the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke contain many more miracles and parables, these too are far from exhaustive. This verse not only emphasizes the holiness of what was written, but also points to the ongoing oral tradition within the Church (see 2Th 2:15).

1:2 During the Last Supper, Jesus promised to teach His disciples **through the Holy Spirit** (Jn 16:13). After His Resurrection, His promise is fulfilled.

1:3 **Forty** is a number indicating completion or fulfillment.

1:4 **The Promise of the Father** is the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 5), which the Jews had been expecting to accompany the messianic age (see Joel 3:1).

1:6 That the disciples are still fixated on the establishment of an earthly kingdom shows that the Holy Spirit has not yet been given, for only after Pentecost do the disciples receive the full understanding of the Kingdom of God. Here, the disciples are asking the wrong question, for Christ will not **restore the kingdom to Israel**, but will rather restore Israel and the world to the Kingdom.

1:9-11 Christ's Ascension is His enthronement in the fullness of divine authority and glory. Icons of the Ascension represent Christ in such a way that one cannot tell whether He is going to heaven or coming again to earth. This captures the profound truth that we are already living under His reign while awaiting His return. Thus, the icon shows Christ being **taken up** (v. 11), coming again **in like manner** (v. 11), and yet continually present (Mt 28:20). Believers are not to stand idly **gazing up into heaven**, but rather are called to virtuous faith and action in this world until Christ's return.

1:12 **A Sabbath day's journey** is the distance the Jews could travel without breaking the Sabbath rest—something under a mile.

1:16 Because the apostles had been enlightened by Christ to understand the OT as pointing to Him and His works (Lk 24:27), Peter now sees these two prophetic psalms (v. 20) as foretelling the fate of **Judas**.

1:18 See Mt 27:3–5. Though the accounts may seem to differ, Luke's report here is merely a more detailed account of Judas' end. This should also be understood in a spiritual sense, that the heart and soul of the rebellious or faithless person will be spilled out in the final judgment.

1:20 The Greek word *episkope*, here rendered **office**, is literally "bishopric" and refers to the apostolic position of overseer. Thus, we learn the apostles were the first bishops of the Church. The authority of overseeing the life of the Church continues in the bishops who stand in their succession.

1:26 Casting **lots** to discern the will of God has been practiced since ancient times (Jos 18:6–10; Neh 11:1; Jon 1:7) and continues in various places in the Church to this day. This should not be misunderstood as surrendering all authority to random chance. The authority of the apostles is shown by their offering of specific names (v. 23). Nevertheless, the final outcome is left to God.

2:1 The **Day of Pentecost,** also called the Feast of Weeks in the OT (see Lv 23:16), comes 50 days after Passover and is a celebration of the first fruits of harvest. As Jesus was crucified at Passover, the events of ch. 2 occur 50 days after His death. On the first Christian Pentecost, the unity of assembling **with one accord** (or purpose) **in one place** provides the environment in which the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us.

2:3 The Holy Spirit coming in the appearance of **divided tongues, as of fire** fulfills the prophecy of John the Baptist that Christ would “baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Lk 3:16). This fire is a manifestation of the uncreated energy of God. Because God is wholly uncreated, His power or energy is also uncreated.

2:4-8 This is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 3:1 and a divine reversal or recapitulation of the events at the Tower of Babel (Gn 11:1–9). In the account of Babel, pride was shown to possess the awesome power to divide; here, the humble reception of **the Holy Spirit** is shown to have the overwhelming power to unite, even in diversity. A key lesson of Pentecost is that the people hear the gospel in their **own language**.

2:14-40 Peter's sermon focuses on two prophetic themes: (1) the promised coming of the Holy **Spirit** (vv. 14–21); and (2) the Resurrection of Christ (vv. 22–40). This pattern of showing the OT prophecy being fulfilled in Christ is the central means by which the apostles preached the gospel (see 8:35). This method of preaching led directly to the multitude's repentance, baptism, and reception of the Holy Spirit (vv. 38, 39).

2:16-21 On Pentecost, the first part of Joel's prophecy (vv. 17–19) was fulfilled with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The second part (vv. 19–21) will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ.

2:36 The term **made** refers to Christ's Incarnation and works as a Man, and not to His eternal existence as Lord and God.

2:37 Peter's listeners were **cut to the heart** because they understood and had been prepared by the OT. Almost half of Peter's message is a quotation of OT scriptures. The evidence that Jesus fulfills these prophecies is overwhelming to them.

2:38-39 Peter's answer defines Christian life within the Church. We must (1) **repent**, (2) **be baptized**, and (3) **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. The baptismal service of the Orthodox Church reflects this way of life. Candidates first repent, confess their sins, and renounce the devil. Second, they are baptized by immersion. Third, they are given the gift of the Holy Spirit through chrismation.

2:42 Central elements of worship that were present from the very beginning continue in the Orthodox Church to this day: apostolic **doctrine** being taught in the **fellowship** of a common assembly, the breaking of the eucharistic **bread**, and specific liturgical **prayers**. *Prayers* is literally "*the* prayers" in Greek, referring to specific liturgical prayers. The Jews had practiced liturgical prayer for centuries, the preeminent prayers being the Psalms. Because the Psalms point so clearly to Christ, Christians immediately incorporated them into NT worship.

2:44-45 Having **all things in common** was practiced as a necessity, for many of the new converts were far from home. While such communal living is not a mandate for all Christians, it is still practiced in various monasteries. Furthermore, it continually reminds us that all things belong to God and are for the benefit of all mankind.

3:1 **At the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour***: The apostles were observing regular Jewish hours of prayer, just as believers had done for centuries (Ps 54:18; Dan 6:11). The practice of praying at the first (6:00 a.m.), third (9:00 a.m.), sixth (12:00 noon), and ninth (3:00 p.m.) hours of the day carried over into the Church from the start. This practice continues to this day in the Orthodox Church in private prayers, in monasteries, and in some parishes. (See also 10:3, 9, 30.)

3:1-10 The apostles participate not only in preaching and teaching but in healing as well. The sacrament of healing manifests God's presence in the Church and confirms the message of the gospel.

3:11 **Solomon's porch** is in the temple area.

3:12-26 Peter's sermon clarifies several key truths concerning Jesus: (1) He reveals the identity of Jesus, by whose **power** the lame man was healed. He is God's Suffering **Servant** (v. 13), the **Holy One** (v. 14) of God, **the Prince of life** (v. 15), the Christ foretold by the prophets (v. 18). (2) As prophesied, Christ was rejected, for the leaders had Him **killed** (v. 15). But God raised Him, and the apostles are **witnesses** to that Resurrection (v. 15). (3) The rejection of **Christ** shows profound ignorance of God's saving activity (vv. 18–20). (4) The only saving response the people can make is to **repent** and **be converted** (v. 19), which is a thorough change of mind and heart. (5) The rewards of conversion include forgiveness of sins, renewal, and confidence in the glorious Second Coming of Christ (vv. 19–26).

3:26 Repentance always bring blessings from the Lord. Some fear **turning away** from sin makes life hard to bear. Instead, through repentance, life that was merely existence is transformed into real living—that is, living in faith, love, joy, and confident hope.

4:1, 2 **Sadducees**: See 23:8.

4:12 The **name** of Christ is not simply a verbal pronunciation, but indicates His will, His life, His person, His very presence. Salvation in the name of Christ indicates salvation in His eternal being. As Christ is the one and only Son of God, salvation can only be found in Him.

4:13 **Uneducated and untrained** refers specifically to religious education. This lack of religious training stands in contrast to the expertise of the Sanhedrin. The wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit transcend earthly religious training, for God works in the humble and simple as well as in those who are formally educated or influential.

4:16 The admission of **a notable miracle** without a faithful response illustrates the hardness of the human heart where there is no repentance.

4:19 While God commands our obedience to governing authorities (Lk 20:25; Rom 13:1–7), obedience to God comes first. When the two are in conflict, the believer must follow God and be willing to accept the consequences.

4:24-30 This prayer follows a traditional liturgical formula of praise, remembrance of God's works, and petition. Note that **signs and wonders** (v. 30) are requested, not as ends in themselves, but in order to give **boldness** to the preachers and to confirm the **word** they speak (v. 29).

4:31 While the **Holy Spirit** continually abides in the Church, His presence is experienced again and again in liturgical assemblies and in recurring pentecostal outpourings. Note how quickly the petition of the apostles (vv. 29, 30) was answered.

5:1-5 **Ananias** and **Sapphira** are accountable for allowing Satan to fill their hearts with lies, and for breaking the trust and integrity of the Church. Their sin is not only keeping back possessions but deception (v. 4). Lying to the Church is equal to lying **to the Holy Spirit** (v. 3), the Spirit of truth.

5:19-21 Signs and wonders are given by God, not as ends in themselves, but to encourage and strengthen the apostles to preach the gospel (see 4:24–31).

5:30 Christ's Cross is often referred to as **a tree**, both because it is made of wood and because trees were often used to crucify criminals. There is also a deeper meaning in this term, for just as a living tree brought death to mankind through Adam (Gn 2:17), now a dead tree brings life to mankind through **Jesus**. See also Dt 21:23; Gal 3:13.

5:34 **Gamaliel** was a famous rabbi under whom Paul studied (22:3).

5:36-37 **Theudas** and **Judas of Galilee** were two of many who made false messianic claims. They raised the sword of rebellion against Rome and were crushed, as reported by the Jewish historian Josephus.

5:41 **Rejoicing**: See Lk 6:22, 23. Suffering is not necessarily a sign of God's displeasure, as thought by many Jews (see Lk 13:1–4; Jn 9:1–3). Rather, Christians accept persecution joyfully, knowing that the rewards of the Kingdom far outweigh any sufferings on earth. See also Rom 5:3–5.

6:1 **The Hebrews** here are Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who spoke Aramaic. The **Hellenists** were Greek-speaking Jewish Christians from other parts of the Hellenized world who had settled back in Jerusalem. St. John Chrysostom notes that this complaint shows a lack of order among the multitude of believers, even though the neglect was not malicious. Thus, the difficulties facing the Church arose not only from outside, but also by dissension from within.

6:2-4 The term **disciples** in Acts generally refers to all believers, and not only to **the twelve** apostles. While the ministries of **the word** and of serving widows are both important, they cannot be performed by the same people and still receive the proper attention. Thus, the Church develops diversified ministries. In the Orthodox Church to this day, the bishops and presbyters are called to focus on **prayer** and **the ministry of the word**, with the other ministries being accomplished by the deacons and the laity. Note that the servants to be chosen must not only be spiritual, but full of the **wisdom** necessary to manage the **business** they are called to do (v. 3).

6:5-6 While the multitude submitted the names of the seven deacons (v. 5), the apostles were the ones to ordain them (v. 6). Thus, the synergy between laity and clergy is demonstrated in the selection of Church leaders. It should be noted that there is disagreement among the Fathers as to whether these men held the liturgical office of deacon, or whether this diaconate was more service-oriented. In either understanding, they nevertheless received this office by ordination.

6:7 **The number of disciples multiplied greatly**: This growth only happens when three great pillars of church life are fully in place. These pillars are (1) worship (v. 4), (2) evangelism (v. 4), and (3) charity (v. 3). Furthermore, this growth happens after the external and internal struggles have been addressed. **The priests** here were Christian converts who had been Jewish priests; they had not necessarily been ordained to the priestly ministry within the Christian Church after their conversion.

6:9 **Freedmen** were Jews who had been formerly held captive under the Romans, often because of rebellion.

6:11 This charge is brought against Stephen because in Christ, the liturgy and Law of the OT are fulfilled, and are thus changed and transformed (Heb 7:12). To those who do not believe in Christ, these changes are blasphemous.

6:14 The charge that Jesus would **destroy** the temple was leveled against Him at His trial (Mt 26:61) by false witnesses. This was a misinterpretation of two of His sayings: (1) “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (Jn 2:19)—referring to His own body; and (2) His prophecy of the destruction of the temple (Lk 21:6, 20). This prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70, when the Romans destroyed the temple as punishment for a Jewish rebellion.

6:15 Those who become one with Christ receive this divine radiance revealed in Stephen's **face**. This is a preview of the glory all believers will share in the age to come (2Co 3:18). See also Ex 34:29–35.

7:1 Stephen does not answer the **high priest** directly, but uses the charges as the context for his preaching. As with Peter's sermon on Pentecost (2:14–40), Stephen preaches Jesus Christ based on the OT, showing how the Jews consistently missed the purpose of God's dealings with them due to their hardness of heart (v. 51).

7:6 **Foreign land**: Egypt (See Ex 1–12).

7:8 **Circumcision** identified each male as being adopted into the community of Israel, and as being a true descendant of Abraham.

7:19 Pharaoh's order to destroy the Hebrew **babies** (Ex 1:22) prefigured Herod's attempt to kill Christ by destroying all the infants in Bethlehem (Mt 2:16). As Moses was preserved from death in order to deliver Israel from bondage, so also Christ was preserved in order to save the world through His Passion and Resurrection.

7:30 This **Angel of the Lord** is the Son of God Himself, before He became Man. *Angel* means “messenger” and is a term used for the pre-eternal Christ as the Word of God, the One who speaks to the people (see Is 9:6). Note that this Angel speaks with the voice of the Lord (v. 31) and declares Himself to be God (v. 32).

7:33 The place of God's revelation is **holy ground**, for God's presence makes creation to be holy. Church buildings are included in this sanctified space because God's revelation comes to the faithful there, and God's presence is experienced through the sacraments there.

7:38 The **congregation** of Israel under the Old Covenant was a type or picture of the New Covenant Church. Just as the Israelite congregation journeyed with **the Angel**, now the Church journeys toward the Kingdom in the presence of Christ.

7:47-50 **The Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands**: This does not mean that God was not present in the temple. Rather, it indicates that God's presence is not *limited* to a specific temple, but dwells in every soul that receives Him.

7:51 Israel resisted **the Holy Spirit** by neither accepting God's plan for them nor receiving His correction through the prophets. The contemporary Jewish leaders continued to resist the Holy Spirit in their opposition to Jesus and to His disciples.

7:55-58 Stephen's vision of the enthroned Christ is seen by his opponents as the ultimate blasphemy, which carried the penalty of stoning (Lv 24:16). **Saul**, a participant in Stephen's martyrdom, was a great persecutor of the early Christians. He would later be called by Christ to be His apostle and would become the great Christian missionary, Paul of Tarsus (see 9:1–22).

7:59-60 In imitation of his Savior (Lk 23:34), Stephen offers his soul to God and prays for the forgiveness of his enemies.

8:1 In the Liturgy of St. Basil, we proclaim God as one who “makes the evil to be good.” In other words, God uses the sins of man for good and holy results. Here, the scattering of the disciples during this **persecution** led to the spread of the gospel to other areas. St. Stephen is sometimes called the Protomartyr (or “first martyr”), as he is the first believer to be killed in the name of Christ.

8:5-13 **Philip** the deacon (6:5) is the first to evangelize Samaria with the gospel of Jesus Christ, bringing both teachings and healings. The eager reception by the people (v. 12) is due in part to the foundation laid by St. Photini, the Samaritan woman of Jn 4, who brought news of the Messiah before His crucifixion (see Jn 4:39).

8:9 Being a sorcerer and dazzled by Philip's healings, **Simon** converted for reasons other than faith. He would later try to buy the power to work miracles (vv. 18–24), and according to tradition, he afterwards returned to his magical arts and was a bitter enemy of the Church.

8:14 The unity of the Church is shown by new communities being under the authority of and in communion with the church of **Jerusalem**. In the Church to this day, all communities in a given area are united under the authority of a local bishop, who is in communion with all the other bishops of the Orthodox Church.

8:16-17 Baptism and chrismation (lit. “anointing for the reception of **the Holy Spirit**”) were considered two distinct sacraments from the beginning. The phrase **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus** should not be understood to mean that the Trinity was not mentioned at the time of baptism. “Do not imagine that because the names of the Father and the Holy Spirit are sometimes omitted when the Apostle speaks of baptism that the invocation of their names has been omitted” (BasilG). Sometimes the Bible speaks of baptism in the Holy Spirit and sometimes of baptism in Christ to emphasize certain points. Always “we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (BasilG; see Mt 28:19). Specific reference to baptism in Jesus Christ was not intended to neglect the Trinity, but to distinguish Christian baptism from John's baptism of repentance (see 19:1–5).

8:22-24 Faith must be accompanied by a total change of life or it is worthless. **Simon** believed on a certain level (v. 13), but he was not justified, because he was **poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity**.

8:27 Eunuchs were men who were castrated, whether by birth defect, disease, or mutilation, and were often employed to guard women of nobility. This **eunuch** had a thorough knowledge of Judaism and was likely a Jewish proselyte (convert).

8:29 Only those who are mature in faith can hear and discern the promptings of **the Spirit** (JohnChr). Those of lesser faith are prompted more directly by words and angels.

8:30-31 Because the Scriptures have a specific, God-given meaning (2Pt 1:20, 21), it is impossible to truly understand them apart from the Church, for apostolic interpretation is held in the consciousness of the Church.

8:32-33 This passage from Isaiah is prayed by the presbyter as he prepares the bread for the Divine Liturgy.

8:35 Again, the OT is the foundation for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ (see 2:14–40; 7:1–53). Such is the power of the OT that if anyone “would apply himself to the study of the prophets, he would need no miracles” (JohnChr).

8:36-39 From the beginning, baptism in **water** (v. 36) and faith in Christ (v. 37) are both essential for entrance into the NT Church. The apostolic pattern of conversion in Christ is hearing, believing, and baptism.

9:1, 2 **Saul** persecutes Christians under the legal structure of Judaism; as such, he is charged to arrest Jewish Christians, but has no authority over Gentile Christians. Christianity became known as **the Way** based on Christ calling Himself “the way” (Jn 14:6), and on the fact that following Christ is not simply a momentary decision or the observance of outward religious practices, but a whole way of life.

9:4 To persecute either Christians individually or the Church generally is to persecute Christ Himself, for they cannot be separated (see Mt 25:40; Eph 5:23, 30).

9:5 **Goads** are spikes used to prod farm animals. The term is sometimes used as a metaphor for the wisdom or promptings of God (Ecc 12:11, “pointed sticks”). Here Christ is declaring the futility of fighting against divine truth.

9:8 Saul's blindness illustrates Christ's teachings on spiritual blindness (Jn 9:39). As long as Saul saw things from his own perspective, he was spiritually blind. Only by having his earthly vision taken away does Saul become capable of truly seeing Christ in glory and truth. This action also drives Saul to submit to the Church for baptism.

9:11 The Orthodox Church of Antioch continues an unbroken succession to this early Damascus Church and to this day is headquartered on **the street called Straight**.

9:13 **Ananias** was likely one of Saul's targets for arrest in Damascus. He served as first bishop of that city.

9:15 That Saul was God's **chosen vessel** does not mean that he had no free will in the matter. Rather, it indicates that God had selected Saul, knowing that he would freely accept and be capable of doing the work set before him.

9:18 Note that even though Saul had a direct revelation of Christ and believed in Him, he still submitted to baptism in the Church. The **scales** falling from Saul's eyes illustrate that those under the Law remain ultimately blind until they encounter and receive Jesus Christ.

9:23-25 The former persecutor is now persecuted (see also 5:41).

9:29 These **Hellenists** were not Christians, but Greek-speaking Jews who rejected Christ (contrast 6:1).

9:31 This is the first mention in the Book of Acts of **churches** in the plural, showing that the Church is not invisible, but consists of visible local communities united in faith, doctrine, worship, and authority.

9:32 The term **saints** refers to all Christian believers, for all who believe in Jesus Christ with their whole heart and are sanctified by the Holy Spirit are by definition saints. The later use of the term *saints* for holy people who lived particularly exemplary lives and who are canonized (or glorified) by the Church does not undo this primary meaning. **Lydda** is about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem.

9:34 **Peter** brings Christ's healing to a paralytic in a manner similar to Jesus healing the paralytic in Jn 5:1–15. The healing power of **Jesus the Christ** continues in His Church to this day.

9:35 **Sharon** was a region north of Lydda along the Mediterranean seacoast. The signs the apostles worked convinced many people who **turned to the Lord**. These signs prove the mercy and power of God, thus confirming the gospel and leading people to repentance.

9:40 Peter's raising of **Tabitha** from the dead parallels Christ's raising of the synagogue ruler's daughter (Mt 9:22–25).

10:1 With this chapter, a whole new period in church history begins. Initially composed of Jews and then Samaritans (8:5–25), with the conversion of **Cornelius** the Church begins its dramatic growth among the Gentiles.

10:2 “Fearer of God” was a formal designation for a Gentile who followed precepts of the Jewish religion but had not yet become a proselyte, or full convert. Two things characterized the devotion of Cornelius: he **gave alms generously** and he **prayed**. His devotion did not make Him a Christian, but His prayers and alms were accepted by God (v. 4) and prepared him for conversion to Jesus Christ at the preaching of Peter. Even good people need Christ!

10:3 The **ninth hour** is 3:00 p.m., one of the traditional hours for liturgical prayer for both Jews and early Christians. These hours of liturgical prayer were prayed by both the Jewish Christians (e.g., Peter in v. 9) and Gentile Christians (e.g., Cornelius here). This practice continues in the Orthodox Church today (see 3:1 and note).

10:7 Cornelius's obedience to God shows the true state of his heart, for it is those who not only hear but also do the will of God that are the true believers (Mt 7:21; Rom 2:13; Jam 1:22).

10:14-15 Peter's resistance shows the difficulty with which the Jews let go of the Law. God's commandment here is first a declaration that the Old Covenant dietary laws are fulfilled and thus no longer in effect (see Mk 7:19). More importantly, this vision revealed that the Gentiles, who were considered unclean by the Jews, are **cleansed** by the blood of Christ and are equal partakers of the Kingdom (see v. 28). This vision thus prepared Peter to receive Cornelius (vv. 17–48). Finally, this also teaches us that God desires to receive everyone into His Church, regardless of heritage, social class, or past sins, for all are one in Christ.

10:33 Cornelius and those with him are eager **to hear**, for “faith *comes* by hearing” (Rom 10:17), and faithful and devoted people still need to hear the gospel.

10:34-43 Peter's focus is on the saving work and power of Jesus Christ, His death and Resurrection, and how He fulfilled the word spoken by the OT **prophets** (v. 43).

10:35 Justification is not merely a one-time event, but a dynamic, ongoing process. In addition to faith, two conditions are given here: God accepts whoever **fears Him and works righteousness**. This does not deny justification by faith, but demonstrates clearly that justification is not by faith *alone* (Jam 2:24).

10:38 It was in His humanity that Jesus was **anointed** by the Holy Spirit, for Christ possessed the Holy Spirit from all eternity before the Incarnation. Note also the core faith in the Trinity: God the Father, together with His Son **Jesus** and **the Holy Spirit**, are co-operational in the salvation of mankind.

10:44 The giving of the **Holy Spirit** prior to baptism is something the Church had not seen before (v. 45). This unusual occurrence is a sign that God has accepted the Gentiles, and that baptism is not to be denied them.

10:48 **To be baptized** is of monumental importance. Even after the household of Cornelius had believed and received the Holy Spirit, baptism was still essential. The Book of Acts clearly teaches the crucial importance of the great sacraments—baptism (see also 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36–38; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16); chrismation, or the sacramental reception of the Holy Spirit (2:38; 8:17; 9:17; 19:6); the Eucharist (2:42, 46; 20:7; 27:35); and ordination (6:6; 13:3; 14:23).

11:2 **Those of the circumcision** were Jewish Christians who insisted that circumcision and the rest of the OT Law must continue to be observed even by Christians in order to receive salvation (see 15:1; Gal 2:12). These Jewish Christians also advocated separation from Gentiles.

11:13 **Call for Simon**: The need to be received into the apostolic Church is indisputable. Even those who have direct revelations of Christ in the Holy Spirit are invariably directed to the apostolic Church (see also 9:6–18; 11:22). For it is in the Church that the unity and fullness of Christ are experienced, and the words of salvation (v. 14) are proclaimed without alteration.

11:17-19 The evangelization of **the Gentiles** brought a significant amount of conflict to the early Church. Even though Christ had commanded the apostles to preach the gospel universally (1:8), it took a while for this to be put into practice. Much debate would come over what requirements from the OT Law, if any, these Gentile Christians would have to follow (see ch. 15).

11:20 **Hellenists** here refers to actual Greeks, not to Hellenistic Jews (contrast 6:1). The Church in **Antioch** was instrumental in bringing numerous Gentiles to **the Lord Jesus**.

11:22 Two key truths are revealed in **Barnabas** being **sent out** to **Antioch**: (1) an apostle is sent, but does not work in isolation from the Church (v. 23); and (2) the church in Antioch needed the seal of apostolic authority to be integrated into the universal Church (see note at v. 13).

11:25 In seeking help Barnabas reveals humility, a recognition of his own limitations, and his communion with and dependence on the other apostles.

11:26 Two key elements of early church practice included (1) the eucharistic assembly and (2) the teaching of the gospel. That **the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch** is more than just historical fact. It demonstrates that Christ's command to preach the gospel among the Gentiles was first fully realized in Antioch. “It was there for the first time that men were accounted worthy of that name” (JohnChr).

11:27 These **prophets** are Christian believers within the Church who have the gift of prophecy (see 1Co 12:29; 14:3, 29; Eph 4:11).

11:28-29 This **great famine** took place in AD 44–51, beginning in Judea and spreading to Greece and Italy. The principle of giving, **each according to his ability**, is one that continues in the Church to this day.

11:30 The **elders** (lit., “the bearded ones”) are the presbyters, or priests; they are the clergy ordained and put in charge of the local churches by the apostles who established them (see 14:23). As to the orders of the ministry, bishops (the apostles) are first mentioned in 1:20 (see note). Deacons appear in 6:2–6. Here is the first reference to presbyters or priests.

12:1-9 **Herod** Agrippa is the grandson of Herod the Great, who tried to kill Jesus as an infant (Mt 2:16). Herod Agrippa ruled as king in Palestine under Rome in AD 41–44. The dates of his reign determine the period in which **James** was **killed** (v. 2) and **Peter** was imprisoned (v. 3). James was the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred. This event reveals that by the year AD 44, there was growing popular displeasure against Christians.

12:3 The **Days of Unleavened Bread** mark the Passover period, and thus the commemoration of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.

12:5 The power of intercessory prayer **by the church** on behalf of its leaders is evidenced by Peter's release from prison (v. 10).

12:9-11 Peter's initial confusion (v. 9) and subsequent understanding (v. 11) about his release from prison show that God's works are not always clear to us while they are unfolding. But in hindsight His purpose often becomes clear.

12:12 **John whose surname was Mark** is St. Mark the Evangelist, who would compose the Gospel of Mark. He would later become a coworker with Paul and Barnabas (v. 25; Col 4:10) and still later with Peter (1Pt 5:13).

12:15 **It is his angel** shows not only that the early Christians believed in angels, but that each person is assigned one. To this day in the Liturgy of the Orthodox Church, we pray “for an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies.” (See Mt 18:10.)

12:17 This **James** is the “brother” of the Lord (Gal 1:19; see also note at Mt 12:46–50), not the apostle of the twelve, for that James had already been martyred (v. 2). By this time, James is bishop of Jerusalem (see 15:13; 21:18). **The brethren** are the Christians of the Jerusalem Church.

12:21-23 The death of **Herod** reveals a deeper spiritual meaning: all who seek or accept unworthy praise are taking that which rightly belongs to God alone.

12:24 The enemies of God cannot stop the spread of **the word of God**.

13:1 **Manaen** was raised with **Herod** Antipas (39–4 BC), the Herod who slaughtered the infants in Bethlehem (Mt 2:16). Manaen was one of the early Christians with noble family connections.

13:2 **Ministered** (Gr. *leitourgounton*) literally means "performed liturgical acts." It is the same root word from which "liturgy" is derived. This phrase would be more accurately translated, "as they performed the liturgy to the Lord and fasted." Liturgical worship did not originate in Antioch. Its roots are in ancient Israel. Saul and Barnabas, who came from Jerusalem, taught the Antiochian Christians—among other things—true worship (11:22–26). Note too that fasting and liturgy are inseparable. It is in the midst of this liturgy that the **Holy Spirit** speaks. **Separate** means "to set apart for special service."

13:3 **Laid hands on them** is a reference to the sacrament of ordination (see note at 10:48). While contemporary Orthodox practice is usually to ordain no more than one person to a specific rank at a given liturgy, here was a case of multiple ordinations. Note that even Saul (Paul), who had a direct call to serve from Jesus Christ (9:1–6; 2Co 12:1–4), still had to experience ordination in the Church.

13:9 This is the first use in Acts of the name **Paul** for Saul. No particular significance is stated, but it was not the result of his conversion as many have suggested, for he is still called Saul for quite some time after his conversion. Paul is a Roman name, and Saul is a Hebrew name. Many Jews of this time had two names, one Jewish and another Greek or Roman. Paul may have begun to favor his Roman name out of humility (*Paul* means “little”), or because his ministry was now becoming more focused on the Gentiles. St. John Chrysostom suggests that the name change was the result of ordination (vv. 2, 3), just as Christ gave Simon the new name Peter (Mt 16:17, 18; Jn 1:42).

13:11-12 The **hand of the Lord** acts not to inflict punishment for punishment's sake, but to bring repentance and conversion—which proves fruitful in this case of **the proconsul**. This is the first recorded instance of conversion to Christ of a high Roman official.

13:14 **Antioch in Pisidia** was in Galatia, and should not be confused with Antioch of Syria, from which Paul and Barnabas had just been sent.

13:17-41 Paul preaches Christ based on His fulfillment of OT events and prophecies (see note at 8:35).

13:23-24 The heart of Paul's message is: (1) Christ is the promise and therefore the fulfillment of the Jewish faith; (2) Jesus is the **seed** of David, and thus fulfills his office as the true King of Israel; and (3) Jesus is the One **John** the Baptist **preached**.

13:26 The **family of Abraham** refers to the Jews, while those **who fear God** refer to Gentile believers; thus, salvation is proclaimed to all mankind.

13:27 Paul consistently presses the point that if the OT is properly understood, it is clear Jesus is the Messiah. Even the Jewish leaders' rejection of Jesus **fulfilled** these prophecies (Ps 2:1, 2; 118:22, 23; Is 53:1–9).

13:38-39 In addition to Christ's death and Resurrection, two recurring themes in apostolic preaching are (1) the **forgiveness of sins** (v. 38) and (2) no one is **justified by the law of Moses** (v. 39).

13:45-46 Many of **the Jews** reject the teaching that salvation is for all people, so Paul and Barnabas now **turn to the Gentiles**. This pattern continues throughout Acts: the gospel is preached **first** to the Jews, God's chosen people, then to the Gentiles (Rom 1:16).

14:1 **Iconium**: The capitol of Lycaonia in Asia Minor between Antioch and Lystra. An interesting second-century account tells of a man from Iconium who went to meet St. Paul. Paul had been described to him as being “a small man in size with meeting eyebrows, a rather large nose, bald, bow-legged, but strongly built, full of grace, who at times seemed to have the face of an angel” (from *The Acts of Thekla*).

14:2 **Unbelieving** could also be translated “disobedient.” It is from the common Greek verb *apeitheo*, meaning “to disobey.”

14:4 See Mt 10:34–36.

14:5 The inner resistance to repentance is so strong that many would rather deny the wonders of God (v. 3) and destroy His messengers than look inward and change.

14:11-13 This unfitting praise by **the people** was “a contrivance of the devil” (JohnChr), an attempt to lead the people to a new idolatry and to tempt Paul and Barnabas to pride.

14:15-17 While Paul preached Christ to the Jews using the OT (13:17–41), here he presents the Lord to these Gentiles from the perspective of creation (see also 17:22–26). In this way, he uses a starting point most accessible to his hearers.

14:18-19 The people's immediate change from worshipping these apostles to persecuting them shows a mob mentality, and that a faith based solely on the miraculous (vv. 8–11) is fickle, weak, and easily shattered.

14:20-21 Leaving town in the face of persecution shows wisdom, not lack of faith (Mt 10:23). The short reference to **Derbe** does not imply a short stay, for **many disciples** were made before these apostles departed again.

14:22 Part of the apostolic calling is making new disciples, while an equally important part is strengthening those who already believe. It would be an empty gesture for the Church to convert someone and then leave him to struggle on his own. Instead, the believers' **souls** must be guarded and continually nurtured.

14:23 **Elders** are presbyters (priests) ordained by the apostles to nurture and lead the churches they established (see note for v. 22). The word translated **appointed** (Gr. *cheirotoneo*) means “to ordain by the laying on of hands.”

15:1 See 11:2; Gal 2:12.

15:2 This brewing **dispute** concerning the relationship between the OT Law and Christianity (v. 1) came to a head and had to be settled before it divided the Church completely. The Church has never been free from disputes and dissensions, but nevertheless has maintained a way to resolve them: in council. The meeting of bishops in council, with the participation of **elders** (presbyters) and knowledgeable laymen, continues to guide the Church to this day.

15:6-29 This is the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, about AD 49, a precedent of tremendous importance for the government of the Church. The Orthodox Church is sometimes known as “the Church of the Councils,” for it continues the practice of solving disputes and coming to a consensus through councils. This council progresses through the stages of assembly (v. 6), testimony (vv. 7–12), decision (vv. 13–21), and adoption (vv. 22–29).

15:7-12 Peter gives his testimony after **much dispute** (v. 7); he stresses how God has worked among the Gentiles, and then Paul and Barnabas do the same. The emphasis of all three apostles is that God has already shown them the answer and He must not be opposed.

15:13-21 Note that even though Peter is present, **James**, being bishop of Jerusalem, presides at this council (see note at 12:17). He interprets the testimony in light of the Scriptures and finds that Simon Peter's testimony is in agreement with the OT **prophets** (v. 15). Thus, James makes his decision by recognizing the consensus of the apostles in light of the Holy Scriptures. When James declares, **I judge** (v. 19), he does not mean “I think” or “In my opinion”; rather, he is making the final decision. Nevertheless, this verdict is not merely his own opinion, but a summary of the testimony of the council.

The four prohibited acts (v. 20) reflect both qualities of Christian behavior and minimal requirements of the OT Law. Some interpreters understand **blood** to mean eating blood (Lv 17:14); others, such as St. John Chrysostom, understand this to mean murder, the shedding of blood.

15:22-29 While James makes the definitive decision, it is not valid until it is adopted by not only the council, but **the whole church**. This apostolic letter is an early form of church canon.

15:28 **It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us** does not indicate an equality between God and man. Rather, it emphasizes the unity between God and the Church and the way in which the Holy Spirit works in and through holy councils. The Church strives to limit canons to only those that are truly essential, in order to lay upon the faithful **no greater burden than** . . . **necessary**.

15:37-40 **The one who had departed**: See 13:13. This dispute shows that Christians can be plagued with disagreements concerning details and can even separate physically without falling from communion with one another. This particular dispute was eventually resolved, and John Mark later rejoined Paul (see 2Ti 4:11).

16:1 This **Timothy** would become one of the chief co-workers of Paul, would be the recipient of two of Paul's epistles, and would later follow the apostle John as bishop of Ephesus.

16:3 Since Timothy is partly of Jewish heritage, **Paul** has him **circumcised** to accommodate Jewish sensibilities. In the case of Titus, a Gentile, Paul refuses to do this on dogmatic principles, reaffirming that believers do not receive salvation through the Law (Gal 2:3).

16:4 **Decrees** translates the Greek word *dogma*, which includes not only decrees but official teachings. The Church preserves her dogmas, or doctrines, as delivered by the apostles, and these essential teachings are never up for negotiation.

16:6, 7 Though no indication is given in the Scriptures why Paul was **forbidden by the Holy Spirit** to preach in these places, St. John Chrysostom likens this to the way a hunter will underfeed his dogs before a hunt in order to increase their hunger for the prize. Likewise, these people were not yet hungry for the gospel, and thus God delays the gospel being preached in their presence until a desire for Him can be cultivated.

16:10 The use of **we** indicates that Luke (the author of Acts) has joined Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Troas. This is the first of several uses of *we* in Acts, indicating that Luke was an eyewitness to many of the events he recorded.

16:13 The place for **prayer** was usually a synagogue, though in Philippi there were few Jews. Thus, this may have been a private home or gathering place by **the riverside** for lack of an actual synagogue.

16:14 **Paul** is the church planter *par excellence*, and his work remains the model for building churches. He starts with people already attuned to God and expounds for them the fullness of the gospel message (see note at 8:35). **Lydia**, the first convert in Europe, was a well-to-do businesswoman with a large home sufficient to host the Christian missionaries.

16:16-18 Exorcisms in the name of Christ are part of apostolic ministry. Notably, every baptismal service in the Orthodox Church begins with an exorcism to expel Satan from having any further influence over the new believer. Though the demon declared the truth through this **slave girl**, nevertheless, she needed to be free to accept Christ on her own, and Paul could not endure to see her tormented any longer. Furthermore, impure praise from God's enemies is not acceptable (WSir 15:9; see note at Lk 4:41).

16:20 Paul's accusers here care little for religion, but they use religious prejudice against the **Jews** to retaliate for their financial loss.

16:25 Being persecuted unjustly for Christ leads **Paul and Silas** to joy rather than sorrow (Lk 6:22, 23). Their **praying and singing hymns** prepares the other **prisoners** for conversion later than night.

16:27 **Was about to kill himself**: A jailer who let prisoners escape would be subject to cruel torture and execution.

16:30 The jailer's question, “**what must I do to be saved?**” implies he has already heard his prisoners proclaiming “the way of salvation” (v. 17) and their praying and singing (v. 25). The miraculous earthquake (v. 26) and Paul's concern for the jailer's life (v. 28) strengthen his faith and lead to his conversion.

16:33 **All his family** would include not only his wife and children, but any servants as well (see note at v. 15).

16:37 Note that **Paul** does not appeal to his Roman citizenship in order to escape punishment for Christ, which he could easily have done. Rather, he uses his citizenship to have additional opportunities to proclaim the gospel (see also 22:22–30).

17:1 The largest and most important city in Macedonia, **Thessalonica** was very cosmopolitan, possessing an excellent harbor and superior commerce. With the flow of goods, communication, and people to and from the city, word of what was happening there spread quickly, and the church there became highly influential (1Th 1:8).

17:2-3 **Reasoned** (Gr. *dialegomai*) does not mean engaging in rational debate, for the proclamation of the gospel is not about winning intellectual arguments. Rather, this term indicates speaking or conversing about truths, ideas, or things that have been witnessed (note how this term is used in 20:9). The English word “dialogue” comes from the same root. **The Scriptures** are the OT writings (see notes at 8:35; 13:17–41).

17:4 **Devout** as used here is a synonym of “God-fearing.” It was used to designate a Gentile who followed the precepts of the Jewish religion, but had not yet become a proselyte or full convert (see 10:2).

17:7 The trumped-up charge that Christians claimed **another king—Jesus** is reminiscent of the charges brought against Jesus of being a political king. Instead, Paul was proclaiming the Kingdom of God, with Jesus as King (see 14:22; 19:28; 20:5).

17:9 **Security**: A deposit of money held as a bond to encourage Jason to uphold public peace in the future.

17:13 Though unwilling to search the Scriptures to see if Paul's message is true, as the Jews in **Berea** did (v. 11), **the Jews from Thessalonica** were willing to travel the 60 miles to Berea to stir up the crowds against Paul.

17:14 **Brethren**: The new Christians.

17:17 In freethinking Athens, Paul moves beyond **the synagogue** and makes open contact with Gentiles **in the marketplace**.

17:18 Both the **Epicurean and Stoic philosophers** believed that fulfillment could be achieved in this life through emotional calm and impassivity. However, they pursued this aim differently. The Epicureans pursued pleasure, while the Stoics renounced it.

17:22-31 Paul consistently preaches Christ from a starting point familiar to his hearers. To the Jews, he preaches from the OT (vv. 2, 3). To these Gentiles, he uses one of their own altars to proclaim Christ (v. 23) and emphasizes: (1) God is Creator of all; (2) God is the giver of life; (3) God desires all people to seek Him; (4) repentance is a way toward God; (5) God is Judge of all; and (6) God raised Jesus from the dead. (See also note at 14:15–17.)

17:32 **The resurrection of the dead** is the point at which some Gentile philosophers react negatively, while the other aspects of Paul's speech go unchallenged (see previous note). This rejection is due to the Platonic view that the body was a prison for the soul and unworthy of salvation.

18:6 Shaking out his garments was a sign of God's judgment. Quoting the OT (2Kg 1:16; Ezk 18:13), Paul declares the fulfillment of his responsibility and these Jews' own accountability for their rejection of the gospel message.

18:12 **Gallio** was governor of Corinth and Achaia in AD 51–52, which firmly dates Paul's first visit to Corinth.

18:18 The vow Paul makes is likely a form of the Nazirite vow (Nm 6:1–21) given in thanksgiving for deliverance from danger.

18:21 **God willing** underscores Paul's constant reliance on God and the continual submission of his own plans to God's (see Jam 4:13–17). The coming feast was either Passover, which became the Christian celebration of Christ's Resurrection, or Pentecost, which became the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit (see 20:16). Note there was already a budding liturgical “calendar” among the apostles, revealing their deep desire to gather in remembrance of the great Christian feasts.

18:24-28 Two outstanding qualities characterize Apollos: (1) He is **fervent in spirit**, and (2) he is humble. A fervent person can be useful to God even if he is not yet well taught. Apollos apparently was not yet in the Church, but still spoke **boldly in the synagogue** (v. 26). His humility is shown in that he submits to correction by two tentmakers, one of whom was a woman—offensive to most educated men in his culture. **Aquila and Pricilla** displayed great decency and wisdom: they did not correct Apollos publicly, but rather **took him aside** privately.

19:1 **Ephesus** was the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor, a large, magnificent city. Paul remained there for at least two years and three months (vv. 8–10). Because of this city's influence, churches were formed in almost every neighboring city and town within those three years. The seven churches in Revelation 2; 3 are all in this area.

19:2-4 **Repentance** (v. 4) is good, but apart from **Christ Jesus**, it does not secure salvation. Repentance is enough to stay people from sin, but it cannot restore us from corruption. Only the Incarnation of the Son of God has the power to overthrow both sin and its subsequent corruption (AthanG). Thus, a person needs to be joined to Christ in baptism and the sustaining power of the **Holy Spirit**.

19:8-10 On the term **reasoning** as it occurs in vv. 8, 9, see note at 17:2, 3. Again Paul follows the pattern of first preaching to the Jews and then moving to the Gentiles (see 13:45).

19:11-19 The miracles performed here follow those performed by Christ and show that Christ lives and works through His followers. Of particular significance is the way physical objects (**handkerchiefs and aprons**, v. 12) become instruments of grace when touched by people of great faith. That God works wonders both through His saints and through created objects shows that creation itself is being renewed. (For other examples of objects bestowing grace, see 5:15; Nm 21:8, 9; 4Kg 13:20, 21; Mk 6:12, 13; Lk 8:41–48; Jn 9:6, 7.)

19:26 Being dynamic and vital, the Church has an impact on every culture in which it exists, bringing both conversion and opposition. Note that Paul, a man without wealth or political status, influenced **almost all Asia** by his simple proclamation of the gospel. St. John Chrysostom emphasizes that this fact alone demonstrates God's hand was upon him.

19:27 The **temple of . . . Diana** (Gr. *Artemis*), goddess of the hunt, was one of seven wonders of the ancient world because of its size and exquisite beauty. In the center of the temple was a statue of Diana, which the people there believed Zeus had sent down from heaven (see v. 35).

19:29 **Gaius**, from Asia Minor (20:4) is perhaps the same person mentioned in Rom 16:23 and 1Co 1:14. **Aristarchus** is a Thessalonian (20:4; Col 4:10).

19:33-34 **Alexander**, who was **a Jew**, attempted to prevent the Jews from associating with the Christians and to turn the anger of the crowds against them.

19:37 Apostolic preaching does not blaspheme other people's gods. Instead, as simply as possible, it presents the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

20:4 Paul never took missionary journeys alone, but always a team **accompanied him** and together they raised up local leaders.

20:7-12 **The first *day* of the week** was Sunday, the Lord's Day of Resurrection, the Church's customary day to celebrate the Eucharist. Worship on the Sabbath ceased with the passing of the old covenant. **To break bread** means to celebrate the eucharistic Liturgy. While teaching and preaching are vital, the weekly Eucharist is always the culmination of the Lord's Day assembly.

Note the unified order of liturgical worship here. After gathering on the Lord's Day, the first part of the Liturgy focuses on the proclamation of the word, with Paul giving his lengthy sermon (v. 7). The second part of the Liturgy consists of breaking the bread, or Holy Communion (v. 11), followed by the agape feast, or community meal and fellowship. This pattern of liturgical worship continues in the Church to this day.

20:9 St. John Chrysostom upholds **Eutychus** as an example for young believers. While some young people stay up into the night for the purposes of entertainment, drunkenness, or immorality, this **young man** tried to remain awake in order to hear **Paul** preach the gospel.

20:10 See 4Kg 4:34.

20:16 That Paul desired to be with the other apostles in **Jerusalem** for **Pentecost** shows that a liturgical calendar based on sacred days was already being kept in the early Church. In that tradition, the Orthodox Church to this day keeps a calendar of special feasts, fasts, and celebrations (see 18:21 and note).

20:17-38 From this meeting, we learn: (1) the Church in Ephesus is living and growing; (2) it has already developed a permanent pattern of sacramental leadership in the **elders** (lit. “presbyters”; v. 17) and the **overseers** (lit. “bishops,” v. 28); and (3) the threat of false teachers and heresies arising both within and without the Church is already present (vv. 29, 30).

20:19 Paul reminds his hearers of the **tears and trials** he faced in Ephesus in order to strengthen them for what is to come. Paul's persecutions in Ephesus (Asia Minor) were among the worst he faced (1Co 15:32; 2Co 1:8).

20:26 **Innocent of the blood** does not mean that Paul has no responsibility to others. Rather, it means he has fulfilled his responsibility with regard to preaching the gospel, and their rejection of Jesus Christ is their own. (See 18:6 and note; see also note for v. 28 below.)

20:28 **Blood** in biblical language signifies life. Christ shed His own blood on the Cross to redeem His people and establish His Church.

20:29-32 Because trials come from both outside (v. 29) and inside (v. 30) the Church, the only protection is with God Himself (v. 32). It is in God and not in man that the Church is sustained and thrives.

20:33-35 While St. Paul teaches the clergy should be supported materially by the faithful (1Co 9:1–23), he has not required this for himself from the communities he established. This allowed Paul to preach all the more freely and took away any opportunity for others to question his motives (compare with Neh 5:14–19; 13:10–13). The quotation from Christ (v. 35) is not recorded in the four Gospels (see Jn 21:25).

21:9 Prophecy is the gift of the Holy Spirit to speak the will of God authoritatively. This gift is given to both men and women (see 1Co 11:4, 5), and many holy women were prophets, including Miriam (Ex 15:20, 21), Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Huldah (4Kg 22:14), Isaiah's wife (Is 8:3), the Virgin Mary (Lk 1:46–55), and Anna (Lk 2:36–38).

21:10-11 This same **Agabus** is mentioned in 11:28. Here he prophesies in the style of the OT prophets, using an ordinary object to illustrate his message (see Is 20:2; Jer 13:1).

21:17-25 Paul meets with **James**, the bishop of **Jerusalem**, who reports that many Jews have set themselves against Paul. While neither Jews nor Gentiles find salvation through the Law, James encourages Paul to demonstrate his compliance with the Law in order to gain the trust of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

21:25 See 15:1–29 and notes.

21:28 For a Gentile to enter prohibited precincts of the **temple** area was a serious offense punishable by death.

21:31 Since **Jerusalem** is under Roman occupation, disturbances like this were held in check here by the Roman **commander**.

21:36 **Away with him** was the same cry shouted against Jesus at His trial (Jn 19:15).

21:38 **The Egyptian**, according to Josephus the historian, claimed to be a prophet and led a group of 30,000 to the Mount of Olives, telling them the walls of the city would fall at his word. Felix, the Roman governor, attacked the rebels and killed thousands of them, but this false prophet and some of his followers fled into the wilderness.

22:1 **Brethren and fathers** is a respectful form of address (7:2), showing that Paul treats even his enemies with courtesy.

22:3-21 Again, Paul begins at a point with which his listeners would be familiar, first identifying with his hearers before trying to bring them to a new understanding (see note at 14:15–17). Paul is careful to mention his relationship with important Jews (**Gamaliel**, v. 3; **Ananias**, v. 12) both to calm and to identify with this crowd at the temple.

22:16 In apostolic understanding, being **baptized** is directly equated with the cleansing of **sins** (see notes at 8:36–39; 10:48).

22:17 **Trance** means a religious ecstasy or a direct vision of God's divine energy.

22:21-22 In spite of Paul's attempts to moderate the wrath of these Jews, the mere mention of **Gentiles** sets them off against him, demanding his death.

22:24-29 **Scourging** was a form of punishment in which prisoners were bound in a stooping position with their hands tied behind their backs, and whipped with leather lashes that had bits of bone or metal in them. This punishment could be inflicted on non-citizens either to extract a confession or as a penalty for a crime. For **Roman** citizens, it could only be used if the person had been found guilty of a crime.

22:30 God often works through secular leaders (see 23:23). Here, the civil authority wants to interrogate Paul more thoroughly, which allows Paul all the more opportunity to proclaim faith in the Resurrection.

23:1 This **council** is the Jewish Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish governing body.

23:2 **Ananias** was **high priest** during AD 47–59. He was a hard and violent man who was later assassinated by his own people at the start of the Jewish war against the Romans (AD 70). Paul has thus far said nothing offensive to the Jews, and St. John Chrysostom calls the order to strike Paul “shameless” and without cause.

23:3-5 Paul accuses Ananias of the ultimate hypocrisy: violating the Law while posing as one who judges according to the Law. Paul nevertheless shows great respect for the holy office of the **high priest** even though the officeholder himself was contemptible.

23:6 Knowing that his interrogators will not hear him impartially, Paul intentionally divides the council against itself by bringing up the heart of the Christian faith: the **resurrection of the dead**.

23:8 **The Pharisees confess both**: Why is the word *both* used when three things are mentioned? According to St. John Chrysostom, **angel** and **spirit** refer to one entity or concept. Thus *both* refers to belief in the **resurrection** and belief in a realm of angels or spirits.

23:11 Paul receives comfort from **the Lord** in the face of the impending plot on his life (vv. 12–16), and a prophecy of both his preaching and his subsequent death at Rome. For the word **witness** can also refer to martyrdom.

23:23 God often works through secular leaders (see also 22:30). Here the commander (v. 19) protects Paul from assassination, which allows God's plan to unfold for Paul to preach in Rome (v. 11). **The third hour of the night** is 9:00 p.m.

23:24 **Felix** was the Roman **governor** from AD 52–59.

23:31 **Antipatris** was a town halfway between Jerusalem and Caesarea which had a military outpost.

23:35 **Herod's Praetorium** was a palace and fortress built decades earlier by Herod the Great. It was later taken over by the Roman governors as their official residence.

24:1 The presence of the **high priest** indicates the vigor with which the Jewish leaders sought Paul's destruction.

24:5 Since Paul has broken no Roman law, Tertullus the prosecutor tries to present Paul as a social agitator who could stir up trouble at any time. Roman authorities were very particular about keeping peace and order.

24:11 **Twelve days**: Part of Paul's defense is that he had not been in Jerusalem long enough to gather people and start a riot.

24:14 Paul again affirms the unity between Christianity (**the Way**) and God's promises in the OT (see 8:35; 13:17–41).

24:17 This is the only time Paul reveals that bringing **alms** was the main reason he came to Jerusalem, showing that charity is to be performed without drawing attention to oneself (Mt 6:1–4; see also Rom 15:25–28; 1Co 16:1–4; Gal 2:10).

25:3-4 Though Paul has now been in prison for two years (24:27), his Jewish opponents are still determined **to kill** him. **Festus** denies their request for a trial in Jerusalem, not so much to protect Paul as to underscore his own authority by having the trial at his headquarters in **Caesarea**.

25:7 Compare Mk 14:56, 59.

25:11 Perceiving that Festus might yield to the Jewish authorities, Paul appeals **to Ceasar**. It was the right of Roman citizens to be tried before the imperial tribunal in Rome. This course of events allows the Lord's prophecy that Paul would preach in Rome to be fulfilled (23:11).

25:13 **King Agrippa** is Herod Agrippa II, ruler of Galilee. He is the son of Herod Agrippa I (12:1–23), who beheaded James and imprisoned Peter, and a grandson of Herod the Great (Mt 2:1), who slaughtered the infants in Bethlehem. **Bernice** is Agrippa's sister.

25:18 **As I supposed**: Because of the turmoil and the pressure being placed on him by the whole Jewish council, Festus assumed that Paul must have committed some staggering crimes.

25:23 Again, the course of events allows for a large group of influential people to be exposed to the gospel message (see 26:2ff).

25:26-27 Paul's trial here is strikingly unusual in that there are no actual charges against him, yet there is already an appeal. As Festus would look incompetent sending a man to Caesar on appeal without any charges, this hearing has to be held in order to come up with a legal accusation (compare Jn 18:29–35).

26:10-18 This is the third account in Acts of Paul's conversion (see 9:1–8; 22:1–21 and notes).

26:25 The Greek word for **reason** (*sophrosune*) would be better translated “good judgment.”

26:26 **This thing was not done in a corner**: A proverb meaning something was done publicly and was widely known, here a reference to the Resurrection of Christ (v. 23).

26:27 **Agrippa** was of Jewish blood and familiar with the OT (v. 3). If he believed in the OT writings, he would have to take Paul's proclamation seriously.

26:32 Though not legally necessary at this point, Paul's appeal serves the advancement of the gospel in two ways: (1) it protects him from his enemies, and thus a teacher of the gospel is kept alive; and (2) it allows the gospel to be preached in Rome (23:11).

27:3 The term **friends** here refers to other Christian believers.

27:9 **The Fast** refers to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which falls in late September or early October.

27:10 **I perceive**: Paul gave a personal opinion (rather than a prophecy), in contrast to the professional opinion of the helmsman (v. 11), so that the others would listen to him later when the ship was being torn up (vv. 21–25). The fact that the voyage did not result in the loss of **lives** does not mean that Paul was wrong; rather, it indicates that if the natural order of things had not been superseded, men would have died. Instead, God intervenes, and the people are spared (vv. 30–34).

27:16 **The skiff**: A small boat or dinghy pulled by the ship, which could be used for expeditions to land.

27:17 **The Syrtis *Sands***: A sandbank on the north coast of North Africa.

27:18 **Lightened the ship** means throwing the most expendable cargo overboard to compensate for having taken on water in a storm.

27:31 Since Paul's earlier words had proven true (see v. 10 and note), the **centurion** was now inclined to trust **Paul**, resulting in all the people on board being **saved**.

27:35 Paul's actions express both the Jewish and Christian practice of giving **thanks to God** before a meal. This expression of thanks in the midst of a terrible storm teaches us to be thankful to God even when circumstances appear hopeless. It also helped those on the ship to have confidence in Paul and to be more inclined to listen to him. Note the high level of trust they placed in Paul, for even though there were so many people (v. 37), they threw out the rest of the food based on his words.

27:41-44 According to St. John Chrysostom, the destruction of the ship serves several purposes. It shows: (1) the severity of the danger, and thus the power of Paul's prophecy (v. 22); (2) that people are ultimately to depend on God rather than earthly things, for God saved the men when the ship was unable to; and (3) the importance of having holy people dwell among us, for they guide us to safety according to the will of God.

28:1 **Malta** is a small **island** south of Sicily.

28:2 **Natives** is literally “barbarians,” which simply means they were not cultured and did not speak Greek.

28:3 The apostle Paul does not cease to be a servant of others.

28:4-6 Though their understanding of God is flawed, these **natives** are deeply spiritual and on some level recognize God as being present everywhere, directing the course of human events. According to St. John Chrysostom, they have a far better understanding of God than worldly philosophers.

28:8-10 The natural kindness of the residents of Malta (v. 2) increased all the more as they saw the works of God being done among them.

28:11 The **Twin Brothers** of Greek mythology were sons of Zeus and were considered protectors of sailors.

28:12 **Syracuse** was a major seaport in Sicily.

28:13-14 **Brethren** are Christians. By AD 60, there were numerous churches scattered throughout the empire, including one in **Puteoli**. From this point, Paul's company traveled on foot.

28:16-17 **The Jews** had a strong and well-organized community in **Rome**. As was his custom in every city, Paul spoke first to the Jewish **leaders** concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ (see 13:45).

28:20 The **hope of Israel** means the resurrection, which Paul has made central in his preaching (see 23:6). **This chain** refers to his imprisonment under house arrest.

28:22 That Christianity was **spoken against everywhere** shows the tremendous influence it had already in Rome. The Jews in Rome were more open to the gospel than the Jews in Judea.

28:31 Paul's preaching finishes here where it began: proclaiming(1) the Kingdom of God and (2) **things** concerning **the Lord Jesus Christ**. These two interrelated subjects are still the content of the **preaching** and **teaching** of the Orthodox Church. **No one forbidding him**: Imprisonment did not stop Paul from bearing witness to Jesus Christ, for the gospel cannot be hidden (Mt 5:14). The story of the Acts of the Apostles continues through their successors in the Church to this day.

1:1-4 St. **Paul** is a **bondservant**, a slave to **Jesus Christ. Apostle**: one who is sent. **The gospel of God**: the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. This gospel fulfills what God **promised** in the OT (v. 2), which is realized in the Incarnation of the Son of God (v. 3). This gospel also reveals the Trinity, for it is from God the Father (v. 1), it concerns **His Son** (v. 3), and it is **according to the Spirit** (v. 4).

1:3 **Jesus Christ** is one Person with two natures: human and divine. His divine nature is from all eternity and is revealed in that He is both God's **Son** and the **Lord**. His human nature is revealed in His being **born of the seed of David according to the flesh**: He was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary while never ceasing to be God.

1:4 Christ's **resurrection** did not make Him the **Son of God**, but rather **declared** Him to be so. The truth of His divinity, which had been veiled from the world, is revealed fully in His Passion and Resurrection.

1:5 **Obedience to the faith** can mean either acceptance of the gospel of Christ itself, or the virtue of obedience practiced by those who believe in His name.

1:6 New believers are **called** by the Church to a life of faith. It is not up to us to create the Church, for the Church existed before us. Rather, we are called to enter the living historic Church **of Jesus Christ** as she exists today.

1:8-12 St. Paul shows a pastoral concern for the Roman Christians even though he was not the founder of the church at Rome. He thanks **God** for them (v. 8), prays **always** for them daily (v. 9), and longs to **see** them (v. 11).

1:11 Paul had not yet visited Rome when he wrote this letter. This epistle contains the core of apostolic doctrine essential for the foundation of a local community. For this reason, the Church reads Romans immediately following Pentecost, the season in which we celebrate the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the world.

1:13 Paul **was hindered** in coming to Rome because of his missionary work **among the other Gentiles**. Though Paul's personal desire was to go to Rome, he submitted to God's will by first accomplishing what God had planned for him in these other places.

1:14 **Barbarians** are literally “alien people,” here those not culturally **Greeks** (see Acts 28:2).

1:16 St. Paul is **not ashamed of the gospel of Christ**, thus setting an example for all believers (see Lk 9:26).

1:17 **The righteousness of God** is to be in a continuous state of communion with Him. This state of being right with God originates with God and is accepted by mankind in faith. **From faith to faith**: We first receive Jesus Christ by faith and then live in Him by that faith.

“The just shall live by faith” is one of the passages of the OT (Hab 2:4) most quoted in the NT. It shows the harmony between both testaments and summarizes the theme of Romans: faith is a way of life. The righteous (just means “righteous”) are those who not only believe, but live righteously in accordance with their faith.

1:18 **The wrath of God** is His righteous and holy judgment. It is not a loss of temper or self-control, but the revelation of His divine truth, love, and power confronting those who reject Him (see Mt 25:41–46; 2Th 1:6–10; 2:8).

1:20 All humanity can recognize “natural revelation,” that is, God's energy or **power** and His transcendence (**Godhead**), by simply observing the glories of **creation**. Thus, the rejection of God cannot be excused by the claim of ignorance, for even “the heavens declare the glory of God; / The firmament shows the creation of His hands” (Ps 18:2).

1:21 Humanity by nature worships. Some seek to worship the Creator, while others worship the creation. A brief definition of being fully human is giving glory and thanks to the true God. Those who refuse to worship Him become **darkened** in their **hearts**.

1:26-27 Homosexual behavior, **men with men,** is a **vile** rejection of God's order for creation. These **passions** are **against nature** and therefore spiritually devastating. **Error** means “delusion.”

1:29-32 While **sexual immorality** is not the only way man is given over to **unrighteousness**, it is often more destructive than other sins and thus receives specific attention here (see 1Co 6:12–20). Those who focus only on sexual sins fail to see that *all* sin separates man from God and leads to destruction. **Covetousness** is a sinful passion directly opposite the virtue of thankfulness—it is being unsatisfied with the blessings already received and having an insatiable desire for more. **Murder** also includes hatred towards another (Mt 5:21, 22). **Whisperers** are people who gossip. **Inventors of evil things** are those who cooperate with the devil to discover new forms of wickedness. Those who **approve** (v. 32) of sins such as homosexual behavior, greed, and rebellion against parents are as guilty as those who commit them.

2:1 Not only will the unrighteous experience God's judgment (1:18–32), so also will the self-righteous.

2:2-16 See the article, “The Basis of God's Judgment” in this chapter.

2:14-16 A Gentile is counted as a Jew—as one of God's people—when his **conscience** leads him to righteousness the way the law leads a virtuous Jew.

The law written in their hearts (v. 15) refers to a person's conscience. Because man's conscience is God-given, it has the same power to lead a person to God as the law does. According to St. John Chrysostom, those who are able to follow their conscience to God are more virtuous than those with the law, for they do not have the advantage of concrete instructions yet still desire to please God (however, see 3:1, 2).

2:17-24 Many Jews relied on knowing **the law** for their righteousness, when in fact they did not obey it. Knowing the law does not make one **a guide to the blind** (v. 19); it is keeping the spirit and heart of the law that makes one a guide to others.

2:25-27 **Circumcision** is an outward sign of **the law**, valuable only when accompanied by interior conversion and love for God. Those who are **uncircumcised** but virtuous will **judge** the circumcised.

2:29 The name **Jew** comes from “Judah,” which means “the Lord be praised.” A true Jew is one who seeks **praise** . . . **not from men but from God**. The goal of the legalist is to have praise from men; the goal of the spiritual person is to please God.

3:1, 2 While the Gentiles can find God through their conscience (2:14–16, 25–29), they are not better off than the Jews. The Jews have the advantage of the **oracles of God** (that is, the Law and the Prophets) to lead them all the more to God. The advantage to the Jew is pedagogical; they are taught more thoroughly and more precisely about God. Nevertheless, this advantage does not make the Jew any more righteous than the Gentile, for all are under sin (vv. 9, 23).

3:4 **Let God be true but every man a liar** means God remains faithful to His word and to His creation, while man is continually unfaithful to God.

3:10-18 These quotations from the OT speak to the questions Paul asks in vv. 1–9.

3:19 Since **the law** reveals sin, all the world is accountable **before God** by the very presence of the law.

3:20 **The law** cannot justify a person (that is, bring them into an ongoing state of communion with God) because that is not the purpose of the law, nor does it have that power. The purpose of the law is to reveal **the knowledge of sin**—that we have fallen from communion with God—in order to turn our hearts to repentance.

3:21-22 **The law** may be kept by obedience (Lv 18:5) and by faith (Dt 30:14). Obedience without faith cannot bring anyone to **righteousness**. Yet faith, even **apart from the law**, can bring a person to righteousness, because **Jesus Christ** supersedes the law.

3:23 The ultimate purpose of man's existence is to attain **the glory of God**. Even if a person were to keep the whole law, he would still **fall short** of that glory, because he would still be bound by death. The glory of God is both eternal righteousness and eternal life. Jesus Christ alone lived in completed righteousness, and He alone was resurrected from the dead. Therefore, He alone is the fullness of the glory of God, and we receive that glory in Him (see Jn 14:6).

3:24 **Being justified** refers to an ongoing state of righteousness and not merely to a one-time event. This justification requires a **redemption**: a sacrificial offering capable of (1) setting us free from sin and death, and (2) uniting us eternally with righteousness and life. In the OT, this sacrificial offering was prefigured by blood sacrifices—the killing of physically perfect animals for the temporal remission of sins (see Heb 9). Under the new covenant, Christ is the sacrificial offering that once for all eternally frees us from sin and death (Heb 10:14) and **by His grace** unites us with righteousness and life.

3:25 To propitiate means “to cover” or “to conciliate.” **Propitiation** refers to the mercy seat in the tabernacle where God was enthroned among His people (Ex 25:17–22). Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the blood of the sacrifice was liturgically sprinkled on the mercy seat in the holy of holies. This prefigured the covering of our sins and our reconciliation to God that was to come in Jesus Christ. Heaven holds the true mercy seat (Heb 9:23–26; 10:19–22), and Christ's blood was taken to heaven through His Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, thus reconciling us to God once and for all.

3:26 Ongoing **faith in Jesus** is the way mankind receives God's **righteousness**. Justification (being made righteous) by faith is not a one-time “not guilty” verdict, as some may teach. Rather, it is Christ living in us, and we in Him (Gal 2:20). Thus, to be justified is to be in communion with Jesus Christ in an ongoing, dynamic, and growing life with Him. The relationship between God and His people is one of Shepherd to sheep, Master to servant, and Father to an adopted child.

3:27-31 **The law** teaches us that: (1) Attaining righteousness through **works** alone is impossible (v. 27). (2) Righteousness is attained by **faith** and is a gift from God (vv. 27, 28). (3) God is impartial—Jews and **Gentiles** are justified on the same basis of ongoing faith in Jesus Christ (vv. 29, 30). There is "no difference" (JohnChr) between the terms **by faith** and **through faith** (v. 30). (4) By teaching justification by faith in Christ, Christians **establish** (or uphold) **the law** (v. 31), because Christ Himself fulfills the law (Mt 5:17).

4:1-5 Even **Abraham** experienced **righteousness** in the sight of God through faith, and this completely apart from works of the law, for the law had not yet been given. If this holds true for the Jews' founding **father**, it is true for all Jews. Because Abraham responded in **faith** to God's promise (Gn 15), he was **accounted** righteous, or justified (see note at 3:24). Only through faith in God can the **ungodly** be justified (v. 5).

4:6-8 Faith not only predated the law, it remained active during the time of the law. As revealed in Ps 31, **David** discovered what Abraham had known: being **forgiven** comes by God's mercy through repentance, faith, and humility, not by **works** of the law.

4:11-12 Because Abraham was circumcised as a sign of God's covenant, he is father to all Jews. Yet Abraham was living by **faith** when he was 75, but was not circumcised until he was 99 (Gn 12:4; 17:24). During this time of being uncircumcised, he was still righteous before God by faith; thus he is also the **father** of **uncircumcised** believers, the Gentiles. **Imputed** (v. 11) means “reckoned” or “rendered.” This term does not refer to a mere legal standing, but indicates that God's **righteousness** is actually given to mankind by grace. This righteousness transforms the whole person, internally and externally. Those who say God's righteousness is merely an external declaration or fiat that does not really become ours experientially miss the point and fall short of the truth. God's righteousness is a gift that indeed becomes our own, leading us to godliness (see article, “Deification” at 2 Peter).

4:13-18 **Righteousness** does not come through genetic or ethnic ancestry. Though **the law** requires one to become a Jew, this law only **brings about wrath** (v. 15). Why? Its purpose is not to save, but to make man aware of his sin or **transgressions**. True righteousness is based on God's **promise** (v. 14) and is received by **faith**. The righteous are those who receive God's promise in faith and not those **of the law** (v. 14), that is, those who are merely physical offspring of **Abraham**. The true **descendants** of Abraham are the believers, for he is the father of all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

4:25 Jesus died for the forgiveness of **our offenses**. If He had been a sinner, the law would have condemned Him as it did everyone else. But He is and has perfect love, and He is without sin. Thus, He perfectly fulfilled both the letter and the heart of the law, and the offering of Himself on the Cross is **our justification** (see note at 3:24).

5:1 **Faith** in Christ makes us **justified**, an ongoing state of communion with Him (see note at 3:24). Because of this ongoing communion, **we have peace with God** which is also ongoing. The Greek word *pistis*, here translated as *faith*, can also be rendered “faithfulness.” Faith is more than the conviction that something is true (Jam 2:19). Genuine faithfulness is continuous loyalty and obedience to God. Such faithfulness justifies a person through God's grace.

5:5 Christians ask, “How can I experience **the love of God** and pass it on to others?” St. Paul offers the answer here.

5:6 **The ungodly** are all of us. Because of sin, everyone stands in alienation from God, and we do not have the capacity to become righteous on our own. Because of God's love, **Christ died** for our sins to bring us the gift of righteousness.

5:10 Those who accept and appropriate Christ's love are **reconciled to God**, being restored to peace and communion with Him. God has not ceased to be our Friend, for He is unchangeable. We are the ones who have changed and thus need changing. So while we were still rebellious **enemies** of God, God was working in His love to restore us.

5:12 For Adam and Eve, **sin** came first, and this led to **death**. This death then **spread to all men**. The rest of humanity inherits death, and then in our mortal state, we all sin. Thus, all mankind suffers the consequences of Adam's “original sin.” However, the Orthodox Church rejects any teaching that would assign guilt to all mankind for Adam's sin. We indeed suffer the consequences of others' sins, but we carry guilt only for our own sins.

5:13 **Until the law** came, **sin** worked freely **in the world**. From Adam to Moses, people suffered from mortality and committed all manner of sin. They were accountable to God for their sin under natural law (1:18–21; 2:14–16). But without the written law, the seriousness of their sin often remained clouded. God gave the law to Moses to expose the magnitude of man's sin (see note at 4:13–18).

5:14 After **Adam**, our sin could not be said to be in the **likeness** of his sin, because only Adam's sin brought mortality to our race. Yet the law of sin and death **reigned** because man overwhelmingly continued to sin in rebellion against God. However, among both Jews and Gentiles, some kept the law of nature and the law of Moses on the basis of inner faith. Yet these still suffered the **death** that reigned over humanity. Adam is a **type**, a prefiguring or a foreshadowing of Christ as the head of humanity. As the first man, Adam caused death to reign in the human race. As the new and perfect Man, Christ brings eternal life to humanity.

5:15-17 Just as immortality is far superior to mortality, so also the **grace** of Christ exceeds the death we inherited from Adam. For by grace, not only is Adam's sin covered, but the sins of the whole world are covered as well. In other words, **justification** in Christ far exceeds **condemnation** through Adam (v. 16). As we all inherited Adam's mortality (v. 15), we shall all inherit Christ's immortality. This saving **gift** (v. 15) must be received through faith. Though all will be raised, some will be raised to eternal life while others will be raised to eternal judgment (Jn 5:28, 29).

5:19 **Many were made sinners** refers to man's subjection to mortality and becoming prone to sin. It does not mean that man inherits the guilt of Adam's sin, nor does it mean that our sinning is completely inevitable. However, the first thing damaged in Adam's nature was his will, and in our corrupted state, this weakened will is prone to falling into sin.

Christ has two wills, one human and one divine. His human will is totally and willingly subject to the divine will. Through Christ's obedience, healing is brought to man's human will. Therefore, **many** are **made righteous** and are able by grace to participate in God's righteousness. Indeed, many saints become so filled with grace that they pass extensive periods of time without sinning, for they allow the healing power of Christ to fill their human will.

5:20 **The law** was given as a temporary measure on God's part to reveal sin and to lead us to repentance and faith (Gal 3:23–25). Instead of decreasing under the law, **sin abounded** even more. This increase of sin amplifies our awareness of our fallen state and serves as an impetus to “*bring us* to Christ” (Gal 3:24).

6:1-14 Opponents of St. Paul twisted his summary of God's past dealings with humanity, and instead applied it to individuals. They accused him of saying, “Sin increases grace, so let us increase sin!” (3:8 paraphrased). This argument misses the fact that a person must be allied with one side or the other. If one is willfully living in sin, he cannot experience union with God. Even if grace is increasing, he is destroying himself, and for that he is responsible. Increase of grace honors God when its power leads us to become dead to sin.

6:2 To have **died to sin** does not mean our human nature has died. Rather, it means we are no longer held captive by it. We are to be immovable towards sin as something dead would be.

6:3-4 Freedom from sin is grounded in the sacrament of holy **baptism**. Ignorance of what happens when we are **baptized** is a great enemy. Through this ignorance, many are defeated in their battle against sin. What Christ accomplished on the Cross—an actual death to sin—baptism accomplishes in us: an actual death to sin and our liberation from its power. Because our baptism **into Christ** gives us power over sin, it is an exact likeness of His death. Baptism does not merely “stand for” this truth, but is itself our death to sin.

6:5 **United together** with Christ refers to being planted and growing together in Him, clearly implying the expectation of fruit. **In the likeness of His death** means baptism causes a real unity with Christ's death. **We also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection** is literally translated, “we shall be of the resurrection,” referring both to the new life of baptism in this world and to eternal life in the age to come.

6:6 **Knowing this** refers to our understanding that baptism is a reality, not merely an outward symbol. **Old man** does not refer to human nature as such, but to the power of sin in fallen man that once held sway over us. **The body of sin** is not the human body, but all iniquity. “Just as he calls the whole sum of wickedness ‘old man,’ again the wickedness which is made of the different parts of iniquity he calls ‘the body’” (JohnChr). Thus, it is *sin itself* that is **crucified with** Him, and not some kind of “sinful nature,” for sin is what we do, not what we are.

6:7 A physical body, once it is dead, makes no response to its environment. So we who died with Christ in baptism must not respond to the promptings of sin, for we are **freed from sin**.

6:8 When bondage to sin has **died**, it must be replaced with something else. For those who are baptized, the replacement is Christ's resurrected life. **We shall also live with Him** means both a righteous life on earth after baptism and eternal life in the Kingdom to come.

6:10 Christ was never under the control of death or sin, yet He chose voluntarily to die **to sin** for our sake. In Christ, we too can voluntarily die to sin through baptism. As Christ's death is **once for all**, so also for us there is never a second baptism. Constant repentance renews our baptism as we grow in our relationship with God.

6:11 A shift in emphasis comes here, from what Christ has done for us (vv. 1–10) to our response to Him (vv. 11–14). **Reckon** is an action verb, relating to faith: we lay hold of our union with Christ and thereby lay hold of every virtue.

6:12 The command to **not let sin reign** proves that sin's power over man is not absolute. Rather, it is something we allow by our free will. Man's will was the first aspect of human nature damaged through sin, and therefore it is the first thing Christ heals. His healing allows us to make true choices against sin. While sin continues to plague humanity, those who are baptized into Christ have the power to overcome sin through their union with Him. **Lusts** refers to all the passions of the flesh and spirit that make demands on the will. In Christ, a person can resist and defeat these lusts through righteous exercise of the will.

6:13 **Instruments** (lit. “weapons of war”) are in this case various aspects of human nature, especially the body. Though God created our members good, we may use them to serve either of two rulers, **sin** or **God**. For those who live out their baptism, the choice is clear.

6:15 Having completed his references to baptism, Paul initiates another discussion: Christians are no longer to sin as those who sinned during the period of the law. Those **under law** did not have the power of baptism. The law exhorted people to battle sin; the **grace** of baptism gives people the power to battle sin and win.

6:16 Though we choose our master freely, we are always a slave to someone or something. Only **obedience** to God leads us to **righteousness**, making us heirs of salvation rather than **slaves** of sin (8:14–17).

6:17 Baptism frees us from being **slaves of sin** if we continue in obedience to God. The **form of doctrine** refers to the apostolic teachings of the Church (see 2Ti 1:13).

6:19 **Human *terms*** are the images of slavery by which Paul expresses the fallen human condition, for God does not want us as slaves but as children (see 8:14–17). If previously we served sin so well, certainly we are now empowered to serve **righteousness** even more effectively.

6:21 While one is enslaved to sin, one does not know enough even to be **ashamed** of it. But having received the gospel, one realizes how shameful the life of sin is and can clearly see its end: **death**.

6:22 Slavery to God, initiated by baptism, is actually freedom (see note at v. 19). Only this freedom can bear the fruit of **holiness** and **everlasting life**.

6:23 **Wages** are something earned; thus death is earned by man through his sins. Eternal life is never earned, but is a **gift**. No human actions, no matter how good or noble they may seem, can earn **eternal life**, for it is only through the grace and love **of God** that life everlasting is given to us.

7:1-4 Paul has affirmed that justification, our ongoing communion with God, comes by faith in Christ and not by following the works of **the law**. These verses use examples from the law to prove our ultimate need to be **free from** the law. Under the Law of Moses, only death releases a person from marriage (v. 2), while divorce does not (v. 3). Likewise, Christ's death brings about our death to the law so that we can be **married** to **another**, that is, to Christ (v. 4).

7:5-6 **Flesh** here refers to unredeemed man under the power of sin and death. In this condition, **sinful passions** are awakened when man faces the demands of the law (see vv. 7–10). **Aroused by** is more properly translated “aroused through.” The law merely brings to light our bondage to sin; it does not cause us to sin.

Christian believers, on the other hand, live in a new mode of existence by the power of the Holy Spirit. As we have been liberated from the ways of the flesh, in our marriage to Christ (v. 4) we bear fruit to God. **Letter** (v. 6) refers to the Mosaic Law.

7:7-12 **The law** was intended to reveal the depth of humanity's sin so that we would turn to Christ in repentance and faith. The law also had the effect of increasing rebellion and sin in many people. This is not because the law itself is bad, but because unredeemed humanity craves to do what is forbidden.

7:13-17 The passions driving us to **sin** get even stronger when we fight against them on our own, and the clarity of right and wrong found in **the law** increases the passions all the more. Only Christ's healing power can save us in this battle.

7:17 Man is not sinful by nature. The Orthodox Church rejects any teaching that man has a “sin nature” or that man's nature is depraved to the core. This passage clearly shows that **sin** is something distinct from our nature. Because we are created in the image of God (Gn 1:26), there is an indelible goodness in our nature that can never be undone. While we can become immersed in sin, we know that it is still not part of our nature, but a foreign force **that dwells in** us. Thus, sin is what we do, not what we are. See also v. 20.

7:18-23 Paul clarifies the distinction between the will of the soul and the will of the **flesh**. Because the soul is reborn in baptism, it can strive to follow **the law of God** (v. 22). Yet our flesh remains corrupt in this world, and it often fights against our will to do good.

7:24 This question is answered in 8:1–4. The term **body of death** refers to our corrupted state in this world; it does not imply that the body is evil, for the body is good. In this world, however, it remains in need of final redemption.

7:25 The conclusion is far from hopeless, for the final blame is not to be found in man's nature, nor in **the law**, but in **sin** itself.

8:1 Repentant sinners will have **no condemnation** if they remain **in Christ Jesus** through faith and baptism and if they **walk** in the power of **the Spirit**.

8:3-4 **The law** of Moses failed because of the weakness of human nature. The term **sinful flesh** does not imply our nature is inherently sinful, but that our flesh has become corrupt and given over to all manner of sin (see 7:17). Christ **fulfilled** both the law and human nature by becoming **flesh** Himself. Christ did not sin, for He came in the **likeness** of our sinfulness, but did not succumb to it. In doing so, He **condemned sin** itself, destroying its power over mankind. In Christ, human nature has final victory over sin.

8:5-8 The **mind** here is far more than intellectual capacity. It is the highest knowing faculty of the soul (Gr. *nous*), the spirit and understanding behind all we think and do. Thus, it follows that repentance literally means to have a “change of mind,” a change not only of intellect but of all our being.

To be carnally minded (v. 6) means to choose to have one's whole being captivated by sin. This decision against God puts us at **enmity** with Him (v. 7), and thus we have no lasting peace. **To be spiritually minded** means to accept liberation by **the Spirit**, so that one's whole being—body, mind, and soul—becomes directed by and is led to the Holy Spirit.

8:9 **The Spirit of Christ** declares the intimacy between the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son becomes incarnate by the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:20) and in turn sends the Holy Spirit from the Father into the world (Jn 15:26; 16:7).

8:10 Though **the body *is* dead** (it is mortal) **because of sin**, the Holy **Spirit** gives new **life**, both now in this world and in the promised final resurrection.

8:13 The gift of new life requires the reception and cooperation of the believer through faith and obedience to God. We are His children (v. 14) as He leads us by the power of **the Spirit**. In this new life, **the body** becomes the follower, not the leader. In choosing the way of the Holy Spirit, we **put to death** sinful passions expressed through our thoughts, words, and deeds.

8:14-17 Christians are adopted as **children of God** (v. 16) and therefore **heirs** (v. 17) of the same Kingdom Christ inherited when He ascended in the flesh into heaven. This standing is given by grace; what Christ inherited by His own nature, we receive as a gift. Our **adoption** (v. 15) is a fact of our baptism. Yet it rests on us to receive the love of this adoption by continuing in faith and turning constantly toward God. The experience of this adoption allows us to address God with the intimate term **Abba**, which means “Papa” (v. 15; see Gal 4:5–7).

8:15 **The spirit of bondage** refers to a return to the law. Israel feared God as a slave would fear a strong master. Under the new covenant, we are no longer slaves but by **adoption** are part of God's family, the Church.

8:17 **Joint heirs with Christ** reveals that everything Christ is by nature, the Father gives to us by grace. See the article, “Deification” at 2 Peter.

8:18 Note the contrast between **sufferings** and **glory**. As Christians, we have God's glory **in us**, though His glory is not fully **revealed** (see also Col 3:3, 4). In the Orthodox Church, the icon of the Incarnation, the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, is on the left side of the door to the altar, while the icon of Christ as Ruler is placed on the right side. Thus we proclaim that Christ has come first in the Incarnation and will come again in glory as Ruler and Judge. We learn that we live in a tension between our present and future experience of the Kingdom, one marked by both sufferings and glory.

8:21 **Glorious liberty** is the resurrected life **the children of God** will experience in the age to come. Then our wills, free from the **corruption** of the flesh, will be at liberty to follow God completely.

8:24 **Hope** is more than wishful thinking, more than optimism. It is settled confidence concerning things to come. This hope is so sure that we can patiently endure suffering in anticipation of Christ's Kingdom.

8:26 Believers **do not know** how to **pray** effectively. The guidance of **the Spirit** in prayer aids in overcoming **our weaknesses** by teaching us how to pray and by interceding directly for us when our own prayers are inadequate. The Fathers identify three stages of prayer: (1) saying the words of prayers; (2) saying the words with meaning and concentration; (3) praying without the words, when one is so filled with the Holy Spirit that human words become inadequate, the highest form of prayer.

8:28-30 The Scriptures and man's experience both bear witness that **all things work together for good to those who love God**. Setbacks and difficulties there will be, but God turns them into “light affliction” (2Co 4:17, 18; 12:9, 10). God has foreknowledge of all things.

Predestined must not be understood as overpowering man's free response, for man's free will is a gift from God. Nor does the term apply to individuals. Rather this term (which can also be translated “preordained”) means that God has a specific calling for His people from before the beginning of the world. “God does not will evil to be done, nor does He force virtue” (JohnDm). Based on His foreknowledge, God assures, or predestines, that those who will choose to love Him will be **conformed to the image of His Son**, that is, **glorified**.

8:31-39 These verses summarize all that has preceded in the Epistle to the Romans. Because of (1) God's love for us, (2) His victory over sin and death, and (3) our life in His Kingdom, we can withstand all the assaults of the world and the devil and arise from these attacks as **more than conquerors** (v. 37). We conquer sin not by our own strength, but only through God.

8:38-39 **Angels**, **principalities**, and **powers** are spirit beings of various angelic ranks. While nothing external can **separate us from the love of God**, we can choose to reject Him by our own free will. Nevertheless, even those who remain in eternal rebellion against God are still loved by Him. Even our rejection of God cannot take away His love for us.

9:1-5 St. Paul had many opponents who accused him of failing to love his fellow **Israelites**.

9:6-13 Jewish unbelief is illuminated by Paul's description of a twofold Israel: one spiritual and the other physical. God is faithful to all Israel, but the issue is this: Who is a true child **of Abraham**?

It is not Abraham's **children of the flesh** (v. 8), his natural or biological offspring, who are his true children. If this were the case, the children of Hagar (Gn 16:4, 15) and of Keturah (Gn 25:1–4) would be Israelites. Furthermore, not all those in Isaac's line are Israelites; otherwise Esau and the Edomites would be. Abraham's true children are the **children of the promise** (v. 8), that is, those who are **in Isaac** (v. 7), which means faithful believers. Because Isaac was miraculously conceived through God's promise, which Abraham believed (Gn 18:10–15; 21:1–7), it is those who continue in this faith who are Abraham's true offspring.

9:10-13 Both **Jacob** and **Esau** were born of **Isaac** and **Rebecca**, yet only Jacob is considered the seed of Abraham. Jacob's position is clearly not the result of mere human lineage, but is secured because he is the child of the promise. Both Jacob and Esau were called to salvation, for God loves all equally. **Esau I have hated** (v. 13): This does not mean God did not love Esau. Rather, God foresaw the wickedness Esau would choose and hated it. Likewise, God foresaw Jacob's faith and obedience and knew Jacob would serve His purposes.

9:14-18 At Mt. Sinai, some of the idolatrous Jews perished while others survived (Ex 32; 33), though God does not explain why He made this distinction. Likewise, **Pharaoh** opposed God, and thus God used his arrogance to accomplish the divine will. The actions of God's will are neither capricious nor vindictive, but are based in divine **mercy** and **compassion**. Even though mankind does not understand the basis of God's decisions (see Is 55:8, 9), we trust His grace and righteousness, upon which our salvation rests.

9:19-21 Man can have no complaint against God's sovereignty any more than **clay** can question **the potter** about how he fashions it. When we recognize our standing before God, the objections vanish (see Job 38:1–42:6). It is not only impossible to answer questions of this kind (vv. 22–24), but it is presumptuous to raise them (JohnChr).

9:22-24 After first instructing his hearers how presumptuous it is to question God's sovereign will (vv. 19–21), Paul nevertheless gives an answer. The proof that God's judgment is based in mercy is shown by how long He **endured with much longsuffering** those who were in rebellion against Him. In other words, God gave his enemies every benefit and every opportunity to repent, though they deserved none. In this way, His **wrath** is justified and the **glory** He grants believers is complete. **Vessels of wrath** are unbelieving Jews and rebellious foreign nations (see vv. 14–17). The **vessels of mercy** are believing Jews and Gentiles.

9:25-29 The OT prophets had foreseen God's sovereignty and man's salvation in several ways: (1) He makes the outcasts (Gentiles) to be His **people** and **sons** (vv. 25, 26); (2) He saves only a **remnant** of the Jews (vv. 27, 28); and (3) He forbears to utterly destroy the unbelieving Jews on account of the faithful remnant (v. 29).

9:30-33 The first answer to the question of Jewish unbelief was from God's standpoint: His sovereign will (vv. 6–29). Here, Paul gives the second part of the answer, which is man's free response: faith. The Gentiles who had been unconcerned with **righteousness** now attain it through **faith** in Christ. God mercifully overlooks their former unrighteousness because it was practiced in ignorance (Acts 17:30). By contrast, the Jews fail to attain even the **righteousness** of **the law**, for they do not pursue the law **by faith** but by **works** (v. 32). Because they only saw the letter of the law, they missed both its spirit and its profession of Christ, the Lawgiver, who was to come. Because they saw the letter of the law as being greater than its fulfillment, Christ becomes their **stumbling stone** (v. 32).

10:1-3 Paul wishes nothing but good for **Israel**, but their **zeal** is not based in truth. If they had merely been **ignorant** in their rejection of Christ, then their offense would certainly be pardonable. However, theirs was more than ignorance, for it was not that they simply did not know Christ, but they were bent on establishing **their own righteousness** rather than submitting to **the righteousness of God**. In other words, they trusted in themselves and their works and rejected the way of faith when it was presented to them.

10:4 **Christ** has always been the way of salvation in both testaments. The law prepared people for Him, while His coming was **the end of the law** and the fulfillment of God's **righteousness**.

10:5-13 The way of **the law** and the way of **faith** are contrasted. Whereas mere obedience to the law has always failed, faith in Christ brings salvation. Faith does not doubt (vv. 6, 7), but trusts in Christ. Faith makes God **near** to the believer (v. 8). Faith transforms the whole person, **heart**, soul, mind, and body (vv. 9, 10).

10:9, 10 This confession and belief are more than simply mental acknowledgment that something is true. Rather, this belief refers to placing one's whole trust in the resurrected Christ and living with Jesus as one's **Lord**. Only the giving of the whole self to Christ is belief **unto righteousness**.

10:11-13 Belief and **confession** (vv. 9, 10) were both OT themes, Isaiah emphasizing the faith of **the heart** (v. 11), and Joel emphasizing the confession of **the mouth** (v. 13). Both prophets teach that grace and faith are universally offered to all people.

10:14-21 From 9:1–10:13, Paul left the Jews with no excuse for rejecting the gospel. Paul insists that God fulfilled His part completely, giving the Jews extraordinary opportunities to come to faith. God sent His message throughout all creation; Israel heard but did not believe (vv. 16, 18, 21). Therefore, God turned to the Gentiles, who heard and believed (vv. 19, 20). The Jews demanded signs, yet God had given them the continual sign of fulfilled prophecy.

11:1-10 Jewish unbelief in Christ raises the question of whether or not **God cast away His people**. The answer is, **Certainly not!** If He had done so, not one would have been saved. But Paul himself was being saved (v. 1), and there is a **remnant** (v. 5) of Jews who believed. Elijah prefigured this remnant when he thought that he **alone** followed God (vv. 2–4). As only a few heeded Elijah in his day, so only a few heed Jesus and His apostles. God's grace saves the willing. Israel is not willing, for she **seeks** (v. 7) righteousness on her own terms through works of the law and not through faith in Christ. **God has given them a spirit of stupor** (v. 8) as a result of their refusal to believe, not as the cause of it.

11:11-15 Though Israel has **stumbled** by her refusal to believe in Christ, it is not necessarily inevitable that she should **fall** permanently. The **jealousy** she feels toward **the Gentiles** has the potential to lead Israel to repentance and faith. Furthermore, Israel's fall has led to the conversion of the Gentiles, thus renewing the opportunity for Israel's own **salvation**.

11:16-22 Paul addresses the Gentile believers, reminding them not to be puffed up against the Jews, for (1) Israel's heritage is **holy** (v. 16); (2) the Gentiles have been **grafted in** to an existing **tree**, and thus owe gratitude toward the Jews (vv. 17, 18); and (3) the Gentiles are just as much at risk of falling away from grace through **unbelief** as the Jews (vv. 20, 21).

11:24 The **tree which is wild by nature** refers to the pagan and godless ways of the Gentiles before their encounter with Christ. The **cultivated olive tree** refers to the nation of Israel, which had been prepared for Christ through the law, and the remnant of the Jews that believed in Him.

11:25-27 The **mystery** which explains the unbelief of so many Jews is that **the Gentiles** are now being united to the remnant of the faithful Jews, and thus this body of believers together form the true Israel. (In Gal 6:15, 16, St. Paul calls those “in Christ Jesus” the “Israel of God,” which is the Church.) This true Israel is not based on biological ancestry but on faithfulness to God's **Deliverer**, the Messiah. In this understanding, **all Israel will be saved** (v. 26).

11:30-32 Paul reminds the Gentiles that they have no superiority over the Jews, for both Jew and Gentile were subject to **disobedience**, and both receive salvation only through God's **mercy**.

11:36 This benediction ends the first part of Romans, which has laid the theological foundation of our communion with God in Christ and clarified the relationship between Jew and Gentile in Christ. From this point forward, Paul uses this doctrinal base to address pastoral issues facing believers in Rome in their attempts to live out this faith in daily life. **Forever** is literally “unto ages of ages.”

12:2 A faithful relationship to God changes our relationship to the world. To be **conformed to this world** is to stand for and pursue the world's values and pleasures. **Mind** (Gr. *nous*) here is more than the intellect; it is the highest faculty of human nature, encompassing the mind and heart. With this faculty one sees and comprehends God.

12:3-8 We live out our faithful relationship to God in the Church, the body of Christ, with humility (v. 3), sober thoughts (v. 3), and proper use of spiritual **gifts** (vv. 4–8). **Ministry** requires functioning together in diversity. The seven gifts mentioned here (vv. 6–8) should not be understood to be exhaustive; rather these gifts represent all the infinite gifts God has given to us.

12:9-16 While a believer is justified by faith (see article, “Justification by Faith” at ch. 5), this faith is intimately united to good works, which are genuine expressions of true faith. Faith and works cannot be separated.

12:19-21 **Vengeance** is perfect and righteous judgment, which only God is capable of carrying out. **Evil** is **overcome** only by **good**, which the Son of God Himself demonstrated on the Cross and which believers are called to emulate.

13:1-3 To defy the civil government is to defy God, for God works in and through **the governing authorities**. This principle holds true so long as the civil **ordinance** is not in opposition to God, but promotes **good works**. When civil rulers are in direct opposition to God, the believer must follow God (see Acts 4:19; 5:29).

13:4 Because the civil government is established by God, St. Paul calls a civil authority **God's minister**. He is responsible to protect those who are **good** and to execute punishment on those who practice **evil**.

13:5 Believers are commanded to **be subject** to civil authorities **not only** for fear of earthly punishment (**because of wrath**), but because they know that in obeying the authorities, they are obeying God (**for conscience' sake**).

13:12 **The night** is life in this world, and especially life under the influence of sin and evil. **The day** refers to the presence of Christ's Kingdom, both in the Church now **at hand** and fulfilled completely in the age to come.

14:1 In Orthodox Christianity, there are things that cannot be compromised, and there are areas of flexibility. God is gracious and allows diversity in **doubtful things** (v. 1), matters not related to essential doctrines and moral teachings. The **weak in the faith** are people who assign primary importance to secondary matters. The two examples of flexible areas given here involve food restrictions (v. 2) and the observance of liturgical calendars (v. 5), things which the weak might try to use to judge others or to divide the Church. In both cases, we are commanded to give flexibility to others, just as God Himself does (v. 3).

This passage is read on the eve of Great Lent, reminding the faithful that the main focus of the season is not on the details of fasting restrictions, but rather on overcoming passions of the soul (13:14).

14:7-10 Because **we are the Lord's**, we have no business judging others' practices based on our own ideas, prejudices, or cultural heritage. These things cause us to lose sight of the fact that we are united in Christ, who is our one Lord and Judge.

14:13-21 A mature conscience in Christ knows that no food is **unclean of itself**, and also knows it must use discretion so as not to be a **stumbling block** to others. We behave righteously to be (1) **acceptable to God and** (2) **approved by men** (v. 18).

14:22-23 Those who have strong **faith** can follow their conscience before God and avoid sin. According to St. John Chrysostom, those who are weak in faith may sin, not because the action is wrong in itself, but because in their hearts they think they are betraying God and proceed anyway. This action **is sin** because it does not come from that person's faith.

15:1-3 **Bear with** does not mean “to put up with,” but rather “to carry together” (see Gal 6:2). It is in imitation of **Christ**, who bore all of humanity's weaknesses, that the strong in faith lovingly and joyfully identify with the weaker believers.

15:4 The bounty of mankind's **hope** can be found in **the Scriptures**. It is through the witness of the Scriptures that we learn of the **patience** not only of Israel and the Church, but of God. Likewise, it is through the promises, victories, and spiritual struggles recorded in the Scriptures that we find true **comfort**.

15:9-12 From the OT Scriptures, Paul demonstrates the unity in Christ between Jew and Gentile that was foretold.

15:14-16 Paul recognizes that his lengthy letter to Rome—a church he did not found—is bold in teaching and counsel. He seeks to soften possible offense by expressing confidence in the Romans' own gifts, and by referring to his special commission from God to be the apostle **to the Gentiles**, including those at Rome (see 1:13–15; Acts 23:11).

15:16 **Minister** is literally “liturgist” (Gr. *leitourgos*); **ministering** is doing the work of a priest. **Offering** (Gr. *prosphora*) is a reference to the eucharistic liturgy, in which bread is **sanctified by the Holy Spirit**. Paul uses this imagery to speak of **the Gentiles** themselves, who are being offered to God as the Body of Christ and are sanctified through that offering, just as the bread is sanctified in the liturgy.

15:18 The fulfillment of both preaching and faith is righteous works done by those **obedient** to God.

15:20-24 Paul's missionary work involved preaching mostly in virgin territories (v. 20). While the Church in Rome had been flourishing for some time, **Spain** (v. 24) was unevangelized.

15:27 The Jewish Christians have passed on to **the Gentiles** the great gift of the gospel. In return, the Gentiles are bound to share their **material things** with them (1Co 9:11).

16:1, 2 **Phoebe** was a leading Christian woman who was both a deaconess (**servant** here is lit. “deaconess”) and involved in missionary work. St. John Chrysostom notes that Paul holds her in the highest esteem, as he names her first. “He has added her rank by mentioning her being ‘deaconess,’” and he recognizes “her as being a saint.”

16:3 **Priscilla and Aquila** were a married couple, Jewish business people, and Paul's coworkers (see Acts 18:18, 26).

16:7 **Prisoners:** We know of no imprisonment of Paul in Corinth, where Romans was likely written. According to St. John Chrysostom, Paul is not referring to literal imprisonment, but to his subjection to all kinds of persecution and afflictions (2Co 6:4–10).

16:17-19 Those who serve **their own belly** are either selfish people or those who caused **divisions** over dietary rules (see 14:1–6). **Simple** (Gr. *akakos*; vv. 18, 19) does not mean unintelligent, but rather innocent, trusting, and truthful.

16:22 While Paul is the author of ***this*** **epistle** (1:1), Tertius **wrote** it down as Paul's secretary. Paul frequently dictated his epistles to a scribe (1Co 16:21; Col 4:18; 2Th 2:17; Phm 19).

16:25-27 Dismissals in Orthodox services are patterned after scriptural benedictions such as this one by Paul. **Mystery** here refers to God's plan of salvation revealed in **Jesus Christ**. **Obedience to the faith** is essential for all believers. Before the celebration of the Eucharist, the Creed is recited by all the faithful to demonstrate a unity of faith. **Forever** (v. 27) is literally “unto ages of ages”—a frequent refrain in Orthodox prayers and liturgy.

1:1 Since Paul is **called *to be* an apostle** by **the will of God**, men cannot remove him as some were trying to do. A **Sosthenes** is also mentioned in Acts 18:17 as the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth. Probably this is he: there are stories of his spectacular conversion in early records, which also report that Sosthenes became bishop of Caesarea.

1:2 Despite disorder, disunity, and error among the Corinthians, the apostle still calls them **the church of God**, **sanctified in Christ**, and **saints**, those set apart to God. Baptized into Christ, united with Him, this Church by His mercy is one with the faithful everywhere.

1:3 **Grace** is God's unlimited, unconditional, uncreated love, freely given to those who do not deserve it. **Peace** is our reconciliation with God and with each other. “Peace to you,” found repeatedly in the OT, is the common everyday greeting then and now throughout the Middle East. “Peace be to you” in the Orthodox Divine Liturgy is connected to the reading of the Gospel, the kiss of peace, and the Lord's Prayer. Jesus gave to the disciples the gift of peace, which is the presence of the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:27; 20:19).

1:4 Nothing is so acceptable to God as our thankfulness for His grace, both to us and to others.

1:7 **Revelation** implies that although He is not seen, yet the **Lord Jesus Christ** is present even now, and then shall appear in glory. The Second Coming of Christ is a main point in Paul's teaching, for then our salvation will be clearly revealed and fully known.

1:4-9 Though he will later rebuke this church severely, Paul's assurance concerning their gifts and calling is sincere. For God's grace is given to the Church in every place, even in Corinth.

1:10 Here for the first time Paul rebukes the Corinthians, pleading with them in the name of the Lord to put away **divisions** and maintain unity in the church.

1:11 Chloe was a prominent woman who hosted the Corinthian church in her home and who faithfully reported these **contentions** to Paul.

1:12 **Apollos** was a learned Jew from Alexandria, Egypt, “mighty in the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24). Originally a follower of “the baptism of John” (Acts 18:25), he was taught more fully about Christ by Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus, and he later preached at Corinth, where some saw him as a rival to Paul. Tradition tells us Apollos became the first bishop of Crete (see Tts 3:13). Paul makes it plain that he and Apollos are partners in apostolic work and that Apollos would not approve of the factionalism in Corinth (3:4–6; 4:6; 16:12).

1:13 **Is Christ divided?** Or is the Church? The answer to all questions in this passage is *no*. One can leave the Church, but not divide it! Factionalism, however, brings great harm to the Church, for it seeks to give to the apostle a place only Christ should occupy (vv. 13–17). Many looked upon the apostles as teachers of philosophy rather than preachers of the Cross (1:18–2:5). The factious do not accept true wisdom, which is bestowed by the Spirit (2:6–3:4), and they misrepresent the apostles as rivals to each other rather than as fellow workers with Christ (3:5–23).

1:14 **Crispus** had been the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth (Acts 18:8). Converted through the preaching of Paul, then baptized, he was apparently succeeded as ruler by Sosthenes (Acts 18:17). **Gaius** was a resident of Corinth with whom Paul was staying when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans (Rom 16:23). The third epistle of John (see 3Jn 1) seems to have been directed to this same Gaius.

1:15-17 Paul's denial does not degrade baptism; he is simply emphasizing that baptizing is not his primary role. As an apostle, Paul's primary job is to **preach the gospel** (v. 17), teaching those seeking God to be baptized. The one who performs a baptism is God's instrument; the convert's loyalty must be to God alone.

1:17-25 **Wisdom of words** (v. 17) refers especially to philosophical thought and rhetorical devices. Such human wisdom by itself does not promote salvation or an understanding of how God works in the world and what He wishes us to do.

1:18 Why is the **message of the cross** . . . **foolishness** to unbelievers? “It is a mark of them that perish not to recognize the things which lead to salvation” (JohnChr). We who bear witness to Christ must not be discouraged when those outside of Him mock, for so did once even Paul himself. **Being saved**, present tense, refers to the process by which the Cross transforms us with the **power of God**.

1:22 To those who **request a sign**, the Church offers one: the Cross! The Cross is to be adored, for wherever the sign may be, there Jesus will be.

1:24 Since **Christ** is the **power** and **wisdom of God** the Father—the brightness of the Father's glory (Heb 1:3), the substantial and perfect Image of the invisible God—where He is, there is the uncreated and saving grace of God. His Cross restores man to immortality and stirs up desire for the things of heaven.

1:28 **The base things of the world** are “those persons who are considered to be nothing because of their great insignificance” (JohnChr). There is no such thing as a “no-account” Christian (v. 27; 2Co 12:9).

2:4-5 Great preaching is not with “swelling *words*” (2Pt 2:18) but with (1) the anointing of the Holy **Spirit** and (2) the dynamic of God's **power**.

2:6, 7 The **mature** (Gr. *teleioi*) are the “spiritual” (Gr. *pneumatikoi*) of v. 15. **Mystery** here is the gospel of the Kingdom (see Rom 16:25; Eph 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Col 4:3; 1Ti 3:9, 16), which neither angels nor any other creature knew before it was revealed by Christ, even though the Incarnation of the Son was God's plan from eternity for transforming creation. Moreover, that Gospel is hidden from those who perish (2Co 4:3). Those who will not believe do not grasp what is clear to the faithful.

2:8 The **Lord of glory** demonstrates that the dignity and honor of Jesus is that of God the Father Himself (Ex 24:16–18). The incarnate Son of God, who clothes Himself “with light as with a garment” (Ps 103:2), stood naked before human judges, receiving blows from hands which He had formed. The Lord of Glory, the Son of the Father, was crucified in His humanity (Acts 2:36). They crucified God!

2:9 Paul seems to have collected phrases from several passages (Is 52:15; 64:3; 65:17; Jer 3:16; WSir 1:10), though this may have come from an early hymn.

2:10-4 We come to know God's wisdom through the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit **knows the things of God** (v. 11), just as **the spirit of the man** knows what is in man. Note Paul's threefold classification of humanity:

(1) The **natural man** (lit. “soulish”; v. 14) is one not yet joined to Christ, unenlightened and unregenerate. For such people, divine **things** appear to be **foolishness** because they inquire into divine things by human and natural reasoning rather than receiving these by faith.

(2) The **spiritual** man (2:15) is filled with the Holy Spirit given at chrismation and is maturing in his knowledge of Christ.

(3) The **carnal** man (lit. “fleshly”; 3:1) is the person who, while in the Church, has his mind set on earthly things, still trying to satisfy personal wants and selfish desires.

We reveal our spiritual condition by our relationships with other Christians. The lesson is plain: Growth in our fellowship with God demands living in the overcoming strength of the Holy Spirit, who brings unity to the Church and great victory over petty, egocentric squabblings.

2:12-15 Enlightenment from God in itself is beyond all words, and even beyond evaluation by other men (v. 15). Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit speaks through spiritual people words that truly reflect the unspeakable knowledge of faith. This language of faith in turn leads spiritually minded people to know God better, although it baffles the **natural man** (v. 14).

2:16 The **mind of Christ** is enlightenment by the Holy Spirit (v. 10). He brings those chrismated into communion with Christ and others of like mind in His Body, the Church. The *mind of Christ*, then, is not private but is given to all: it is the mind of the Church.

3:1-4 Note the gospel was first communicated through the spoken word of the apostles. Since God inspires both oral (apostolic preaching) and written (scriptural) communication of His Word, oral and written Tradition form a seamless whole.

3:6-17 The Church is an organic whole: it is (1) **planted** (vv. 6–9), (2) a **building** (vv. 9–11), (3) a **temple** (vv. 16, 17). In vv. 16, 17 **you** is plural and refers to the whole Church. One who would break this unity would desecrate a sacred place.

3:9 **Fellow workers** (Gr. *synergoi*) refers to the biblical concept of synergism, shown here by the way the apostles work together with God in carrying out the ministry. So too, we as God's fellow workers cooperate with Him to do His will. By this cooperation or synergy with God, we do not mean a working together of equals, or a so-called fifty-fifty arrangement. Rather we mean that He is the Lord, and we His servants are called to participate obediently in His work.

3:18-20 The **wisdom of this world** (v. 19) is attractive and reasonable, and on the surface appears to be true. But such earthly wisdom denies God and leads us away from Him—not to fulfillment, but to death. True wisdom and life are found only in Christ, in our total abandonment to the love of God and neighbor.

3:21-23 **Yours** and **you** here are plural. They refer not to the individual but to the corporate Church. The Church possesses the whole, **all things**, because the Church is the Body of Christ—His perfect and glorified humanity—and Christ is God. Individual opinion in doctrine and private interpretation of Scripture that stand apart from those of the Church, or outside of apostolic tradition, are marks of worldly wisdom.

4:3 Here, as in 2:15, **judge** (Gr. *anakrinein*) is difficult to render in English. *Anakrinein* is comparable to the investigation that takes place before and during a trial and preceding judgment; *krinein* (v. 5; Mt 7:1), to rendering of a verdict. Many Corinthians prejudged Paul as an unfaithful steward; some denied his apostolic authority (see Introduction to 2 Corinthians). For Paul it is improper for them, or even for himself, to prejudge his life, for Christ is the Judge.

4:6 In the expression, **beyond what is written**, most likely Paul refers to the whole OT, reminding the Corinthians that all Scripture urges us not to be proud or contentious. **Puffed up** in Greek suggests the swollen inflammation around an infected wound; it may be rendered “arrogant” (vv. 18, 19; 5:2).

4:7 Paul directs a series of sharp questions to the Corinthians to deflate their pride. Nothing justifies thinking ourselves better than or above anyone else.

4:10 Irony and sarcasm are bitter medicine, and Paul uses them here (vv. 8–13) with full force. The three parallel statements **we *are* fools**, **we *are* weak**, **we *are* dishonored** are heaped upon each other in a stinging series. The relative comfort of the Corinthian Christians is contrasted with the persecuted, poverty-stricken and uncertain life of the apostles (vv. 11–13; see Mk 6:4; 9:35; 10:31).

4:12-13 The apostles have endured all kinds of humiliation, being treated as **filth**, and instead of fighting back have responded with love toward their persecutors—all for the joy of serving Christ and reconciling the world to God.

4:14-16 Paul soothes the soreness of his rebuke by reminding them of his fatherhood (see the note on Mt 23:9, 10). As in a family, so in the Church, maturing children need parental guidance. The apostle to the Gentiles—thus to most Christians—writes **imitate me** because he imitates Christ (11:1).

4:18-20 Paul will soon visit Corinth and face those who prejudge him to see if any **power** (Gr. *dunamis*) lies behind their **word**. Citizenship in **the kingdom of God**, discovered in the Church, does not consist in mere talk, but is manifested in a growing life of grace.

5:1 **Sexual immorality** (Gr. *porneia*, from which we get “pornography”) originally meant prostitution, later immorality in general. In this case of incest, **his father's wife** is not the man's own mother, but a stepmother. Even so, this sin is grievous among Jews and Gentiles alike.

5:2 The Greek word for **mourned** (*pentheo*) is also used in the Septuagint to refer to (1) grieving for the dead, and (2) sorrow over unrepentant sinners (see Neh 8:9; Is 24:4; Dan 10:2; Am 8:8). **Taken away from among you** refers to excommunication.

5:4 **My spirit** (Gr. *pneuma*) is Paul's human spirit, which is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

5:5 In the Church there is protection from the destructive power of **Satan** (Mt 16:18). This protection is here removed through excommunication in the hope that, having experienced the difference between God's rule and Satan's, this offender may repent and in the end **be saved**. **The flesh** (Gr. *sarx*) is not synonymous with “body” (Gr. *soma*; see v. 3). Paul is calling for the **destruction** not of the body but rather of the lusts of *the flesh*.

5:6-8 The Israelites were to remove the **leaven** (v. 7) from their houses in preparation for Passover (Ex 12:1–30), the remembrance of their freedom from Pharaoh's bondage. Christ, crucified and risen, is our Paschal lamb, **our Passover**. United to Him in baptism, our life becomes an unending deliverance from evil. Since our life in Christ includes keeping **the feast** (v. 8), Passover fulfilled in Eucharist, the old leaven of **malice and wickedness** must be continually removed from us personally and corporately.

5:9 **My epistle** to which Paul refers is apparently lost. There is evidence Paul wrote letters which were lost and not incorporated in the NT canon (see Col 4:16).

5:12-13 **Those** . . . **who are outside** is an ancient Semitic expression for those outside the community of God (see WSir, Prologue; Mk 4:11; Col 4:5; 1Th 4:12; 1Ti 3:7).

6:1 **Before the unrighteous** refers to judges of secular courts at Corinth. Paul asks, why seek justice before the unjust and not before **the saints**, their fellow Christians? This is the biblical basis for church courts.

6:2-3 **Saints will judge the world** (v. 2) and **angels** (v. 3) because in Christ, Christians share in His authority to judge (see Mt 19:28; Jn 5:22, 27; 2Pt 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 20:4). This being so, **how much more** are we able to judge the everyday concerns of **this life** (v. 3)?

6:7 Love of litigation is a love of greed, hatred, and retaliation. Christians ought to be possessed of generosity, mercy, and forgiveness. To ***let yourselves* be cheated** is to turn the other cheek (see Mt 5:39).

6:9, 10 As to those who will **not inherit the kingdom of God**, see 15:50; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 5:5; Rev 21:7, 8; 22:15.

6:11 Salvation includes being **washed** in Holy Baptism, **sanctified** through the giving of the Holy Spirit in the oil of chrismation, and **justified** through our faith. **Such were some of you** shows that in Christ we can be set free from the very worst of sins (see vv. 8–10).

6:12 **All things are lawful for me** may be a statement Paul made in Corinth sometime earlier (perhaps regarding the Mosaic cleanliness code) which the libertines took out of context as their slogan. The apostle sets the record straight: without discipline and discernment through obedience to Christ, freedom from law is slavery to sin.

6:13 The libertines in Corinth—as some do today—argued that illicit sex (adultery and fornication) is as necessary for the body as eating, and both are irrelevant to the spiritual life. Paul contends **the body** belongs to God, and everything is relevant to the spiritual life. Therefore, dealing with sin means controlling our bodies. This is why in the Orthodox Church abstinence from **foods** is the first discipline of the Fast, which also includes prayer and charitable giving.

6:15 When Paul calls our bodies **members of Christ** (see 12:12; Rom 6:13; 12:4, 5), he is reminding us of our union with Christ in baptism (see Rom 6:3–10). Fornication is therefore a sin to be fled in horror, for it joins Christ to harlots. “We have many improper wishes, but we must repress them, for we can” (JohnChr).

6:19 **Temple** here refers to the individual Christian as a dwelling place of the Spirit.

7:1 Paul's personal preference is for celibacy, but he knows this is a “gift from God” (v. 7) that is not given to all.

7:4 The mutuality of marriage, the equality of commitment, that Paul enjoins here is unprecedented in his era. Speaking of husband and wife, St. John Chrysostom teaches neither “is master of himself . . . they are servants to each other.”

7:5 While periodic ascetic practices, including temporary abstinence from sexual relations for the sake of prayer, are good, sexual abstinence by married people for other reasons and at other times is usually unwise.

7:8-9 It is wise to consider marriage rather than to insist upon the virtue of chastity and fight a losing battle against sexual passion.

7:11 If a Christian couple cannot stay together, the two alternatives are to **remain unmarried**, that is, separated, or **be reconciled**. **Divorce** is hated by God (Mal 2:16), a last measure, a great calamity. Paul forbids remarriage while the first spouse is still living (v. 39).

7:14 In Judaism the family was joined to the covenant through the father. But in the Church, the family is **holy** if either spouse is a believer (see also 2Ti 1:5). This does not mean that all are saved, but all are affected by the faith of a Christian spouse. The family is a spiritual unit: if one member is a Christian, the whole family is set apart by God's grace.

7:17-28 When the **Lord has called** (v. 17) us into His salvation, we do not change our ethnic identity (vv. 18, 19) or our occupations (vv. 20–23), and we certainly do not rush out and get married or divorced (vv. 25–28)—though Paul's counsel is a preferred option, not a command. **Keeping the commandments of God *is what matters*** (v. 19).

7:26 **The present distress** probably refers to the trials and tribulations of life just before the glorious coming of Christ, which Paul perceived as imminent (vv. 29–33).

7:29-35 Paul expects an imminent end of this age. **The time *is* short**; it is better to minimize obligations in this age—without being irresponsible—in order to be prepared for the age to come.

7:36-38 It is not clear whether **any man** is the father or the fiancé of the **virgin**, but in any case the option of her marriage is left open.

7:39-40 Though Paul once again recommends the unmarried state, he affirms the holiness of marriage and gives the widow a choice: **to be married . . . in the Lord** (v. 39), that is to another Christian, or to remain **as she is** (v. 40).

8:4-13 Throughout the Roman Empire, animals were sacrificed to pagan “gods” at feasts and public occasions. Part of each offering was used in a ceremonial meal or went to the donor; the remainder was often sold in public meat markets. Christians had a dilemma. Should they eat meat that had been offered before idols? The Jews had prohibitions, but the Christians believed an **idol *is* nothing**. Paul answers they are correct in principle (v. 8), but they must think about other people's consciences (vv. 9, 10). Love of God and of fellow Christians compels Paul not to eat such meat (v. 13).

8:6 **Of whom** and **through whom** do not speak of the divine nature, but of the relationship of the Father and the Son to us.

9:1 Paul's apostleship is under attack; in this chapter he defends it.

9:2 The effectiveness of the clergy is certified by the spiritual condition of the sheep.

9:11 Clergy must be given **material** support to be free to sow **spiritual things**. God saw to this under the Old Covenant (vv. 8, 9), and Paul implies that most Christian pastors are similarly supported (vv. 5, 6).

9:24-27 Using contemporary terms from the sports of running (vv. 24, 25) and boxing (vv. 26, 27), Paul shows the proper use of ascetic practices in the life of faith. They are valuable not in themselves, but for the sake of the goal of salvation. As training prepares an athlete, so spiritual **discipline** prepares a Christian to exercise faith and enter the Kingdom.

10:1 Paul often uses **I do not want you to be unaware** or a similar formula (Rom 11:25; 12:1; 2Co 1:8; Col 2:1; 1Th 4:13) to introduce a matter vital to the Christian faith.

10:2-4 Israel's liberation from Egypt by Moses prefigures our liberation from sin by Christ. **The cloud** is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; **the sea**, of water and baptism; the **Rock** (v. 4), of the body of Christ, His humanity; and the **spiritual drink**, of Christ's blood. Jesus Himself linked these events of the Passover with the Eucharist when He established it (Mt 26:17–29).

10:5-8 In spite of her baptism in the Red Sea (v. 2) and her spiritual eating and drinking (vv. 3, 4), Israel still fell into idolatry and sexual immorality.

10:6 The lessons of the OT, here those surrounding the Passover (vv. 1–5), are **examples** for us, that we might not repeat the same mistakes.

10:16-17 The English word **communion** (Gr. *koinonia*) is the correct translation; the alternative, “fellowship,” is too weak. For at Communion, at the Eucharist, there is a real participation in the body and blood of Christ. Just as Christ's human body is united to Him, so we are united to Him. As many grains become one loaf, those who take this *communion* become one in Christ.

10:18 **Israel after the flesh** is the Israel of Judaism as contrasted to the true Israel, which is the Church, the Israel of God (see Gal 6:16).

10:19-22 All worship is sacramental, even false worship. To genuinely offer a sacrifice is to unite spiritually with the object of that offering. An **idol** (v. 19) by itself is nothing, but behind them lurk **demons** (v. 20) waiting for someone to partake of them. The Christian offering is the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We are not to engage in any worship contrary to or in competition with the Eucharist of Christ.

10:23-24 Christians are obligated to obey only one law: the law of Christ, the law of love. This obligates us to what is **helpful** (v. 23) and edifying to **the other's *well*-being** (v. 24). We therefore continually seek the good of others in every way.

10:25-33 Since God created everything, everything is clean (v. 26), even what was once used in idolatrous worship (vv. 25, 27). However, offending a fellow Christian in nonessential matters breaks the law of love, the bond of unity (vv. 28–30). If we say that it affects no one but ourselves, yet we must **do** what is **to the glory of God** (v. 31), or else we offend God. The salvation of all is more important than the rights of the individual (v. 33). A right is never inalienable if it alienates us from others. Note that Paul assumes Christians say a prayer at meals (v. 30).

11:2 **Remember** is primarily a word of liturgical prayer: The Corinthians constantly pray for their apostle in their corporate prayers. **Delivered** (Gr. *paredoka*) refers to the passing on of authentic apostolic tradition. **Keep the traditions** refers to obedience to what has been *delivered*—God-given oral tradition, from which Paul taught. He makes no distinction between the authority of his written and his oral instruction.

11:17-19 When the Corinthians come **together** (v. 17) as the Church, they reveal the world, not heaven. For **divisions** (v. 18, Gr. *schismata*) and **factions** (v. 19, Gr. *haireseis*) are contrary to the Church, which is one and indivisible. Paul finds only one good thing in this ungodly disorder: God's **approved** (v. 19) faithful are shown to be trustworthy.

11:20-22 The agape meal held before or after **the Lord's Supper** (see vv. 33, 34; also 2Pt 2:13; Jude 12), was intended to build and unify the community in Christ. It gave the rich opportunity to serve the poor, for everyone brought food and shared it—an ancient potluck supper. When the Corinthians **come together**, however, they experience drunkenness and gluttony, not Christ and His Body, manifesting not God's love (Gr. *agape*) but self-love.

11:23-26 **Received** (Gr. *parelabon*) and **delivered** (v. 23) refer to the transmission of Holy Tradition. These words were part of the eucharistic celebration in the first century just as they are today. **Remembrance** (vv. 24, 25; Gr. *anamnesis*) is far more than thinking back about something; it is participation in it. In the Eucharist we participate in Christ's human nature, His **body** and His **blood**. The Jews were permitted to eat meat but not blood, for the life is in the blood (Lv 17:11), and life belongs to God. Now the Israel of God, the Church, breaks this fast and feasts, as it were, by eating Christ's body and drinking His blood in the Divine Liturgy. We **proclaim the Lord's death till He comes** (v. 26), for we presently celebrate the Eucharist in Christ's invisible presence, though one day we will feast with Him face to face in His Kingdom.

11:27 To receive Christ's body and blood **in an unworthy manner** means coming to Him with hidden immorality (6:18–20), disunity (v. 18), doctrinal heresy (v. 19), or disorder (vv. 21, 22), failing to see the gifts of God as holy things for holy people.

11:28 We prepare for the Eucharist by examining ourselves. This includes confessing our sins and being reconciled to one another in the sacrament of repentance (Mt 5:23–26). In the Orthodox Church this confession before God is done in the presence of a priest, who visibly represents Christ (Mt 16:19; 18:18–20; Jn 20:23), and in general prayers of confession. Being “worthy” does not mean being sinless, but being cleansed. It is not legalism but commitment to walk in righteousness before God.

11:29-30 There is such power in the body and blood of Christ communicated to us in the eating and drinking of His gifts (Jn 6:54–56) that to do so in willful disregard of the Lord could result in sickness and even death.

11:31-32 God's promise is that if we **judge ourselves** we will not be **condemned with the world** (v. 32).

11:33-34 The agape meal, connected to the Eucharist, was conducted with the same dignity as the Eucharist. While the Corinthian church ate before Communion and present-day Orthodox Christians fast, the spirit of their eating was the same as our fasting: preparation.

12:1 The Corinthians were **ignorant** not of the spiritual gifts but of how they were to be used in service to God.

12:2 It is possible to get **carried away** and **led** into error. For not all gifts are from the Holy Spirit. Demons lurk behind **dumb idols** (v. 2), speaking evil prophecies through the religious ecstasies of their priests (see Acts 16:16). Religious ecstasy or enthusiasm is no proof of spirituality.

12:3 The sign of the **Holy Spirit** speaking is when Christians say from the heart, **Jesus is Lord**. Every time we say the Nicene Creed sincerely at the Divine Liturgy, for example, we are gifted by the Holy Spirit to do so.

12:4-6 Every true gift and ministry in the Church manifests the Holy Trinity: the **Spirit** (v. 4), the Son, the **Lord** (v. 5) Jesus Christ, and the Father, **God** (v. 6). While the working out of our chrismation is primarily the grace of the Holy Spirit, it is the work of the Trinity as well. Note there are **diversities** or **differences** of **gifts** and **activities**; no two Christians are alike.

12:7 The purpose of spiritual gifts is the growth of the whole Church. “A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given for the benefit of others. But no person possesses all the gifts” (BasilG).

12:8-10 This list of nine gifts is not exhaustive (see 14:1–5; Rom 12:6–8; Eph 4:7–12).

12:12-13 Paul here moves from the gifts in the Church to **the members** of the **one body** of Christ. Note how the **many members** are to work as **one**.

12:14-18 A remarkable passage that leaves no room for a spiritual inferiority complex (see also vv. 22–24). Every member of Christ's body is important to the overall life and work of the Church.

12:26 There is no such thing as an “individual” Christian. Being “knit together in love” (Col 2:2), we are called in Christ to **suffer** together, be **honored** together, and **rejoice** together.

12:28-31 There is a hierarchy of honor in the Church of the NT as there is in the Church today. The apostolic work, that of the bishop, sets the pace for all the rest. When the oversight is in order, the rest of the Church is free to function at the optimal level. But even with all the gifts in place and operative, there is something **more excellent** (v. 31). It is the love of God, the true sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

13:1 St. Basil the Great teaches there are three reasons, all biblical and all God-given, that people follow the Lord: (1) fear (Pr 1:7); (2) obedience, a recognition that because He is God we must follow Him (Acts 5:29); and (3) **love** (1Jn 4:19). And while we must aim to do all things out of love, we also must not cease fearing God and obeying Him. To a church preoccupied with **tongues**, Paul teaches the ultimate gift: love.

13:2 **Love** outshines **prophecy** and **all faith**. It is of far greater value than the miraculous ability to **remove mountains**.

13:3 Jesus urges us to “give to the poor” (Mt 19:21) and to lay down our lives for others (Jn 15:13). But even such a selfless act done without **love profits** us **nothing**.

13:4-8 How do we know we are acting with **love** (v. 4)? This passage gives specific characteristics of love: (1) it **suffers long**, is patient (1Th 5:14); (2) it is **kind**, gentle, especially with those who hurt (Eph 4:32); (3) it **does not envy**, is not jealous of what others have (Pr 23:17); (4) it **does not parade itself**, put itself on display (Jn 3:30); (5) it **is not puffed up**, arrogant, proud (Gal 6:3); (6) it **does not** act **rudely**, brashly, mean-spiritedly, insulting others (Ecc 5:2); (7) it **does not seek its own** way, act pushy (10:24); (8) it **is not provoked** or angered (Pr 19:11); (9) it **thinks no evil**, does not keep score on others (Heb 10:17); (10) it rejoices not **in iniquity**, takes no pleasure when others fall into sin (Mk 3:5); (11) it **rejoices in the truth**, is joyful when righteousness prevails (2Jn 4); (12) it **bears all things**, handles the burdensome (Gal 6:2); (13) it **believes all things**, trusts in God no matter what (Pr 3:5); (14) it **hopes all things**, keeps looking up, does not despair (Php 3:13); (15) it **endures all things**, “puts up with everything” (JohnChr), does not wear out (Gal 6:9); (16) it **never fails**. The only thing love cannot do is fail (16:14).

13:8-13 The gifts of the Spirit, wonderful as they are, are temporary and incomplete. They are for this age, while we are “children” (v. 11). But **love** continues into the age to come: it is eternal, complete, and fulfilling.

13:11 The Scriptures differentiate between being dependent on God, or childlike (Mt 18:3), and being **childish** or immature.

14:1 We are to **desire** or want the gifts of the Spirit, but **pursue** the **love** of God. St. John Chrysostom notes the difference. “Chase” love, he writes. “Make every effort” to retain her. To find this love one “strains himself, and leaves not off until he lay hold of it.”

14:2 In the Orthodox Church, what about one **who speaks in a tongue**? Historically, God judged the builders of the Tower of Babel (Gn 11:1–9), dividing their unity by confusing their language. At Pentecost Vespers we hear, “Of old there was confusion of tongues because of the boldness of the tower builders.” Then, “God condemned the infidels.” But at Pentecost, “the Spirit of Christ illuminated the fishermen.” At Babel, there was “confusion of tongues.” At Pentecost, “the vision of tongues has been renewed.” In the Church, as in the NT, the gift of tongues is last on the list of the gifts (12:10, 28), temporary (13:8), primarily for the edification of the one who speaks (v. 4), and difficult to understand (vv. 11, 14). St. John Chrysostom concludes that tongues are “neither altogether useless, nor very profitable.”

14:22-23 Spiritual gifts are for all men, Christians and non-Christians. But tongues do not edify most Christians and fail to convert **unbelievers** (v. 22), instead repelling them and suggesting that Christians are **out of** their **mind** (v. 23).

14:25-33 This is a compassionate exhortation to the one who claims to possess the gift of tongues. This passage explains why the practice of tongues is not a part of the Divine Liturgy, which is to be entered into as God's living word. In worship we know **God is truly among** us (v. 25) because we have His prophetic word in our ears and upon our lips. Paul is here guiding a church that is severely out of balance. **God is not *the author* of confusion** (v. 33), and the truly spiritual can control themselves (v. 32). True spirituality is manifested in preparedness, propriety and order, courtesy, and control. If the Spirit is truly moving, there is **peace**. This is already a tradition of the Church (v. 33).

14:34-36 An early tradition in the Church is that women shall **keep silent** and not talk during the Liturgy. While they are permitted to prophesy (11:5) they are not allowed to simply converse (see also 1Ti 2:12). With the spiritual gifts (12:12–27), all are equal in Christ, while the order of the original creation remains in the new creation.

14:37 One can picture Paul as he writes thinking back over his hard sayings in chs. 12–14. He is clear: this is God's word, not man's.

15:3 Paul **delivered** an apostolic tradition of Christ's Resurrection which is unchanging and sufficient for salvation (v. 2). How had Paul **received** his gospel? By direct experience with the risen Lord (v. 8), confirmed by his interactions with the original apostles (Gal 2:2–10) and the whole Church. It is impossible to decipher what he learned where; in Paul's mind, his gospel forms a seamless whole. “To receive” designates the passing on of tradition (see 11:2, 23; Gal 1:9; Php 4:9; 1Th 2:13; 4:1).

15:3-4 This concise statement of the gospel is probably part of an early creed or catechism. (See Ps 16:9–12; Gal 1:4; 1Jn 2:2; 4:10.)

15:5-8 Paul lists those who would testify to the truth of the Resurrection, from the first witnesses to Paul himself.

15:12-19 What is Christianity without the resurrection—both Christ's and ours? His death does us no good without it. What use is forgiveness if we remain dead? His disciples were transformed by His Resurrection, and this they preached above all. On Easter morning Orthodox Christians sing, “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.”

15:20 As **the firstfruits** in the OT were consecrated to God as the representative and promise of later fruits (Ex 23:16), so the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the first offering of the resurrection of all who are His (v. 23).

15:22 All people share the same human nature, but Christians have two fathers: first **Adam**, who became the father of mortality and earthly life, and now **Christ**, the father of immortality and spiritual life.

15:24-28 **The end** is the consummation of the Kingdom when Christ's lordship over all will be fulfilled and He will offer creation up to God the Father (see Rom 8:19–23, 32–39). Although **the Son** (v. 28) shares the same divine nature and dignity as the Father, He is **subject to** the Father because only the Father is the source of divinity. God being **all in all** refers to the common lordship of the Trinity over all things, not to pantheism.

15:29 The meaning of **baptized for the dead** is much disputed. Many understand this as vicarious baptism of baptized Christians for deceased catechumens. St. John Chrysostom considered it a derisive comment about the practices of the Marcionite heretics. Epiphanius says it refers to a practice of the followers of Cerinthus, another gnostic teacher.

15:32 Fighting **with beasts at Ephesus** may refer to persecutions there (16:8, 9; Acts 19:21–31).

15:35-54 How will **the dead** rise? What is the resurrection **body** like? Paul's most basic contrast is that between the **natural** (lit. “soulish”; Gr. *psychikon*) and the **spiritual** (Gr. *pneumatikon*, v. 44), that is, between the present body and the deified body. Other contrasts are **corruption** vs. **incorruption** (v. 42), **dishonor** vs. **glory** (v. 43), **weakness** vs. **power** (v. 43), **living** “soul” (literal translation) vs. **life-giving spirit** (v. 45), **of the earth** vs. **from heaven** (v. 47), **of dust** vs. **heavenly** (v. 48), the **mortal** vs. the immortal (v. 54). This present body is only a **seed** (v. 38) of the body to come. The “spiritual” body is not a pale shadow of the material world we now know; the opposite is true. The resurrection body is the fulfillment of what God intends for our present body. It is the material fulfilled, not dematerialized.

15:45-49 Whose body is this? As our present body is Adam's, so the resurrection body is that of the last Adam, Christ.

15:50 **Flesh and blood** refers to human nature in its present weak and imperfect condition.

15:56 Our basic mortal condition is manifested in sin. We are born mortal; we then become sinful. Thus does **death** “sting” us before we die. Being a Christian is more than having one's sins forgiven or being good; it is being alive. **The law** is not sinful, but it exposes sin. And, since it does not provide the power to obey it, it increases sinfulness in unchanged humans (Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:13, 20; 7:7; Gal 3:19–22).

15:58 The doctrine of the resurrection has a practical consequence: It is to move us to do the works that God would have us do, **the work of the Lord**.

16:1-4 See 2Co 8; 9.

16:17-18 These men apparently were the carriers of the letter Paul answers in chs. 7–15 (7:1). Paul's displeasure with Corinth does not affect his joy for certain Corinthians.

16:19 **Aquila and Priscilla** were Jews who had been among those expelled from Rome by Claudius in AD 49–50. They had resided in Corinth for a while (Acts 18:2) and then moved to Ephesus (Acts 18:26).

16:21 Paul often dictated his letters to a secretary. The proof that he composed this letter is his closing signature.

1:3-11 The *source* of afflictions is the sin of humanity. The *purpose* of afflictions, if we use them properly, may be our comfort and salvation, as the Father Himself preserves us through them (v. 3). The *means* of facing our afflictions is a hope in God that allows us to enter into the afflictions of others in actual, experiential knowledge. In this case, this means people empathizing with their apostle's trials. The communion of saints, spiritual solidarity, is to begin now in the pains of this life.

1:6 The godly suffer, in part, so that having experienced God's comfort they in turn can comfort others. Thus, Paul shows the fallacy in his opponents' idea that Christians should never suffer and should be concerned only with their own salvation.

1:8 What this **trouble** is for Paul is not clear—perhaps a physical malady or persecution. But whatever its nature, it makes him more aware of death and of his dependence on God (v. 9)—and more appreciative of the fellowship of other Christians and of the power of the Church's corporate prayer (v. 11).

1:13 Paul was accused by the dissidents/schismatics in Corinth of speaking murkily, indirectly, by allusion and not by clear, direct statement.

1:15 Paul has changed his travel plans. (1) In his earlier letter, he planned to travel to Corinth, passing through Macedonia in northern Greece (1Co 16:5–7). (2) When he felt compelled to go to Corinth immediately, the “sorrowful visit,” he planned to visit Corinth twice (vv. 15, 16); but he actually came only once. (3) In the “sorrowful” letter (now lost), written after that visit, he stated his plan to travel directly from Ephesus to Corinth. Instead, he traveled up through Macedonia (2:12, 13). This was perceived as vacillation by some in Corinth.

1:19 **Silvanus** is Silas, Paul's longtime coworker (Acts 15:40).

1:20 Christ is **Yes**. He affirms and fulfills God-given **promises**, though His ways may at times seem strange to men. Therefore, the Church may always affirm **Amen** to **Him**—which explains the repeated use of that response in liturgical practice.

1:21-22 Note again the NT roots of Orthodox sacramental life. We are established **in Christ** (v. 21) through baptism and are **anointed** and **sealed** (v. 22) in **the Spirit** through chrismation.

1:23-24 The real reason for Paul's change in itinerary is graciousness: to **spare** them a confrontation. The purpose of church discipline is never for the leader to exercise **dominion** or harsh authority; rather it is to call for repentance, reconciliation with the Church, and renewal in the **joy** (v. 24) of the Spirit.

2:4 True pastoral correction brings both agony for the overseer—**affliction**, **anguish of heart**, **many tears**—and abundant **love** to the one being disciplined (see Heb 12:5, 6, 11).

2:5-11 Church discipline must not **be too severe**; that is, it must not go farther than the sin. And not to **forgive and comfort** (v. 7) the one who repents is itself a sin. Undue separation from the Church through excessive and prolonged discipline increases tension (**too much sorrow**, v. 7) and even division. This pleases **Satan** (v. 11), the author of strife and discord; it does not please God.

2:14-17 Our **triumph in Christ** (v. 14), taken in an ancient Roman context, suggests a magnificent picture of unwilling captive soldiers paraded before the victorious commander's chariot while fragrant flowers are strewn along the way in celebration. The victor is Christ; the captives are the powers of darkness; His **fragrance** (v. 15) is the apostolic ministry, especially its preaching (v. 17). Christians are the winning forces who triumph through the hearing of the **word of God** (v. 17) and lead the great procession of thanksgiving ***leading*** **to life** (v. 16).

3:1 The outsiders who came to Corinth as prominent apostles demanded evidence of Paul's sincerity. They themselves carried forged **epistles of commendation**—letters Paul could not match. They maintained Paul was not a genuine apostle.

3:2-3 Paul does not need a commendation in **ink** (v. 3), for the Corinthians have all experienced the fruit of his ministry; this fruit is of more value than any written **epistle**. Paul compares the difference between sterile epistles and living spiritual fruit to the difference between the Old Covenant, written **on tablets of stone**, and the New, written **on tablets** . . . **of the heart**. The impostors in Corinth are lifeless legalists. Paul is ministering **Christ** through the **Spirit** of **God**.

3:4-6 This passage holds great hope for the Christian ministry. “Who *is* sufficient for these things?” (2:16)—the one who places **trust through Christ** in **God** (v. 4). The minister gives his all in study and service, but ultimately human power is not sufficient for ministry or for salvation: we must depend utterly on God.

3:7-9 The Old Covenant was external, temporary, and powerless. Under it God was present, and it **was glorious** with the presence of God. But it was imperfect and imparted a **ministry of death** because men were unable to keep the Law. **Israel** had access to God but generally failed to apprehend it. The inner veil of the temple and the veil over **the face of Moses** spoke of the veil over the hearts of fallen human nature: men could neither adequately approach nor adequately see God. Many even fail to see the Godhead veiled in Jesus' flesh. By contrast, the New Covenant is internal, eternal, and powerful. Under it God is fully present as an unlimited, life-giving **glory** (v. 9), through **the ministry of the Spirit** (v. 8) and **of righteousness** (v. 9). Christians have bold access to God, for there is no veil to separate us (v. 16). The New Covenant is therefore **more glorious** (v. 8).

3:16-18 **The Lord** here is a title. In the NT *Lord* usually refers to the Son. The Father is sometimes called *Lord* (Mt 11:25; 22:44; Lk 1:32; 4:12, 18; 10:21; Acts 3:22; 4:26; Rev 11:15; 21:22), and **the Spirit** is referred to as *Lord* here (v. 17) and in the Nicene Creed: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life."

There is difference of opinion as to which of the Divine Persons *the Lord* refers to in each usage here. But Orthodox interpreters all agree that: (1) The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are in no way confused here—Paul has in mind one Person or another. The Son, for example, cannot be the Holy Spirit. (2) *The Spirit* is a Divine Person, not an impersonal force—though elsewhere in the NT "spirit" occasionally refers to a realm or way of existence. (3) This title here describes how God reigns in the world. It does not describe the eternal relationship of the Persons of the Trinity: the Spirit, for instance, does not proceed from the Son.

Paul is transforming the Old Covenant understanding of one God, the Lord, into Jesus' New Covenant revelation of one God in three Persons, each of whom is Lord. So **when one turns to the Lord** (v. 16) he turns not just to the Father but also to the incarnate Son (v. 16), in the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 17).

3:17-18 The work of the Holy Spirit brings **liberty** (v. 17), freeing us to behold God and have open access to Him. Created as the image of God, we see His uncreated **image**, the Son, the **glory of the Lord** (v. 18; see 4:4–6), in two ways: (1) through the Son's deified humanity (see 1Co 13:12; Jam 1:23–25) and (2) in the power of the Spirit. As we behold Him, we become what we were created to be. God is infinite; therefore, growing in His *image* and *glory* has no limits. We shall ever see God more clearly and ever be **transformed** into His likeness.

4:1 In the face of numerous onslaughts, challenges to his apostleship, and his responsibility “for all the churches” (11:28), Paul still writes, **we do not lose heart** (see v. 16). For he is preoccupied with the glories of the **ministry** of Christ and the **mercy** by which it is given to him.

4:3-4 The veil is not over the gospel or the apostle, but over the hearts and minds of those who will not believe.

4:5 The goal in preaching is not to glorify **ourselves**, but **Christ**.

4:7 The **treasure** is the light of God's glory in Christ (v. 6); **earthen vessels** refers to our humanity. As this light shines in and through us, people will see that **the power** is **of God** and not of man.

4:8-12 This is victorious, but not trouble-free, Christianity. These trials "show both the power of God and, more, disclose His Grace" (JohnChr).

4:16 The Orthodox Faith teaches that salvation in Christ includes: (1) *a passage* from death to life, from darkness to light (Jn 3:1–6; Col 1:13, 14), through repentance, faith, and baptism (“I have been saved”); (2) *a process* of spiritual growth and maturation (2Pt 1:2–8) through ongoing repentance, faith, and communion, often called deification (“I am being saved”); and (3) *a promise* of eternal life (5:9–11; Jn 14:1–6), calling us to perseverance and righteousness (“I shall be saved”). It is this second element, the process of our salvation, that Paul describes here, saying that our inner life **is being renewed day by day**.

4:17 Despite Paul's hardships (vv. 8–12), he sees God's everlasting **glory** and calls his trials **light affliction**.

4:18 As part of our inner renewal in Christ (v. 16) we gain the gift of seeing the unseen, **the things which are** . . . **eternal**.

5:1-4 Fear of death is overcome by hope in the resurrection, faith in the Holy Trinity (vv. 5, 7), and the love of Christ and our union with Him (v. 14). **Our earthly house** (v. 1) is our present mortal body. The **building from God**, the one **which is from heaven** (v. 2), is the immortal, deified body we shall have in heaven (see 1Co 15). The soul is **naked** (v. 3), or **unclothed** (v. 4), when it departs the body, that is, when one dies. Paul longs not for death but for resurrection; he knows God created us not to die, but to be transformed from **mortality** to **life** (v. 4; see v. 5). So he speaks not of the bliss of the soul without a body, but of the union of the soul with the glorified body.

5:5-8 Being **always confident** (v. 6) in the resurrection means we are being **prepared** by **God** the Father and **the Spirit** (v. 5) to join **the Lord** (v. 8), Jesus Christ.

5:10 Following his discourse on suffering, death, and resurrection (4:16–5:8), Paul now turns to the **judgment**. **We must all appear**, not only the unbelievers, to be judged according to **what** we have **done**. For Christians, right belief gives power and motivation for right behavior. Here again, the NT unifies faith and works.

5:11-15 In his gospel, Paul seeks to **persuade men** (v. 11) on two fronts: (1) by **the terror of the Lord** (v. 11), the possibility of judgment to eternal death; and (2) by **the love of Christ** (v. 14), the divine invitation to **live** for Christ (v. 15), to eternal life. The heart of Paul's gospel is baptism, where life and death meet: Christ died and rose for us that we might die and rise in Him.

5:16-17 Paul did not know “the historical Jesus” as He voluntarily took on our mortality, lived on earth, and was known **according to the flesh** (v. 16). Nobody knows Jesus that way after His Ascension, for his mortal *flesh* has been transformed into an immortal body. Even so, our **old** bodies are transformed into **a new creation** (v. 17) in Christ. Because God created **all things** through Christ, He will transform and reunite *all things*—material as well as spiritual—to Himself through Christ.

5:18-21 How was Christ made ***to be* sin for us**? He, the incarnate Son of God, voluntarily assumed the consequences of our sin—corruption and death—without sinning Himself. And He submitted to unjust suffering because of the sinful passions of men and of angels. This means salvation is far more than forgiveness of sins. It is new life: our reconciliation to God (vv. 18–20) and our becoming new creatures (v. 17), participants in the very **righteousness of God** (v. 21). This means our salvation is not just juridical (the static, legal pronouncement of a judge), but personal and relational (the dynamic, sacrificial love of a father for his child).

6:1-10 Here is an authentic apostle! His life demonstrates the paradox of God's strength working in human weakness, of renouncing the world in order to master it. **The day of salvation** is **now** (v. 2), always the present moment in the period before Christ's return.

6:11-1 This passage is the spiritual perspective of the New Covenant holiness code: Love of God and His Church requires a spurning of immorality and false religions, and a devotion to **perfecting holiness in the fear of God** (7:1).

6:14 One important application of this passage is that the Church calls us to marriage between those of like faith.

6:17 This verse extends an invitation from God to **come out** of the world and false religion.

7:1 An escape from **filthiness** requires more than thinking repentant thoughts. For we are enmeshed in a spiritual war zone, entrenched in patterns of sin that become habitual. Often, darkness becomes imprinted in our souls and bodies so that even our wills are bypassed and we sin automatically. To **cleanse ourselves** means that by the **promises** of God, we embark on a sustained struggle for **holiness**. This cleansing includes genuine sorrow for our sins, confession, and repentance. It means a willful avoidance of sin-arousing situations, reconciliation with those we have wronged, the resolute practice of Christian virtue, and cleaving to God through faith and prayer. It calls us to participation in the holy sacraments. Is this too difficult for us humans? Yes. Thus it is the Holy Spirit, who cleanses us from every stain and heals our infirmities, who empowers us to live this life of peace with God and repentance before Him.

7:9-11 Feeling sorry is not enough. Heartfelt, **godly sorrow** produces **repentance** and **diligence** (v. 11). True *repentance* cleanses us from sin and alienation, and *diligence* zealously pursues holiness and reconciliation. We hereby continue on the path of **salvation** to eternal life. The **sorrow of the world** (v. 10) is feeling sorry we were caught. It centers on ourselves, on our embarrassment over the predicament we find ourselves in. It stops short of repentance and reconciliation to God.

8:1-15 The subject of this passage is a collection from the churches in Asia Minor for the church in Jerusalem. Beyond the material help Jerusalem needs, for Paul this appears to be an important theological matter as well. It (1) relates to the unity of Jew and Gentile in the Church, (2) underscores the messianic age as having indeed come in Christ, and (3) demonstrates that the charismatic effects of Pentecost are continuing and maturing in the Church.

Paul had given the Corinthians the same instruction he gave to Galatia, to contribute systematically to the fund (1Co 16:1–4). Titus is to make sure they actually have begun to do so (8:6). Paul has told the Macedonians that Corinth was exemplary in giving (9:2), but he has his doubts. So he sends Titus to Corinth to be sure the Corinthians will comply (9:3–5). Some in Corinth feel pressure, saying that Paul is “crafty”; he gets his way “by cunning” (12:16). Paul encourages the Corinthians by holding up the generosity of the poorer Macedonians as an example (8:1–5). The Corinthians actually do contribute to the fund, and Paul is pleased with them (Rom 15:25–28).

8:5 Note the progression: **they first gave themselves to the Lord** ("They offered up themselves"—JohnChr) **and *then* to us**, to the Church, to the apostles. If our lives are an offering to God, they will be an offering to His people as well.

8:9 What was Christ's **poverty**? He emptied Himself (Php 2:5–8) of His heavenly glory to join our humanity to His divinity, and to suffer and die on our behalf. He did not owe this to us, but did so by His **grace**, that we **might become rich** in His salvation.

8:24 The proof of God's love for us is that He gave us His Son through His Incarnation and death (Rom 5:8). The **proof** of our **love** for God is in the giving of our gifts to Him and **the churches**.

9:3 Paul has stuck his neck out. The Corinthians' “zeal” had caused many in Macedonia to give to Jerusalem (v. 2). Yet, to make sure Corinth will stay zealous, Paul has **sent the brethren**.

9:6-15 Here is Paul's landmark teaching on Christian stewardship. The metaphor is not the giving of money but the sowing of seed for a harvest. And where does the seed come from? God Himself (v. 10).

10:1 Paul replies to the charges of his opponents: far from being weak, he is extraordinarily strong. But strength in spiritual warfare sometimes appears as weakness to the world. **The meekness and gentleness of Christ** is sometimes communicated in a **lowly** or humble fashion, and sometimes boldly (see vv. 10, 11).

10:3 **In the flesh** refers to fallen human nature.

10:4-6 The battlefield of spiritual **warfare** includes entrenched spiritual fortresses (**strongholds**), human reason (**arguments**, v. 5), human and angelic powers (**every high thing that exalts itself**), ideas (**thought**), and the will (**obedience**). Our **weapons** include the Cross, prayer, and the Word of God. Both our thoughts (v. 5) and our actions (v. 6) are to be submissive to Christ. The Church is God's fortress, marching against the strongholds of **disobedience**.

10:7-8 Some teachers in Corinth had claimed a special knowledge of or an esoteric relationship to Christ. Paul here counters their claim by boasting **somewhat more** of his **authority**—not because he wants to boast (11:1, 16–19; 12:1, 11), but because the boastfulness of his enemies must be shown to be not only empty, but ruinous for those who believe them.

10:12-18 Paul's opponents had stepped into his **sphere** (v. 13) after he had evangelized and established the church in Corinth. They then claimed they were responsible for raising up this church and commended themselves (v. 18) for doing so.

11:1-3 Paul compares the reality of the New Covenant to the Garden of Eden, where Christ is Adam and the Church is Eve, and where Satan is up to his same **craftiness** (v. 3). Paul's desire is to present a pure Church, **a chaste virgin** (v. 2), **to Christ** at the Second Coming.

11:4-6 The first element of a “chaste virgin” (v. 2) is the purity of orthodox doctrine. Not human persuasiveness (v. 6) but apostolic content is important. Paul is a part of the apostolic college (v. 5), which continues in line with the original twelve apostles.

11:7-12 Pure doctrine is taught out of pure motives. A mark of apostolic authenticity is the refusal of excessive money. The clergy draw their living from the Church, but not to the point of getting rich (see 1Co 9:4–18; 1Ti 6:3–10; Tts 1:11). Paul's opponents dared not make this claim.

11:13-15 Although **Satan** (v. 14) imitates the Kingdom of God, telltale signs such as nonapostolic doctrine (vv. 4–6) and a lucrative ministry (vv. 7–12) reveal his sham.

11:16-21 The Corinthians thought they were **wise** (v. 19) enough to evaluate church leaders. They had become enamored with false apostles who championed themselves using the methods and values of the world, full of outward show and crafty talk. They disparaged Paul, seeing him as a weakling without credentials. As a result they were in **bondage** (v. 20), defrauded and even brutalized. Paul, playing the devil's advocate, takes up the methods of these false apostles to show them as **fools** (v. 19). He satirizes them in the hope the Corinthians will thereby see through their charade.

11:22-33 Using his opponents' level of argument, Paul lists his Jewish and Christian credentials. If genealogy means anything, which it does to the Jews, Paul has it (v. 22). If “Christian experience” means anything, no one can compare with him in his sufferings (vv. 23–27), his compassionate, involved concern for his people (vv. 28, 29), or even his bizarre adventures (vv. 30–33).

12:1-6 Paul's opponents probably boasted of **visions and revelations** (v. 1), for Paul mentions one of his. **Fourteen years ago** would date the event before his missionary journeys. Paul employs two terms used by Jews to describe heavenly realms: **the third heaven** (v. 2) is the highest heaven; **Paradise** (v. 4), where God is surrounded by the assembly of the just, is the City of God.

12:7-10 Unlike his opponents, who publicly proclaimed their own greatness in their mystical experiences, Paul sees his **thorn in the flesh** (v. 7) as **given to** him precisely so he might not **be exalted**. What was this *thorn*? Perhaps a chronic physical problem, or deluded Christian leaders, or hard-hearted Israelites. Nevertheless, for Paul, his **weakness** (v. 9; see v. 5), not his mystical experiences (vv. 2–4), is the means of **the power of Christ** remaining in him.

12:11-13 By **signs of an apostle** (v. 12; see Rom 15:19; 1Co 2:4; 4:20; 12:28, 29; Heb 2:4) Paul seems to be referring to miracles that lead men to God and the Church, for with these **signs and wonders** (v. 12) the Corinthians are greatly impressed.

12:15 This is the experience through history of the godly shepherd.

12:20-4 Paul is more impressed with the miracle of unity and harmony than with physical miracles. He fears he may have to exercise the supreme apostolic power, that of excluding people who **have not repented** (v. 21) from the Church.

13:5 In this context, the test of being in Christ is a humble, virtuous life lived in communion with the Church.

13:12 The **holy kiss**, the kiss of peace, is an established liturgical tradition. Perhaps the final test of whether one is a Christian is whether one can give this kiss with an uncondemning conscience.

13:14 This Trinitarian blessing is also an ancient and contemporary liturgical practice.

1:1, 2 The Judaizers invading Galatia argued that Paul was not a true apostle. Paul introduces himself with a threefold defense: (1) The source of his apostleship is God (v. 1). (2) He has witnessed the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:27), just as the eleven have. (3) His apostleship is confirmed by **all the brethren** (v. 2) with him. An additional proof of Paul's apostleship is that he founded **the churches of Galatia** (v. 2).

1:3-5 Paul's greeting encapsulates the true gospel, which he is defending in this epistle. Several points may be drawn from this greeting: (1) The true gospel comes from God Himself (v. 3). (2) Christ **gave Himself for our sins** not only in His death, but in every phase of His Incarnation, from conception to Ascension (see 2:20). (3) Christ delivers us **from this present evil age** (v. 4) to enter the age to come. (4) This deliverance is accomplished **according to the will of our God** (v. 4), the Son in His human nature cooperating with the divine will (Jn 5:30; 6:38). The Father's will is done by Jesus, and then by us, "on earth as *it is* in heaven" (Mt 6:10).

1:6-10 **Different** (Gr. *heteros*, v. 6) means different in kind, whereas **another** (Gr. *allos*, v. 7) means another of the same kind. Paul is saying that the teaching the Galatians are listening to is not a harmless variation of the truth, but a completely different, false **gospel**. This “gospel” (1) is a **turning away** from **the grace of Christ** (v. 6); (2) brings **trouble** to the faithful; (3) will **pervert the gospel of Christ** (v. 7)—it is a distortion of the truth, a mixture of truth and falsehood; (4) is **accursed** or anathematized by the Church (v. 8); and (5) is intended to **please men** (v. 10), not God.

Paul's warning about **we, or an angel from heaven** is not hypothetical. Angels can and have delivered the gospel to us: they announced Christ's conception (Lk 1:26–38), birth (Lk 2:9–15), Resurrection (Mt 28:5–7), and Ascension (Acts 1:9–11). But angelic messages are not necessarily true; they may come from fallen angels, who are **accursed**.

1:11-14 The true gospel is taught by true apostles, but many declare themselves to be apostles. How can we know true apostles from false?

(1) True apostles are called by God. They learn the gospel by revelation, either directly from the risen Son, as did the original apostles (1:11, 12), or by the revelation of apostolic tradition (2Ti 2:2). They are called by grace, not according to works or a "proper" background (1:13–17). A true apostle brings glory to God, not to himself (1:18–23).

(2) True apostles form one church government, holding the same doctrine and working by agreement reached in council (2:6–10).

(3) True apostles stand firm in matters of conscience and are correctable when mistaken (2:11–14). Thus, Paul rebukes Peter sharply in public for his hypocritical ethnic elitism.

1:11-12 Apostolic tradition is grounded in divine **revelation** from **Jesus Christ**. Just as the Twelve were called by Christ, so was Paul (v. 1). Just as the Twelve received the gospel directly from Christ, so did Paul (Acts 9:3–6; 26:13–18). Just as the Twelve stood together as one, so Paul entered their unity in consensus and mutual submission.

1:13-17 People are called by God not according to **former conduct** (v. 13)—good or bad—but by God's **grace** (v. 15). Paul, whom God called in mercy, received grace from Ananias' hands and the waters of baptism (Acts 9:10–19). **Separated me from my mother's womb** (v. 15) refers not to Paul's physical birth but to God's calling Paul to apostolic ministry before he was born (see Ps 138:15, 16; Is 49:1; Jer 1:5; Lk 1:35, 43, 44, 48). As with Paul, God's intentions for a person may lie hidden for years.

1:18-20 As a true apostle, Paul submits himself to the Church and her apostles rather than elevating himself. Paul knows his encounter with Christ, instruction in the gospel, and call to apostleship are highly unusual—in a private revelation, the only other witness is God (v. 20). But he also knows he must teach the same gospel as the other apostles.

1:19 **James** is James the Just, the first bishop of Jerusalem and author of the Epistle of James. **Brother** also means cousin or close relation (see the Introduction to the Epistle of James).

1:24 Glory goes to God, not to the apostle.

2:2 **Communicated** (Gr. *anatithemai*) means "laid before" or "submitted." Paul submitted to the apostles James, Peter, and John (v. 9) what he had been teaching **among the Gentiles** so that he might not **run in vain**, that is, teach error. He did so **privately** because the Judaizers were slandering him, giving apostolic honor only **to those** they considered **of reputation**, the original apostles.

2:4-5 The **false brethren** are not those “of reputation” (v. 2) in the Church, but the Judaizers, whom no one had recognized as apostolic.

2:6 **Seemed to be something** is more correctly translated “were of reputation,” as in v. 2. To the Judaizers, only the original apostles had valid authority. But the Judaizers were wrong. Paul is not putting down the Twelve; rather he is saying that **it makes no difference** that all his fellow apostles were formerly “blue collar” workers, not scholars like Paul himself. **God** does not show **personal favoritism**. As for correcting Paul's gospel, they **added nothing to** his teaching.

2:7 Peter and Paul were each responsible to reach one segment of the population in the central part of the Roman Empire: **Peter** the **circumcised** (Jews), Paul the **uncircumcised** (Gentiles). The others of the Twelve also did evangelistic work, as did the Seventy (see article, “The Seventy,” at Luke 10).

2:8 One God gave one gospel through two apostles to two different ethnic groups.

2:9 **The right hand of fellowship** indicates consensus, not merely friendship. The apostles are united in preaching the same gospel.

2:10 Apostles are also united in caring for **the poor**, which in this case probably refers to the Jerusalem church (see Acts 11:27–30).

2:11 No individual apostle (or bishop or patriarch) is infallible. Even when he speaks officially (*ex officio*), he is correctable. Unchecked, Peter could have caused a schism.

2:12-13 The **men** who **came from James** were probably trying to force the culture of the Jerusalem church on the Gentiles—and they were not necessarily representing James. Jerusalem was Jewish, but to impose that culture on Gentiles was **hypocrisy** (v. 13). And to mistake culture—any culture—for the gospel is even worse. God had already shown that Jewish dietary laws were obsolete (Acts 10:11–16), for the law is fulfilled in Christ.

2:14-21 Paul recounts the speech he gave in Antioch when he confronted Peter.

2:15 **Gentiles** were considered **sinners** by the Jews.

2:16 What does it mean to be **justified**? See the article, “Justification by Faith,” at Romans 5. **Faith in Jesus Christ** is grammatically parallel to **the works of the law** and should be translated “the faith *of* Jesus Christ.” The faith of Christ is the gospel. As the source of *works* is *the law*, so the source of *faith* is *Christ*. It is the faith of Christ—His beliefs, His trust, His obedience—that justifies us, not our faith as such. Christ's faith is seen in His entire life on earth, not in just a few of His crucial works.

2:17 **By Christ** should be "in Christ." Justification is not merely legal but actual—effected by our real, personal union with Christ in His glorified human nature. That we could be **found sinners** shows this union never takes away our free will, and explains how some defected to Judaism.

2:18 **Those things which I destroyed** are “the works of the law” (v. 16). Paul *destroyed* them in the sense of proving their ineffectiveness for salvation. The real **transgressor** here is one who tries to reinstitute the Jewish Law.

2:19 We die **through the law**, not bypassing or dishonoring it, but by recognizing that it is holy; that we deserve its consequence, death; and that we voluntarily die **to the law** through our death with Christ. Being crucified with Christ through baptism, we come alive to the law of the Spirit, which perfects the intention of the OT *law*. There is no contradiction between law and gospel. The law is “holy and just and good” (Rom 7:12). However, the law is “weak” (Rom 8:3) and “obsolete” (Heb 8:13), for it is fulfilled in the gospel, in Christ Himself.

2:20 **I have been crucified with Christ** means our sinful “passions and desires” (5:24) have been crucified. This is not the crucifixion of human nature, but of **the flesh**, the corruption into which human nature has fallen. This crucifixion must be willingly and freely accepted, just as Christ freely accepted His death. Living *in the flesh* (Gr. *en sarki*) is contrasted with living “in the faith” (Gr. *en pistei*), translated here **by faith**. Just as living *in the flesh* involves the whole person, body and soul, so living “in the faith” involves the whole person. Justification therefore constitutes substantial union with Christ, not just an abstract position of the believer with respect to God.

While **it is no longer I who live** under the dominion of sinful passions and desires, I do **live** a crucified life in Christ. As we are not saved by works alone, nowhere does the NT say we are saved by faith alone. We are saved by faith, but not faith *alone*.

2:21 **Set aside the grace of God** is what Peter and Barnabas had done (vv. 12, 13). The faith of Christ is not opposed to the works of the law, but it is opposed to using works to justify oneself before God. As Moses himself looked ahead to Christ (Heb 11:26), so the law is a shadow, an icon, pointing toward Christ Himself, who brings us life.

3:1-5 The **Galatians** had believed in **Jesus Christ** (v. 1) and received **the Spirit** through **the hearing of faith** (v. 2). But they are **foolish** because they have rejected ongoing life in Christ and the Spirit, teaching instead that we are **made perfect by the flesh** (v. 3)—circumcision. Paul argues they do not understand righteousness, nor how men have always participated in it.

3:6-9 Who are the **sons of Abraham**? **Those who are of faith** (v. 7)—true Christians. Jews saw Abraham as their father. Paul shows that Abraham's **righteousness** (v. 6) does not consist in keeping the law, but in **believing** God (v. 9). *Righteousness* is a heart-centered belief in and obedience to God, with the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Accounted (v. 6) in our day suggests keeping the books, ledgers, CPAs. To “account” here (Gr. *logizomai*) refers rather to faithful participation. When God “accounted” Abraham righteous, Abraham was participating with God in the fruit of the Holy Spirit and faith (v. 5).

With believing Abraham (v. 9) is literally “in the faith of Abraham,” that which he believed and did. This shows that Jesus' words, “If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham” (Jn 8:39), underscore the fact that separating faith from works is impossible. To **justify** (v. 8) means to make righteous and so to be righteous. Therefore, to be **blessed** (v. 9) in Abraham is to participate with him, body and soul, in communion with God and His goodness.

3:10 While the works of the law are good, those who **are of the works of the law** are **cursed** because they cannot become righteous by keeping the law. Even on their own premise they fail, for no one has kept *all* the law.

3:12 **The law is not of faith** because the law came before the true faith (v. 23). This is not to say that no one believed before Christ, or that the law cannot be obeyed out of faith. Abraham is the father of faith! But his faith was a type of the faith of Christ, for his faith is perfected in the faith of Christ.

3:13 Christ perfectly obeyed **the law** and accepted its **curse**. In Christ, we are redeemed from the curse and participate in His perfect faith and obedience.

3:14 How is God's promised **blessing** obtained? The Judaizers believed they were progressing toward perfection by obeying the law. Paul argues by contrast that the blessing comes through **the promise of the Spirit through faith**, a participation in the very life of God.

3:15-18 The Jews were blinded by the multitude of details of the law. They failed to see that their sonship was founded on God's **promises** (the covenant) **made to Abraham** (v. 16). Since a **covenant that was confirmed** (v. 17) cannot be added to, changed, or annulled, the law, which comes later (v. 17), cannot alter the covenant's promise (v. 15). The Jews thought they were sons of Abraham (**seeds**) through physical genealogy. They overlooked the fact that **Seed** (v. 16) is singular, referring to Christ.

3:19 Why was **the law** given then? Because Israel was transgressing what they knew of God's law through conscience and nature. So God put it in writing! The law was never a savior, but a tutor (v. 24) to convict Israel of **transgressions** and to lead her to Christ.

3:20 For Christ to be the **mediator** between **God** and man (see also 1Ti 2:5), He had to be both God and man. **God is one** is a reference to the one divine nature and does not deny the existence of three divine Persons. (Priests, by the way, are not seen as mediators between God and man; their role is to lead people to the Mediator.)

3:22-25 **Faith in** (v. 22) should be translated “faith of.” Two faiths are cooperating: first and foremost, Christ's faith; secondarily, the faith of **those who believe**. While OT people had faith, they could not participate in Christ's faith, for Christ had not yet come.

3:26-27 Paul directly relates saving **faith** (v. 26) and being **baptized**, connecting them as the most intimate of friends. Verse 27 is the ancient hymn perhaps already being sung at Christian baptisms during the procession of the newly regenerated into the assembly—and sung at every Orthodox baptismal service to this day.

3:28-29 We share one human nature in Christ. Therefore, valuing people based on opinions and ethnicity (**neither Jew nor Greek**), pride and social status (**neither slave nor free**), or gender (**neither male nor female**) has no place in the Church. **All** are **one** in nature, and so all are equal in dignity.

4:1, 2 **Child** refers not to age but to understanding. **Guardians and stewards** provide the special discipline and protection required for growth. **Slave** refers to one under the rule of a taskmaster, in this case, the law.

4:3 **The elements of the world** are the philosophies and traditions developed by humanity without regard to God (Col 2:8).

4:4-5 **Son** refers to Christ as God by nature. God, then, is **born of a woman**, and so Mary is rightly called the mother of God (Theotokos). Since Jesus is **born under the law**, He can redeem those under the law. Jesus fulfilled the law as an infant by being circumcised on the eighth day and being presented in the temple forty days after His birth. Both of these events are remembered in the liturgical cycle of the Orthodox Church.

Why does God **redeem those who were under the law**? To fulfill His promise to Abraham. God owes no one anything—He certainly does not owe us salvation.

Whereas the Son is God by nature, we become sons of God by **adoption**. We cannot become members of the Godhead by nature because we are human by nature. But we do become members of His family by grace. In adoption we become everything God is, except that we do not share His nature. Because we are given new life, *adoption* is also called a new birth, being born again.

4:6, 7 The ongoing growth into adoption, being **an heir of God** (v. 7), is called deification (see the article, “Deification,” at 2 Peter). This means we are becoming by grace what God is by nature. Each Person of the Trinity, **Spirit**, **Son**, and **Father** (v. 6), is involved in this process of transformation. Therefore, to become sons of God by grace, we must believe in and know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

4:10 The Judaizers were making their holy-day calendar an end in itself. Although God gave Israel her holy days, they point beyond themselves to Christ and His Kingdom. The OT holy days are fulfilled in the great feasts of the Church. Passover becomes Easter, while Pentecost, the celebration of the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, becomes the descent of the Holy Spirit—a renewed calendar for a renewed creation.

4:13 The nature of Paul's **physical infirmity** is not known. Perhaps it was simply the sufferings of his work for the gospel.

4:14-19 The **angel of God** in the OT was a pre-incarnate appearance (theophany) of the Son, whom we know as **Christ Jesus**. A priest in the Church is called to be a manifestation of Christ and is to be **received** as Christ, but he is neither identical with Christ nor a mediator between a Christian and Christ. He must both win the love of his people (v. 15) and adamantly confront bad behavior and wrong belief (vv. 16–18). A true priest seeks spiritual growth, deification, for his people (v. 19), even if his people do not want the truth (v. 16).

4:21-31 By saying that Abraham's **two sons** and related events are **symbolic** (v. 24, Gr. *allegoreo*), Paul is not implying that they are not historical. Rather he asserts that OT history is announcing something far greater than itself. **Hagar** and **Mount Sinai** symbolize earthly **Jerusalem** and the Jews under the law (v. 25). Sarah, the **freewoman** (vv. 22, 23), symbolizes the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the Church (v. 26). **The desolate** are those in the Church, especially the Gentiles; **she who has a husband** is Israel (v. 27). Furthermore, Sarah is a type of Mary, the Mother of God, for Sarah's son was born **through promise** (v. 23), the promise of God.

Isaac “was the issue of bodies that were dead, and of a womb that was dead. His conception was not by the flesh, nor his birth by the seed, for the womb was dead both through age and barrenness. But the Word of God fashioned him. . . . He that was not according to the flesh was more honorable than he that was born after the flesh. Therefore let it not disturb you that you were not born after the flesh. For from the very reason that you are not so born, are you most of all Abraham's kindred” (JohnChr).

2:16-31 In this section, Paul gives the content of the true gospel by contrasting it with the false gospel, that of the Judaizers.

(1) The source of justification is faith, not the works of the law (2:16–21). (a) Works of the law deal with man in his fallen state, in his corruption; faith “crucifies” man's corrupt condition and deals with the new man in Christ. (b) Works of the law begin with the action of man; faith begins with the action of God. Every work of faith is the action of both God and man, a cooperation (synergy) between the divine and human wills. This faith and these actions find their source and fulfillment in God-made-Man, Christ. We experience them through our union with Christ brought about in baptism.

(2) The Holy Spirit gives us power for the ongoing life of righteousness in Christ, the life of blessing (3:1–14). (a) Father Abraham is the father of faith and of the blessing of the Spirit. (b) But Judaizers, who have based their righteousness on the works of the law, have received a curse, not the blessing of the Spirit.

(3) The status conferred by righteousness is sonship. We become children of God through union with God incarnate (3:15–4:31). (a) The source of sonship is God, not humanity; divine promise, not human deeds; faith, not works. (b) God introduced the works of the law to protect mankind until the time of divine sonship, the time when our union with the Son of God became possible. (c) The purpose of sonship is for us to become like God and to enter heaven.

5:1-5 The **yoke of bondage** is the law. It mistakes the lesser reality, its rules and regulations, its externals, for the greater reality, God, who produced the law and to whom the externals point. The law in this sense includes: (1) the initiatory requirement to be **circumcised** (v. 2); (2) an obligation to perfectly obey **the whole law** (v. 3); (3) being **justified by law**—trying to establish one's own righteousness under the law (v. 4); (4) continuing **bondage** to sin (v. 1); (5) dependence on the “flesh,” corrupt human nature; (6) alienation **from Christ** and **from grace** (v. 4), which Christ calls “labor” and being “heavy laden” (Mt 11:28).

By contrast, Christ's yoke is life in the Spirit, which includes: (1) the regeneration of baptism (3:27), the renewal of the entire human nature in Christ, the circumcision of the heart; (2) obedience to Christ and growth in perfection (Mt 5:48); (3) being justified by grace, God's righteousness which becomes ours; (4) freedom or **liberty** (v. 1) from the power of sin; (5) dependence upon **the Spirit** (v. 5) and access to the perfect and glorified human nature of Christ; (6) union with Christ and the grace of God. Christ calls this yoke “rest,” for it is “easy” and “light” (Mt 11:30).

5:5 **The hope of righteousness** is the Kingdom of God.

5:6-12 To believe in Christ involves **faith working through love** (v. 6). Those who stop short of love, **hindered** by legalism (v. 7), miss the message of the Cross (v. 11). For by His death Christ abolished the law, and by His Resurrection He granted us sonship with God. For **those who trouble you** (v. 12) with circumcision, Paul wishes they would **cut themselves off**—referring to complete castration. Why does he speak so strongly? Christ broke the bonds of the law, not that our standard might be lowered, but that it might be exalted. We who are free from the law must not return to its bondage.

5:13-15 The way of life in the Spirit, the way of faith and love, is expressed through service to God and **one another** (v. 13). We must avoid at all costs competitive comparisons of each other's deeds.

5:16 By **the flesh**, Paul does not mean the body. *The flesh* here is a general term for evil actions, the depraved will, the earthly mind, the slothful and careless soul—things that are under one's control, not part of human nature. This *flesh* is crucified with Christ (v. 24). It is not human nature that is mortified, but its evil deeds.

5:25 A **walk in the Spirit** comes from life **in the Spirit**.

6:1 To be able to administer correction with **gentleness** is a spiritual gift.

6:2 Paul admonishes us to **bear one another's burdens**. But moments later, he notes that “each one shall bear his own load” (v. 5). Both are true. We are called to initiate caregiving in the Church, *and* not to be needless burdens to others.

6:6 See Nm 31:47; 35:1–8; 1Co 9:14. The teacher and the **taught** form a bond, and the sharing here is in material blessings.

6:12 The legalizers choose to offend God that they may please human beings.

6:14 How does one **boast** . . . **in the cross**? Throughout the history of the Church, Christians have preached the Cross, displayed the Cross in their homes and altars, venerated the Cross in the liturgy, and signed themselves with the Cross in worship of the Holy Trinity and during times of fear or temptation.

6:15 The **new creation** is our way of life **in Christ Jesus**.

6:16 Paul calls the Church **Israel**.

6:17 Paul is no hypocrite or coward. He has persevered through much for what he is teaching, and he bears in his **body** the **marks** to prove it.

1:1, 2 **Saints** and **faithful** are biblical and historical references to Christian believers. Here, **God** (v. 2) refers to the Father, **Lord** (Gr. *kyrios*) refers to the Son. Early Christian usage of these words indicates an identity of nature but distinction of Persons between the Father and the Son.

1:3 God blesses and so is **blessed**. The Christian life is a response to God's initiative, especially that of the **Father** but also that of the Son, **our Lord Jesus Christ**. **Spiritual blessing** is primarily the work of the Spirit. **The heavenly *places***, where the risen and ascended Christ reigns, are experienced **in Christ**, that is, by the life that is begun when one is joined with Christ in baptism (see Rom 6:3–5).

1:4-6 Everything comes from God, and everything should be drawn back to Him. God's original intent for the Incarnation was not redemption from the Fall but **adoption as sons** of God (v. 5), that is, deification. For when God contemplated creating the world, He planned on bringing it into union with Himself through the Incarnation of His Son, that is, through the Son's union with human nature. That is why St. Athanasius can say, “God became man that man might become god.”

The Father **chose us** (v. 4) **in Him**, the Son. Christ, who is God by nature, became Man by choice. If we choose Him, we, who are human by nature, become “gods” by grace. If we are in Christ, the Son of God, we are sons of God. Paul is not addressing individuals as such but **us**, the community, the Church. And he is not addressing the issue of human will in salvation but the will of God, which is that all are chosen (see Rom 11:32; 1Ti 2:4; 2Pt 3:9). But being **predestined** (v. 5) by God does not nullify human will: in everything, God is the originator, the initiator; we merely respond, but our response is necessary. Becoming a Christian is not so much inviting Christ into one's life as getting oneself into Christ's life. What is true of Christ must become true of one who is in Him.

1:7-8 The sacraments of baptism (**redemption**) and the Eucharist (**His blood**) are alluded to as the necessary foundation for drawing near to God. *Redemption* has a technical meaning relative to the freeing of slaves. Here, the bondage is to **sins**; the act of releasing is **forgiveness**; the price of *redemption* is *blood*—the human life of Christ given over to death for the sake of new life. This beginning of life in Christ is not merely legal, nor instantaneous, but living and dynamic.

1:9, 10 The **mystery** is the plan of salvation, the gospel, the Kingdom of God, the Church. This mystery centers on Christ Himself (Col 2:2), from the Incarnation (1Ti 3:16), to the Cross (1Co 2:8), to the restoration and culmination of all things (v. 10). It is **the fullness** (v. 10) of all, not only for humanity but for the whole creation. Although it was announced by the prophets (Rom 16:25, 26), God revealed it through Christ, and it is made known to us through the apostles (3:1–5; 1Co 2:6, 7, 10–16; 4:1). The *mystery* is made manifest in history by the fact that Gentiles and Jews compose one body (3:6; Col 1:26–28). The *mystery* is experienced in the sacraments of the Church, which are called the “mysteries.”

1:11-14 The gospel unites all humanity: the Jews (vv. 11, 12) and the Gentiles (vv. 13, 14). The Jews, especially those who **trusted in Christ** (v. 12)—one of whom was Paul, hence the use of **we** (v. 11)—were the first witnesses to the coming of the Messiah. In “the fullness of the times” (v. 10) they were joined by the Gentiles.

1:13-14 The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an evidence that the last times, the day of the Lord, had come. Hence, Pentecost was a proof to the Jews that Jesus indeed was the Messiah. And the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles (Acts 10:44–48) was a proof they were equal to the Jews in this final age. After baptism one is **sealed with the Holy Spirit**, called “chrismation.” (The word “seal” is repeated by Orthodox Christians as the priest or bishop anoints the newly baptized with oil.)

The guarantee (v. 14) is a first installment in kind, a down payment or earnest of what is later to be completed: we both are redeemed and shall be redeemed.

1:3-14 In the original Greek, this is all one sentence. Paul's opening theme is the preeminence of God's initiative. We say, simply, “Blessed is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Paul's doxology is more detailed: The Father has all power (vv. 3–6); the Son, all rule (vv. 7–12); the Spirit, all caretaking (vv. 13, 14).

1:15 This is a way of restating the two great commandments: love God and love man.

1:18 **Understanding** should be translated “heart.” The prayer that Orthodox Christians pray before the reading of the Gospel begins, “Illumine our hearts, O Master who love mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge.”

1:21-23 **Principality**, **power**, **might**, and **dominion** (v. 21) are orders of angelic beings. Because Christ transcends all (v. 21), everything submits to Him (v. 22). Because He is intimately united with **the church** (v. 22) as a **head** to its **body** (v. 23), the Church has the greatest glory of all creation. The Church is God's masterpiece (v. 23). Since Christ as God is infinite, the Church never ceases becoming “full.”

1:15-23 This is an intercessory prayer that Paul prayed often and repetitiously (v. 16). He asks that his hearers might understand the redemption he outlined in vv. 3–14. Like vv. 3–14, this section is also one long sentence in Greek.

2:1-7 Two unequal kingdoms are at war. Each is spiritual in nature; each stamps its image on its subjects and requires strict obedience. Yet they are opposites. The king of the lesser realm is a created being, Satan. His domain is **of the air** (v. 2), neither fully of earth nor of heaven. He is the author of **disobedience** (v. 2), rebellion. The beginning of his rule is spiritual death (v. 1). The **desires** of his subjects are lustful, **of the flesh and of the mind** (v. 3). Their deeds are **trespasses and sins** (v. 1). The result of his rule is **wrath** (v. 3), and hence eternal death.

The King of the other Kingdom is uncreated, **God** the Father (v. 4). His realm is **the heavenly *places*** (v. 6). He rules by **mercy** and **love** (v. 4). The beginning of His rule is redemption to eternal life (v. 5). The desires of His subjects are thankfulness and glorifying God. Their deeds are righteous, as is proper to those who reign with Christ. The result of His rule is **exceeding riches** and **kindness** (v. 7), and hence eternal life.

2:8-10 How can one get from the one kingdom to the other (vv. 1–7)? By the unity of **grace**, **faith**, and **works** (v. 9). Not that these are equal, for grace is uncreated and infinite, whereas our faith is limited and can grow; good works flow out of authentic faith. Works cannot earn us this great treasure—it is a pure gift—but those who receive this gift do good. We are not saved *by* good works, but **for good works** (v. 10).

2:11-12 Since salvation involves the renewal of all mankind in Christ, the old distinction between Jew and Gentile no longer exists. This ethnic distinction was based on **the flesh** (v. 11), the Gentiles being uncircumcised and the Jews being circumcised. While Israel was especially blessed by God (v. 12), both Jews and Gentiles had to become *true* Israel (see vv. 13–18).

2:13-18 Man's brokenness was twofold: man was separated from man, that is, Gentile from Jew (vv. 13–15); and man was separated from God (vv. 16–18). The healing is likewise twofold: the creation of a unified humanity, the Church, and the raising of this unified humanity to God. The Incarnation of the Son of God accomplished the former; His death and Resurrection did the latter. The whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, act together (v. 18; see v. 22).

The middle wall of separation (v. 14) probably refers to the barrier in the temple separating the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Jews. This barrier manifested the limitations of the Old Covenant. It did not heal humanity's self-alienation; it actually increased human hostility. Now that this wall is **broken down**, both Gentiles and Jews are reconciled and one in Christ.

2:19-22 The Church, humanity unified and renewed through union with the incarnate Son of God (vv. 11–18), is built on a foundation of **Jesus Christ** and **the apostles and prophets** (v. 20). From this foundation come the Scriptures and all doctrine. In 4:11 these gifts are implied to be a continuing reality in the Church. And the spiritual building is one: the Church is designed to be united.

3:1-13 How does Paul fit into the cosmic plan described in 1:3–14 and 2:1–22? God has revealed this plan to him (vv. 1–6) so that he can reveal it to all, especially to the Gentiles (vv. 7–13).

3:1, 2 **Prisoner** (Paul is in prison in Rome as he writes this letter) is a title of honor and a mark of apostleship (Lk 21:12; 2Co 6:4, 5). Paul is not only an apostle (see v. 5), but one with a special role, a special **dispensation** (v. 2, Gr. *oikonomia*). All NT leaders, “apostles and prophets” (v. 5; 2:20), know the doctrine of the unity in the Church of Christ; Paul has received the special commission to extend this Church to the Gentiles (v. 8).

3:3 God's **revelation** to Paul began on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:3–21). God was gracious to Paul not for his own sake but for others (see Acts 9:15, 16).

3:5 The apostolate is the special bearer of divine revelation necessary for the life of the Church in this age.

3:6 This is the content of the revelation mentioned in v. 3: that **through the gospel** the **Gentiles** should be united with the Jews, so that a united and renewed humanity is brought to God.

3:8 Why did God choose a Jew to preach to the Gentiles? Because if God can redeem Saul, the persecutor of the Church and hater of Gentiles, then God can certainly redeem the Gentiles through Saul.

3:10 Not only did men not know of God's mystery (v. 5), neither did the angels. They hear of it from men. How can this be? Because **the church** affects all elements of creation, from the material to the immaterial. The united, renewed humanity made possible by Christ is the basis of the reconciliation of the heavens and the earth. Therefore, the Church ascends above the angels, **the principalities and powers**. The basis of such an astounding work by men is Christ's Resurrection and exaltation (v. 11).

3:12 The wonder of the mystery of God, surprising even to angels, is that mere humans, earthly creatures, can have **boldness** and confident **access** to God the Father.

3:13 Paul sees that even his sufferings are a part of his apostolic work. His **tribulations** are **for you**, that is, for the Church, for us. So our sufferings can be for others.

3:14-19 Paul picks up where he left off in v. 1, beginning a prayer for his hearers. **I bow my knees** shows his special earnestness, since standing would have been a more common posture for prayer. The whole Trinity is involved in our deification: Father (vv. 14, 15, 19–21), Son (vv. 14, 17, 19, 21), and Holy Spirit (v. 16).

3:15 **Family** or clan (Gr. *patria*) is a group descended from one ancestor. God the Father (Gr. *pater*, v. 14), is the ultimate source of every living being. As there is only one uncreated Father, so the whole of creation is called to form one family under the fatherhood of God.

3:18-19 How do we **comprehend** (v. 18) and **know** (v. 19)? It is something other than a scientific fact or intellectual awareness. It is (1) a revelation, a divine gift that illumines and transforms our intellect; and (2) a reciprocal encounter, a personal bond with the personal God, who reveals Himself to us through communion with Him. This revelation and personal communion, this faith, is best known (1) **with all the saints** (v. 18), that is, in personal communion with the corporate Church; and (2) through an experience of the great gift of grace, **the love of Christ** (v. 19). Theological knowledge is first personal and experiential, and then thought out and verbalized. A theologian witnesses to what he knows through experience.

3:20-21 A benediction that falls in the middle of the epistle acknowledges that God's work goes far beyond what we envision, **above all that we ask or think**. The goal of deification, “that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (v. 19), is accomplished by the working together, the synergism, of our faith and love with God's **power** and Spirit **in us** (v. 20).

4:1 Paul implores his hearers to realize what has been given to them and to be in practice what they are in Christ. So he turns the focus of his letter from what God does for us to what we are to do in response. How you believe must affect how you live; creed must influence conduct.

4:2-3 The basic characteristics of Christians are the virtues that contribute to **unity**: though we are many persons, we share one new nature. Though we are members of the most exalted body, the greatness is of God, not of ourselves. Even the cohesiveness of this body is God's work in the **Spirit** (v. 3). So there is no place for quarreling. To live in the heavenlies we are to walk in solidarity and humility on earth. Note that the one virtue listed not common to Greco-Roman philosophy is **lowliness**, taught in word and in deed by Jesus Himself.

4:4-6 Here is the manifold unity of the Church. Christian morality is not based on ideas but on a living reality: the life of the Holy Trinity in the Church. Paul combines the three Persons of the Trinity (**one Spirit** . . . **one Lord** . . . **one God**) with the Church, the sacrament of **baptism** (v. 5), and the theological virtues of **hope** (v. 4) and **faith** (v. 5) into one grand reality, the concrete basis for holy living. Each Person of the Trinity sanctifies, but the sanctification is one, because the baptism is one, and the grace of the sacrament is one.

4:7-16 While the Church is one in essence, it is diverse in gifts and function. Unity does not mean uniformity. Each member is unique before God, with gifts and roles granted by Him. Diversity in operation is (1) based on the ascent of the Son and the descent of the Spirit (vv. 8–10), (2) guided by specially gifted people (v. 11), and (3) for the sake of the maturity and stability of the body (vv. 12–16).

4:8-10 Paul's rabbinic way of intertwining the Ascension of Christ (**He ascended**) with the descent of the Spirit (**gave gifts**) reveals the relationship between the body of Christ and the gifts of the Spirit. **The lower parts of the earth** is either the earth itself, referring to the Incarnation; or burial or Hades, the place of the dead, referring to Christ's death and descent into hell (1Pt 3:19). Only Christ, as God and Man, can **fill all things** (v. 10), that is, reign over the unification and fulfillment of creation.

4:11-16 The gifts listed in v. 11 are limited to those who lead the Church. The Holy Spirit extends gifts to each person at chrismation, but the “ministry gifts” listed here form one leadership group responsible for **equipping** the laity for **the work of ministry** (v. 12).

Why is there a diversity of persons and giftings in the Church? For unity of service (vv. 12, 13), for the preservation of truth (v. 14), and for the operation of **love** (vv. 15, 16), the primary quality of Christian growth. The Church, in which Christian life develops, is not primarily an organization, but an organism whose parts or members receive their edifying power from Christ to grow up into Christ. Paul does not look at the Christian as an isolated individual walking toward perfection, but as a member of the body, striving to reach the perfect faith and full knowledge of the Son of God. Thus unity of faith cannot be separated from knowledge of the Son of God.

4:17-24 The process of Christian growth requires our free will commitment to walk in **righteousness and holiness** (v. 24). A child of the light can no longer act as a child of darkness. A change of lifestyle is possible because of Christ, the original **new man** (v. 24). So Christ must be **learned** (v. 20), and relationship with Him must **be renewed** (v. 23), a process implying intimate relationship. Further, Christ must be **put on** (v. 24), a clothing metaphor, an allusion to baptism and the baptismal robe. While spiritual grace makes man heavenly, righteousness is both a gift and a goal, a present reality and a promise to be striven for.

4:25 **Lying** hurts the entire body of the Church. It is as if the eye were to see a trap and not tell the foot, or the tongue to taste poison and not spit it out.

4:26-27 “If you fail to master your anger on the first day, then on the next day and even sometimes for a whole year you will still be dragging it out. . . . Anger will cause us to suspect that words spoken in one sense were meant in another. And we will even do the same with gestures and every little thing. . . . Be angry with the devil and not your own member. This is why God has armed us with anger. Not that we should thrust the sword against our own bodies, but that we should baptize the whole blade in the devil's breast” (JohnChr).

4:28 We are to work, not for personal gain and luxury, but in order to serve.

4:31-32 “Cut off clamor and you will clip the wings of anger. . . . There is but one thing in which it is useful to cry aloud—in preaching and in teaching” (JohnChr).

4:32 We cannot be content only to root out the weeds mentioned in v. 31; we must plant good fruit as well.

5:2-15 “Walk worthy of the calling,” Paul says in 4:1 (see 2:10). Here he defines this **walk**: Walk in love (v. 2); walk in light (v. 8); walk in wisdom (v. 15). *Walk* implies a slow, steady pace; a daily effort; a marathon, not a sprint.

5:4 “Just as clamor was the fuel of wrath, so foul talk is the fuel of lust” (JohnChr).

4:25-5 The way we live affects our relationship not only with God but also with each other—for in Christ we are **members of one another** (4:25). The moral standard for the new humanity is the life appropriate to a child of God (5:1)—of the Father (4:32–5:1), the Son (5:2), and the **Holy Spirit** (4:30). Such a child fulfills the two great commandments: (1) love of man, demonstrated in self-sacrificing service (**given Himself for us,** 5:2); and (2) love of God, manifested in worship (**an offering and a sacrifice to God**).

Paul especially emphasizes that Christians must avoid sexual immorality, not just the act but thinking and talking about it also (5:4); and greed, which treats things as if they were gods (5:5). Ungodly thoughts as well as behavior can keep believers out of the Kingdom.

5:6, 7 Paul's sharp contrast between the two ways, the way of darkness and the way of light, begins here. The animosity between the two ways is in thoughts, words (vv. 6–10), and actions (vv. 8–12).

5:8-10 We must judge what the world says is reasonable on the basis of what God says is true.

5:11-14 Besides separating from darkness, Christians are also to **expose** (v. 11) it. But we must first come out of hiding in order to be exposed ourselves. That is, we must confess our sins and repent of them (see Jn 3:19–21). Orthodox Christians do this before baptism, before the Eucharist, and also in a separate sacrament of repentance. The hymn in v. 14 is an early baptismal hymn: baptism is illumination (see Acts 26:18; 2Co 4:6; Heb 6:4; 10:32). To walk in the light is to walk in one's baptism.

5:15-17 The goal is not to abandon the world, but to keep oneself in Christ and salvage as much as possible from the evil world. Christians renounce the fallenness of the world, not creation itself.

5:18-20 Following repentance, a surge of life and joy wells forth. A distinctive spirit, a kind of elation, energizes both darkness and light. For those in darkness, this spirit is like drunkenness, artificial and temporary. For Christians, it is the Holy **Spirit** (v. 18), and the joy is New Covenant worship of the Holy Trinity, the Eucharist (**giving thanks**, v. 20): to the Father, through the Son incarnate (**Lord** in v. 19; **Lord Jesus Christ** in v. 20), in the Spirit (v. 18). He who is made drunk with wine totters and sways, but he who is inebriated with the Holy Spirit is rooted in Christ and gloriously sober.

5:19-21 Quoting Scripture and singing hymns are not spiritual if there is not also true humility, submission, and the **fear of God** (v. 21).

5:21-9 Verse 21 is a transition to the theme of the next section, where Paul applies the idea of mutual submission to the most basic human relationships—those in the household.

5:22-33 The model is **Christ and the church** (v. 32), which is then applied to marriage. Yet Christian marriage helps us to understand the mystery of the Church.

(1) For wives, concerning headship (vv. 22–24): In both the Church and marriage, there is one who acts as head, who leads. As Man, Christ is first among equals, not superior to us in nature; yet He alone is the **head of the church** (v. 23). Likewise, wives are called to submit to their husbands as equals.

(2) For husbands, concerning sacrificial love (vv. 25–31): Paul writes three sentences to wives, but writes at greater length to impress on husbands that they should love their wives. Just as the wife's submission is to accept the headship of the husband, the husband's submission to his wife is to sacrifice himself for her. In ancient Israel, the bride would bathe and dress and be escorted to the bridegroom by his friends. In the Church, baptism is that bathing and dressing in which we put on Christ (v. 26), and the groom Himself, Christ, escorts us (v. 27). In the Church, the baptized are one humanity, one flesh with Christ; in marriage, husband and wife are one flesh with each other.

6:1-4 Children are expected to **obey** and respect their parents. The meaning of the Greek word for *obey* (*hupakouo*) begins with the idea of listening attentively. The caution regarding the fathers puts a restraint and a requirement of godly instruction on the parent.

6:5-8 As with marriage, Paul does not seek to alter the existing social structure. But he does insist that both marriage and the master-slave relationship (nowadays, employer-employee) are different when Christians are involved. The expectations for the slave are similar to those for a wife and for children: sincere obedience. Paul, however, unlike the culture around him, insists that, in God's eyes, the good done by a slave is the same as that done by a free man. Before Christ they are equal.

6:9 Masters are curtly warned against intimidation. They must remember their own **Master**, who is not biased in their favor just because they are earthly masters.

6:10-17 All who stand for good must wage a constant battle with the forces of evil. For the demons still have power in the world (v. 12) until Christ comes again in glory. This is clearly acknowledged in the prayers at the conclusion of Orthodox baptism. Christians fight back with God's arms, that is, His uncreated divine energy, given to us (1:19–23; 3:16–21) and actively used by us. The Christian has “put on” (4:24) at baptism all the qualities listed as armor in vv. 14–17. These qualities must be exercised in the conflict of growth: no struggle, no deification.

6:18-20 Just as important as spiritual armor is a Christian's readiness and alertness: diligent prayer and watchfulness in submission to the Holy Spirit (see 1:16; 3:14–21; 5:20). Those on the “front lines,” apostles and evangelists in this case, require the backup power of a praying Church.

6:21-22 **Tychicus** presumably was the bearer of the letter.

6:23-24 This final benediction parallels the greeting (1:3–14).

1:1 This is the only epistle in which St. Paul includes the clergy, the **bishops and deacons**, in his address. St. John Chrysostom says this is because it was the clergy in Philippi who collected the funds Paul so badly needed, and sent them to him by Epaphroditus. *Bishops* are the leading presbyters. By the time this letter was written, around AD 63, not only were bishops present in Philippi, but James was presiding over the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13) and tradition reveals that Peter was bishop in Antioch—and later in Rome. (Tradition sometimes refers to the men Peter designated his successors in those places as the “first” bishops, affirming the difference between the apostles and the overseers they appointed.) Paul's pastoral epistles outline the qualifications for the office of bishop (1Ti 3:1–7; Tts 1:7–9).

1:5 **Fellowship**, the Greek word *koinonia*, is central to this epistle and to Orthodox Christianity in general. It implies true communion, a more fundamental community of life and worship than is usually conveyed by the word “fellowship.”

1:9-11 **And this I pray**: This prayer of Paul shows his love and pastoral care for the Philippians. Their behavior makes him confident that God will continue to perfect them—and those who follow in their footsteps.

1:19-21 Our witness for Christ goes beyond the words of our mouths to the way we live and the way we die: the totality of what we are and do. St. Paul expects **deliverance** (v. 19), though not necessarily for his **body** (v. 20). His **expectation and hope** (v. 20) is of eternal life.

1:29 **To suffer for His sake** is a repeated theme in this epistle. Suffering not only bears witness to others, as Paul's chains have done (see vv. 7, 13), but also can serve to increase our faith. Suffering is a gift from Christ, as is faith: it is a participation in His grace.

2:3 **Conceit**, or vainglory, is a common and fatal vice. It hinders spiritual growth, for *conceit* causes us to despise those who have a different way of life, thinking we are better than they. “The spirit of despair exults at the sight of mounting vice, the spirit of vainglory at the sight of the growing treasures of virtue” (JohnCli). To be conceited is a form of idolatry. It captures those who say they want to please God, but secretly wish to please other people more.

2:5-11 This passage is a hymn already in use in the Church, quoted here by St. Paul because it calls us to ponder the humility of Christ, a truth necessary for suffering Christians to understand and live out. The passage has been incorporated into many hymns of the Orthodox Church. Christ is He who, **being in the form of God**, is also in the **form of a bondservant** (v. 7), in our likeness (see Gn 1:26), and is voluntarily subject to death. He who has died, God has exalted and given the name **Lord** (v. 11), a name God the Son shares with God the Father from all eternity.

2:6 **The form** (Gr. *morphe*) **of God**, a concept parallel with “the image [Gr. *eikon*] of God” (Col 1:15), refers to the Son's sharing in full the divine nature. **Robbery** (Gr. *harpagmon,* lit. “prize” or “booty”) refers to an object stolen and tightly clutched. Christ has equality with God not by seizure but by nature, and with absolute security. There is, therefore, no threat, loss, or any change in the divine nature of the Son of God when He takes our humanity to Himself and offers us salvation.

2:7-8 **Made Himself of no reputation** (v. 7; lit. “emptied Himself”) deals with the Son's will, not His nature. He emptied Himself not by laying down His divine nature or setting it aside, but by voluntarily taking on our human nature. To human beings He looks just like another human being, for being truly incarnate, He is fully man by nature. He took **the form of a bondservant**, voluntarily sharing our human condition except for one thing: sin. In His humanity, He showed the fullness of humility by His obedience to the death that has enslaved humanity. To die on a **cross**, the death of a criminal, was repulsive to the Romans and considered a curse by the Jews. But His death brings life to all who are joined to Him.

2:12-13 **Therefore**, because of Christ's sacrifice, we are to take hold of what God offers, accepting His grace and working toward becoming mature in Christ. Note the cooperation: we **work out** our **own salvation** (v. 12) while **it is God who works in** us to do His **will** (v. 13).

2:17 **Service** is literally “liturgy.” St. Paul sees himself being **poured out** as an offering, a participation in Christ's **sacrifice**, for he also participates in Christ's sufferings. In all this, we see the attitude that prevailed throughout the entire early Church: there is no separation between worship and life. They are one. To worship Christ is to live for Him and in Him.

2:19-30 These verses portray the leadership and the laity in the primitive Church working together. Paul is confident of his authority **to send Timothy** (v. 19) to Philippi, which demonstrates Paul's apostolic or episcopal role. Timothy is an apostle as well, sent to care for this church. **Epaphroditus** is a **fellow worker** and **fellow soldier** (v. 25) who earns high praise. Early tradition tells us Epaphroditus later became bishop of Philippi and died a martyr.

3:2-3 The Judaizers were teaching that Christians needed to submit themselves to the Law of Moses, especially emphasizing the rite of **circumcision** (v. 3). Paul boldly tags them with the name they gave to Gentiles—**dogs** (v. 2)—and compares their circumcision to the self-inflicted **mutilation** (v. 3) of some pagan cults. True Israel, the Church, does not rely on outward observance of the law. She is the mystical body of **Christ Jesus**, composed of those **who worship God in the Spirit** (v. 3).

3:4-6 Though Paul could boast concerning his ancestry, his circumcision, his keeping of the **law** (v. 5)—he is a more zealous Jew than they are—he knows this is not true righteousness.

3:7-9 True righteousness is **the knowledge of Christ Jesus** (v. 8). He is the “pearl of great price” and eternal life (Jn 17:3). A faith that obeys Christ is the very content and meaning of life, and it is for this that we suffer **the loss of all things** (v. 8) and deny ourselves. Everything about us must be subordinated to Christ and His Kingdom (see Mt 6:19–34; 24:36–25:46).

3:9-11 **Faith** is the name of the relationship that gives us full participation in the life of Christ and in **His resurrection** (v. 10). Faith includes our assent to articles of belief, but it is also our openness to God's action in our lives. The meaning of our suffering comes in sharing in Christ's suffering and death, becoming like Him. Why? So that we may be with Him in glory.

3:12-16 What is the goal (v. 14) of the maturing Christian? For Paul it is that we be engaged in the struggle of faith, confident that Christ has made us His own, but knowing we are not yet **perfected**. Thus, we are zealous to **press on** (v. 12) toward the completion of our salvation, **the prize of the upward call of God** (v. 14)—the resurrection to eternal life.

3:17 Because St. Paul and other saints set an **example** for us, **a pattern** for us to follow, we do follow in their steps (tradition) and honor them in the process (veneration).

3:18-21 **The enemies of the cross of Christ** (v. 18) is a reference to those made captive to dietary laws, circumcision, and discipline. Christian spirituality, by contrast, is based in the age to come, knowing we have no glory in this age. The passage from humiliation to exaltation that Christ experienced (2:5–11) is promised to those Christians who follow Him in perseverance. **Transform our lowly body** (v. 21) implies a change not in substance but to **His glorious body**, a change from corruption to incorruption.

4:2 **Euodia** and **Syntyche** are two women who assisted Paul in his ministry in Philippi.

4:3 It is most likely this **Clement**, a disciple of Paul, who later became the bishop of Rome. A long letter, still in existence, to the Corinthian church is attributed to him.

4:4-6 Paul often uses the word **always** in relation to prayer. Rejoicing *always* is a fruit of perseverance in daily prayers (see 1Th 5:16–18).

4:5-9 How do we handle the daily pressures of life? By (1) faith that **the Lord *is* at hand**, present with us (v. 5); (2) refusing to worry, being **anxious for nothing** (v. 6); (3) **prayer** (v. 6); (4) **thanksgiving** . . . **to God** (v. 6); (5) meditation on that which is virtuous (v. 8); and (6) imitating the godly (v. 9).

4:11-13 Here is the secret of contentment.

1:3-8 Giving **thanks** for the church in Colosse, Paul commends them with his **faith**, **hope**, **love** trilogy (vv. 4, 5). Note the gospel is the same in Colosse as **in all the world** (v. 6), indicating the catholic (universal) nature of the faith in the first century. Elements of this gospel include: (1) *faith* **in Christ Jesus** alone, no other (v. 4); (2) *love* **for all the saints** (v. 4); (3) *hope* in the Kingdom of **heaven** (v. 5); (4) true preaching (v. 6); and (5) godly ministry, as established by **Epaphras** (vv. 7, 8).

1:9-14 A summary of progress in a truly spiritual life: from discernment of God's **will** (v. 9) to doing God's will (v. 10) with divine energy and virtue (v. 11), within the Church, the baptized and eucharistic assembly. In the apostolic tradition, this life is open to all the saints, not just to a few.

1:12-13 Being a Christian goes beyond changing masters from Satan to God, to a change of kingdoms as well—from that of **darkness** to the **kingdom of the Son**.

1:15 No clear distinction is made between Christ as God and Christ as Man, but the point of the verse is obvious. As God, Christ is eternally and consubstantially (of one essence) the **image** (Gr. *eikon*, “icon”) of the Father. As Man, Christ is the image in which man was made and toward which man is moving. In both natures, He fully represents and manifests the Father. As God, Christ is **the firstborn over all creation** in that the Father created everything through Him, as the Only Begotten Son of God. As Man, Christ is *the firstborn over all creation* in that He has authority over creation. In either case, creation is fully subject to Him. Contrary to the Colossian heresy, in which He was considered one of the created mediators, Christ is the only Mediator and Lord of all.

1:16 **Thrones**, **dominions**, **principalities**, and **powers** are ranks of angels. Christ is not only the source (**through Him**) of creation—of all things, on earth and in heaven—but also its goal (**for Him**; see Eph 1:10).

1:18 **The head** and **the body** have one and the same nature. In this case *the body* comes from, submits to, and continues to exist in *the head*, so the one nature is the glorified humanity of Christ. As Christ has supreme and life-giving authority (**the firstborn**) over the original creation, where life is temporary, so He has supreme and life-giving authority over the new creation, where life is eternal. But now He is Head through the body, **the church**. The Church, then, is the source of the restoration and fulfillment of creation in Christ.

1:19-20 **The fullness** was a term used by the gnostic heretics to describe all the spiritual beings and forces they saw as intervening between man and God. Of these, Jesus was seen as but one mediator in one level of existence with one force. Paul differs, saying Christ is Himself *the fullness*. Jesus is everything, God in all fullness; and in His human nature, resurrected and ascended, He is the created and glorified Head of all creation. Jesus Christ ends the alienation between God and creation, bringing creation as a sacrament into a living union with God.

1:15-20 This passage is an ancient christological hymn, perhaps expanded upon by Paul, in two stanzas: (1) Christ the Head of creation (vv. 15–17) and (2) Christ the Head of the new creation (vv. 18–20). This hymn may have been part of the early baptismal liturgy; if so, Paul could be using it to bring the Colossians back to their original profession.

1:22 **The body of His flesh** is the mortal (capable of dying) humanity of Christ before His Resurrection. The heretics' angels cannot save us because they have not become one of us. We cannot be saved unless we become one with Christ by being united with Him in His death. Through His death, we die with Him.

1:24 Christ and the Church are so intimately united that, as we suffer and die with Him (beginning at baptism), so Christ suffers with us in our work of reconciliation. (See Mt 25:40; Lk 10:16; Jn 15:18–21; Acts 9:1, 4, 5; Rom 8:17; 2Co 1:5; 4:10; Php 1:20; 3:10.)

1:25 The Colossian church is bound not only to its confession of faith (vv. 15–20) but also to its divinely appointed apostle.

1:26 **Mystery**: See Eph 1:9, 10 and note; see also *Glossary*.

2:3 For those who seek the secrets of the universe, a desire the Colossian heretics fed upon, Paul assures us Christ knows everything. Most of this is **hidden** to us, so we must seek Christ alone, who is God's Wisdom. In the Incarnation He became for us a Servant, taking on our weak and mortal existence, but He always remains Lord of all.

2:8 **The basic principles of the world** include (1) the basic elements of *matter*; (2) the *laws* that regulate the universe, including those conditioning fallen human life, such as death, sin, the flesh, and the Mosaic Law; (3) the *spirits* who use these conditions to oppose Christ and are at the core of the pagan cults and systems of knowledge; and (4) *human traditions* opposed to God's tradition.

2:9, 10 See Jn 1:14. Do we need to rise through manifold levels of being to get to God? No! The incarnate Christ is fully God and fully Man—He fulfills human nature, and all levels of being submit to Him. Do we need to rise slowly through a humanly conceived spiritual bureaucracy to God? No! We go directly through Christ, for He is the sovereign power, **the head** over angelic beings.

2:11-14 Do we need to perform manmade rituals and works in order to gain a hearing before the Redeemer? No! We come through God's work, Holy **baptism**, to be joined to Christ. For Jesus Christ triumphs over the conditions of fallen existence—sin, death, the flesh, the law, and evil spirits—by His death and Resurrection. In the OT rite of circumcision only a small piece of flesh is removed; in **the circumcision of Christ**, our baptism, we die to the flesh and live to God.

2:15 Don't the dark powers still have the ability to take power over us? No! All of these created **principalities and powers**, the angels who are the hidden powers behind fallen human existence, are defeated by the Resurrection. Even the law has been fulfilled and thus transcended (v. 14). Christ triumphs, and He rides in triumphal procession, leading out the prisoners of war in chains before Him, while He follows behind in His glorious shining victor's chariot, the Cross.

2:16-23 Here Paul speaks against false worship (vv. 16, 17), false mysticism (vv. 18, 19), and false asceticism (vv. 20–23). He says, **let no one judge you** (v. 16) and do not submit to **the basic principles of the world** (v. 20; see v. 8 and note). For man does not live by **shadow**, the law, but by **the substance** (lit. “body”) that produces the shadow (v. 17), which is the body of Christ, the Church. Man-centered superstitious ritualism is deadly. The fulfilling liturgy is that of the body of Christ, culminating in the Eucharist. (For Paul on liturgical worship, see 1Co 11–14.) Mystical experiences are not wrong in themselves, but we must beware of deception, pride, schism, and a mind controlled by passions and the body. (For Paul on mystical experiences, see 2Co 12; Eph 1; 3.) Ascetic practices—prayer, fasting, almsgiving—are taught by God (Mt 6), but enemies lie along that path as well. Submitting to created realities, heeding human traditions, the deception of feeding the flesh when you think you are denying it, are false asceticism and condemned as pride. (For Paul on asceticism, see 1Co 9; 1Ti 6:12; 2Ti 2:3–6).

3:1-17 Using baptism as his backdrop, Paul counters the practices of the heretics in Colosse (2:16–23) with the practices of the apostolic Church: true mysticism (vv. 1–4), true asceticism (vv. 5–14), and true liturgical experience (vv. 15–17).

3:1-4 True mysticism: Christians both have received Christ's exalted resurrection life in baptism, and need to keep on seeking the ultimate and spiritual glories of the age to come. Remember your baptism! Live according to His Resurrection! Seek your true life in Christ, awaiting the heavenly and glorious final revelation!

3:5-14 True asceticism: As baptized Christians, we are becoming in practice what we are already in spirit. As we died with Christ, so we must will to experience death daily by “killing” old sinful and disintegrating passions (vv. 5–9). As we were raised with Christ, so we must will to experience life daily by the virtuous and unifying desires of the **new *man*** we all are in the body of Christ (vv. 10–14).

3:10 The **new *man*** grows from one stage of perfection to another, becoming **the image** of Jesus Christ and throughout eternity remaining *the image* of **Him who created him**.

3:15-17 True liturgical experience: Note how the liturgy of worship can be experienced as divine through the unity and holiness of the Church—the one New Man in Christ. Worship is experienced in **the word of Christ**, including the Scriptures and their exposition; the **hymns and spiritual songs**; the Eucharist (**giving thanks to God**).

3:18-1 Life in the home is **in the Lord**; the family is a little church and is to live in the baptismal and eucharistic life of the Church. Duties are reciprocal, everyone having the same standing before the same Master. All authority is for the sake of loving service (all authority is humbling) and all submission is to God (all submission is glorious).

4:2-6 Paul expects the church to be at corporate **prayer** often. Not only are the apostles to **speak the mystery of Christ**, but every member of the church is to have **speech . . . with grace** so as **to answer** those seeking the true faith.

4:7-9 **Tychicus** is the courier for this letter as well as for those to the Ephesians (Eph 6:21) and to Philemon.

4:16 Paul expected his letters to be read aloud to the churches and at least sometimes to be sent on to neighboring churches. (Colosse and Laodicea are less than 15 miles apart.) Paul's letter coming from Laodicea probably is the one we know as Ephesians.

1:1, 2 As with all of Paul's epistles, 1 Timothy begins with the traditional Greco-Roman format of greeting—addressed not to a church, but to a **true son in the faith**, Timothy. (The disciple of a rabbi was called his “son.”) This relationship supports Paul's title “father” (1Co 4:15) and, by application, the use of “Father” for priests.

God the Father is called **Savior** (see 2:3; 4:10; Tts 1:3; 2:10; 3:4), for every work of the Trinity is the work of all three Persons in which each Person participates.

1:4 Paul's faithful are plagued by Jewish **fables and endless genealogies**, energetic disputation over myth and human tradition for argument's sake. “The Jews wasted their whole course on these unprofitable points [for] historical knowledge and research” (JohnChr).

1:7 **The law** is the Old Covenant Mosaic Law, not the commandments of Christ in the Gospels or the canons of the Church.

1:8 **The law *is* good** because God gave it (Rom 7:16). It was a schoolmaster for God's chosen people, to confront and control their sin until the Incarnation of His Son fulfills it; and a guide to lead all people to Christ.

1:12-17 Paul, as a former rebel toward God and persecutor of the Church (Acts 9:1–3), gives glory to God for his calling as an apostle. Throughout the OT and NT and church history, the greatest sinners have often become most notable saints (Moses, Rahab, David, Photini—the woman at the well, Matthew, Paul, St. Mary of Egypt).

1:15 Used in Orthodox liturgical prayer and said by all approaching the chalice for Holy Communion.

1:20 If Paul is a recipient of God's grace, here are two who rejected this grace and stand as a warning to all.

2:1, 2 Intercessory prayers are to be offered for all without partiality, but special attention is given to prayer for those in authority. Thus, Orthodox Christians repeatedly pray for “all civil authorities.”

2:3-5 The religions of the Greek world were pluralistic and elite. In contrast, Paul teaches that there is one **Savior**, **one God and one Mediator** (v. 5). And God offers salvation equally to all, for He created us to share in His goodness, and for this end He became a **Man** like us.

2:5 Some who are opposed to the established Church use this verse to claim that “all you need is Jesus—not the Church, her clergy, and her sacraments.” But the Son became the **one Mediator** by becoming **Man** through the Holy Spirit and a virgin—that is, through **God and men**. He “built” His humanity not from Himself alone but from another, the Virgin Mary. Likewise, as the *Mediator* He says, “I will build My church” (Mt 16:18); He establishes her leaders and her worship. As Mary gives us Christ in His humanity, the Church introduces us to Him, who alone is our *Mediator*.

2:6 Regarding ancient slaves, a **ransom** did not so much *purchase* them as *free* them from their bondage to experience liberty.

2:8 Prayer must be united with quiet and godly behavior. Does this contradict praying secretly, not to be seen by men (Mt 6:5, 6)? No. The warning is against spiritual showmanship, not congregational prayer. The secret “room” (Mt 6:6) is a person's innermost being, perfectly consistent with praying **everywhere**. In contrast to the Jewish emphasis on one primary earthly place for prayer (the temple in Jerusalem), Christians experience the fullness of prayer wherever they may be.

2:12 The Church's greatest saint is a woman, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Some women, including Mary Magdalene, are called “Equal to the Apostles,” others serve as deacons (Rom 16:1). While sharing full equality in Christ, women are not ordained to the offices of bishop and presbyter.

2:15 If salvation is holistic, involving all of one's life, then women who have children are **saved**, in part, by motherhood, *if* they persevere in godliness. Our God-given role in life is the place of our salvation.

3:1 **Bishop** means “overseer,” an elder (4:14; 5:17). Later in the first century *bishop* came to designate a presiding elder.

3:2 St. John Chrysostom on **blameless**: “Every virtue is implied in this word. [The bishop's] life should be unspotted so that all should look up to him, and make his life the model of their own.” In the early Church, a bishop could be married. Today married men may be ordained to the Orthodox priesthood. The Sixth Ecumenical Council (681) sanctioned celibate bishops, but only as a special dispensation relative to the feeling that it was not acceptable for a bishop to live with a woman. Married bishops are in accordance with the general teaching of Orthodox canon law.

3:8 For qualifications for the first deacons, see Acts 6:1–6.

3:11 **Wives**: Or perhaps “women,” referring to deaconesses.

3:15 While the Scriptures are the inspired truth of God in human words (2Ti 3:15–17), the Church is **the pillar and ground** of that truth.

3:16 Paul quotes an ancient Christian creed or hymn that is especially clear about the divinity of Jesus Christ. Another such creed is found in 2Ti 2:11–13. (See also 6:15, 16; Eph 1:3–14; 5:14; Php 2:6–11; Col 1:15–20.) Thus, when the early Councils met and issued creeds, they were well within the mark of biblical precedent.

4:2 A **conscience seared with a hot iron** describes the reality that repeated willful sin blunts our sensitivity to good and evil. A grim warning to all Christians to reject evil in all forms and thereby maintain a softness of heart toward God.

4:3-5 Whereas sexual abstinence and fasting are important factors in spiritual discipline, we control our passions not because the material world is evil, but because we are corrupt and tend to sin. Sex and food are not unclean, but willful disobedience, an unthankful disposition, and uncontrolled desires are. The Church is here to bring the whole world back to God.

4:5-6 *The* **word** (Gr. *logos*) **of God** is the Son (Jn 1:1; Heb 4:12; 1Pt 1:23; 1Jn 1:1; Rev 19:13). A *word of God* in the NT can be God's creative will (2Pt 3:5, 7), the OT (Mk 7:13), a blessing using God's name (as here), the gospel itself (Acts 4:31; 6:7; 13:5, 26; 15:7, 36; 1Th 2:13), or a special message from God. The Son is the ultimate reference for every other *word of God*. Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether “word” refers to Christ Himself or words about Him (Col 1:25). To spread the *word of God* is to spread Christ Himself. (The Greek *rema* is identically translated as “word” whether it refers to the gospel [Heb 6:5; 1Pt 1:25], a message from God [1Pt 1:25], or an act of God [Heb 11:3].) **Words of faith** (v. 6) means speech consonant with the gospel. **Doctrine**, or “teaching,” is the content of the gospel. Thus, the rich and manifold speech concerning salvation serves our communion with Christ, the Word of God. He is the reason these words are vital and powerful. Using words without the Word is vain.

4:7-8 Paul is no stranger to physical exercise and its benefits (see 1Co 9:24–27), but he prefers spiritual exercise, for it leads to life eternal.

4:13 **Give attention to reading**, whether personal reading or the public reading of Scripture during worship, is tied with **exhortation** (preaching) and **doctrine** (teaching). The early Christians had a liturgical worship structure—including the reading of Scripture and the homily—the roots of which were in the synagogue.

4:14 This refers to Timothy's ordination as presbyter (priest), which was conferred by the apostles, as it is by the bishop today (2Ti 1:6; see Acts 6:6). In 5:22 Paul gives Timothy instructions for ordination. In continuity with the NT, Orthodox ordination to the diaconate and priesthood comes through the laying on of hands by the bishop.

5:3-16 Specific advice on caring for widows. If there are no family members to do this, care belongs to the parish, for a widow has God as her guardian (Dt 10:18; Ps 67:6; Ps 145:9). A “real” widow (vv. 3, 5, 16), however, in turn cares for the parish through prayer (v. 5) and works of compassion (v. 10) while maintaining a pure and holy life (vv. 6, 7, 11–16). Special qualifications are given for those who are on the register of widows (vv. 9, 10); perhaps this was an “order” for charitable service. Widows have from the start constituted a definable group within the Church (Acts 6:1; 9:39, 41).

5:18 **The laborer *is* worthy of his wages** (Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7) may be the first use of the Gospels as Scripture.

5:23 Timothy's physical problems—perhaps from strict water-fasts—are not miraculously overcome, and Paul does not suggest breaking the fasts, only decreasing their rigor.

6:11 The beginning of repentance is to flee from sin and to abstain from passions.

6:12 **Confessed the good confession** is a reference to Timothy's words at his baptism or ordination.

6:11-16 A remarkable challenge for all who serve God, especially the ordained clergy.

6:20 The faith and worship of the Church is a sacred **trust**, to be preserved intact, without personal-preference changes and without personal gain.

1:6 **The gift of God** is the grace of the Holy Spirit, or charism, given Timothy at his ordination. This grace fills up what is lacking and gives authenticity to the priesthood. But it is not automatic. We must **stir up** and rekindle it.

1:7 While any Christian may be persecuted (Jn 15:20; see Mt 5:11, 12 and note), we reject feelings of fear or timidity. We do not “quench the Spirit” (1Th 5:19), but act with power and courage (2:12; see Mt 10:33; Lk 9:26).

1:9 Our salvation and **calling** are based on His **grace** and love, not on anything we have done to merit God's favor (Eph 2:8–10; Tts 3:5, 6).

1:10 “He submitted [to suffering] so that he might break the power of Death and demonstrate the resurrection from the dead—thus it was necessary for him to be manifested in flesh. Also [he submitted] so that he might fulfill the promise to the fathers and, while he was preparing the new people for himself and while he was still on earth, to prove that after he has brought about the resurrection he will judge” (Barn 5:6, 7).

1:13-14 **The pattern of sound words** (v. 13) is oral apostolic tradition **which you have heard**. It holds the same weight as written apostolic tradition (see 2:2; 2Th 2:5). Oral or written, this Holy Tradition is rooted in **Christ Jesus** (v. 13) and kept by **the Holy Spirit who dwells in us** (v. 14).

1:18 Perhaps Onesiphorus is dead. The Church has never hesitated to pray for her departed that they **may find mercy** from God on the **Day** of **the Lord**. (The first *Lord* in the verse refers to the Son, the second to the Father.)

2:2 Paul establishes a clear chain of witnesses to oral tradition. Christian tradition is for all believers; it is “catholic,” belonging to the whole Church, and needs to be passed down to others unhindered. This stands in clear contrast to the elitism of the major religions of the first-century Roman world, including gnosticism and the various mystery religions.

2:3-6 Faithful ministry requires discipline: obedience, self-denial, and struggle. Our icons (examples) here are the **soldier** (vv. 3, 4), the athlete (v. 5), and the **farmer** (v. 6).

2:8-13 Verses 11–13 may be an early baptismal hymn. Ministry is based on union with Christ and immovable loyalty to Him. The end, for the minister and his hearers, is life with Christ in the eternal Kingdom.

2:15 The last phrase of this verse is quoted in an Orthodox liturgical prayer for the bishops.

2:16 **Profane *and* idle babblings** (like nonsense syllables) is an apt description of heresy.

2:17-18 What is the heresy of **Hymenaeus and Philetus**? Perhaps a superspiritual interpretation of **the resurrection** (v. 18) as affecting only the soul and not the whole person (Greek philosophy thought bodily resurrection absurd); thus resurrection is thought to be **already past**, having occurred at baptism. They use the language of baptism but in a non-Orthodox way. Let us not be naive: this sort of novel doctrine can spread through the community **like cancer** (v. 17).

2:20-23 Heresy corrupts: bad theology leads to bad behavior. The Church on earth is a mixture of wheat and tares sown together (vv. 19–21). Membership in the Church guarantees nothing—even the baptismal confession (quoted in v. 19) acknowledges the necessity of struggle.

2:24-26 Good theology helps us along the path to good behavior. Although the truth stands firm and unalterable and cannot tolerate the false (see 1Co 5:1–13; 2Co 6:14–18), it instills a reasonable patience and gentleness toward all, especially toward false teachers—while not losing sight of the fact that they are enemies and to be avoided (3:5).

3:1-9 While technically we have been **in the last days** since Christ walked the earth, the Church has seen this and other warnings as a reference to the days just before His coming again. A great decay in morals (see Mt 24; Mk 13; 2Th 2; 2Pt 2; compare Rom 1:28–32) will even infiltrate the Church (v. 5; see Mt 7:15–27; 1Co 5:1–5; 1Ti 4:1–11). Like the prominent men of Cain's city (Gn 4:16–24), these offenders willfully reject law and morals out of love of self and love of pleasure.

3:5 The **form** and **power** of **godliness** are intended to be inseparable. We normally do not have the *power* of *godliness* without the *form*. Charismatic power, however, can be twisted for evil and greed (Acts 8:9–20). Outward forms, even of liturgical worship, can be carried on without *power* or conviction (see Mt 7:15; 24:4, 5, 24). As faith without works is a *form* without substance (Jam 2:26), so is religion without *power*. This is a stern warning to those of us committed to proper form.

3:8 In Jewish tradition, **Jannes and Jambres** are the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses in Ex 7.

3:10-13 Paul's life exhibits what the Lord taught: In this world, godliness elicits persecution (see Jn 15:20).

3:14-17 Having exhorted Timothy with the example of his own steadfastness (vv. 10–13), Paul now issues a reminder of the depth of Timothy's training, which combined both oral and written instruction (see Mt 28:16–20; 1Co 11:2; 2Th 2:15; 3:6). A part of this tradition is Scripture. Paul, of course, speaks of the OT, since the NT did not yet exist.

4:6 A **drink offering** is a wine, water, or oil offering poured over animal or grain sacrifices at the conclusion of both Jewish and pagan rites.

4:7 **The race** is the life and work that God gave Paul. The comparison of the spiritual life to an athletic contest (see 1Co 9:24–27) is common in the writings of the ascetic Fathers.

4:10 **Demas** provides a sobering footnote to Paul's ministry. He was Paul's companion in Rome, his co-laborer in apostleship, and a close friend of Luke (Col 4:14; Phm 24). Yet Demas—after these great and glorious years of service with the Apostle—forsook Paul, **having loved this present world**. It is in the face of tragedies such as this that the Scriptures, the Fathers, the prayers and hymns of the Church together call us repeatedly to a life of humility and repentance—that we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought.

4:11 Paul is now reconciled with (John) Mark (see Acts 15:37–40). The sharp contention between Barnabas and Paul is forgotten, and the true love of Christ reigns.

4:21 “The blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, having founded and established the Church of Rome, handed over the office of bishop to **Linus**—of whom Paul makes mention in his second letter to Timothy” (Iren). Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, says the same.

1:1 In the Roman world, a **bondservant** (Gr. *doulos*) was in an unenviable position: he had no name, rights, will, or even time of his own. But in the world of the OT, a bondservant was often the king's right-hand man—one of the most honored titles. Moses and other OT prophets were the bondservants of the Lord. Paul, of course, knew of both usages. An **apostle**, "one sent out," was a New Covenant equivalent to a bondservant.

Acknowledgment (Gr. *epignosis*) is deeper than mental knowledge; it is experiential, not theoretical. Knowledge (**the truth**) and action (**godliness**) are a unity; knowledge that does not change one's life does not save.

1:5 When Paul evangelized an area, he did not leave it unattended (1Co 3:6–10; Col 1:7).

1:5-9 All Christians are priests in Christ. Candidates for eldership, that is, for the special priesthood inside the general priesthood of all, should exhibit a wholesome and united family life (v. 6), control over passions and emotions (v. 7), loving and righteous relations with others (v. 8), and careful adherence to tradition (v. 9; see also 1Ti 3:1–16; 5:21; 2Ti 2:2).

1:10-16 False leaders also exhibit certain characteristics. They upset rather than reconcile (v. 11), have an eye for personal profit (v. 11), lack discipline and integrity (vv. 12, 13), misjudge reality—here setting up external laws when the uncleanness is internal (vv. 14, 15), and are immoral. Bad theology leads to bad behavior (v. 16).

2:1-10 Good theology helps lead us to good behavior. Various classes, distinguished here primarily by age and sex, have characteristic problems and responsibilities.

2:3-5 Note the opportunity for older women in the Church to be role models and teachers for young wives and mothers.

2:11-15 While Christian ethical teaching often appears similar to other systems—Paul uses both Roman and Jewish ethical terms—the basis of Christian ethics is unique. Christians are good not merely out of obedience to law or harmony with nature, or in order to gain immortal bliss for the soul. Rather, they are righteous in anticipation of the age to come, the *eschaton*, the age of the fullness of creation in the incarnate Son of God. **Grace** (v. 11) is the uncreated energy of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, through which He gives His gifts to man in tender mercy and good will. It is a formative power, the rule of life of the *eschaton*, requiring our determined participation. To belong to God is to become like God. To be ransomed, or "owned," by God (v. 14) is not simply legal and static, but means to live in solidarity with Him: a blessed, victorious struggle.

2:13 The Church Fathers regard **our great God and Savior Jesus Christ** as a landmark statement of the divinity of Christ (see Rom 9:5; 2Pt 1:1). In Paul's thought, “God” refers usually to the Person of the Father, not to the divine nature.

As Paul grew older, it seems his sense of the difference between this age and the age to come deepened. In his earlier letters, he emphasized the present realization of God's power; now he speaks more of our future transfiguration.

3:5 **The washing of regeneration**, baptism, and **renewing of the Holy Spirit**, chrismation, form a unity in our salvation, clear throughout the NT. Jesus taught we are born from above through “water and the Spirit” (Jn 3:5); Peter preached salvation in Christ through being “baptized” and receiving “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Now Paul calls us to the *washing* of the water and the *renewing of the Holy Spirit*.

3:7-8 While Paul is painfully aware we are awaiting the consummation of the age to come (2:13), he knows we already participate in the eschatological community. Baptism and chrismation are the beginning, the rite of passage toward a progressive life of renewal in Christ (see 2Co 3:16–18).

3:10-11 A **divisive** person is one who “picks” or “chooses from” the whole truth. A sect is a group that follows its own choices, independent of holy tradition. Incomplete or erroneous beliefs result in immoral behavior.

1:1 It is not known whether **Philemon** was yet ordained as a presbyter/bishop; he is recognized for his kindness, hospitality, and gracious spirit.

1:5 **Love** and **faith** go together. As true faith includes works, so true faith includes love. We cannot believe in God without loving others.

1:6 **Faith** unites a person not only to Christ but to all who are in Him—including those who have greatly wronged us, as Onesimus had wronged Philemon.

1:1-7 Paul's apostolic spirit is manifest in his affection, benevolence, and regular intercessions for his fellow laborers.

1:8-9 Paul appeals not to his own apostolic authority (v. 8; see 2 Corinthians). Instead he appeals to his age, to his being **a prisoner of Jesus Christ** (v. 9)—for whom we should be quick to do all that we can, and to Philemon's Christian conscience (see v. 14).

1:10 Paul became Onesimus's spiritual father by convincing him of the truth of Christ (see 1Co 4:15; Gal 4:19).

1:11-13 Paul sees to it that Onesimus fulfills his legal responsibilities by returning him to his master, concerns about the justice of slavery notwithstanding.

1:14-17 While the master-slave relationship continues, it is transcended by brotherhood in Christ.

1:18 Onesimus stole from or otherwise wronged Philemon when he ran away. **Put that on my account** is reminiscent of how Christ has taken away our sins that we might go free (2Co 5:21; 8:9).

1:19 Paul had also brought Philemon to Christ.

1:21 Perhaps Paul hopes Philemon will not only receive Onesimus with forgiveness, but will also free him and return him to Paul.

1:1-4 These verses provide an introductory summary to 1:1–10:18. The new covenant is superior to the old, for the old is incomplete and preparatory whereas the new is complete and final. In the new man enters into the heavenly realm through Christ and is glorified (see Php 2:5–11 for a close parallel).

1:2-3 **Through whom also He made the worlds** (v. 2; see Jn 1:3) and **upholding all things by the word of His power** (v. 3; see Col 1:16, 17): These two phrases reveal the Son as God acting in the world. The Lord Jesus Christ is (1) the One who created the universe, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and is therefore (2) the One who sustains the Creation and has absolute authority over it. It is natural, then, that the Son, as both God and Man, is **heir of all things** (v. 2). If the sons of Abraham hoped to be heirs of the promised land, the sons of Christ can hope to be heirs of the whole universe.

The first half of v. 3 is quoted verbatim in the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. The **brightness of *His* glory** expresses the Son's nature, His origin from and identity of nature with the Father. He is the Father's *brightness* because He is begotten from the Father beyond time and without change. Thus, the Nicene Creed speaks of “Light of Light.” As the sun does not exist without radiating light, so the Father does not exist without His Son.

Thus, the Son reflects His Father's glory in this world. The unapproachable light of divinity, the divine energy (1Ti 6:16; 1Pt 2:9; 1Jn 1:7), is approachable only in the incarnate Christ (Jn 12:36). God's *brightness*, though it had been experienced at the burning bush (Ex 3:2–4), known by Israel (Ex 10:23; 13:21), and spoken of by the prophets (Ps 35:10; 103:2; Is 9:1; 10:17; Hab 3:4), is especially revealed in Christ's birth (Lk 1:79; 2:32; Jn 1:4–9), the Transfiguration (Mt 17:2) and the Resurrection.

The express image of His person (Gr. *hypostasis*) expresses the Son's Person as being distinct from the Father. The Son is the perfect and eternal “icon” of the Father. Thus, the personal distinction of God as

Trinity is known only through Him (see Jn 14:9). No one knows the Father but through the Son.

Having conquered sin and death, the Son **sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high**, a reference to the Father, showing Christ's exaltation as Man.

1:1, 2 **In time past** and **to the fathers** (v. 1) are contrasted with **in these last days** and **to us** (v. 2). In OT times God spoke constantly through the Holy Spirit in the Law and **the prophets**, leading His people into greater truth. Now He speaks directly, through His own incarnate Son. *The fathers* are the leaders of Israel and representative of all the spiritual ancestors of New Israel.

1:4 **Having become so much better than the angels**, with regard to their role in the old covenant, refers to Christ's human nature, not to His divine nature. The **name** inherited is an open declaration that this Man is the Son of God. In Hebrews this *name* is “Son”; in Php 2:11 it is “Lord.”

1:5 Christ is superior to the angels. They are, in some Judaic thought, only “the sons of God,” whereas Christ is *the* **Son** of God. (The LXX at Dt 32:43, which Hebrews paraphrases in v. 6, literally reads “sons of God,” not “angels of God.”) While Christ is recognized as God's eternal Son at His Baptism and the Transfiguration, it is His enthronement in heaven that settles the matter (v. 4; see Rom 1:4). **Begotten** is a reference to the Son in His divine, eternal nature. The Nicene Creed states He is “begotten, not made, begotten from the Father before all time.” **Today** is eternity. There never was a time when God the Son did not exist.

1:6 Christ is **the firstborn** (1) of *God*, in that He is His one and only eternal Son; (2) of all *creation*, in that He is the image (icon) by which creation was made and toward which creation is to move; and (3) of *man*, in that Christ incarnate is the model for man's creation and the goal of man's existence. **The angels** . . . **worship Him** because He is God.

1:8 Ps 44 (quoted in 1:8, 9) celebrates a royal enthronement and wedding. The groom is a king who has conquered for righteousness and is called "god" (*Elohim*), though the king is distinct from God. This celebration is fulfilled with the messianic enthronement and wedding in the Kingdom of God. The OT gives the title "god" to Moses, Samuel, descendants of David, and angels, but it is primarily the Messiah who embodies this title. Here, God the Father calls **the Son** "**God**."

1:10-12 In this quotation from Ps 101:26–28, God the Father (v. 9) is addressing Another as “Lord,” that is, as God.

1:14 The role of angels is **to minister for those who will inherit salvation**. During the NT era, many Jews believed angels mediated the old covenant. Certainly they served the Angel of the Lord, the Son of God. In the new covenant, they serve Him in His humanity. Instead of ruling over man, angels are partners in service with us, our guardian angels.

1:5-14 Much of first-century Judaism believed angels were present at creation and had mediated the old covenant. By using the rabbinic method of demonstration, Hebrews proves to lovers of Judaism that even the OT argues for the superiority of the Son.

2:1-4 An admonition against willful negligence and carelessness by a slow process, a **drift** (v. 1), of attrition. **If** (v. 2) and **how** (v. 3) suggest a conditional statement or question. *If* Israel was expected to obey the words of created angels or suffer punishment, *how* much more must we heed what God Incarnate has said through His apostles—especially when the word has been **confirmed** (v. 3) by many **miracles** (v. 4) of the Spirit, proof that the Kingdom has come upon us? When we ask in the liturgy for “pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions” and a “good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ,” we affirm there is **a just reward** (v. 2) or retribution, a very real judgment.

2:5-18 The Jews expected the Messiah to be an earthly, conquering king—a political success story, not a failure. They would naturally ask, if Jesus is superior to the angels—indeed, a divine Being, as portrayed in ch. 1—why did He die, especially in such a degrading way? Hebrews answers that Christ's humiliation is only temporary (v. 9), it is the only means of redeeming mortal man (vv. 14–16), and it reestablishes man's God-intended dominion over all creation, including the **angels** (vv. 5–8).

2:6-8 Hebrews applies the discussion in Ps 8 about man to Jesus Christ, the perfect man.

2:9 See especially Php 2:5–11. **Made a little lower than the angels** refers to the Incarnation, the Son becoming Man. Christ's **suffering** and **death** have highly exalted Him. The Cross, which should have brought shame and reproach, has brought Christ **glory and honor**. All of this is not something God has owed to man; it is **by the grace of God**, His gift. **Taste death** means to experience it fully, to know it intimately. Christ's death was a real death. He died for **everyone**, for the whole world, not for the faithful only.

2:10-11 **To make** . . . **perfect through sufferings** does not suggest there was imperfection in Christ before the cross. Rather He voluntarily took on human nature (**all of one** nature, v. 11), which can be saved and perfected only by the suffering of death. Christ is the pioneering **captain** of the narrow path to God in His suffering for sin, death, descent into hell, Resurrection, and Ascension. In salvation we take on Christ's way of sufferings. Our perfection requires a growth that is manifested in suffering.

2:14 In the Incarnation, God did not come in appearance only; He truly assumed **flesh and blood** from the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and became **the same** as we are so that He could truly enter **death** and bring us salvation. Christ destroyed the devil's power by using the devil's strongest weapon—death itself.

2:15 There is a relationship between sin and death: each one leads to the other. Sin causes death, and the **fear of death** leads one to sin and thus to **bondage** (Rom 5:12). Christ sets us free from this *bondage* of sin and death.

2:17-18 **In all things He had to be made like *His* brethren**—Christ was even **tempted**—for what is not assumed is not healed, and what is united to God is saved. The Son is *like* us in His human nature; we do not become *like* Him in His divine nature. Hebrews moves without transition from Christ as sacrifice to Christ as **High Priest**, for He is the Offering and Offerer. He is **merciful** in behalf of those He serves and **faithful** in His ministry to God.

3:1 Christians are **holy brethren**; to be in Christ is a **heavenly calling**, one that separates those in Christ from those who have not heeded His call. As **Apostle** and **High Priest**, Christ is both God's representative to man and man's mediator before God. In Him the offices of prophet and priest—of Moses and Aaron—are combined.

3:3-6 The glory of the building goes to the architect rather than to the structure itself. Thus, **Moses** (v. 5) glorifies Christ, and the Church is consecrated to the glory of God, **whose house we are** (v. 6).

3:7-11 This reference is to the rebellion of those who left Egypt during the Exodus. Due to their unbelief, the whole **generation** (v. 10) was forbidden to enter into Canaan, the promised land, and thus could not enter God's **rest** (v. 11). *Rest* (Gr. *sabbatismos*) literally means a Sabbath rest or Sabbath observance.

There are three types of God's rest known to the Jews: (1) *the Sabbath rest*, the day on which God rested from His works (Gn 2:2, 3); (2) *the rest from Egyptian bondage*, which the Israelites coming out of Egypt experienced in Canaan; (3) *the rest in the kingdom*, the ultimate Sabbath rest in heaven established by Messiah. Hebrews uses this OT quote (Ps 94:7–11) concerning Canaan to refer to the rest in the Kingdom of heaven. Significantly, we experience this rest now as we ascend to God in worship (4:4–11).

3:12 Those in Christ are not immune to turning away from God. There is a temporary attractiveness in sin, which leads to a hardened **heart** and ultimately apostasy. We must take constant daily care not to be deceived and thus fall away (see Mk 4:5, 6, 16, 17).

3:14 Union with Christ belongs to those who persevere in their faith **to the end**, not to those who stop with a one-time profession of faith.

3:16-19 The five questions in this text demonstrate the consequences of Israel's disobedience and her failure to believe God in the wilderness. Once again, faith (v. 19) and works (v. 18) are distinguished but not separated. As the fundamental component of entering God's **rest** (v. 18) is faith, so the primary cause of failing to **enter** (v. 19) is **unbelief**.

4:1 **Fear**: Keep constant watch.

4:6 Faith (3:19) and obedience are inseparable. Lack of one is lack of the other. Lack of either bars entrance to rest.

4:8 Joshua and Caleb were the only two men who left Egypt and entered into Canaan (Nm 14:28–32; Dt 1:34–40). They had not participated in the disobedience of Egypt. The possession of Canaan under Joshua, though, was not the promised **rest**. Otherwise, David would not have spoken centuries later of a rest still remaining for us.

4:9 **Rest** here is a reference to the third type of rest (see note on 3:11), the perfect, final rest of the Kingdom of heaven.

4:11 Man must labor to enter the rest of God, for rest implies prior work.

4:12-13 **The word of God** and the **sword** here are **living and powerful**. The phrase **His sight** (v. 13) tells us this reference is not to the written word, Holy Scripture, but to the Word of God Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ (see Jn 1:1–18). Nothing is able to escape the discernment of Christ, the Word of God.

4:14 **Passed through the heavens** refers to the Ascension of Christ. It is seen in the context of the Son sitting “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3). Christ has accomplished His work on earth and has entered into His Sabbath rest.

4:15 Christ's empathy with sinners rests on His being **tempted** in every way ***we are***.

4:16 Christ, enthroned at the right hand of the Father, sits on a **throne of grace** rather than of judgment, granting **mercy** and **grace to help in time of need**. The normal position for a priest is standing, not sitting. There is significant power in our enthroned Priest, for He has accomplished and fulfilled the sacrificial offering.

5:1-4 To qualify as priest in the OT one must (1) be **taken from among men** (v. 1), i.e., be fully human; (2) be **appointed for men** (v. 1), specifically for liturgical service; (3) offer **sacrifices** (v. 1); (4) **have compassion** (v. 2); and (5) be **called by God** (v. 4). In the Aaronic priesthood a priest identified himself with humanity and had sympathy for his fellow men because he sinned as other men sinned. The sacrifices were vicarious offerings of animals.

5:5-11 Christ assumes and fulfills the OT priesthood (see 5:1–4): Like **Melchizedek** (v. 6; see 7:1–21; Gn 14:18–20), Jesus is both Priest and King. He does not sin; His sacrifice is the human sacrifice of Himself, and His perfect priesthood continues in the Church to this day.

5:7 **Cries and tears** is likely a reference to our Lord's agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36–46; Mk 14:32–42; Lk 22:39–46).

5:8-9 Christ **learned obedience** in His human will, which continually and freely submitted to the divine will. In the agony of injustice and in physical pain He submits to the will of the Father. This perfecting of human activity in communion with God shows Christ alone to be the Savior (v. 9).

5:11-20 How can one understand and enter into the message of the Book of Hebrews? By (1) repenting of laziness (5:11; 6:12); (2) exercising one's spiritual senses, especially in doctrinal matters (5:12–6:8); (3) diligently doing good in all things, especially in loving service to others (6:9–12); and (4) firmly believing in Christ and the access He provides to God (6:13–20).

5:11-14 When Christians are not growing spiritually, doctrine is difficult to explain to them. Let us repent of being **dull of hearing** (v. 11)—a constant criticism Christ and the prophets had of God's people—and habitually and vigorously exercise ourselves in spiritual matters. The primary spiritual exercise is the study and knowledge of the Scriptures (JohnChr).

6:1 **Perfection** is Christian maturity, the result of spiritual growth. **Dead works** are done without God's grace and without faith. Works of the Law are *dead* to those who know the new covenant. Good works are done in **faith toward God**.

6:2 **Baptisms** are all the rites of washing, including those of the OT and of John the Baptist, fulfilled by Christ in the sacrament of holy baptism. **Laying on of hands** has several uses in the NT, such as for healing, prophetic commission, ordination, and reception of the Holy Spirit (chrismation).

6:4 The basic sacraments are crucial to salvation: One is **once enlightened** in baptism, which is unrepeatable and called the sacrament of illumination (see Eph 5:14). **Tasted the heavenly gift** (see 1Pt 2:3) may refer to the grace of baptism—Chrysostom says this *gift* is especially the forgiveness of sin experienced in baptism—and it most certainly refers to the Eucharist. **Become partakers of the Holy Spirit** refers to the fruit of chrismation, the experience of knowing the *Holy Spirit*.

6:1-4 A glimpse at some features of oral apostolic tradition.

6:5 Besides the sacraments (v. 4), belief and life experience are also essential: **tasted the good word of God** refers to the message of the gospel and the true doctrine of the Church, especially the confession of faith. **The powers of the age to come** are manifold: incorruption and eternal life, the presence of the future Kingdom here and now, and also miracles and spiritual gifts (Mt 7:22, 23; 12:28).

6:6 Those who revert to Judaism **crucify** Christ **again**—they become like those who hung Christ on the Cross, who denied His deity and His saving power. They put themselves in a position of needing to be baptized again, which is impossible, for baptism is death and the dead cannot be put to death. To deny one's baptism is to mock Christ's death. Such may not be renewed **again to repentance**.

6:4-6 This refers to those who have apostatized, that is, those who, after being baptized, have rejected Christ and His saving power. Historically, these verses have been used extensively in discussions of repentance. For example, Tertullian, the Montanists and other ancient schismatics used these verses to argue there is no repentance from apostasy. The Church holds that those who apostatize may repent and be brought back into the Church after a period of repentance (see Canons VIII, X, and XIV of I Nicea, Canon II of St. Gregory of Nyssa, and the Canons of the Council of Ancyra (AD 314). Nevertheless, such “second conversions” are difficult and rare—thus this sober warning.

6:7-8 These verses are reminiscent of John the Baptist's and Jesus' images and parables of trees and their fruit (Mt 3:8–10; 7:16–20; 12:33; 21:19).

6:10 To **minister** is to serve someone else's will. It has a liturgical dimension. In part, ministry flows out of liturgical worship (see 2Co 9:12, where “the administration of this service” is more literally translated “the service of this worship”). Prayer leads to action: the supreme NT example is the collection for the church in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25, 31; 2Co 8:4).

6:12 For examples, see vv. 13–15 and ch. 11.

6:13-15 The **promise** made to Abraham was a son, an heir through whom God would greatly **multiply** (v. 14) him.

6:18 The **two immutable things** are God's promise and God's oath (v. 17).

6:19 ***Behind* the veil** (see the note on 9:1–5) is heaven.

6:20 **Melchizedek**: The author picks up the argument from 5:10.

7:1-10 Persecuted Christians are encouraged not to apostatize to Judaism because the founding father of Christ's priesthood, Melchizedek, is superior to the OT priesthood of Levi.

Note the importance of the tithe: The desire to enter into the ministrations of a priesthood is fulfilled when such a liturgical offering is made. Throughout the OT, Israelites showed their continuing desire for God's priesthood by continuing to give a tenth of all they received.

7:11-28 Not only is the founder of the new covenant priesthood superior to that of the old covenant, the rules of the new covenant's priestly order are also superior. Priesthood is so intertwined with a covenant that if the priesthood is changed, so is the covenant (vv. 11–15).

8:1 **Majesty** is a biblical name for God the Father. A high priest sitting on the right hand of *majesty* would have to be both human and divine. **Seated**: No one but an equal sits in the presence of a king—much less in the presence of God.

8:6-13 Christ's covenant solves the problems that Moses' could not. Both covenants come from God's grace and require man's willed response. However, Moses' covenant (1) is external to man and cannot solve the root of man's problem, sin and death; (2) cannot reunite and reintegrate man's soul; (3) is learned by teaching; (4) is heeded with fearful compliance; and (5) gives imperfect forgiveness. Christ's covenant (1) is internal—it heals our nature; (2) unifies the inner man—heart and mind are joined in union with God; (3) is therefore grasped intuitively; (4) is heeded with willing cooperation (synergy); and (5) gives perfect forgiveness, even of those sins the old covenant was powerless to deal with.

9:2-3 A most important detail in Hebrews is the inner veil, **the second veil**. It separates the holy place (v. 2, **the sanctuary**) from the most holy place (v. 3, **the Holiest of All**), which contains the ark of the covenant and into which only the high priest can enter and only once a year.

The inner veil forms the locus of the liturgical practice of the old covenant (vv. 6–10) and reveals its imperfection. The people could not draw near to God (see especially v. 8). At His death, Christ solved this alienation (Mt 27:51).

9:4 The **ark of the covenant** contained the relics, as it were, of Israel: the **pot** of **manna**, **Aaron's rod**, and **the tablets** of the Law.

9:5 God is enthroned upon the **cherubim**; hence, God's throne in Israel's midst, **the mercy seat**, has a cherub on each side (the Orthodox Christian altar is flanked by cherubim). These representations, along with the pictures of cherubim on the inner veil (Ex 26:31) and the beauty and detailed workmanship of everything made for the tabernacle, serve as the icons of the OT. This, and numerous other passages, held put to rest the fear that the Second Commandment (Ex 20:4–6) prohibits all imagery. God cannot be represented because divine nature is unknowable and hence cannot be depicted. However, when the Son becomes Man, the human nature of God the Son can be, and is, imaged.

9:6-10 While priests entered the holy place daily, only the high priest could enter the most holy place and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). He entered with the animal blood of the atonement sacrifice, which was offered first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. This annual sacrifice reveals the imperfect, temporary status of the old covenant, for (1) only one man can enter God's presence; (2) that man cannot enter continually; (3) he must enter occasionally to repeat the sacrifice for sins, a sacrifice good only for a limited time; (4) this sacrifice deals entirely with materials from this age, which are imperfect and impermanent—it cannot begin a participation in the age to come (v. 10, **the time of reformation**); (5) it deals mainly with the outer man—it is superficial and cannot purify man's heart and mind, let alone restore fallen human nature.

9:11-14 Christ, in contrast to the OT high priest (see note on 9:6–10), is high priest of the new covenant. He enters the heavenly sanctuary **once for all** (v. 12)—Christ's one sacrifice covers all sins by all people for all time—with **the blood of Christ** (v. 14), His own human blood, which heals our corrupt humanity (v. 13, **the flesh**), restores us to our proper relationship to God, pure (v. 14, **cleanse your conscience**) and holy, and draws us near to God in liturgical worship (v. 14, **serve the living God**). **Dead works** (see 6:1) are human activity in and of this age, participating in mortality and corruption (and normally even in sin). Liturgically, *dead works* are the actions of old covenant worship.

9:14 **Eternal Spirit**: Proof the Holy Spirit is fully God.

9:15-23 Hebrews contrasts the Day of Atonement (once every year for forgiveness) with the covenant ceremony (once at the beginning to establish the covenant). In Christ's one sacrificial offering, He effects what all the sacrifices of the old covenant did not. He even covers those saints departed under the old covenant, that they might enter God's presence as they had been promised.

The Greek word *diatheke* means both **covenant** (vv. 15, 18–20) and last will and **testament** (vv. 16, 17). As with a *testament*, a **death** (vv. 16, 17) is required to initiate its conditions. This death is a death to sinning; the new condition initiated by the *testament* is that of the resurrection, the reformation of our nature. As with a *covenant*, sprinkling **with blood** (v. 21) is necessary to consecrate all dedicated things into the covenantal reality. The locus of life is blood (Lv 17:11). So blood, our mortal life, is offered to God, who is life, and establishes us in a new relationship with Him (vv. 19–21).

9:21-23 Why was the earthly sanctuary sprinkled with consecrated blood? Because it had to be cleansed, being of this mortal and corrupt realm, and it needed to be consecrated to God. The heavenly sanctuary, of course, never was unclean, but it did need worship to be inaugurated there.

9:23-28 Hebrews moves back to the sacrificial act of the Day of Atonement (from vv. 11–14). The blood sprinkled here brings the life of the covenantal people into God's presence: it reconciles God and man. The final reconciliation, the eternal one, is the presentation of Christ's sacrificial blood (12:24) to God in heaven.

10:1 Worship in **shadow** has no power because it has no substance of its own and does not participate directly in the spiritual reality. Orthodox worship, however, is **the very image** (Gr. *eikon*—from which “icon” is derived) **of the things**. It is united with eternal realities and participates in the Kingdom to come. It does so by participating in the voluntary Passion and exaltation of the incarnate Son (v. 10), the only release from our mortal and corrupt existence.

10:2-7 Although OT sacrifices prefigured Christ's sacrifice, they were powerless in themselves. An effective sacrifice requires **a body . . . prepared** (v. 5), a righteous human being who voluntarily obeys the Father (v. 7).

10:8-10 A common prophetic theme throughout the OT (see 1Kg 15:22; Ps 50:8–15; Is 1:10–17; Jer 7:21–26; Hos 6:6). This is not in opposition to liturgical, sacramental worship, but a statement of priority: obedience comes before praise. Sacrifice pleasing to God requires voluntary human sacrifice, not the slaughter of dumb animals. The primary instance of this is Christ, who did God's will in a liturgical, sacramental act (v. 10).

10:11-12 A **priest stands**; a king sits. Christ is both. OT priests stand **daily** and vainly repeat ineffectual **sacrifices**. Christ offers His **one** perfect **sacrifice** (v. 12) and sits. His work is completed. The Church *repeatedly* does certain things, but she does not repeat Christ's sacrifices; she participates in Christ's once-for-all *sacrifice*.

10:14-18 The completeness of Christ's sacrifice establishes the prophesied new covenant: Sacrifice for sin is complete, sanctification is perfect.

10:22 **Full assurance of faith**: With no doubts or second thoughts. **Sprinkled** . . . **washed**: A reference to a single action in the past, to baptism.

10:24 **Love and good works** go hand in hand, as attitude and action. They are almost synonymous.

10:25 **Assembling**: The assembly in the OT (Heb. *koheleth*) is translated *ekklesia* in Greek, which we translate as “church.” God instructs the faithful not to forsake *assembling* as the church. Corporate worship on a daily basis, such as morning prayers or Matins, increases our expectation of **the Day**, the coming of the Kingdom.

10:26-27 While many sins are willful, to **sin willfully** is defiant sin or a deliberate repudiation of God (see 5:2; 6:4–6). Christ is the offering for all sin—voluntary and involuntary—which demonstrates God's incomparable grace toward us. But if we deliberately and with full knowledge reject the sacrifice of Christ—which is all-encompassing and final—then where can we possibly turn to obtain forgiveness?

10:32 **Illuminated**: Illumination, or enlightenment, refers to baptism (see 6:4; Rom 6:4; Eph 5:14).

11:1 This is not so much a definition of faith as it is a description of how faith works, especially during hard times. It encourages Jewish Christians discouraged by persecution. **Things hoped for** and **not seen**, a vision of the future, have encouraged the people of God throughout history: the invisible is often more real than the visible. In the past, mighty works of faith were done by those whose faith was unfulfilled. How much more should those persevere who have inherited the promise, knowing God under the new covenant (vv. 39, 40)?

11:8-12 Faith is simple, but it becomes many-splendored in our lives. For Abraham and Sarah it became a venturesome action (v. 8); obedience (v. 8); patience (vv. 9, 10); trust (v. 11); and confidence (v. 11). Faith moves from the impermanence and discomfort of living **in tents** made by man (v. 9) to the permanence and solace of **the city** built by **God** (v. 10).

11:21 **Jacob** prefigured the Cross when he venerated the top of the **staff** of Joseph (Gn 47:31) and when he **blessed** Joseph's **sons** with his hands crossed (Gn 48:14).

11:37 **Sawn in two**: Some traditions say that Isaiah was killed in this manner by Manasseh. (See the pseudepigraphal Martyrdom of Isaiah; see also 2Ch 24:20–22; Jer 33:20–23; 2Mc 6:18–31; Mt 23:29–36.)

11:38 **Caves**: See 2Mc 6:11; 10:6.

11:40 See 9:15. Christ's Incarnation and all that He accomplished for us in the flesh redeems the OT saints, who by faith participate in His Resurrection and His Kingdom.

12:1 The **cloud of witnesses** includes not only the OT saints mentioned in ch. 11, but also the saints and martyrs of the Lord in all ages. If they made it, so can we. We persevere by getting rid of **sin**, the **weight** which keeps us from heeding the truth; setting as our destination the heavenly city, running **the race** of faith; and keeping our attention focused on Jesus Christ our Lord and King (12:2). This race is not a sprint but a marathon of **endurance**: it does not end until we fully enter the age to come (see 1Co 9:24–27).

12:2-3 Christ is both the **author**, that is, the initiator, and the **finisher**, that is, the perfecter of **faith**. His **joy** was to do God's will. He **endured the cross** in that He voluntarily accepted humiliation and death. We are to imitate His determination and perseverance.

12:4-11 Unpleasant circumstances, which tempt us to complain, may be the **chastening of the Lord** (v. 5). If the loving discipline of our **human fathers** brought us to respect them, how much more deserving of respect is the discipline of **the Father of spirits** (v. 9), our Creator, whose breath gives us life (Gn 1:26; 2:7)?

12:13 **Straight paths** is a theme found throughout both the OT and the NT. See especially Is 40:3; Mt 7:13, 14.

12:14-17 An especially heavy “weight” (v. 1) is **bitterness**, a spirit of habitual complaining. *Bitterness* refuses God's chastening and defiles us before God. **Esau** became bitter about Jacob's easy, favored life in contrast to his own life of difficulty. *Bitterness* blinded him to what is truly valuable. It cut off his endurance, so he traded his family honor, **his birthright**, for one small meal (Gn 25:27–34). For this Esau is called a **fornicator** (v. 16), being unfaithful to God and uniting his spirit to this temporary age. Later, when he changed his mind, his father Isaac would not change his. Esau missed his blessing (Gn 27:30–40). Thus, our two clear choices for life are bitterness or blessing.

12:18-21 **The mountain** (v. 18) of the new covenant, Mt. Zion, is the fulfillment of the mountain of the old covenant, Mt. Sinai. Sinai is remembered as the place where God first called Israel to meet Him (Ex 19:9–23; 20:18–21; Dt 4:11, 12; 5:22–26). It was a place of fear, a place not to be approached and touched, out in the desert where Israel could not live permanently. Israel met God, and God spoke, but Israel could not fully enter into God's holiness.

12:22-24 We are encouraged to approach and touch the heavenly *mountain*, for we already participate in the Kingdom and dwell there. It is more like **Mount Zion** and **Jerusalem** (v. 22) than like Sinai (popular Jewish images at that time), for *Jerusalem* was a habitable place and *Zion* a place of God's holy presence. This Kingdom is not earthly but **heavenly**, inhabited by **angels** (v. 22) as well as men. There is an unending **assembly** (v. 23), the divinely instituted gathering of God's people of all ages, in which they know themselves as **church**. There everyone is **firstborn** (v. 23) and has inherited all. There **blood** (v. 24) cries not for vengeance and further death—as did Abel's (see 11:4; Gn 4:10)—but for mercy, forgiveness, atonement, and unending life. This is the blood of Christ given to us in the Eucharist.

Heaven is not a place of the separation of the soul from the body. There, soul and body together are transformed into a **better** (v. 24) reality. For **the spirits of just men** are **made perfect** (v. 23; see 11:40) in unity with their bodies: glorified, divinely energized, without the limitations we now experience. This passage is quoted in hymns for both the Trisagion and funeral services of the Orthodox Church. **The blood of sprinkling** (v. 24) is that of Christ, which effects the new covenant—real blood, effective for the physical people.

12:25 He **who *speaks* from heaven** is Christ at the right hand of the Father.

12:26-28 What can be **shaken** (v. 27) is that which is created: temporal, impermanent, imperfect—except for the final consummation of the **kingdom** (v. 28), which is unshakable. There, life is a eucharistic liturgy. **Grace** (v. 28) is gratefulness that leads to serving God and worshiping Him in an acceptable way, with proper **reverence and godly fear**.

12:1-29 This entire passage (beginning with 10:19) is a progressive discourse imploring us to seek God's Kingdom first. Under the new covenant, we can ascend to this heavenly place in worship and in prayer. Christians experience this heavenly dimension fundamentally in the Divine Liturgy. We ascend to that place where we are surrounded by a **great** . . . **cloud of witnesses** (v. 1) This is not a physical place (v. 18) but a spiritual place, **Mount Zion** and **the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem** (v. 22), inhabited by God, the angels, and **the spirits of just men made perfect** (v. 23). Here, communion of the saints is established in the NT.

In 9:11, 12 we saw Christ come to the greater and more perfect tabernacle, obtaining eternal redemption for us. In 12:22 this tabernacle is that same spiritual place, showing that we enter the holy place with Christ by virtue of our union with Him (10:19, 20). This is done fundamentally in corporate worship (10:25), by faith (11:1–3), and in order to show gratitude to God (12:28, 29). The content of this worship includes remembering the departed righteous (11:4–40; see also Ps 111:1–6; Pr 10:8).

13:1-3 Practical **brotherly love** is to be shown toward all Christians, but especially for the lowly, the powerless, and the victims of injustice. **Strangers** (v. 2) are travelers in need of hospitality. Abraham's hospitality is recalled (Gn 18:1–8; also 19:1–3). **Prisoners** (v. 3) are to be prayed for and aided if possible, for all those **in the body** of Christ, the Church, are members of one another (1Co 12:12–27).

13:7 **Those who rule** are especially the leaders of the sacraments (bishops and priests). These Christian leaders are not only to be prayed for (see v. 3) but followed as models of Christian life as well. The **faith** of Christian leaders is that *faith* they both teach and live by.

13:8 Such a *faith* does not disappoint. Since Christ is God and does not change, His gospel does not change. If Christians in the past attained the eternal Kingdom through faith, so can we. Thus, the Church strives to keep her doctrine pure and without change.

13:9 **Strange doctrines** are “foreign” ones, those not coming from the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. In this case, the outside teaching is Jewish and legalistic. Kosher laws dealing with food do no spiritual good if **grace** is not at the heart of one's actions. Such has always been the teaching of the Church with regard to fasting (see 9:9, 10).

13:10 In the OT, priests were given part of most sacrifices for food, but lay people had **no right to eat** this food. Under the new covenant, all Christians may eat the food of the **altar**.

13:11-12 On the only day of the year when the holy of holies could be entered, the Day of Atonement, only the high priest could come in, and then only with the blood of sin offerings. The bodies of these animals were not eaten but **burned outside the camp**. Christ identified with this supreme sacrifice of the OT in that He **suffered** and died **outside the gate** (v. 12). His blood was not carried into the temple in Jerusalem by another human, however. Rather, He carried His own blood into the heavenly most holy place in the eternal “today.” This great entrance of Christ shows the Divine Liturgy is eternal and for all under the new covenant. We being members of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, may always enter in.

13:13-14 **The camp** here is the old covenant, Israel and all its institutions and worship. The **city** (v. 14) is the earthly Jerusalem as the temple city of the Jews (see 11:10, 13–16; 12:22). One cannot follow both the new covenant and the old covenant. The early Church in Jerusalem (AD 30–70) retained its Jewish customs, even the religious traditions, but it was under only the new covenant and so bore the ire of Jews still under the old covenant. Likewise, every Christian must be prepared to bear men's scorn and see himself as in exile in this life. The heavenly city we **seek** is the one to which we have already come (12:22): such a tension is no problem for the author of Hebrews.

13:15-19 A summarizing exhortation: (1) We experience the heavenly city and the heavenly most holy place when we **sacrifice** our whole being, body and soul, in the Divine Liturgy—a mystery in which our part is that of praise consistent with true doctrine (vv. 15, 9–14). (2) **Good** works and life in community (**to share**, Gr. *koinonias*) must be united with worship (vv. 16, 1–6). (3) Priests and spiritual leaders must be respected and obeyed (vv. 17, 7, 8), a reference to "spiritual fatherhood" in the Church. They will give account of their ministry at the judgment. The author sees himself among the leaders and asks for prayer that he may live an exemplary life (see v. 7).

13:20-21 The benediction notes: (1) The sufficiency of the **blood** of Christ is realized in His Resurrection as Christ offers His blood in the eternal sanctuary and thereby inaugurates a new, **everlasting covenant**. (2) The *everlasting covenant* **makes** us **complete** as we cooperate with God (synergy) in all things and progress toward sainthood.

1:1 James establishes his authority—not as a brother of Christ or bishop of Jerusalem—but as **a bondservant** (self-indentured slave) **of God**. For the Jews, God is the only ruler, and true honor comes from Him. *God* refers to the Father, and **the Lord Jesus Christ** to the Son of God incarnate. **Scattered abroad** (Gr. *diaspora*) refers to Jews in exile, but James applies it to the Church—Jewish and Gentile Christians alike—on pilgrimage.

1:2 **Trials**, the world's oppression, take place by God's permission. The issue is not *trials* but our response to them. Properly received, trials reveal where our hearts are. They are food for faith, which must grow or die. The godly reaction to trials is joy and perseverance (Mt 5:11, 12; Acts 5:41; Rom 5:2, 3; 8:18; Heb 12:11; 1Pt 2:19). Though unkind circumstances are from the evil one, to get angry at circumstances is to get angry at God, who permits them.

1:5 **Wisdom**, the practical and spiritual knowledge required for skilled living, comes to those who **ask of God**, who pray to Him. While James loves God's law, for him faith is not found in rules, as with the Pharisees, but in a relationship with God.

1:6-8 Prayer as petition is effective when it is done **in faith, with no doubting** (v. 6). We need an unquestioning loyalty to God along with the confidence that comes from a life stable in all its ways (v. 8). While James teaches the necessity of works, for him works demonstrate a living *faith*. By contrast, *doubting* (v. 6) means questioning God. Double-mindedness (v. 8) speaks of one who has two loyalties, love of the world competing with love for God (see Mt 6:24). Such **unstable** life deadens our conscience and turns us aside from the truth.

1:9-11 Note the reversal of the order of the world. **The lowly** (v. 9), those who have the least here, will have the most in the Kingdom of heaven (see 2:5; Mt 5:3; Lk 1:52), but they are tempted to be bitter and envious. **The rich** (v. 10) may perceive their goods as passing, but they are tempted to be greedy and arrogant and may thereby lose true wealth (see 5:1–12).

1:12 We are to rejoice even in temptations. They reveal whether or not we are prepared for heaven (see 1Co 9:25).

1:13 James has discussed outward trials (vv. 1–11). He now turns to inward temptations, which deceive us and lead us into sin. God tries us, but He never tempts us.

1:14-15 The immediate origin of a temptation is our own sinful passions, which the devil energizes. Temptation begins with **desires** or lusts, then progresses to being **conceived**, a fixation on or delight in sinful *desires*, and ends as **birth to sin**, a consent to or acting out of sinful *desires*. We fall to temptation because we allow ourselves to do so. Neither God nor circumstances force us to yield.

1:17 As **Father of lights,** God reigns over both the visible and invisible creation. He is Creator of all and the giver of spiritual gifts. The first part of this verse is used in the Divine Liturgy, in the prayer before Christ's icon.

1:18 God provides our salvation **of His own will**, not of necessity. **Brought us forth**: He "begot" us, a reference to baptism, by which we become children of God by grace. **The word of truth** is the Gospel, the precious, unchanging doctrines of the faith. We are the **firstfruits of His creatures**: In salvation we benefit not by taking on the essence or nature of God, but by putting on a new humanity consecrated to God (as with *firstfruits* in the OT). Humanity is preeminent over all creation, and through our salvation all creation is likewise being changed. The first half of this verse appears in the Divine Liturgy in the prayer of thanksgiving after the faithful receive Communion.

1:19-20 **The wrath of man** is unjust, ungracious, and severe. It proceeds from uncontrolled anger, not from God's judgment. For us to discern **the righteousness of God** requires patience, graciousness, and controlled passions.

1:21 While the **word** was **implanted** in baptism, Christians continue to **receive** Him throughout their lives.

1:25 James takes the Jewish notion of freedom—obedience to the Law—and applies it to Christ's law, His commandment to love others as He loved us. James uses the OT form in 2:8.

1:26-27 Here are three examples of the relationship between faith and works. (1) *Mastery over speech:* What proceeds out of the mouth flows from the heart, for sooner or later our tongue will reveal the quality of our faith in God. (2) *Ministry to the needy:* Faithful Christians must be the guardians of the poor, especially of those **orphans and widows** who have lost their natural guardians. “Do not let the widows be neglected; after the Lord, you must be their guardian” (IgnAnt). (3) *Moral purity in thought and deed:* A traditional indicator of a working faith. “Let us make haste to wash away through fasting the filth of our transgressions, and through acts of mercy and compassion to the needy let us enter into the bridal chamber of the Bridegroom Christ, who grants to us great mercy” (Vespers, week before Lent).

2:1-4 Unjustly judging others is an example of fainthearted faith being manifested in unjust works. Favoring the rich over the poor is contrary to true faith. A person's dignity and worth come from God, not from fellow humans. So we must not judge others by the earthly standards of rank, wealth, attainments, and appearance.

2:5-7 God is not partial to anyone. The **poor** are more likely to repent and renounce this world for the sake of the kingdom, for they more easily see the emptiness of earthly things. **The rich** (v. 6), on the other hand, tend to prize earthly things, desire material things, and even hurt others to gain them (see Lk 6:21–25; 1Co 1:26–28). They may mock Christians for the **name by which** (v. 7) they **are called**, the *name* invoked at baptism.

2:8-13 The corrective standard of judgment is perfect faith manifested in perfect works. The **royal law** (v. 8), **the law of liberty** (v. 12; 1:25), is the second great commandment of Christ: love for neighbor (Jn 13:34). The standard by which we judge is that by which we will be judged; the mercy we give will be the mercy we receive. “God has shown mercy to us. Let us in our turn show mercy: let us feed the poor, and with the divine water of fasting let us wash the defilement from our souls. . . . O heavenly angels, entreat the Giver of good to accept in His infinite mercy our poor and mean repentance” (Matins, Friday before Lent).

2:14-19 The faith that saves is a complete faith, not just the mind and the tongue but the whole man trusting in the living God. This means our faith and our relationship with God—our justification—are dynamic and living. Our faith grows and affects our actions, or it dies. “Faith alone” (**by itself**, v. 17), static faith, does not save. We must nurture our faith in God and love for Him through our works. “Do not say you are the temple of the Lord, writes Jeremiah [see Jer 7:3]; nor should you say that faith alone in our Lord Jesus Christ can save you, for this is impossible unless you acquire love for Him through your works. As for faith by itself, ‘the devils also believe, and tremble’” (MaxCon).

2:20-24 The faith of Abraham is living and active.

(1) In Gn 12:1–3, when Abraham is 75 years old, he receives a call to forsake all and follow God.

(2) In Gn 15:6, when Abraham is almost 85, after he has proven his faith through years of renouncing his land, family, property, and privileges, God promises him that he will ultimately regain everything he has given up. Abraham's faith in God's promise is “accounted to him for righteousness.” God fulfills Abraham's faith by making a covenant with him, an OT liturgical and sacramental act.

(3) In Gn 22:1–19, Abraham is at least 110. He has been tested for years concerning God's promise of a son. Now, after the covenant sacrament of initiation (circumcision) has been given in Gn 17, comes Abraham's supreme test: the sacrifice of Isaac, his son of promise (Gn 15:6).

James reveals that Gn 15:6 is fulfilled in Gn 22. This is a crucial lesson for us in our understanding of justification by faith. Neither Abraham's faith nor his justification is merely momentary, static, or once-and-for-all. It is dynamic, a growth process that finds its natural and normal realization in good works. Far from being just point-in-time, Abraham's justification covered at least 25 years after God first declared him just. It is living and active faith that saves!

2:26 This summary of the organic relationship of faith and works (see Mt 7:21; 25:31–46; Jn 14:15; Gal 5:6) shows that only God can save.

3:1-12 What we say reveals what we are. If we can control what we say, we can control what we do (vv. 2–8). For James, this is a prime example of the relationship between faith and works, and a major locus of spiritual warfare. James even warns against becoming a Christian teacher (v. 1) and expresses astonishment at how hypocritical and contradictory our speech can be (vv. 9–12).

3:13-18 James is also leery about us counseling others, for what is offered as wisdom can be based on pride and other sinful passions. Self-centered faith will manifest itself in self-centered works, in this case “helping” others. True wisdom comes from God and proves itself by action (v. 13). **Sensual** (v. 15; Gr. *psychike*) means unspiritual, not possessing the spirit of God.

4:1-10 **Wars and fights** in the Church are another example of the result of faith without works. Such disputes come from ***desires for* pleasure that war in** our **members**, passions that bring disruption in the body of Christ. These passions are fragmenting (v. 1), self-centered (v. 3), of this world (v. 4), energized by Satan (v. 7), and therefore at **enmity with God** (v. 4). God does not answer prayers for our selfish desires (v. 3). **Adulterers and adulteresses**: The image of unfaithfulness in marriage is common throughout the OT for the faithlessness of God's people.

How do we conquer arrogant pleasure-seeking? (1) Stop praying for self-centered pleasures (vv. 2, 3). (2) Renounce the world and build a friendship with God (v. 4). (3) Yield to the Holy **Spirit who dwells in us** through chrismation (v. 5). In seeking the Holy Spirit we gain the Holy Trinity! (4) Be **humble**, recognizing that **God resists the proud** (v. 6). (5) **Resist** (be insubordinate to) Satan and **submit to God** (v. 7). (6) Approach God in worship (**draw near**). Take special care to **cleanse *your* hands** and **purify *your* hearts** through repentance in preparation for worship (vv. 8, 9). Never laugh off God's call to mourn for sin.

“The rewards for the toils of virtue are dispassion and spiritual knowledge. For these are the mediators of the kingdom of heaven, just as passions and ignorance are the mediators of eternal punishment. It is because of this that he who seeks these rewards for the sake of human glory and not for their intrinsic goodness is rebuked by the words of Scripture: ‘You ask, and do not receive, because you ask wrongly’” (MaxCon).

4:11-12 Belittling criticism of others is another case of pride coming out in what we say. It is a lack of faith united with evil works, an offense both to the person criticized and to God. God's will is to love others (2:8) with humility and mercy, even if they are in the wrong (see 3:13–18).

4:13-16 True faith depends completely on God and seeks ways to do good works. But to plan as if we knew exactly what will happen is arrogance.

5:1-6 The terrible fate of the unjust rich is that their wealth will condemn them.

5:7-12 The **early and latter rain** (v. 7) refers to the pattern of rainfall—at planting time and just before harvest—in Palestine. We are to put away grumbling at each other, and we must not demand that life be “fair.” Patience, forbearance, and a right vision of the ultimate Judge are true works of living faith.

5:10-11 The faithful prophets, true saints of God, are models or **examples** to us in how to practice **suffering and patience**. Consequently, Christians from the NT era even till today have honored or venerated the prophets—indeed, all the saints—counting them **blessed**.

5:12 A polemic against a bad custom stemming from bad faith: the common practice of swearing by God or something that signifies God (as if swearing were a proof of truthfulness). We may swear when required to, but the solution to lack of trust is good faith—our integrity, truthfulness between a person and God. See Mt 5:33–37.

5:13-15 The sick person is to **call for the elders** (presbyters) for prayer. Salvation deals with the whole person, for each human being is a unity, body and soul. Hence, this sacrament has a double purpose: not only for healing but for forgiveness also. The presbyter (shortened form: priest) is given certain gifts of the ministry at ordination, the laying on of hands (see 1Ti 4:14). Prayer is combined with olive **oil**—not only the primary medicine of ancient times, but also a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Church—in a single sacrament that effects a healing for the whole person. Thus, the elements of the sacrament of healing include (1) the presbyter or priest (v. 13); (2) **the prayer of** (the) **faith** that **will save** (v. 15), connected with (3) the work of Christ Himself, for **the Lord will raise** us **up**, and (4) the Holy Spirit, manifested in the oil; and (5) confession of sins just prior to the anointing with oil, which explains why James writes **if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven** (v. 15). In the Orthodox Church, this sacrament is granted anyone who is sick, whether in danger of dying or not.

5:16-18 Some allege that confessing sins to God before a priest is not biblical. The ancient Christian custom was to **confess *your* trespasses to one another** (v. 16). When a Christian was guilty of sin, the matter was confessed before the whole Church as an act of repentance. As the Church grew, and those not part of the community came to observe, the pressure in such public confession became so great that the priest, instead of the entire community, heard the confession, representing the people. What is not taught in Scripture is a private confession only to God, which refuses to acknowledge sin to the community (1Jn 1:8, 10). Thus, the Church has effected healing through such works of faith as confession of sins and the power of intercessory prayer.

5:19-20 The work of faith in restoring the apostate.

1:1 **Pilgrims**, or “sojourners,” are aliens, those who stay for a while in a strange place with no intention of permanently residing there. This is said of God's people in this world (see 2:11; Gn 23:4; Ps 38:13; Heb 11:13), for they are citizens of the heavenly world to come (Php 3:20).

1:2 Note the apostle's clear reference to all three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity.

God's **foreknowledge** does not preclude or bind human will. Rather, it has to do with His Providence, His sovereign control of history. **Sanctification**: See Glossary. The **sprinkling of the blood** connects OT sacramental rites with Christ and the New Testament. Through the blood sprinkled on the doorposts of their homes, the people of Israel escaped the power of Satan and death in Egypt (Ex 12:13). When the covenant between God and the Israelites was made at Sinai, Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant upon the people, thereby empowering Israel to participate in the life of God (Ex 24:8). On the Day of Atonement, the blood of a goat was sprinkled on the mercy seat of the tabernacle (Lv 16:15). As people of the New Covenant, we enter into God's life more intimately: “Unless you . . . drink His blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53). Through Christ's blood communicated to us in the Holy Eucharist (1Co 11:25), we are united with Him in His incorrupt human nature.

We are to be in **obedience** to Jesus Christ because of the obedience **of Jesus Christ**. In contrast to the disobedience of the first Adam, the second Adam, Christ, fulfilled the Law completely and performed all righteousness. Through His obedience, corrupt human nature will be transformed into incorrupt human nature.

1:3 We are **begotten** . . . **again to a living hope** in baptism. As Jesus told Nicodemus, we enter the Kingdom of God by being “born of water and the Spirit” (Jn 3:5). This new birth in baptism unites us with Christ and His **resurrection** (Rom 6:3). The words and actions of Peter also confirm this sacramental reality (see Acts 2:37, 38, 41; 10:43, 47, 48; see also the “washing of regeneration” in Tts 3:5, where baptism and God's mercy are coupled). Here the sacrament of baptism (vv. 3–6) is the power by which we suffer faithfully (vv. 7–9). Being regenerated, given new life in Christ, we have a hope by which to live. This grace of God sustains us in the trials of life. (Verses 3–12 in the original constitute one long sentence.)

1:4 Note the home for which we yearn, our inheritance, is also described in the context of baptism (1:3).

1:5 The incorruptible inheritance is reserved for those who have true faith, the faith that by God's grace perseveres to the end.

1:6, 7 To reach the joy and blessing of eternal life in Christ, we first experience the sadness of the passing world, along with the afflictions we must face here (see also Jam 1:1–12). To the watching world, the perseverance of the faithful during affliction appears foolish and even contemptible. But Peter shows that faith under trial is precious indeed, bearing more glory and honor as it continues to stand under trial (see Mt 25:31–46; 1Co 3:10–15).

1:8 Peter knew by experience the failure to perceive the truth until he saw it with his eyes (see Lk 24:8–12; Acts 10:39–43). Here he addresses those who believe Him whom they have **not seen**. This is the faith of baptism and the faith of eternal life.

1:10-11 The prophets had supernatural knowledge of the events to come—even so far as **the glories that would follow** the sufferings of Christ, His Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming.

1:12 Even the **angels** desire to deepen their vision both of the uncreated glory and of what God has in store for creation (see 1Co 2:8). The *angels* beheld and worshipped Christ in His divine nature; what is new and amazing to them is His human nature.

1:13 The Israelites ate the original Passover with **loins** girded, that is, with their long outer garments tucked into their belts so as to free their legs for movement. Similarly, Christians are to live always in the spirit of Passover, prepared for the journey of obedience and virtue.

1:17 Why should we pray **in fear**? Because the **Father** we serve will judge us **according to each one's work**. While being certain of God's mercy, we **conduct** ourselves with care.

1:18-19 Our salvation has been purchased by the infinitely **precious blood of Christ** (v. 19). We are not our own and are to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the price paid for our redemption (see 1Co 6:19, 20).

1:24-25 This passage from Is 40:6–8 sets in sharp contrast the difference between human and divine seed. Our present human condition will have an end, of course, as witnessed by the ever-presence of corruption, and will meet that end in death. But in the glorified, incarnate Son, **the word of the LORD** (v. 25), we gain incorrupt and immortal humanity, both in body and in soul.

2:1 The duty, the necessity, for Christians to be holy in their conduct is the issue pursued in this passage. The apostle Paul has written that new (indeed, all!) Christians are to put off the old manner of life, corrupted by evil and deception (Eph 4:22). Similarly, those addressed here are to turn from the same.

2:2-3 **The pure milk of the word** is apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42), the basic teaching of the Church—both written (1:10–12) and spoken (1:25). These lead us to the meat of the word (1Co 3:2), the sacraments of the Church, and continual growth in the Christian life. We **have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious** and should long for this spiritual nourishment.

2:4-10 Peter likens the growth of the Church to the OT temple with its attending priesthood and its sacrifice and worship, Christ Himself being the fulfillment of this imagery. Thus, in Christ we become **living stones**, **a spiritual house, a royal priesthood** (v. 5; see Ex 19:5, 6), **the people of God** who have **obtained mercy** (v. 10; see Eph 2:19–22; 1Co 3:16, 17; 2Co 6:16). This is salvation in all its fullness.

2:5 In the true temple, one sacrifice is offered, the unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ. But in Him, in baptism, we also are sacrificed, “a living sacrifice” (Rom 12:1) **acceptable to God**. Our whole life is to be lived in this baptism as an offering to Christ our life. This is the **spiritual** offering of the Church in the Eucharist, the offering by which she lives.

2:9 In the true Temple there is one offerer, one priest, who, again, is Christ. In baptism we all are anointed with grace as priests in the Kingdom of God; for the spiritual Kingdom is also the spiritual priesthood. Moreover, as the body of Christ, we have a priestly ministry to the world, fulfilling the very priesthood and intercession of the Lord Himself, so that to the whole universe we **may proclaim the praises of Him** who called us **out of darkness into His marvelous light**.

2:11 To this point Peter has been addressing the whole of the Church, describing the benefits and challenges of salvation. Now he speaks to various groups of Christians—citizens, servants, wives, husbands, pastors—exhorting all to forsake sinful passions and to live as true **sojourners and pilgrims** in the world.

2:13-17 (See also Rom 13:1–7; Mt 22:21; Tts 3:1.) Peter urges his readers to be obedient to civil government. While Christians serve a higher authority, God Himself, it is God who calls us to **submit** to earthly leaders **for the Lord's sake** (v. 13). This is not a call to “separate” Church from state, but rather a call to cooperate with and enhance the state—realizing that at times Church and state have been at great odds. When ultimate loyalty and obedience to Christ and His gospel are at stake, Peter's actions show that we are to obey God rather than man, even to the point of prison or death (Acts 4:19, 20).

2:18-24 This advice to **servants** is applicable to all who are employed by another. Christ is our **example** for service and for our response to mistreatment. He is shown to be the Suffering Servant, offering Himself on our behalf, **by whose stripes you were healed** (v. 24; see Is 53).

2:22 No washing away of sins was necessary for Christ, who did **no sin**. His washing was done for us, who do sin. We should live, then, for Him who did not spare His own Son, that in His body He might crucify our passions. For Christ died for us that we might live in His renewed body.

2:25 Peter—according to tradition the first bishop of Antioch, the guiding church of the mission to the Eastern Mediterranean, and later of Rome, the leading church of the mission to the Western Mediterranean—the one charged by Christ to tend His sheep (Jn 20:16), sees all of us as **sheep** under the care of Christ, our universal **Shepherd and Overseer** (lit., "bishop"). Peter calls himself "a fellow elder" in 5:1, for bishops and priests are not two different orders in the NT.

3:1-7 A stunning call to contentment in Christian marriage, whether we live in the first century or the twenty-first. The dignity and modesty of a woman—and her good conduct—have the power to call her husband to faith and devotion. Husbands are not to take advantage of this superior conduct on the part of their wives, but are to reciprocate, indeed to give honor. Peter's image of marriage is one of sacramental union, not merely of legal contract. Contrary to the inheritance customs of the time, husband and wife are **heirs together of the grace of life** (v. 7). Failure to live **with understanding** with one's spouse even affects one's relationship with God (see Eph 5:22–33).

3:8-12 Our behavior today has consequences for the future. The Church as a corporate priesthood is to express God's graciousness to the entire world. As we have been blessed, so must we bless (see Mt 7:12).

3:13-17 As the royal priesthood follows Christ in His obedience and His mercifulness, so it follows Him in His suffering.

3:15 A challenge to all—clergy and laity alike—to answer when asked about our **hope** in Christ **with meekness and fear**.

3:17 Not all our suffering comes about because we have been righteous.

3:18-20 As Noah preached righteousness, suffered unjustly, and rescued those who were with him, so also does Christ. Christ descended to those in darkness and death that light might shine on them and He might deliver them from death. As Christ fearlessly faced His tormentors, death, and hell, so we through Him can confidently face mockers and tormentors—and, yes, bring His light to them.

3:21-22 The Flood is an OT mystery of salvation of the human race. Noah was saved from a godless society—not so much saved *from* the water, as *through* the water from evil. For through the water of **baptism** the resurrected Christ, having taken His place in **heaven** itself, gives us a clean **conscience**.

4:1-5 Though Peter refers here to specific activities and vices prevalent in that day in Asia Minor—where excessive drinking along with unspeakable practices took place in connection with the worship of various deities—there can be no doubt of the direct application of this passage to our own day and the condition from which many of us have come into the Kingdom.

4:6 The **dead** are most likely those preached to “in prison” in Hades (3:19).

4:7-11 Whatever gifts God has given to His people are to be used for the glory of God and in a spirit of love (see Rom 12:4–10; 1Co 12–14).

4:12-13 The **fiery trial** is the suffering of tribulations that tempt us to unfaithfulness, to the ruin of our faith. God's people have always suffered unjustly, but in baptism the **sufferings** in which we partake are those of Christ Himself, which will ultimately bring great **joy** (v. 13).

4:17-19 Slander and persecution purify the Church for **judgment**, but persecutors and **the ungodly** (v. 18) are heaping up condemnation for themselves. The severity of the present judgment of **the righteous** is evidence that *the ungodly* face a fearsome fate. Christians who suffer can always be confident that God is **faithful** (v. 19) and good.

5:1-4 (See Jn 21:15–17.) From Christ Himself and throughout the history of the Church, these words have been delivered in exhortation to the shepherds or leaders of **the flock** (v. 2). Pastoral work is to be undertaken **willingly** and cheerfully, with neither financial **gain** nor power in mind. For faithful service is rendered on behalf of Christ, **the Chief Shepherd** (v. 4), and awaits an eternal **crown of glory**.

5:3 (See Mk 10:42–45; 2Co 4:5.) **Those entrusted to you** (Gr. *kleron*) means those who have “the inheritance”; the word is the source of the English “clergy.” In the OT the Levites were the *kleros*; their inheritance was the Lord. In the NT all are *kleros*, a royal priesthood, equally inheriting the Lord. While there are “orders” of clergy in the Church—bishops, presbyters, deacons—a separation or isolation between priests and laity is unknown in the NT.

5:5-7 **Humility** is the foundation of virtue; it is learned through submission and obedience to godly **elders**. In submitting to one another, we **humble** ourselves **under the mighty hand of God** (see 1Th 5:12, 13; Heb 13:7, 17).

5:8-9 The devil and his angels do explore us individually, looking for our weaknesses. The enemy offers appealing visions to our eyes, music to our ears, to each of our senses setting forth whatever might tempt us to sin. He arouses our tongues to speaking evil about others and urges our hands to injure them. He sets forth profits to be earned by shady and immoral means and holds out earthly honors and false values to be preferred to heavenly ones. When he is unable to tempt us, he brings forth a threat of persecution so that fear may cause us to betray the faith. Thus we are always alert for his many-faceted attacks, ready to resist him at every turn.

5:13 **Babylon** here is almost certainly a reference to ancient Rome, like the more ancient Babylon (itself of no significance in the days of the early Church) a source of confusion and tribulation for the people of God. Peter himself was martyred in Rome.

5:14 The **kiss of love**, or of peace, is here already a liturgical practice. In St. John Chrysostom's liturgy, the kiss of peace occurs between the Great Entrance and the Creed; historically the entire Church took part in it. This embrace signifies forgiveness, reconciliation, and banishment of every remembrance of injury. It recalls the command of Christ, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:23, 24).

1:1 Whereas, 1 Peter introduces the author simply as “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” 2 Peter adds **Simon**, the pre-Christian name of **Peter**, and **a bondservant**. **God** refers to Jesus Christ (as in Tts 2:13). What Peter teaches in this letter is apostolic consensus: **like precious faith with us**. He reminds and exhorts his hearers to full Christian belief and virtue.

1:2 Gnostics, who were infiltrating the church, taught they had access to a special knowledge, unknown by ordinary people. Peter teaches the true **knowledge of God**, and it is in the Church this knowledge is found.

1:3 Peter assures us we have no need for anything other than what we have received. For God has given us His energy (**life**) and His personal presence (**godliness**, or piety, devotion), both of which we may grow in. **Virtue** (Gr. *arete*) may also be translated as “excellence” or “power.” It is spiritual and moral excellence attained by vigorous and courageous faith.

1:4 Being renewed by God's power, we become **partakers of the divine nature**. This does not mean we become divine by nature. If we participated in God's essence, the distinction between God and man would be abolished. What this *does* mean is that we participate in God's energy, described by a number of terms in scripture, such as glory, life, love, virtue, and power. We are to become like God by His grace, and truly His adopted children, but never become God by nature. According to some church fathers, this especially occurs through the Eucharist, for when Christ's Body and Blood become one with ours, we become Christ-bearers and partakers of *the divine nature*.

“We that are made worthy to participate in Him [the Holy Spirit] through faith in Christ are brought to perfection as participants of the divine nature, and are said to be born of God, and on that account are given the title gods, not flying up to the glory above us by grace alone, but as already having God indwelling and taking lodging in us, according to what is set forth in the Prophet, ‘I shall dwell among them and walk about in their midst’ (Lv 26:12; 2Co 6:16)” (CyrAl).

1:5-7 How do we who know Christ grow in our participation in the divine nature through grace? By the cultivation of a progression of spiritual realities. As in v. 3, **virtue** refers to the vigor and courage behind attaining moral excellence. **Love** (v. 7) is adjoined to **brotherly kindness** (affection among Christians), for love of God cannot be perfected except through love of one's neighbor (see 1Jn 4:20).

1:8 This **knowledge** (Gr. *epignosis*, as also in v. 1) is not primarily mental but spiritual and personal. It is experienced as we have faith and bear good fruit in the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

1:9 Gnostics claimed to know God without becoming godlike. Peter makes it plain this is not Christian, for we reach participation with God through the increase of spiritual virtues, not the absence of them. Here, as with all eschatological warnings in the NT, admittance to God's Kingdom is conditioned by a faith that exhibits perseverance and holiness.

1:11 The primary truth with which Peter is dealing (which he has only indirectly touched upon to this point) is the second coming of Christ and His **everlasting kingdom**.

1:13 People live in a **tent** when on a journey or at war. As long as we are in this body, we live in “tents,” which bear witness to the long journey of life and to the ongoing battle against enemy forces of darkness.

1:16-18 Peter has been an eyewitness to the **majesty** of Christ in many ways—and here reminds us especially that he was one of those present with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–8). What Peter is going to repeat about the second coming is the common apostolic tradition, which is buttressed by the eyewitness testimony of the apostles. It is not an elaborate scheme of **fables**, such as the Gnostics propounded. In all the Gospel accounts, the Transfiguration is a proof and foretaste of the coming of Christ in glory.

1:19-21 The testimony of the apostles both confirms **prophetic word** (v. 19) concerning the second coming and shows us how to interpret prophecy. Just as **Scripture** (v. 20) was not written by the mere volition of men but by the inspiration of the **Holy Spirit** (v. 21), so Scripture is to be interpreted by holy men guided by the Holy Spirit. Heretics (ch. 2) and unstable Christians (3:16) interpret incorrectly. The apostles (the **we** of v. 19) are guided by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the promise of true interpretation (Jn 16:13). The Church, founded by the apostles, likewise receives the Holy Spirit. “For the apostles, like a rich man in a bank, deposited with her [the Church] most copiously everything which pertains to the truth. And everyone who wishes, draws from her the drink of life. For she is the entrance to life, while all the rest are thieves and robbers. That is why it is surely necessary to avoid them, while cherishing with the utmost diligence the things pertaining to the church, and to lay hold of the tradition of truth” (Iren).

2:1-3 Peter now reaches his main concern: **false teachers** who are unholy and communicate heresy. They are arrogant, sensual, and greedy (he deals with them in much the same way as does Jude) but they deny accountability in their lives. Isolating themselves from apostolic doctrine concerning Christ, they hold their own “private interpretations,” misconstruing doctrines about the second coming and the ultimate authority of Christ over us. But as deceivers, they teach as though they possess true apostolicity.

2:4-10 God's past judgments indicate what awaits the heretics: He will divide the holy from the unholy in the life to come. We already have the example of the **angels who sinned** (v. 4), imprisoned in the lowest part of **hell** (Gr. *tartarus*) while awaiting the final **judgment**. Verse 10 repeats the two main sins of heretics: (1) immorality, (2) disdain for **authority**, especially that of Christ.

Noah is **a preacher of righteousness** (v. 5), in part because by doing righteous deeds he showed to all who saw him how life ought to be lived (see Heb 11:7).

2:12-17 False teachers are condemned for both their words and their actions. Those who are **natural** cannot **understand** spiritual **things** (1Co 2:14) and will be destroyed, as false prophets have been in the past. For the story of **Balaam** (v. 15), see Nm 22:1–25:9; 31:8, 16; Dt 23:4, 5; Jos 13:22; Jude 11.

2:19 A common misunderstanding of **liberty** or freedom is to see it as standing apart from all moral restraints, to say there is no such thing as sin. But this results in slavery of the worst kind, **bondage** to egotistic and sensual passions. True Christian freedom begins with freedom from sin, freedom from immoral activity. A Christian is called to live in purity in an impure world.

3:4 “It is clear to all who love **His coming** that the mind must be controlled rather moderately in this conjecture. We must surmise neither that the aforesaid day of the Lord is near and will come quite quickly, nor again that it is coming too slowly. But we should be diligent in seeing to this alone: that whether it comes sooner or later, it may find us ready when it does come” (Bede).

3:9 These words are not just for the false teachers, but for us all. We are granted more time primarily to grant us fuller **repentance**. (See v. 15; 2Co 7:9, 10.)

3:10-12 Because this world will pass away, we ought to be **holy** (v. 11) and godly, living as citizens of the new heaven and earth. Christians can actually **hasten the coming of** that **day**. How? Through evangelism (Mt 24:14; Mk 13:10), prayer (especially the Lord's Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come”), holy living (1Pt 2:12), and repentance and obedience (Acts 3:19–21).

3:13 Not other **heavens** and **earth**, but the same ones transfigured for the better. For a beautiful prophetic description of the new heaven and earth, see Rev 21–22 and Is 65:17–25.

3:15 **Longsuffering** can be **salvation** only if our salvation in Christ includes a lifelong process of maturing.

3:16 The author knows of a collection of Paul's letters and regards it as equal in authority to Scripture, that is, to the OT. This is the first indication of the collection of an NT canon.

3:17-18 The danger of deception is high for everyone. The defense against deception is to stay connected to the true apostles (v. 17) and to their doctrines, which encourage our growth in the **knowledge of our Lord** . . . **Jesus Christ** (v. 18).

1:1 **We** means the apostles. Their testimony is true, not that of the false apostles. While John makes a distinction between divine revelation (**which was from the beginning**, **the Word of life**) and human sensory perception (**heard**, **seen**, **looked upon**, **handled**), he has no problem connecting them. Note John's clarity of teaching on Christ's two natures: divine (*from the beginning, the Word of life*) and human (*heard, seen, handled*) (see Lk 24:39; Jn 1:14; 20:27, 28).

“When [John] says: ‘which was from the beginning,’ he touches upon the generation without beginning of the Son, who is coexistent with the Father. ‘Was,’ therefore, indicates eternity without beginning, just as the Word Himself, the Son, being one with the Father in regard to equality of substance, is eternal and uncreated. That the Word always existed is signified by the words: ‘In the beginning was the Word [Jn 1:1]’” (ClemA).

1:2 The divinity of Jesus **was manifested** in His **life**, especially His teaching and His miracles (see Jn 2:11).

1:3 *Koinonia* (Gr.) is far more than *fellowship*. It is our personal participation with other believers in the life of Christ. **Fellowship with us** refers to communion—especially eucharistic communion—within the apostolic Church. It is inconceivable to John that the Church not be one and united (see Jn 17:11, 20, 21) or that *fellowship* not be founded on doctrine (the theological implication of **with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ**) and on sacrament (the liturgical implication of *koinonia*).

1:1-4 Contrary to heretics, who claim communion (*koinonia*) directly with God through “spiritual” (non-material) means, John teaches communion with God through the Incarnate Son. Especially in view here is the Eucharist, where the physicality of Christ is repulsive to the heretics.

1:5 For John, **light** is divine energy manifested as truth (true doctrine), virtue and holiness (true behavior), and communion with God in the Church (true spirituality). The strongest of all weapons against **darkness** is our love for God, a strong, vibrant relationship with Him.

1:6-2 John addresses three false gnostic teachings on light. Their intertwined errors are that (1) union with God is indifferent to sin (vv. 6, 7); (2) sin does not exist (vv. 8, 9); and (3) one in union with God cannot sin (1:10–2:2).

John answers: (1) Faith must be evidenced by works, that is, must produce purity (**practice the truth**, v. 6, where *truth* is a right relationship with God manifested in a holy and righteous life). And faith must seek forgiveness and cleansing for sin (**the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanses us from all sin**, v. 7). (2) Sin does exist, and the practice of confession is the established basis for growth toward righteousness (v. 9). (3) Though we do sin, we should strive not to. Salvation in Christ is a process, in part toward not sinning (v. 7).

2:3-11 The ancient gnostics held two false teachings on God's light: knowledge of God requires neither (1) obedience (vv. 3–8) nor (2) love of others (vv. 9–11). John answers:

(1) To know God is to obey Him. **His commandments** (vv. 3, 4) are not a legal code but life in Christ, the way of love (vv. 5, 6). Those outside of Christ will not become partakers of His life unless they, by God's grace, practice what He says. “In vain do we applaud Him whose commandments we do not keep” (Bede; see also Lk 9:23; Jam 2:19). The **new commandment** is Christ's (v. 7), that we love as Christ loved (Jn 13:34; 15:12, 17).

(2) To love God (to be **in the light**, vv. 9, 10) is also to love each other. “Anyone who comes hating his brother to the font of life where he is to be reborn, to the cup of that precious blood whereby he is to be redeemed, even though he may think he is enlightened by the Lord, is still in darkness. He cannot in any way have put off the darkness of his sins when he did not take care to put on the fundamentals of love” (Bede).

2:12-14 In this poem of comfort and encouragement, John addresses three stages of Christian growth. (1) **Little children** are the newly converted (see Lk 10:21), who see clearly that their **sins are forgiven** (v. 12) and who know **the Father** (v. 13). (2) **Fathers**, the mature in understanding, **have known Him *who is* from the beginning** (vv. 13, 14). (3) **Young men** are those who war against the devil (vv. 13, 14), who are **strong** (v. 14) and who have **the word of God** (v. 14) living in them.

2:15 **The world** here is creation after the fall and under the dominion of Satan. It is creation no longer oriented toward God, but temporary and dominated by inordinate passions (see Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13; 1Co 7:29–31).

2:16 **The world** distorts every realm of God's good creation (see Jam 1:13, 14). There are (1) sensual pleasures **of the flesh** (physical passions), (2) intellectual attainments and capacities **of the eyes** (the soul's passions), and (3) inordinate possessions, power, and honors **of life** (the **pride** of human spirit). Biblical ascetic practices—prayer, fasting, almsgiving (see Mt 6:1–18)—help us overcome these distortions and live lives of virtue.

2:18 **The last hour** is the era of the New Covenant, the “eleventh hour” (Mt 20:6). The deceptions at hand, not a specific prediction of the end of the world, are in view. **Many antichrists** are the heretics, through whom **the Antichrist** of the end times (see 2Th 2) is doing his spadework.

Very early in the second century, on his way to martyrdom in Rome, Ignatius of Antioch wrote, “These are the last times [see 1Co 7:29]. Let us then be ashamed and fear God's patience so that it may not become condemnation for us. We should either fear the wrath to come or love the grace which is present, one of the two, just so that we may be found in Christ Jesus for true life [see Acts 17:30; 1Th 1:10]. Nothing should seem fitting to you apart from him in whom I bear my bonds as spiritual pearls. May I rise again in them by your prayer, in which I may always participate so that I may be found in the lot apportioned to the Ephesian Christians, who have always agreed with the apostles by the power of Jesus Christ.”

2:19 Being on the roll of the Church, even receiving the sacraments, is not enough. We must continue in our belief and manifest the fruit of faith.

2:20-21 **Anointing** (Gr. *criso*, hence “chrismation”) recalls the coronation of kings and the ordinations of priests and prophets in the OT, which activated the spiritual gifts and energies needed for their offices. The NT anointing is the ongoing reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit, who works in every member of the Church to preserve her in the truth (Jn 14:26; 16:13–15). **You** is plural. Anointing is not for independent action but for the one holy Church.

2:22-23 Theologically, the issues are: (1) Does God the Father have a consubstantial Son? (2) Is the Man Jesus the same Person as God the Son? These, of course, are the two basic issues of Christology: that Jesus Christ is one divine Person in two natures.

2:24-27 To **abide** in Christ involves not only mental assent to the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is a sacramental union with Him, effected in baptism and nourished in the Eucharist (Jn 6:53–59; 15:1–8). For John, apostolic teaching and writing (vv. 24–26) is identical with being taught of God (v. 27). Without both the work of the Spirit and apostolic doctrine, we would remain in darkness.

3:1 Bede says that at the Judgment, the people of the world “will say to one another, groaning and repenting, ‘These are they whom we once held in derision and, as it were, a byword for taunts; witless we judged their life madness and their end without honor. How have they been numbered among the children of God, and is their lot among the saints?’” Christians, of course, are **children of God** by grace while remaining human by nature.

3:2 Made in God's image and likeness, we are fulfilled by becoming **like Him**, a process called *sanctification* or *deification*. Being “partakers of the divine nature” (2Pt 1:4), we are “transformed into the same image from glory to glory” (2Co 3:18). When we **see Him as He is**, in the fullness of His glory at the last day, this process will be supremely magnified. John had seen the foretaste of this glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–9; Mk 9:2–9; Lk 9:28–36).

How shall we *see Him*? Through our likeness to Him; our human nature will be glorified with the glorified humanity of the Son (see Col 3:3, 4) and through a knowledge of all three Persons of the Trinity. (Note Paul's expressions, “face to face” and “with unveiled face” in 1Co 13:12; 2Co 3:18).

3:4-9 John is talking in general terms, contrasting this world with the world to come. The Christian, though sinful, **does not sin** (v. 9; lit., “does not keep on sinning”) as the world does. The Church lives under God's influence; the world, under Satan's **lawlessness** (v. 4), is living without law, in a hardened enmity to God. **The devil** (v. 8; lit., “slanderer” or “opposer”) is a creature, a fallen archangel. **From the beginning** (v. 8) refers to Satan's ceaseless sinning since his fall.

3:12 We are to give our attention to deeds, not just to words. Abel showed himself **righteous**, a child of faith and love; **Cain** showed himself **evil**, self-centered and envious (see Gn 4:4, 8; Heb 11:4; 12:24).

3:15 “If then we wish to receive the Lord's blessings we should restrain not only the outward expression of anger, but also angry thoughts. More beneficial than controlling our tongue in a moment of anger and refraining from angry words is purifying our heart from rancor and not harboring malicious thoughts against our brethren. The Gospel teaches us to cut off the roots of our sins and not merely their fruits. When we have dug the root of anger out of our heart, we will no longer act with hatred or envy. ‘**Whoever hates his brother is a murderer**’ (3:15), for he kills him with the hatred in his mind. The blood of a man who has been slain by the sword can be seen by men, but blood shed by the hatred in the mind is seen by God, who rewards each man with punishment or a crown not only for his acts but for his thoughts and intentions as well. As God Himself says through the Prophet: ‘Behold, I am coming to reward them according to their actions and their thoughts’ [cf. WSir 11:24]; and the Apostle says: ‘And their thoughts accuse or else excuse them in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men’ [Rom 2:15, 16]. The Lord Himself teaches us to put aside all anger when He says: ‘Whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of judgment’ [Mt 5:22]. This is the text of the best manuscripts; for it is clear from the purpose of Scripture in this context that the words ‘without a cause’ were added later. The Lord's intention is that we should remove the root of anger, its spark, so to speak, in whatever way we can, and not keep even a single pretext for anger in our hearts. Otherwise we will be stirred to anger initially for what appears to be a good reason and then find that our incensive power is totally out of control” (JohnCas).

4:3 **Antichrist** is anyone who **does not confess** that the Son of God became man while remaining God.

4:6 **We** is the apostles and their followers.

4:7-11 **God is love** (v. 8) is not a definition of who God is, but rather describes His relationship to us as our Father. As the **only begotten Son** (v. 9) sacrificially gave Himself **that we might live through Him** (v. 9), so we are to give ourselves to Him and **one another** (v. 11).

4:10 What a statement of God's mercy and grace! (See also 4:19.)

4:12-16 How can we know God lives in us? John gives a fourfold answer: (1) **if we love one another** (v. 12); (2) if we have been given **His Spirit** (v. 13); (3) if we can confess **Jesus is the Son of God** (v. 15); and (4) if we abide in the **love** of **God** (v. 16).

5:1, 2 Who is it that truly **believes that Jesus is the Christ**? Those who live in the way Christ commanded, who love others.

5:3 How is it that God's **commandments are not burdensome**? We live these *commandments* by faith and in God's love, which makes them light on our fallen nature. They are hard and rough only to those who are living a sinful life. That the Kingdom of heaven belongs to those who suffer makes even suffering sweet.

5:6-12 **By water and blood** (v. 6) is a reference both to the constancy of the Incarnate Son throughout His life and to the mingled water and blood that poured from Jesus' side (Jn 19:34), which is a type of baptism. Similarly **the Spirit, the water, and the blood** (v. 8) refers to the unity of the basic sacraments: chrismation, baptism, and the Eucharist.

5:13 When we **know** we have been given the gift of **eternal life**, we are to ***continue to*** **believe** and follow **the Son of God**.

5:16 What about those Christians who are not living righteously? **Sin *leading to* death** is willful, continual disbelief in the grace of the Holy Spirit toward us. (See Mt 12:28, 31, 32; Heb 6:4–6; 10:26–31.)

5:21 **Idols** are either false gods or things that turn us away from God (Col 3:5).

1:1 John calls himself **the elder**, or presbyter, which confirms that in the NT there is not always a distinction between bishops and presbyters. He is confident those who stand against the apostolic Church are in the minority. He assumes the Church is one, a true, concrete unity, and that it follows one rule of faith, whereas the unorthodox agree mainly in their rejection of this common Faith.

1:3 Calling **Christ the Son of the Father** strongly refutes the deceivers and gnostics. Jesus is the Son; the Son is by nature what His Father is, and He does what His Father does (see Jn 5:19).

1:4-6 False teachers were introducing new, nontraditional practices and breaking the covenant of unity based on God's love—the heart of new covenant life.

1:7 The heretics here deny either Jesus' full humanity or His full divinity (or the full divinity of the Holy Spirit). The Jews were denying **Jesus** is the **Christ**, the Messiah. All these deny Jesus is our Archpriest in His human nature, and that He will come in His glorified human body to judge the dead and the living.

1:9 The Orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation (**the doctrine of Christ**) is, according to John, necessary for knowledge and communion with God. **God** is synonymous with **the Father**, but, according to *the doctrine of Christ*, **the Son**, *Christ*, is also God.

1:10-11 It is reported that one day John went into a public bathhouse and found there the well-known gnostic heretic, Cerinthus. The apostle ran out, crying, “Let us get out of here, for fear the place falls in, now that Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is inside.” (See Tts 3:10, 11.)

1:13 **The children of your elect sister** most likely refers to the church from which John is writing, namely Ephesus.

1:1 This is probably not the same **Gaius** mentioned in Rom 16:23 and 1Co 1:14, 15.

1:3-4 **Truth** for John here is not doctrine or thought, but the Christian's manner of life. Like all good fathers, John finds his greatest pleasure in seeing his children walk in truth.

1:5 **Strangers** are probably the missionaries sent by John.

1:7 The missionaries went forth for the specific purpose of preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:8 One way we may participate in ministry is by giving material help to those with spiritual gifts. The donor becomes a coworker in spiritual things (see Mt 10:41).

1:9, 10 **Diotrephes** means “nursed or nourished by Zeus.” Early Christians kept their original name after their baptism. Diotrephes loved being preeminent—not the first among equals but peerless, with a passion for personal aggrandizement. This sin results in insubordination: Diotrephes slanders John, the last of the twelve apostles, by refusing to accept him as either an apostle or a presbyter. By rejecting John's missionaries he rejects John himself. And he disdains the apostolic, catholic ways of the Church, setting himself up as a petty tyrant.

1:12 **Demetrius** is either a member of Diotrephes' church, one of the emissaries already sent by John, or yet another emissary from John—perhaps the carrier of this letter.

1:1 **Preserved in Jesus Christ** is a promise of God to all faithful. But not all are so faithful, as Jude will relate in this letter (see Jn 10:27–30; 2Ti 1:12; Heb 12:2).

1:3 Jude had intended to write a more general letter on salvation, but the danger of false teachers caused him to write a polemic instead. There is one salvation which is the same for all the elect, **our common salvation**. And this salvation is set in apostolic tradition **once for all delivered to the saints**; it cannot be changed.

1:4 **This condemnation** involves body and soul (see Jn 5:29). **Only Lord God** is better translated “only Sovereign” (Gr. *despotes*).

1:5-7 The recipients of this letter **once knew this** (v. 5), the mysteries of the faith, because the totality of that faith had already been delivered to them (v. 3). Jude gives three arresting examples of the danger of departing from truth and righteousness:

(1) In the Exodus from **Egypt** (v. 5), all were saved through the baptism of the Red Sea, but not all responded to their deliverance with ongoing deeds of repentance and godliness (Nm 14:26–37; see 1Co 10:1–13). The lesson for us as Christians is to keep walking in our union with Christ.

(2) The **proper domain** of the **angels** is in their likeness and proximity to God. **Their own abode** is heaven, though they may serve elsewhere. Those who left their proper place are confined far from God, having become bound to spiritual darkness. They await **the judgment** (see 2Pt 2:4), when bonds with God will be demolished forever. The lesson for Christians is that their *proper domain* is in being children of God by grace, and their *own abode* is in the one holy Church.

(3) The men in the plains around **Sodom and Gomorrah** lusted after angels because of their sin of immorality and homosexuality (Gn 19:1–29). The lesson for Christians is to live under God's call to a chaste and pure life.

1:8 **Authority** (lit., “lordships”; also translated “dominion”; see Eph 1:21; Col 1:16) and **dignitaries** (lit., “glories”) refer to angels, perhaps in this case to fallen angels (see the parallel in 2Pt 2:10). Although, they are hostile to God, they are nonetheless to be treated dispassionately.

1:9 Apparently from the apocryphal book *The Assumption of Moses* (see Dt 34:5, 6 for the possibility of the assumption of Moses; also Zec 3:1, 2). The people of God are defended by holy angels. This is also a gracious warning to believers concerning vehement accusations against God's enemies: Let God judge. The archangel Michael showed this restraint (Zec 3:2) even though he was dealing with the devil himself.

1:10 **Know naturally**: That is, they know by their own natural instincts, apart from any specific revelation of the Holy Spirit. God has given all persons a measure of “common sense.”

1:11 A threefold woe or warning of great sorrow, using a triad of Israel's most famous offenders: (1) **Cain** (Gn 4:3–24) sinned by faithlessness and envy, especially over an honor given to another. His sin led to murder (Gn 4:16–24). (2) **Balaam** (Nm 22–24) sinned by greed, which led to lying and an all-out assault upon the truth, which he knew as well. (3) **Korah** (Nm 16:1–35) sinned by ambition, pride, and arrogance, grasping for leadership against God's will. His sin led to blatant **rebellion** against God.

1:12 Jude has a gift for using graphic word pictures. **Spots** should be rendered “hidden reefs,” those razor-sharp underwater growths that can damage and sink great ships. The **love feast**, or “agape,” was a liturgical banquet tied to the Eucharist. Designed to be a peaceful, joyful meal, it was sabotaged by the false teachers, the hidden reefs in this peaceful ocean of loving friendship. **Clouds without water** are spiritually dry teachers who do not possess what they claim to have. **Carried about by the winds** is the effect of listening to the suggestions of invisible spirits and obeying their own passions. **Twice dead** means they were *dead* before they believed and *dead* a second time after they turned their backs on Christ.

If barrenness is worthy of being cast into the fire (Mt 3:10), how much worse is bearing rotten fruit (Mt 7:17–19). In contrast to the saints, who are firmly rooted in Christ (Eph 3:17; Col 2:7), the false teachers are **pulled up by the roots** and so cannot remain with Christ or in His Church (Mt 13:24–30; Jn 15:6).

1:13 **Raging waves** are perverse teachers—restless, dark, bitter, destructive, and persistent (Is 57:20, 21)—who are casting up as foam as they hit the breakwater of the Church. The higher they raise themselves, the more disorderly and dissipated they become: they crash and perish. In astronomy a **wandering star** is either (1) a planet that never rises or sets in the same place or (2) a “shooting star,” an asteroid, which shines brilliantly but only briefly and then burns out in **darkness**. These are likely fallen angels, for in the Book of Enoch and other late Jewish apocalyptic literature, “star” often means “angel.”

1:14-15 Thus, has God always judged the wicked who dwell among the righteous.

1:16 Those who are consistently **grumblers** and **complainers** are often telegraphing a deeper problem, that is, **walking according to** one's **own lusts**. The more a person truly desires the fullness of life in Christ, the easier it becomes to renounce those things that are contrary to godliness.

1:19 **Sensual** (Gr. *psychikoi*) means operating by the powers of the human soul alone without the indwelling power of the Spirit, that which makes one "spiritual" (see 1Co 2:13–15; 15:44–46). **Cause divisions**: Having separated themselves from the way of the righteous and the life of the Spirit, the divisive "do not have the glue of charity" (Bede).

1:20-21 Our chief safeguards against heresy are (1) growing in the **faith** of the Church—vital dependence upon God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and (2) maintaining *faith* by **praying**.

1:24-25 Jude is quoting an ancient Christian benediction or doxology probably taken from an early liturgical tradition.

1:1 **Revelation** or Apocalypse (Gr. *apokalypsis*) means literally to unconceal, unveil, or reveal. It was used anciently of a coded message that must get through without falling into the wrong hands. God Himself is the ultimate source of all revelation (see Dan 2:28, 29, 45), but it is the Son, Jesus Christ—who revealed Himself to the prophets of the OT before He became flesh and now is made flesh—who mediates this unveiling (see Jn 1:18; 4:19–23; 7:16; 8:26, 40; 12:49; 15:15; 17:8). This revelation concerns not only the age to come, but certain things from the past and from this present age as well. **Things which must** tells us this is not a haphazard presentation. **Shortly take place** indicates God's time, which is always imminent. It may take a lot of earth's time.

1:2 **The word of God** refers to the Son of God. **Testimony of Jesus** means a witness concerning Jesus. It is John testifying of Christ (see 4:21), not Jesus testifying of Himself. **Bore witness** (from Gr. *martyreo*, a verb) and *testimony* (from Gr. *martyria*, a noun) are forms of the word from which we obtain “martyr.” Persecution is the consequence of witnessing. The martyrs (see Heb 12:1) are those who testify or bear witness, sealing it with their blood in death.

1:3 A blessing is promised to those who read and hear (see Lk 11:28). This is the first of the seven beatitudes of the Revelation, found also in 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14. **Blessed** here are both the reader and the hearers (the assembled faithful), provided they heed what is read—for faith and works are inseparable. Time (Gr. *kairos*) means here an eschatological decisive moment—a time of judgment, a critical moment, the time when all is fulfilled.

1:4 Church tradition maintains St. John dwelt and was bishop in Ephesus, in an area where **the seven churches** were located along a major roadway. The number *seven* signifies fullness, suggesting the entire Church is also in view.

The doxology is Trinitarian, involving the Father (vv. 4, 6), the Spirit (v. 4), and the Son (vv. 5, 6). This initial greeting (lit., "the Existing, the Was, and the Coming") may express the Father, the one **who is** (Ex 3:14); the Son, **who was** (Jn 1:1); and the Holy Spirit, **who is to come** (Acts 2) at Pentecost and shall always be present. Or it may denote the character of the Holy One, who is eternally present and exercises lordship throughout history (see Heb 13:8). God reveals the meaning of the present in light of the past and the age to come. This title may be a paraphrase of the Tetragrammaton, YHWH ("I Am"), of Ex 3:14.

Seven is the number of fullness or completion. The *seven* **Spirits** of God most likely refers to the Holy Spirit and His several gifts, as this phrase is included in the blessing with the Father and the Son. Alternately the term could refer to the seven archangels who, according to Jewish tradition, stand before the throne of God (Tb 12:15; see also 1En 20:1–8; 90:21, 22; TLev 8:2).

1:5 Jesus Christ is presented as the Risen Savior, Lord of all (see Zec 12:10), giving hope to the early Christians that the Church will not always be dominated by a cruel state. Instead of **washed**, many Greek texts read “freed.” The term **witness** (Gr. *martys*), used only here and in 3:14 in the entire NT, refers to Christ, the authentic *witness* of all divine revelation; all that God has revealed is summed up in His life, witness, Passion, Resurrection, and exaltation. He has inaugurated the new age, for He is **firstborn from the dead** in His humanity and has achieved a universal sovereignty by His death, Resurrection, and revelation of His Kingdom for the world's salvation.

1:6 Those joined to the body of Christ in baptism comprise the messianic royal priesthood promised of old (see Ex 19:5, 6; Is 61:6; 1Pt 2:9; and the Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil). This priestly ministry is to offer the world back to God in a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving—eucharistically—as in the Orthodox Church's Divine Liturgy. The universe itself thus becomes hallowed, transfigured, and sacramental. **Amen** is Semitic. It signifies ratification: an acknowledgment of something trustworthy.

1:8 **Alpha** and **Omega**, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, along with **Beginning** and **End** signify the eternality of God, who is the origin and destiny of all things. Its attribution to the Son proves His divinity. History—in fact, all of creation—begins and is completed in the Creator (Is 44:6). **Almighty** (Gr. *Pantocrator*) is used throughout the OT and is found ten times in the NT—nine of which are in Revelation. The inscription that adorns the central dome of a properly appointed Orthodox temple bears the words of this verse; the fresco depicts the Lord Jesus, since He is the One who shows us the Father, and since He has used the title "Alpha and Omega" for Himself (22:13).

1:10 **In the Spirit** may mean John received the revelation in a visionary ecstasy (see Ezk 3:12), but more probably that he was in the worship ("in Spirit and in truth") of the Lord. **The Lord's Day** is the earliest reference to the Christian name for Sunday. The Didache and St. Ignatius of Antioch show this name was used very early for the day when Christians gathered to celebrate the Resurrection in the Holy Eucharist. As a fulfillment of the first day of the week of the old creation, Sunday becomes the "eighth day," the "first day of the new creation." The term "eighth day" is seen in 2En 33:1 and inaugurates the first day of the timeless age to come. The **loud voice, as of a trumpet** is a traditional, eschatological, apocalyptic introduction describing an appearance of the Lord (see Ex 19:16, 19; Mt 24:31; 1Co 15:52; 1Th 4:16).

1:11-12 The glorified Christ introduces himself as **the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last**, thus identifying Himself with God the Father (v. 8; 22:13). His position amidst the seven lampstands signifies His presence in the Church (see Mt 5:14). The **seven golden lampstands**, a fusion of the great menorah of the temple with its seven lamps (see Ex 25:31–37; Zec 4:2; Heb 9:2) and the golden lampstands of Solomon's temple (3Kg 7:35), represent the fullness of God's presence. Also symbolized are the seven Asian churches that receive the letters of chs. 2; 3. This reference prompts some scholars to suggest John was in the church in a liturgical setting during the Revelation.

1:13 ***One* like the Son of Man** recalls Daniel's messianic figure (Dan 7:13—repeated by Stephen at his martyrdom, Acts 7:56). Christ called Himself *Son of Man* (see especially Mt 24:30ff.), for He is the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. Additional parallels may be seen in both the Old and New Testaments (Dan 10:6; Mt 17:2; Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). We also see Him vested in high-priestly garments (see Ex 28:4; 29:5; Lv 16:4; WSol 18:24; Zec 3:4, 5). The gold with which He is girded is both royal (1Mc 10:89) and priestly.

1:14-16 Further, Christ is here described as God, His **hair** (v. 14) being that of Daniel's vision of God as the "Ancient of Days" (7:9; see also 1En 46:1). His **eyes** signify knowledge; His **feet** (v. 15), permanence and stability; His **voice**, authority or teaching; His **right hand** (v. 16), power; His **two-edged sword**, complete discernment. This imagery continues throughout Revelation to affirm the preexistence and eternal divinity of the Son of Man (see also Jn 1:1–18). Thus, in Christ man (v. 14) and God (vv. 15, 16) are united.

1:15 Dan 2:31–44 indicates this mysterious metal foundation not only provides stability but has the ability to forcibly crush all opposition as well. These images are contrasted with the feet of clay found in Dan 2:33, 43: the kingdoms of this world are not permanent, nor ultimately triumphant.

1:16 The Lord holds the **stars** that represent the seven churches (1:20), and hence, the Church. For Christ is Lord of the Church. In His just judgment, the sword He wields is the Word of God, which cuts effortlessly to the very marrow and heart of humanity (see 2:16; 18:15; Is 11:4; 49:2; WSol 18:15; Eph 6:17; 2Th 2:9; Heb 4:12). The brilliance of His face recalls the Uncreated Light John saw radiating from the Savior at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.

1:17-18 Mortal humanity cannot bear the revelation of divine glory, a frequent biblical theme (see Ex 19:21; 33:20; Is 6:5). Just as he fell prostrate at Mount Tabor (Mt 17:6), so also does John here, in the presence of the glorified Savior (see Ezk 1:27; Dan 10:7–9; see also 1En 14:24). **Do not be afraid** is a revelatory formula from the OT. As a signal for the theophany, it was carried over into the NT (see the Annunciation, Lk 1:30; Jesus walking upon the water, Mt 14:27—“Fear not, I AM”; the Transfiguration, Mt 17:7). In the OT God was called “the first and the last” (Is 44:6; 48:12), and so, too, is the Messiah. Some early heresies (e.g. Docetism) held that Jesus only seemed to die. But the Lord Himself testified, **I** . . . **was dead**, affirming the authenticity of His death; **alive forevermore**, His Resurrection—the power of which effects His lordship over death and its realm. The Orthodox icon of the resurrected Christ depicts Him with these **keys** (v. 18) in hand, standing triumphantly on the open gates of **Hades**.

1:19 John's visions have to do with both the present (**things which are**) and the future.

1:20 **The angels of the seven churches** have been variously interpreted as being (1) the guardian angels of the church communities; (2) the pastoral leadership of these local churches; (3) a personification of the prevailing spirit of the given congregations; or (4) simply the messengers responsible for delivering the letters. The term “angel” (heavenly or earthly messenger) is used over 60 times in Revelation.

2:1 The letters to the seven churches all follow a standard format: (1) John is commanded to write to **the angel of the church**. (2) A short introduction of Christ with a descriptive title follows. (3) The state of the church is summarized, beginning with Jesus' saying, “I know,” followed by praise or rebuke. (4) Exhortations are given. (5) The message concludes with, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear,” and a special promise to him who “overcomes.”

Ephesus, the provincial Roman capital for Asia Minor, was a populous, prosperous city located on important trade routes. Besides the official cults of Artemis (Diana) and the emperor, various occult practices flourished there (see Acts 19). The church had been founded by Paul about AD 53–56, and according to tradition, both John the Apostle and the Virgin Mary (whom Christ committed to John's care at His crucifixion) lived in Ephesus.

2:2-5 The Ephesian church had persevered in orthodox faith and moral uprightness, but had left its **first love** (v. 4), presumably for God and each other. False apostles were a serious problem in the early Church (see 2Co 11:13–23), and Paul warned they would ravage the church of Ephesus (Acts 20:29). However, in the early second century, St. Ignatius of Antioch praised the Ephesians for their continuing resistance to heresy. The **lampstand** (v. 5) is probably the Ephesian church's honor as the metropolitan church of Asia.

2:6 Most scholars believe **the Nicolaitans** to be an early gnostic sect that tolerated idolatry and encouraged fornication. Some of the church fathers held the founder of this sect to be an apostate Nicholas, one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:5).

2:7 The message of the Spirit to the churches is explicitly a message to all Christians. In Hebrew, “conquering” and “saving” are synonymous: Salvation is victory. He **who overcomes** does so by participating in Christ's victory, which is salvation. In contrast to the false Nicolaitan sect, “overcomers” remain faithful to Christ until the end, in spite of all obstacles. Further, they fulfill the original destiny of man by partaking of **the tree of life** (Gn 2:9). To eat of this *tree* is to receive eternal life (vv. 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7; Jn 16:33; 2Co 4:7–18). The fruit of *the tree* is the spiritual food of 1Co 10:3, the “medicine of immortality.” *Tree of life* is also an allusion to the Cross, upon which all Christians must be co-crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20), partaking in the death of Christ in order to participate in His Resurrection. **The Paradise of God** is heaven (Lk 23:43; 2Co 12:2–4); the city of God, the New Jerusalem (see 21:1–22:5), contrasted to the original earthly paradise.

2:8 Smyrna (Izmir in modern Turkey) was, like Ephesus, a beautiful and prosperous city, maintaining a strong allegiance to Rome. A large and influential Jewish population actively opposed Christianity there. St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was one of the first of the early hierarchs to be martyred: he was burned to death on a pyre, confessing he had served Christ faithfully “for 86 years.” Polycarp was probably a youth in Smyrna when John addressed the letter to the church there. St. Ignatius of Antioch also wrote to the Smyrnans—and to Polycarp, as well.

2:9 The Smyrnan church was poor, perhaps because of the persecution, but spiritually rich, the opposite of Laodicea. The Jews of the **synagogue of Satan** may be either Jews in name only (see Rom 2:28, 29) who were insincere in their profession of Judaism and compromising in their beliefs (Jn 8:31–47); or Jews who refused to embrace the Messiah and His Church (Rom 2:28; Gal 6:15).

2:10-11 The persecution will be completed in **ten days**, a limited time likely not meant to be taken literally, and some may undergo martyrdom. Christ encourages faithfulness to the end. The **crown of life**, an allusion to the wreath awarded to a victor in an arena (Php 3:14; 2Ti 2:5; 1Pt 5:4), is the reward of eternal life granted to those who conquer in Christ. The **second death** (v. 11) indicates eternal damnation, the “lake of fire,” wherein sinners will receive their reward of final and lasting estrangement from God (20:6, 14, 15; 21:8).

2:12 Pergamos (modern Bergama), northeast of Smyrna, was a distinguished city built on top of a thousand-foot-high hill 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea. It boasted an outstanding library (the word “parchment” is derived from its name). Four important pagan cults were centered there, and emperor worship was popular. The **sharp two-edged sword** is the Lord's two-edged message of terror to some and joy to others, the just judgment of God (see note on 19:1–3).

2:13 **Satan's throne** refers to the city as a seat for idol worship: Pergamos was the first city in Asia to build a temple dedicated to the worship of a living emperor. Hence, *Satan's throne*, where he holds court, can also indicate the altar where Caesar was worshiped as lord, and/or where the Roman governor sat in his judgment seat, dealing out capital punishment by the “law of the sword.” According to tradition, the early martyr **Antipas** was bishop of Pergamos and was martyred in AD 92 by being burned to death in a heated bronze bull, having witnessed before the Roman governor that Jesus is Lord.

2:14 A group in this church holds **the doctrine of Balaam**. Balaam is the biblical prototype of all corrupt teachers and religious compromisers. He encouraged immorality, idolatrous feasting, and infidelity against the Lord (Nm 22–24; 25:1–3; 31:16; 2Pt 2:15; Jude 11).

2:16 **The sword of My mouth** is simply the Word of the Lord, the very articulation of which is just and righteous judgment.

2:17 **Hidden manna** is an allusion to the bread of heaven (or the bread of angels), the bread of the Almighty (Ex 16:4; Ps 77:24, 25; Jn 6:31–35, 48–51). To eat it is to partake of the messianic banquet in the Kingdom (Lk 22:28–30), the Eucharist of the age to come. In sharp contrast to communion with the pagan cult, it restores our original communion with God. The **white stone** on which a **new name** is inscribed indicates a new identity with Christ. Unlike pagan amulets inscribed with mysterious formulae, the *new name* of Christ is received by His faithful at their baptismal rebirth.

2:18 **Thyatira** lay southeast of Pergamos and was a commercial city known for its trade guilds (Acts 16:14). Guild meetings frequently included cultic meals in their patronal temples, a problem for Christian tradesmen, for the meetings involved idol worship and sexual debauchery. Christ's **eyes** and **feet** allude to the vision of the Son of Man in Dan 10.

2:20 The false prophetess is called **Jezebel** after Ahab's queen, who vigorously promoted idolatry in Israel (3Kg 18; 4Kg 9). The church in Thyatira has allowed a new *Jezebel* (a member of the Nicolaitan sect) to exert an influential “prophetic” leadership in the community, leading many of the faithful astray.

2:22-23 **Those who commit adultery** (v. 22) are those who accept the teaching of the false prophetess; **her children** (v. 23) are her followers.

2:24 **The depths of Satan**: The infidels claimed to know deep spiritual things, but Christ labels their claims satanic delusion.

2:28 **The morning star** is none other than Christ (22:16). He is the Daylight from on high (Lk 1:78; see 2Pt 1:19), the true Light which enlightens all who come into the world (Jn 1:9). The phrase may also refer to eternal life and a share in the reign of Christ.

3:1 **Sardis**, 30 miles southeast of Thyatira, was known for its wealth and unassailable fortifications. It was an ancient city, once very powerful, fallen into decline. The church there was also in decline, not falling into heresy or immorality, but into death. For the church in Sardis had so completely compromised with the surrounding pagan world that although it appeared to be **alive**, it was spiritually **dead** (Mt 21:19). There is irony in Christ's accusation. Sardis boasted of a venerable temple to the Asiatic mother-goddess Cybele, purportedly able to restore the dead to life. In the letter to Ephesus (2:1–7), the **seven stars** represented the angels that guided the churches. **The seven Spirits of God** is either an expression indicating the fullness of God's powerful presence in the Church, or an allusion to the sevenfold operation of the Spirit of God spoken of by Isaiah (11:2), a connection proposed by St. Justin. The earliest recorded interpreter of Revelation, St. Melito, was bishop of Sardis c. 190.

3:2 Christ's exhortation to vigilance would be especially relevant to the citizens of Sardis. Though its fortress was considered impregnable, the city was overconfident and had twice fallen because of its guards' failure to **be watchful**.

3:4-5 **White garments**: Basic vestment for priests, a symbol of the resurrected body. They allude to spiritual purity, victory, and love; immersion or baptism into new life in Christ; immortality; a glorified body; and a place at the messianic wedding banquet (Mt 22:11–14).

3:5 **The Book of Life** (13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; Ex 32:32; Ps 68:29; Dan 12:1; Lk 10:20; see also 1En 47:3) is God's register naming all who will inherit eternal life. By the fourth century, at the beginning of Lent the names of the catechumens were enrolled in a church record book termed “The Heavenly Book,” or “The Book of the Church” (see TheoMop, JohnChr and GrgNy). The Son speaks of His **Father** and **His angels** but He also calls them His own angels (Mt 13:41; 24:31), showing His equality with the *Father*.

3:7 **Philadelphia** (modern Alashehier) was a smaller and newer city than the other six, situated 30 miles southeast of Sardis. **The key of David** (Is 22:22, Hebrew text) is a messianic reference to the One who may judge in God's Name and admit or exclude from the City of David, the New Jerusalem (see Eph 1:22). St. Ignatius calls Christ the Door to the Father.

3:8 The Philadelphians had probably been excommunicated from the local synagogue, hence Christ's assurance of an **open door** to His Kingdom.

3:9 **Worship** is better translated “bow down.” Jesus will force the unbelieving Jews to humble themselves before the Philadelphian Christians, not literally to worship them.

3:10 To those faithful to Him, the Lord Jesus will in turn be faithful during the **hour of trial** that will come to **the whole world** by preserving them during that trial (see Jn 17:15) and protecting them from demonic assaults. Although the faithful will not be rescued from sufferings, persecution, and martyrdom, they will be sustained and supported so as to persevere in their faithfulness. The **hour of trial** is an apocalyptic image (Dan 12:1; Mt 6:13; Mk 13:4; Jn 17:6, 15; 2Th 2:1–12), referring to the testing and tribulation (chs. 8; 9; 16) preceding the manifestation of the eternal Kingdom of God. **Those who dwell on the earth** is a commonly used term for the ungodly.

3:12 The coming down of the **New Jerusalem** represents the union of heaven and earth and the liberation of all creation from bondage. **Pillar** indicates permanence; the **new name** is Christ's full revelation at His second and glorious coming.

3:14 Laodicea (modern Eski-hisar) was 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia on the same road. It was the most prosperous city of the area, boasting a special type of wool, a large banking industry, and a famous medical school. Many Jews lived there. Paul wrote a letter to Laodicea (which no longer exists, unless it was identical to what we know as Ephesians) to be exchanged with the Colossians (see Col 4:16).

Amen is a divine title applied here to Christ, who is the final ratification and accomplishment of the promise of God (2Co 1:19, 20). It affirms His sureness and steadfastness, amplified by **Faithful and True Witness**. The word *beginning* (Gr. *arche*) has been seized upon by ancient Arians and modern Jehovah's Witnesses, who attempt to prove Christ is created, thus denying His eternal existence. However, the term is more accurately translated as “source” or “origin,” signifying He is the Master of all. Christ **the Beginning** is the principle, the source of God's creation (see Pr 8:23; Jn 1:3; 1Co 8:6; Col 1:16, 17; Heb 1:2), the creative Word and Wisdom of God.

3:15-16 Six miles from Laodicea, hot springs at Hierapolis gave forth water that became **lukewarm** (v. 16) by the time it reached Laodicea. It was contaminated with many minerals, impossible to drink and nauseating. The Laodiceans were lukewarm in spiritual fervor and good works; their lack of commitment is revolting to the Lord, who would have them go one way or the other.

3:17-18 Preoccupation with material wealth and comfort have deadened the fervor of the Laodiceans, who have fallen into a complacent self-satisfaction denounced by the Physician of our souls and bodies. Christ counsels them to seek spiritual wealth, forgiveness and resurrection life, and enlightenment, offering a loving chastisement that can bring about true healing, true and lasting riches. **Gold**, **white garments**, and **eye salve** (v. 18) correspond to the three leading Laodicean industries.

3:20 **I will** . . . **dine with him** if there is cooperation, the synergy of an open **door**. God does not force anyone to cooperate with Him. He keeps knocking, awaiting a response. This promise looks toward both the messianic banquet, the wedding supper of the Lamb of God (19:9; Lk 22:30), and the Holy Eucharist, which is a foretaste of the heavenly feast. Faithful disciples are promised they will eat and drink at table with Him (Lk 22:28–30) in the ultimate reality of the Kingdom of heaven. Note the parallels with the parable of the bridegroom (Mt 25:1–13) and with the teaching about those who will shut themselves out of the feast of the Kingdom (Lk 13:25–30).

3:21 The one who cooperates with God **overcomes**, or conquers. Those who heed God's rebuke and chastening (v. 19) conquer lukewarmness and become “hot” in their spiritual lives (vv. 15, 16). Those who share Christ's trials will share His table and His **throne** in His Kingdom (4:4; 20:4–6; 22:3–5; Lk 22:30; 2Ti 2:12).

4:1 **After this** does not refer to a chronological order within the text of chs. 1–4, but instead connects this next sequence with the initial vision, a vision that beholds past, present, and future as one whole. St. John writes, as it were, from inside the eye of an apocalyptic tornado, recording glimpses of the eschatological events that whirl by. The single open door through the vaulted firmament (see Gn 1:7, 8) allows vision into the depths of all mysteries, the celestial throne. Since earthly events have their origin in heaven, true insight into history can be attained only from that vantage point (see Gn 28:17; Ezk 1:1; Mk 1:10; Acts 7:56; see also 1En 14:14; TLev 5:1). **Come up**, reminiscent of Moses' invitation from God to ascend Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:24), is a command with liturgical overtones: to enter God's sanctuary, His “high place.”

4:2-3 God is seen in biblical visions as sitting on a **throne**, a symbol of His sovereign lordship (3Kg 22:19; Ps 46:9; Is 6:1; Ezk 1:25–27; Dan 7:9; Mt 5:34; 23:22; see also 1En 14:18, 19). The image of this throne occurs over 40 times in Revelation and is further described as “a great white throne” (20:11), a throne of judgment. But here His throne is surrounded by **a rainbow** (v. 3), the sign of God's everlasting covenant according to which He will not judge man again as He did at the Flood (Gn 9:12–17). Mercy triumphs over judgment (Mt 9:13). Thus, in the Orthodox Church, the altar table is sometimes called “the throne.”

4:4 The **twenty-four elders** are usually interpreted to be elders of the old and new covenants: the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve apostles, the fullness of both covenants. They are the foundation of the people of God in both covenants (7:4; Mt 19:28). These elders continually fall down before God in worship (5:14; 11:16; 19:4), in adoration and praise (4:11; 5:9, 10; 11:17, 18; 19:4).

4:6, 7 The **sea of glass** (Ezk 1:22–26) surrounds God's throne, for God is approached by fallen men only through waters of death that produce life. As Israel journeyed through the Red Sea as if on hard ground, so Christians pass through the waters of baptism, entering into Christ's death and Resurrection. If the *sea* is not of *glass*, there is death, not new life. Also, God is vast and overpowering, as a sea of light would be. The hosts of angels surround Him (Dan 7:10) as a sea of purity.

The **four living creatures** are angelic beings adapted from Ezk 1:4–20 and Is 6:2. Their number is that of the whole world, the cosmos, and thus they portray creation, beasts, men, and angels as the Kingdom of God. Traditional iconography depicts them as symbols for the four evangelists. Their worship of God is unceasing, an ideal inspiring the round-the-clock services of Orthodox monastic communities.

4:8 The **six wings** (Is 6:2; Ezk 1:6) may symbolize the swiftness with which God's will is enacted in His world. **Full of eyes around and within** (see the wheels of Ezk 1:18) indicates the absolute vigilance of these creatures. **They do not rest day or night** suggests the essence of their ceaseless activity: to praise God (the very liturgy which the whole cosmos is called to serve) and to pray without ceasing (Ps 102:20–22; 148; 150; 1Th 25:17).

Their hymn, “**Holy, holy, holy**,” like that of Isaiah's seraphim (Is 6:3), praises God, who is Lord of history and fills heaven and earth with His glory. Isaiah's doxology was part of synagogue worship and was incorporated into the worship of the Church (1Clem 34:6). Another form of this hymn, the Trisagion (“Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!”) reverberates throughout the services of the Orthodox Church. Ambrose wrote a similar hymn, the “Te Deum.” The eucharistic prayer of the Divine Liturgies of Ss. John Chrysostom, Basil, and James refers to the perpetual thrice-holy hymn of the “cherubim and the seraphim,” thus blending the visions of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and St. John, and underscoring that the Divine Liturgy on earth is one with the heavenly liturgy of the angels and glorified saints.

4:10 The elders participate in the heavenly worship by the physical acts of prostration (see 3Kg 18:42) and casting **their crowns**. Prostration, a significant feature of historic Christian worship, is based in Scripture and signifies humility before God. The casting of *crowns* shows that the honor and glory of the saints derives from and belongs to God.

4:11 This doxology (glorification of God) is typical of many in the Apocalypse. It is offered to the Father and to Christ. Doxologies are a prominent aspect of Orthodox liturgy, ascribing **glory**, **honor**, and **power** to God.

5:1 The **scroll** contains the secret decrees of God concerning the judgment and salvation of humanity (see Ezk 2:9, 10; Ps 138:16; see also 1En 81:1, 2). Included is the greatest of all mysteries, God's will concerning the events marking the end times (see Dan 10:21), sealed up and hidden in profound security (**with seven seals**) until the time it will be revealed and implemented. In the twenty-three references to scrolls in Revelation there are five types: (1) the unsealed letters to the churches of Asia; (2) the unsealed Book of Life (13:8ff.); (3) the unsealed books of judgment (20:12); (4) the little open scroll that is eaten (10:8–10); and (5) the present sealed scroll.

5:2-5 Who can know the mysteries of **the scroll** and the **seals**? Who but Christ, the Son of God Himself, can understand the greatest of all mysteries and how God deals with man in history? **The Lion** . . . **of Judah** and **Root of David** are messianic titles with parallels in the OT and apocryphal books (see Gn 49:9, 10; Is 11:1–10). The One who has conquered Satan decisively, once and for all, in His self-sacrifice on the Cross and in His Resurrection, is alone **worthy** to open the scroll of destiny, reveal its message, and carry out its words.

5:6, 7 Jesus is called the Lamb of God in Jn 1:29. Isaiah compares the Messiah's voluntary self-sacrifice to a lamb being led to slaughter (Is 53). The central theme of Revelation is victory through sacrifice. This **Lamb** stands between **the throne**, **the four living creatures**, and **the elders**. St. Ignatius refers to the bishop standing at the center of his flock as an image of both the Father and the Son. In the development of episcopal vesture, the bishop's outer garment was for a time woven of wool. **Seven horns** and **seven eyes** represent the fullness of Christ's power and knowledge; through Him also the Holy Spirit (**the seven Spirits of God**) is sent on His mission to the world. Intertestamental Jewish apocalyptic literature portrayed the Messiah as a horned lamb who would fight for His people and conquer the forces of evil. The Jews, however, never expected this warrior-lamb to suffer and die, and did not consider Him to be God. The warrior-lamb is both with God (**in the midst of** *the throne*) and with man (**in the midst of** *the elders*), for He is the union of God and man without the merging of the two natures.

5:8 The four angelic beings, **the four living creatures**, and the glorified saints of all ages represented by **the twenty-four elders** worship Jesus, thus recognizing His deity, by elevated thanksgiving (**each having a harp**). And by elevated prayer (**golden bowls full of incense**) they present to God **the prayers of the saints** still on earth, manifested in the incense (8:3, 4; see Ps 140:2; Tb 12:15). In the ancient world, incense was used in both secular and liturgical life. God, people, and objects were censed as a sign of honor and dedication. And in the services of the Church, incense is also a symbol of prayer.

5:9-14 Three doxologies are sung by ever-increasing choruses. (1) The elders with the most eminent angels sing **a new song**, more perfect than any hymn before, to the Lamb (Christ), for He has inaugurated the new age (21:1, 5; Is 42:10). (2) The Church joined by all the holy angels—much as the priests are followed by the choir and then by the entire church—sends up to the Lamb a fullness of divine ascriptions in a sevenfold doxology (5:12). (3) All creation, the whole cosmos, joins in a hymn of glory addressed to the Father and to the Son. As heaven's angels sing to God, so do “we who represent the cherubim.” The Church has always been first and foremost a worshiping community; the Divine Liturgy empowers and inspires evangelism, social service, instruction, and all else.

6:1-17 With the Lamb's opening of the seals, John begins a description of the signs of the end, much of it already set forth by Jesus in the Gospels (Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21). The seals are consequences of man's condition, an overview of conditions manifest since the birth of the Church, which will continue until Christ's second coming. The four horsemen (see Zec 1:8–17; 6:1–8 for the model of this imagery) personify the scourges which, through the prophets, God has threatened as judgment on the faithless: war, famine, plague, natural disasters.

6:2 The first rider (on the **white horse**, carrying a **bow**) represents the spirit of conquest, reminiscent of fierce divine judgment in the OT, usually wrought through the military power of adversaries (Jer 27:29; Ezk 5:15). Jesus taught “nation will rise against nation” (Mt 24:7). The figure here probably represents liberators of the oppressed people of God.

6:3-4 The second rider represents war, violent bloodshed, and death—removal of **peace from the earth**, the result of the conquests of the first rider. Jesus predicted there will be “wars and rumors of wars” (Mt 24:6).

6:5-6 The third rider represents famine and inflation, frequent accompaniments of war.

6:7-8 The fourth horseman represents widespread human death, pale green being the color of rotting flesh. Pestilence and starvation follow the famine of warfare.

6:9-11 The cry of the martyrs for vengeance is not vindictive; they are pleading with God to hasten the end of persecution and the consummation of His plans for the world. In the interim, the martyrs are consoled by the **white robe** (v. 11)—a Jewish symbol of resurrection from the dead. Elsewhere it is a symbol of blessedness, good deeds, innocence, victory, purity, new and eternal life, transfiguration, a resurrected and glorified body, vesting in Christ, and the wedding garment of salvation (3:5; 7:9, 13–17; 19:8, 9; Is 61:10; Dan 10:5; Mt 22:1–4; Gal 3:27; see also 1En 62:16). The martyrs are called to have patience until the fullness of their number is complete. The vision of **the souls** of the martyrs **under the altar** (v. 9) derives from the OT practice of pouring the blood (the physical manifestation of the life of the soul) of sin offerings at the base of the altar of burnt offering. It is a basis for the historic Christian practices of building church buildings over tombs of martyrs, placing relics of saints in the altar when a church is consecrated, and burying baptized people under the altar. Thus, in the Divine Liturgy Orthodox Christians remember “those who lie asleep here and in all the world.”

6:12-17 The sixth seal represents the cosmic disturbances that often accompany descriptions of “the day of the Lord,” the return of Christ (Joel 3:3, 4; Mt 24:29, 30; and parallels). People in rebellion against God (v. 15) are terror-stricken before God's judgmental wrath.

7:1-17 The seventh (and final) seal will yet be opened (8:1). The visions here of the faithful Church form an interlude wherein the Lord's faithful are “sealed” against His wrath. “Who is able to stand?” (6:17). The faithful, who will be sealed and will then assemble for worship.

7:1-3 **The four winds** are symbolic “winds of judgment,” as in Jewish apocalyptic literature (Jer 25:16; Zec 2:10; Dan 8:8; Mk 13:27; see also 1En 76:1–4). They are restrained until God's **servants** (Is 44:5; 2Co 1:22; 2Ti 2:19) are **sealed** (v. 3), that is, given a special protection from the ensuing judgments (Ezk 9:1–11).

7:4-8 The servants of God are **sealed** (v. 4) by the Holy Spirit. Extensive debates have taken place regarding the 144,000. Some regard the number as symbolizing the entire faithful Church as the new Israel (12 tribes times the churches of the 12 apostles times 1000—a number which means “a great amount”). Thus, the contention is that the number simply stands for completeness and perfection—twelve times twelve equals the perfect square. Slightly differently, some see the 144,000 as the Church militant, the Church on earth, and the white-robed multitude (vv. 9, 10) as the Church triumphant.

7:9-14 The scene shifts to heaven, where an innumerable **multitude** from **all nations** worships before the throne of God. Their **white robes** and **palm branches** (v. 9) symbolize purity and victory. The vast *multitude* represents either the entire faithful Church—which lives in the spirit of its baptism (**washed . . . in the blood of the Lamb**, v. 14)—or the righteous from all nations who were not members of the "12 x 12 x 1000," old covenant Israel and the Church. These pass victoriously through the great tribulation to inherit the Kingdom. See also note on 22:14.

7:15-17 The heavenly life is pictured as one of unending worship, **day and night** (v. 15), from which all suffering has been banished. Here we have the ultimate sanctification of time, the consecration of all life to the service and worship of God, carried out along with the heavenly hosts. Is 49:10 inspires the statement of v. 16. John's descriptions of the victorious Church and the blessings of heaven were written to encourage and console Christians of the first century who faced severe persecution for their faith—in which the faithful of all generations may find consolation.

8:1-4 The **silence** (v. 1), **trumpets** (v. 2), and offering of **incense** (vv. 3, 4) were features of the Jewish temple liturgy. The half-hour silence (v. 1) dramatically indicates profound awe at the opening of the seventh seal.

8:2 The **seven angels** receive the **seven trumpets**. These bodiless powers represent the OT priests, who also sounded their trumpets during the temple liturgy (see Jos 6:12; 1Ch 16:6; Ps 97:6).

8:3 **Incense** is present in heaven (see 5:8). It symbolizes **the prayers of all the saints**. Incense is: (1) commanded by God to Moses for use in Israel's worship (Ex 25:6; 20:18; 24:16; Lk 1:9–11); (2) used throughout Israel's history under the old covenant (1Ch 23:13); (3) prophesied by the Lord Himself concerning its use in the Church: incense will be offered “in every place . . . among the Gentiles” (Mal 1:11); (4) brought by the Magi as a gift to Jesus (Mt 2:11); and (5) used in Christian worship from the beginning even till today, in both East and West.

8:5 The casting of **the censer** to **earth** (v. 5) shows that the prayers of the saints for vengeance (6:9–11) have been heard. The **thunderings** and **earthquake** signify that the judgment of God is imminent.

8:6 The **seven angels** with the **seven trumpets** form a double image of the old covenant temple liturgy and the fall of Jericho.

The interrelationship of the "seal judgments" (5:1–8:1), "trumpet judgments" (8:2–11:19), and "bowl judgments" (15:1–16:21) in Revelation is complex. There is some repetition and summarizing. The trumpets and bowls also give increasing specificity to God's judgments. They may not describe a chronological unfolding of events or even actual events. The trumpets speak of God's final warning to the world, especially seen in the "one-third" formula, calling the world to repentance before utter destruction comes. This stage of judgment can be seen to be the prelude—manifested in the natural world—to the great tribulation (Mt 24:15–22), playing a role much like that of the ten plagues of Exodus; the end itself is "not yet." The Church is not mentioned until ch. 11, where the calamities of earth are overcome by the Kingdom of God (11:15–19).

8:7 Only vegetation is affected. The seventh plague in Egypt is recalled (Ex 9:22–26; see also Ezk 5:12; Zec 13:8, 9). The reference to **blood** most likely comes from Joel (3:3; see Acts 2:19). A mixture of **hail**, **fire**, and *blood* is a typical apocalyptic picture of judgment.

8:8-9 As in the first plague of Egypt (Ex 7:14–25), **the sea**, marine life, and maritime commerce are affected.

8:10-11 Reminiscent of the first Egyptian plague, this judgment affects fresh waters. **Wormwood**, an extremely bitter plant that would make water undrinkable, symbolizes the bitter fruits of idolatry and sorrow to those who pursue adulterous liaisons with the heathen Gentiles (see Jer 9:12–16; 23:15).

8:12 A three-day period of darkness was the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex 10:21–29). An unnatural darkness is one of the signs of the end of days (Mk 13:24). Darkening of the **sun**, **moon**, and **stars** portends cosmic catastrophe. The darkness is partial to indicate it is a warning.

9:1, 2 While the **star** may refer to an angel, the same angel as the one of 20:1 (such symbolism was known in Judaism: see Job 38:7; also 1En 21:6), it may also represent the fallen world powers (see Jude 13), a fallen angel (Lk 10:18), or Satan himself (9:11; Is 14:12–15). His “fall” may mean “descent”: an angel is sent from heaven by God to unlock **the bottomless pit**, the abyss below the earth, the place of confinement for evil spirits (11:7; 17:8; 20:1–3; also Lk 8:31). The **smoke** from the *pit* causes a darkness on the earth; this may symbolize the spiritual darkness covering the earth during the last times. Compare with 1:18, in which the key to death and Hades is given to the Risen One.

9:3-4 These new plagues are again reminiscent of the plagues on Egypt (see the eighth and ninth plagues in Ex 9; 10). From the smoke come **locusts**, representing demonic entities who rise from the pit to torture those who do not belong to God's Kingdom. **The seal of** (the name of) **God on their foreheads** is given to the 144,000 servants (5:4; 7:2–4; 14:1; 22:3, 4 in contrast with 13:16–18) for their spiritual identity. At chrismation, Orthodox Christians receive “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” through holy oil placed on their foreheads.

9:5-6 The period of torture is limited; it is likened to the sting of the scorpion, one of the most painful known to man. Because of its intensity, the afflicted will seek death, but it is not permitted to them.

9:7-10 A terrifying picture of the demonic oppression of sinners in the last times.

9:11 In Hebrew, **Abaddon** refers to destruction (Job 28:22 and 31:12, Hebrew text). **Apollyon** is the masculine Greek form for “destroyer.” There may be an allusion here to the Greek god Apollo, with whom the emperors Caligula, Nero, and Domitian claimed a special relationship.

9:13-16 The four-horned **altar** is based on the OT prototype (Ex 27:2). The **voice** is a command from God allowing **the four angels** (v. 14) to create the spiritual conditions for the destruction of **a third of mankind** (v. 15). The **Euphrates** (v. 14) was the border of the empire beyond which fierce and menacing peoples were often feared to dwell. The number **two hundred million** (v. 16) makes it unlikely any earthly army is in view; as with the locusts, another infernal, demonic host is probably envisioned.

9:17-19 The description given is for horse and rider combined. Some may imagine modern armaments, but this would have been completely foreign to the communities for whom the book was written. The various features are intended to present an awesome spectacle of the horrific plagues visited on those who resist God.

9:20-21 Unfortunately, humanity is so addicted to sin that even these terrifying plagues do not cause the survivors to repent (see 1Co 8:4). Paul (1Co 10:20, 21) and early fathers such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus also connected idol worship with the worship of demons.

10:1-13 A parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets. The passage consists of two visions: (1) the angel with the book; (2) the two witnesses. Dan 12 provides many of the images.

10:1, 2 John once again beholds from earth the angel's descent. God's message comes to him in a **little book** (v. 2) or scroll. The descriptive features of the angel are common symbols for divine glory (Ezk 1:26, 27; Mt 17:2). His feet **on the sea** and **land** (v. 2) show his immensity and his authority to speak to the whole earth.

10:3-4 The angel's voice, like a lion's roar, reminds us of God readying Himself for judgment (Jer 27:44; Am 1:2; Joel 4:16). The **seven thunders** probably refer to the divine voice (Ps 28:3–9; Jn 12:27–33), a fullness of terror, power, and magnificence. In Dan 12:4, God tells the prophet to **seal up** (v. 4) what has been written in his book. So, too, St. John is told, regarding what the *seven thunders* have revealed. This command not to write down the utterance shows John's revelation does not exhaust divine decrees for humanity: undisclosed mysteries remain (2Co 12:4).

10:5-7 The angel, lifting **his hand** in the form for taking an oath (see Gn 14:22; Dan 12:7), swears that the fullness of time has arrived and God's plan for history (**the mystery of God**, v. 7) is to be completed. This recalls Ps 118:126, proclaimed by the deacon at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy: “It is time for the Lord to act!” as an answer to the question of the martyrs dwelling under the altar (6:10–11). **Lives forever and ever** (v. 6) is literally “unto ages of ages,” the closing phrase of most Orthodox Christian prayers.

10:8-11 **The voice** of God directs John to take the **book**. The symbolism of eating refers to receiving a revelation from God: John's account has many parallels to the commissioning of Ezekiel (Ezk 2:8–3:3; see also Ps 118:103). The contrast between sweetness in the mouth and bitterness in the stomach shows the sweetness of receiving God's revelation (announcing God's victory for His people) as opposed to the bitterness of its message of woe (announcing God's terrible judgments, as well as sufferings for His faithful ones).

11:1, 2 The measurement of the temple recalls Ezekiel's vision (Ezk 40–42). Here the measurement indicates the preservation of the temple, not restoration. Commentators variously interpret the temple as (1) a literal temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the future, (2) a symbol of the Church (see Eph 2:19–21; 1Pt 2:5), or (3) the Jewish-Christian Church of the first century. **The holy city** (v. 2) shows the setting to be Jerusalem. The Synoptic Gospels also taught that Jerusalem would fall (Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21); Luke mentioned specifically that the Gentiles would trample Jerusalem for a period (21:24). In patristic tradition the second interpretation is preferable. The court **outside** (v. 2) is for both Jews and **Gentiles**. It will not be measured because of the large number of Christians.

The **forty-two months** (v. 2) is three and a half years, one-half of seven, symbolizing what is not full or final but temporary, incomplete. It derives from Daniel's “a time, two times, and half a time” (12:7), the three-and-a-half-year period when the temple was to be profaned (Dan 9:27). John affirms the true temple, the Church, will be preserved during this Gentile onslaught. “Temple” is a frequent NT symbol for the Church (1Co 3:16, 17; 2Co 6:16; Eph 2:19–22).

11:3 The identity of the two witnesses is much disputed. The most common opinion of the church fathers is that they represent Elijah and Enoch, who were believed to have ascended to heaven. In Jewish tradition, Moses is frequently substituted for Enoch on the basis of the tradition that he, too, ascended to heaven. It was Moses who appeared with Elijah at the Transfiguration of Jesus. John most likely drew on the Jewish tradition that Elijah would return to preach in the last days (Mal 3:22; Mt 4:5). Although Jesus identified the Elijah figure with John the Baptist, many continued to believe in an actual appearance of Elijah before the end. **Sackcloth** was the ancient garb of penitence (see Jer 4:8; Mt 11:21). The prophecy of the two witnesses will continue for 1,260 days (42 months or 3–1/2 years; see Dan 7:25; 12:7). This period may be interpreted as “fullness” (i.e., seven) arrested halfway, imperfect, impermanent, not necessarily to be taken in a numerically literal manner.

11:4 These **two olive trees and the two lampstands** who stand **before . . . God** are the eschatological agents of God at work on earth. This symbolic description of the witnesses is derived from Zechariah's vision concerning Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, who are described as standing “beside the Lord of all the earth” (Zec 4:14).

11:5-6 These features are reminiscent of Elijah's ministry (3Kg 17) and the plagues God visited upon the Egyptians through Moses (Ex 7–11).

11:7 **The beast** is either the Antichrist or the Roman Empire (see 13:1–10; Dan 7).

11:8 **The great city . . . where also our Lord was crucified**, is clearly Jerusalem (which kills the prophets; Lk 13:34). Like **Sodom and Egypt**, Jerusalem becomes self-sufficient and rebels against God.

11:9 **The peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations** represent the whole world in rebellion against God. They rejoice at the sight of the **dead** prophets because the prophets' preaching had tormented the rebels' consciences.

11:11 **The breath of life** is a biblical term for the animating life-force manifest in the breath. The resurrection of the witnesses is conceivable because of the traditions regarding the ascensions of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses (see, as well, the dry bones of Ezk 37).

11:15 These heavenly **voices**, which introduce an interlude with the scene shifting back to heaven, provide for us the pivotal verse of the whole of Revelation. Once again (as in 10:5–7) the proclamation is made that the fullness of time has arrived: **the kingdoms of this world** are subject to the Kingdom of God. This is the mystery of mysteries alluded to in 10:7, which our Lord Himself mentioned, as recorded in Jn 12:31: the judgment of the world and the casting out of Satan is effected by the crucifixion. The voices state this has already occurred once and for all, at Calvary. Up to this point, Revelation has recorded only the prelude to God's judgment. From now on, the book records the judgment of God in all its power.

11:16-18 **The twenty-four elders** concelebrate the consummation of God's Kingdom in the heavenly liturgy. This carries a message of consolation to the Church. **Those who destroy the earth** (v. 18) are the morally wicked, not merely the ecologically irresponsible—however, ecological irresponsibility is moral wickedness. Perhaps the pagan Roman Empire is in view.

12:1 These verses begin an extensive parenthesis in the center of Revelation dealing with the conflict between the Church and the powers of evil (12:1–14:20). **The great sign** in **heaven**, the **woman**, is either the Theotokos or true Israel, the Church (Is 7:14). Orthodoxy sees the Theotokos as the perfect symbol of Israel and the Church. She is the antithesis of the harlot of ch. 17, for she is a radiant bride (SS 6:4, 10) adorned with splendor. The **twelve stars** indicate the twelve tribes (and possibly the twelve apostles) and **the moon under her feet** symbolizes her preeminent role over creation. Her birth-giving (“a male Child,” v. 5) is that of the Messiah, and she bears other offspring as well (12:17), a likely reference to the Church.

12:3-4 The **dragon** is clearly identified as Satan (12:9). **A third of the stars of heaven** (v. 4) is usually interpreted to mean that Satan drew a third of the angels with him when he fell. His intention is to destroy the Messiah.

12:5 True Israel brings forth Christ, who, after completion of His saving work, ascends to heaven (Ps 2:7–9; 46:6).

12:6 The flight of **the woman** may refer to the flight of the Jerusalem Church (embodying true Israel) to Pella before the outbreak of the Roman war. It illustrates there is no **place** for the Church in this age. The 1260 days, or three and a half years, is the classic period of apocalyptic woe (see 11:2): as bad as it is, it is temporary, not the end of things.

12:7-12 This passage begins an interlude describing Satan's role in stimulating persecution of the Church. The **war** with **Michael** and the good **angels** is usually interpreted to picture an event before the creation of the world. However, the context places it just before the end of the world. Satan has been accusing the **brethren** (v. 10), the Christians, and his downfall (see Lk 10:18) presages the consummation of the Kingdom (v. 10). Satan is overcome by Christ's self-sacrifice and that of the martyrs (v. 11)—those who **did not love their lives to the death**. The **short time** (v. 12) Satan has is the period of tribulation just prior to the end.

12:13-16 Satan hates Christ and His mother. The Virgin Mary was saved by the inspiration of the angel who told Joseph to run into Egypt. Likewise, Satan hates Christ and the Church (Jn 15:21) and attacks the one through the other, since they are identified. One of his first activities is to persecute true Israel. The **wings of a great eagle** (v. 14) refers to the original Exodus (Ex 19:4; see Dt 32:11), as the **flood** (vv. 15, 16) may also be the threat of drowning in the Red Sea. However, Satan is unable to prevail. The Jewish Church safely completes its exodus and is preserved during its apocalyptic period. And the Church in general will be preserved: the gates of hell cannot prevail against her (Mt 16:18). For Jesus' warnings about this flight, see Mt 24:15–21.

12:17 Satan then turns his attention to the rest of true Israel's **offspring**, obviously the Gentile Church, which has inherited from her both **the commandments of God** and faith in **Christ**.

13:1, 2 The **beast** (monster) **rising up out of the sea**, a composite of the four beasts of Dan 7, is the epitome of worldly kingdoms opposed to God and His Kingdom. For John, this was the Roman Empire: a monstrous creature with **ten horns** (very powerful), **seven heads** (the emperors), **ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name** (emperors who assumed titles of divinity such as “Lord and God,” “Savior,” “Son of God,” etc.). In a parody of 5:12–14, where the sacrificed Lamb is enthroned, the *beast* is given **power**, not to bless the Church but to persecute it. One of the *heads* of this monster was “as though it had been slaughtered to death” (the Greek text), and is another parody of the Lamb, which was standing even though it had been slain (5:6).

The **deadly wound** might refer to the mad emperor Nero's death (inflicted by a slit throat in the manner of temple sacrifice). For despite his death in AD 68, the empire lived on, revived under Vespasian. Many believed Nero himself would rise from the dead. Domitian (AD 81–96, the emperor at the time of the writing of Revelation) was considered to be “Nero reincarnate” because his cruelty surpassed Nero's. Christian tradition has also seen the beast as an image of the Antichrist, the false messiah who presents himself in the last times as God incarnate and is accepted by the world (see Jn 5:43; 2Th 1:12; 1Jn 2:18). Since there are “many antichrists” (1Jn 2:18), there may be more than one application of the beast figure.

13:4 People **worshiped the dragon** (Satan), for it had given **authority to the beast** (a reference to emperor worship, which Domitian ruthlessly enforced). **“Who *is* like the beast?”** is an allusion to Michael the Archangel, whose name means “Who is like God?” It is also a parody of God, the incomparable (Ex 15:11; Ps 88:7). Citizens are awed by the power and authority of the empire.

13:5 **Forty-two months** is the final period of apocalyptic conflict. It is one-half of seven years, not the final end of things. Thus, the nations trample over the holy city for three and a half years (11:2); the two witnesses prophesy for three and a half years (11:3); they are left unburied for three and a half days (11:9, 11); the woman is protected in the wilderness for three and a half years (12:6, 14). Nero's persecution lasted approximately forty-two months.

13:6 The beast, the Roman Empire, utters **blasphemy against God**, for the emperor came to see himself as god. Domitian demanded to be called divine, and on Roman coins divine titles were associated with the likenesses of deceased emperors. The **tabernacle** is God's Church; **those who dwell in heaven**, the angels and glorified saints. Christians saw emperor worship as worship of Satan (v. 2; 2:13); it is the ultimate offense against God that His creatures would worship earthly authority, itself under demonic rule. Nevertheless, by God's permission, the Antichrist rules over the whole earth and apparently vanquishes the Church.

13:10 Better rendered “he who is *destined* for captivity,” “he who is *destined* for the sword,” directed to Christians facing persecution (see Jer 15:2).

13:11-12 The **beast** which rose **out of the earth** with **two horns** (power) **like a lamb** (Christ, gentle and giving), and which **spoke like a dragon** (Satan, whose speech is seductive), is worldly religion. Its minister of propaganda, so to speak, mimics John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit: a false prophet (see 16:13; 19:20; 20:10; Dan 7:8) calling all to worship the first beast (false divinity). This monster completes the unholy triumvirate: dragon (Satan, false god), beast from the sea (worldly authority and power, false incarnation), and beast from the earth (worldly religion, false prophet): a blasphemous parody of the Holy Trinity.

13:13-15 With a parody of Pentecost, this monstrous cult leader is able to **make fire come down from heaven on the earth** by means of deception and sorcery (see Mt 24:24; Acts 13:6–12; Didache 16:3–4)—luring people into making an **image to the beast** (v. 14; the goddess of Rome or the emperor). Statues were often “brought to life” by sorcery. Irenaeus, Clement, Justin, and Eusebius note that the sorcerer Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24) used illusion and occult practices to make idols seem alive. This beast is able to enforce the sentence of death on those who will not worship him (see Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Dan 3).

13:16-17 A parody of God's seal of 7:3, even alluding to the Hebrew phylactery of Dt 6:8—where God's Law is kept on the forehead and the left hand—and to chrismation (but not the same word as “sealed”). The **mark** is gained by worshiping **the beast** (v. 17); it signifies *the beast* is the owner of those who wear it—their protector and the one to whom they owe their livelihoods. This mark is not necessarily a visible and physical mark on the person, but it is required to do business. There is then an economic bias against those who do not bear the beast's *mark* (the faithful who will not render demonic worship to the state).

13:18 The letters of the alphabet were used as numbers in ancient times (Roman numerals). Thus, the numerical value of names could easily be calculated. “The name of the beast” (v. 17) is the numerical equivalent of the letters of the name of **a man** (some texts read “616” instead of the well-known **666**). John may be purposefully enigmatic, using a secret code to protect against a charge of sedition.

This is a predictably misunderstood passage, for the text itself says it requires **wisdom** and **understanding.** In the Bible, the number six stands for falling short, incompleteness, imperfection; seven, for perfection, fullness, completion; eight, for eschatological perfection, a superabundance of fullness (see 2En 33:1). The sixth day, Friday, is the day of preparation; the seventh, the Sabbath, Saturday, a picture of the rest to come; the eighth day, Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, the final establishment of God's Kingdom. The numerical equivalent of “Jesus” in Greek is 888. The numerical equivalent of “Nero Caesar” transliterated from Greek into Hebrew is 666, meaning the epitome of created inadequacy. The numerical equivalent of “Nero Caesar” transliterated from Latin into Hebrew is 616. If John were referring to Domitian, whom some considered to be Nero reincarnated, it would be safer to refer not to the present persecutor but to the one long gone. Some believe that “666” is a symbol rather than a cryptogram, falling short of perfection in each of its digits: failure upon failure upon failure, an evil trinity which always falls short of the Holy Trinity (“777”). Many have attempted to identify “666,” but writing only one hundred years after John, St. Irenaeus had no idea to whom John was referring!

14:1 **Mount Zion**, the location of the temple in Jerusalem, is the Church (Heb 12:22). It is where the **Lamb** of God and His **one hundred *and* forty-four thousand** faithful (see 7:4) assemble. Instead of the mark of the beast (13:16–18) they have the “mark” of the Father (see 7:3).

14:2-3 The **voice from heaven** that made the **voice of many waters, loud thunder**, and **harps** recalls the sounds of the temple liturgy. This *voice* sings **a new song** (v. 3; see 5:8–10; Ex 15:1–18; Ps 32:3; 98:1; 149:1; Is 42:10) which only the **redeemed** faithful **from the earth** are able to learn.

14:4 **Virgins**: In the OT, prostitution and adultery symbolize idolatry, and virginity signifies faithfulness to God. Thus, the 144,000 have kept themselves pure from the idolatrous worship of the beast. Instead, they are faithful and **follow** the Lord **wherever He goes** (Ru 1:16, 17) as sheep follow a shepherd (and here, the Shepherd is **the Lamb**), unlike adulterous Israel (Hos 3:1). These martyred faithful who love not their lives even unto death are the **firstfruits** offered to God from among humanity: the faithful remnant. They are truthful (having nothing to do with the father of lies) and unblemished (a technical term in OT temple sacrifice; see Ex 12:5; Eph 5:25–27; 1Pt 1:19). We shall later encounter them as the bride of the Lamb (19:8; 21:2).

14:6, 7 A universal summons to worship the one true God in the face of His approaching judgment.

14:8 **Babylon** the Great, Rome, has **fallen** (Jer 28:8), an anticipation of the dirge over Babylon in 18:1–19:4 (see Is 21:9). Rome has made the **nations**, peoples of the empire, subservient through drinking the **wine** of her **fornication**, the sensual, unholy eucharist of her idolatry and self-divinization. This *wine* is intoxicating and results in the **wrath** of man: corruption, anger, and murder, including the shedding of the blood of the saints (5:20).

14:9-11 **The wrath of God** (v. 10) shall be poured out like **wine**, **full strength** (unmixed, with no water to dilute it), to be drunk by those who compromise with the evil one. Like a smoldering hotpot, this **cup** is agonizing, the same bath of **fire and brimstone** (the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, Gn 19:24) reserved for Satan, the beast, and the false prophet (19:20; 20:10; 21:8). Even the presence of God, **the Lamb**, and His good servants, **the holy angels**, is a torment (see the townspeople in Lk 8:37). And, as the refuse piles in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) smoldered unceasingly outside Jerusalem, this agony continues **forever and ever**, an eternal contrast to the never-ending joy of the worship of God (9:8).

14:12, 13 Christians, when persecuted, must exercise **patience** and **faith**, with **labors** and good **works** (v. 13)—the unity of faith and *works*. The alternative, eternal damnation, is too horrible (vv. 9–11).

14:14 The **Son of Man**, royal conqueror (**golden crown**) and judge (**sharp sickle**; see Mt 3:12), appears, seated on a **cloud** (see Mk 13:26), and reaps **the harvest of the earth**, the beginning of the final judgment (see Mt 13:24–30, 36–43; Mk 4:26–29).

14:18 The **angel . . . from the altar** with **power over fire** (see see also 1En 60:11–21) recalls 6:9; 8:3–5; and 11:1, 18. The prayers of the martyrs under the altar and the saints on earth for a hasty destruction of the destroyers are answered.

14:20 The trampling of the wicked who were gathered **outside the city** recalls the bloodshed (the crucifixion, Heb 13:12; the martyrdom of Stephen, Acts 7:58–60) that took place outside the walls of Jerusalem. The whole world is judged as the Jews would judge the Gentiles (Joel 4:2, 12; Zec 14:2–12; see also 1En 5:31). The absurdly large amount of blood (**one thousand six hundred furlongs** is about 184 miles) suggests the severity and completeness (1600 = 4 x 4 x 100) of God's judgment.

14:14-20 Two images of judgment, a grain harvest (vv. 14–16) and a grape harvest, complete with the treading of a winepress (vv. 17–20).

15:1 An introduction to the bowl plagues, the culmination of God's judgment of the earth.

15:2-4 The victory celebration for those who refuse to submit to Antichrist, perhaps a hymn used in the liturgy of the early Church. In contrast to the idolatry of the beast, this hymn emphasizes the worthiness of the true God. The **song of Moses** and **the Lamb** (v. 3) is prefigured in the hymns of Ex 15:1–18 and Dt 32:1–43, where victory over the oppression of Pharaoh and the Egyptians is celebrated. The Jews incorporated these into the Sabbath liturgy, and the Church also sings them at various times of the year (for example, in Matins, and in the Vespers of Holy Saturday). The Church sings this song of the Lamb in baptism and at the Great Blessing of Water.

15:5-7 The **temple of the tabernacle of the testimony** is the heavenly prototype of the earthly “tabernacle of testimony” (Nm 17:7), containing the witness of God's covenant, the tablets of the Law brought down from Mt. Sinai by Moses (Ex 32:15)—which was itself the archetype of the temple of Jerusalem (see Ex 25:9, 40; Heb 8:5; 9:11; 13:10; Acts 7:44). **Seven angels** (v. 6) appear out of the *temple* in priestly vesture (Ezk 9:2; Dan 10:5; Heb 1:14; Rev 1:13; 19:14). They are given **golden bowls** (see the vessels used by the priests in the Jerusalem temple, 5:8; Ex 27:3; Nm 7) by one of the **living creatures** (v. 7; see 4:6). God's judgment is meted out within the framework of this apocalyptic liturgical theophany.

15:8 **The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God** (see Is 6:4; Ezk 10:3, 4), so that **no one was able to enter the temple** (see Ex 40:29, where Moses was unable to enter the tabernacle; and 3Kg 8:10, 11 where the priests were unable to enter the temple for the same reason). *None* may *enter* to intercede for the earth or to divert the coming catastrophe of God's sworn judgment.

16:1 Although they are quite similar, the trumpet plagues are partial, a warning and call to repentance, whereas the bowl judgments are final and total. The difference is that dreadful step from the “beginning of sorrows” to final judgment. This chapter, like ch. 15, contains many elements foreshadowed in Joel 4:9–17, which is read in the Church on the Wednesday before Great Lent.

The **loud voice from the** celestial **temple** is presumably God's *voice*. **Pour out** is a liturgical term (Lv 4:7, 18, 25, et. al.) referring to the blood and the wine poured out with the offering of the daily sacrifice and the Feast of Dedication. On the Day of Atonement, blood was sprinkled seven times towards the inner veil, more was then smeared upon the horns of the altar, and the remainder was poured out at the altar's base. Here, the seven angelic priests pour out the bowls of God's wrath as a ritual answer to the cry of the martyrs (from under the altar) for vengeance (see Ps 68:25; Jer 10:21; Zep 3:8).

16:2-4 The **first bowl** is poured out, and **the mark of the beast** breaks out on those who received it in **foul** and **loathsome sores**, like the sixth plague of Ex 9:8–11. The **second** (v. 3) and **third** (v. 4) bowls are like the first plague (Ex 7:20–21; see Rev 8:8–11).

16:5-7 This judgment becomes the occasion for a doxology to God from **the angel of the waters**, the element just affected by God's wrath (vv. 3, 4). In biblical thought, spiritual or angelic powers have charge of the physical realm; all elements of the material world have angelic guardians. In response, the altar itself (the voice of the martyrs? —see 6:9; 8:3–5; 9:13) proclaims that God's **judgments** are **true and righteous** (v. 7).

There is a parallel here with “the song of Moses” (15:3, 4). Indeed, there is a parallel here with the musical interlude in the Jerusalem temple liturgy between the preparation and the offering of the sacrificed lamb. **It is their just due** (v. 6) is literally “they are worthy [*axios*],” the antithesis of the worthiness of the Lamb sung about in 3:4; 5:9, 12. At the ordination of a deacon, priest, or bishop, the assembly sings “Axios” as an assent to the candidate's worthiness (see WSol 3:5).

16:8, 9 The spiritually hardened followers of the beast cannot repent, but only blaspheme at the judgments of God. In contrast to Dan 3:22–24, 46–50, where the holy youths who refuse to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image are not even singed by the furnace's heat, here those who worship the beast and its image are **scorched with great heat** (v. 9).

16:10 The plague of darkness is similar to the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex 10:21–29). Here the **throne** is Rome (in contrast to 2:13), and the **kingdom** is the empire. Satan has shared his dominion with “the beast from the land,” the false prophet (13:2).

16:12 In 9:13–21 the Parthian Empire threatened the Roman Empire, as it had Israel. In this verse, the historical setting of ch. 9 is clarified: Rome will lose its natural defensive line (the Euphrates) and be punished by **the kings from the east**, the Parthians (see also 6:2; 17:12, 13). The OT miracles of crossing over a river on dry land (Ex 14:21, 22; Jos 3:17) are repeated (see also Is 11:15; Jer 28:36; Zec 10:11).

16:13 An allusion to the second Egyptian plague (Ex 7:26–8:11). The **unclean spirits** (see 1Ti 4:1; 1Jn 4:3) are **like frogs**.

16:14 **Spirits of demons, performing signs** are attested by our Lord (Mk 13:22; see also Acts 13:6; 2Th 2:9). The **great day of God Almighty** (6:17, foreshadowed in Joel 2:11; Zep 1:14; graphically described in 2Pt 3:12) is the eschatological Day of the Lord.

16:15 In a parenthetical comment, we are told that this Day of the Lord will see Him **coming** unexpectedly **as a thief** in the night (see 3:3; Mt 24:42–44; 1Th 5:2). Like the wise virgins who stand in readiness for the bridegroom who comes at midnight, the Lord exhorts His **blessed** faithful here to remain vigilant as well. It is said that the officer on duty at the Jerusalem temple was to see that his night guards kept awake during their watch. If they were caught asleep, they were beaten. If caught a second time, they were stripped of their **garments**, their vesture, then and there (see Mk 14:51). A Christian's garment is his white baptismal robe, “the garment of righteousness,” the putting on of Christ.

16:16 Decisive battles in Israel's history were fought in the strategic pass near Megiddo (see 4Kg 9:27). **Armageddon**—the word is found only here in Scripture—means “the hill of Megiddo”; the nearest hill to Megiddo is Mt. Carmel, where Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal (3Kg 18:19–40). In the final conflict at *Armageddon*, evil spirits (vv. 13, 14) lead apostate mankind against God. This battle is more fully recorded in 20:7–10, foreshadowed in Ezk 39 and Joel 4.

16:17-21 The last **bowl** is a conclusive act of judgment; **a loud voice** from God's **throne** declares, **“It is done!”** (repeated at 21:6; see Jn 19:30). Cosmic signs of God's presence are manifest—evoking Mt. Sinai and other theophanies (see 4:5; 8:5; 11:10), quite similar to those of the last trumpet (11:19)—especially **great earthquakes**, causing worldwide destruction (v. 20). Yet even 75-pound (the equivalent of one **talent**) hailstones (v. 21) fail to induce repentance. The **great city** (v. 19) is probably Jerusalem (see 11:8) in that Rome is mentioned separately as **great Babylon**.

17:1 The **great harlot** is Rome, the empire with its claims of divinity, sovereignty, and eternity (see vv. 9, 18), opposed to God and the Church: symbolic of all evil rule. In the Bible, harlotry frequently symbolizes apostasy and idolatry (see Is 1:21; 23:15; Jer 13:25–27; Ezk 16; Hos 4:12; Nah 3:4). The **many waters** on which the harlot is seated portray both the waters of Babylon—the canals and tributaries of the Euphrates (Ps 136:1; Jer 28:12, 13)—and the waters of Rome, the seas surrounding Italy. They symbolize the nations who submit to the harlot's rule (v. 15).

17:2 **Fornication**, committed by the **kings of the earth** with this harlot, is a metaphor for infidelity to the Lord (Jer 3:1–5; Ezk 23; Hos 2). The vassal kingdoms within the Roman Empire have accepted the cults of Rome and her emperors and have solidified their obeisance with political and economic obligations—and have fallen into moral decadence. The **wine** of this fornication has made **the inhabitants of the earth** to become **drunk**, seduced and stupefied by a hideous eucharist of death, focused on the persecution and martyrdom of Christians (v. 6; see Jer 28:7).

17:3 The woman's position on the **beast** shows the Roman system supported by the Antichrist-emperor. The **names of blasphemy** may be the divine titles assumed by the emperors.

17:4 The harlot is **arrayed** in abominable luxury: **purple** (an extremely expensive and rare dye from the murex shellfish of Phoenicia), **scarlet**, **gold**, **precious stones**, and **pearls**. Contrast this with the pure linen in which the bride is arrayed in 21:2. The harlot's **cup** contains the spiritual pollutions by which she contaminates humanity. In Jer 28:7, Babylon is pictured as a golden cup in the hand of the Lord which makes all the earth madly intoxicated.

17:5 Roman law stated harlots must wear headbands exhibiting their name. This great harlot bears the mysterious name of **BABYLON** . . . **MOTHER OF HARLOTS**. For the late-first-century Christians, *Babylon* was incarnate in Rome (see 1Pt 5:13), but it is primarily a spiritual reality, a “mystery,” transcending concrete manifestations. For *Babylon* has always stood for rebellion against God (see Gn 11): self-exaltation and idolatry. She is the *mother* **OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH** (lit., “detestable things”), the prostitution of God's creation. And she finds her life in a perverse eucharist, the death of those united with Life Incarnate.

17:8-11 The **beast that was, and is not, and yet is** represents the Roman Empire or the hellish Antichrist, who seems to have been destroyed only to resurrect, in imitation of the true Christ. The **seven mountains** or hills (v. 9) was a well-known description of Rome herself. Numerous interpretations have been given of these verses. A likely historical explanation is that the *beast* is Nero, who was expected to return to life after he died; the **five** who **have fallen** (v. 10) are Augustus through Nero; Vespasian is the **one** who **is**; and **the beast** who is **himself also the eighth** (v. 11) is Domitian, seen as Nero revived. But, again, the reality seems to be transcendent as well. Certainly, at least, *the eighth*—the number eight signifying complete abundance—is a type of the final Antichrist.

17:12 The **ten kings** may be symbolic of all the nations allied with Antichrist in his war against the Church. They completely give themselves over to the beast, but the **authority** they **receive** is of very short duration (symbolically, **one hour**). Though they join the beast in his persecution fury, ultimately Christ and his faithful triumph (19:11–21). As the seal on the eucharistic bread, from which is taken the mystical “Lamb” (v. 14), reads: “Jesus Christ Victor.”

17:15-18 The **peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues** represent the diversity of the Roman Empire (see v. 18). Reaping what she sows, Rome will be conquered as she has conquered. That the **ten horns** (vassal kings) and the **beast** (false prophet) will rise up against **the harlot** (v. 16) indicates the self-destructiveness of evil (see Ezk 23:11–35). The Antichrist proves himself (in contrast to the true Christ, v. 14) the traitor of traitors. Rome will be stripped, devoured, and burned (see Lv 21:9, where death by fire is prescribed for a harlot who is the daughter of a priest).

18:1 As God is light (4:3; Ps 103:2; 1Ti 6:16), so the **angel coming down from heaven** exudes a lingering radiance (see Moses in Ex 34:29–35).

18:2 This dirge over **fallen Babylon** is inspired by Is 13:19–22; 34:11–15, where the prophet speaks of the total destruction of the enemies of God's people. The city is a haunt of demonic, foul, and hateful spirits.

18:4-8 God's people are called to **come out of her** so as not to partake of her punishment, destruction, and devastation (see Nm 33:51–56; Is 52:11; Jer 27:8; 28:6, 46). Separation from this world is spiritual, not necessarily a physical move but a refusal to participate in the works of darkness (2Co 6:14–18). As Babylon (Rome) has proclaimed her own sovereign greatness, sitting as **queen** (v. 7), so her **sins have reached to heaven** (v. 5), recalling the Tower of Babel (Gn 11:4), a symbol of excessive arrogance. God's judgment will be swift, **in one day** (v. 8). In Hebrew *day* denotes not so much a chronological period as a completed act.

18:9, 10 **The kings of the earth who committed fornication** will mourn (but from a distance), stunned by the judgment of Rome and the specter of their own economic loss, when they see her devastation (see Ps 75:13; Nah 3:4–7). What happened to Sodom (Gn 19:28) and Edom (Is 34:6–10) is befalling Rome.

18:11-19 Like the political leaders (vv. 9, 10), the economic leaders, **the merchants**, stand astonished at Rome's sudden destruction and their own loss of revenues. Verses 11–13 list luxury items in Rome's flow of trade (see Ezk 27:12–25).

It was said by the rabbis that “ten measures of wealth came down into the world; Rome received nine and all the world received one.” These goods together with their profit made Rome queen (v. 7) of the world. While worldly possessions are not in themselves good or bad, their misuse leads to sin, complacency, and a fatal lack of poverty of spirit (see 3:17–20). Therefore, excessive wealth easily conflicts with authentic Christian discipleship (see Mt 6:24). The last item in this list, **bodies and souls** (v. 13), refers to slaves sold at auction as human livestock for domestic service, prostitution, and gladiatorial amusements.

18:20 The opposite reaction (see vv. 9–19) in heaven: Justice has prevailed!

18:21-24 The **great millstone** thrown **into the sea** recalls Babylon's disasters and annihilation (Jer 28:59, 60; Nah 3:4–7). Her spell of idolatry, vice, and murder bound the whole civilized world with a bewitching belief that she was immortal and secure. But as her influence was total, so her destruction is total. No signs of life are seen or heard; an eerie silence pervades. **In her was found the blood of prophets and saints** (v. 24) here alludes directly to the massacres of Christians under such as Nero and Domitian. However, **Babylon** as the center of opposition to God and self-deification of creation continues beyond the immediate incarnation to be seen in the Roman Empire.

19:1 In contrast to the song of doom for Babylon (ch. 18), the scene returns to the heavenly liturgy with an outburst of celestial triumph. **Alleluia**, appearing in the NT only here (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6), is from the Hebrew for “Praise the Lord.” It was used in the Great Hallel (Praise) of the Jerusalem temple liturgy (Ps 104–106; 110–117; 134–135; 145–150) and in the synagogue as a response by the people (see Tb 13:18; 3Mc 7:13). Within Christendom, the *Alleluia* has been a part of liturgical and private prayers since earliest times.

19:2 The **judgments** of God are **righteous**, in contrast to the slander of the “accuser of the brethren” (2:9; 12:10), which resulted in persecution of Christians.

19:3-5 **Her** (the harlot, Rome) **smoke rises up forever and ever** (contrast 4:9; 15:7), in contrast to the ascent of incense (5:8; 8:4) in eternal heavenly worship. The Church on earth is united with this liturgy in heaven; a deacon calls from the altar, as it were, for all to **praise our God** (v. 5).

19:6 For the use of the term **Omnipotent** (Gr. *pantokrator*), see 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:15; 21:22, as well as Hos 12:6; Am 4:13. It is used in the NT only in Revelation and once in 2Co 6:18, in a quote from the OT. The word means “almighty, all-powerful.”

19:6-9 At the Passover, deliverance from Egypt—the “Babylon” of Moses' day—was united with the theme of Israel's betrothal to the Lord (for further nuptial imagery, see Song of Songs; Hos 2:19; Rom 7:1–6). For marriage is a symbol of the union of God with His people (see Is 54:1–8; Ezk 16:7–14; Hos 2:1–23), of Christ with His Church (Mt 22:1–14; 2Co 11:2; Eph 5:22–32). This union is fulfilled in the rest of Revelation: Jesus, the Passover Lamb (1Co 5:7) whose death has ransomed the New Israel, is also the divine Bridegroom (Mt 22:2; 25:1–13).

A wedding in the Middle East consisted of two parts: the betrothal and the wedding proper. The wedding itself began with the procession of the groom to the bride's home and concluded with the procession of all back to the bridegroom's home for the wedding supper. By analogy, the Church is now betrothed to Christ by faith. She awaits the coming of the Bridegroom for the **marriage supper of the Lamb** (v. 9), the final eschatological union of Christ and His Church.

The recompense to the faithful for having remained steadfast and pure under persecution (see Mt 5:12; 1Pt 4:13) is to be **clothed with fine linen, clean and bright** (v. 8; see 3:4, 5; 7:14)—the clothes of grace, holiness, and incorruption—and to participate in this mystical *supper* both as guest (v. 9) and as bride (in apocalyptic literature it is not uncommon to find mixed images). This *supper* has already begun in the Eucharist, a foretaste of the Kingdom (see Mt 26:29; Lk 13:29; 22:30). The Orthodox sing on Pascha (Easter): “Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem; the glory of the Lord has shone on you. . . . Grant that we may evermore perfectly partake of You in the never-ending Day of Your Kingdom.”

19:10 Orthodoxy makes a strict distinction between the veneration proper to saints and angels (Gr. *doulia*) and the **worship** (Gr. *latria*) due to God alone (see 22:8, 9).

19:11-16 **Heaven** is **opened**: A standard revelatory formula (4:1; Ezk 1:1; Mt 3:16; Jn 1:51; Acts 7:57). Christ is presented as the Warrior-Messiah, a triumphant King. In Semitic thought, name expressed being. Some of the names of the rider are understandable: **Faithful and True** (see 3:13), **Word of God** (v. 13; see Jn 1:1, 14), **KING OF KINGS** (v. 16; see 17:14) **AND LORD OF LORDS** (see Dt 10:17; 1Ti 6:15). But He also has a secret name only He can understand (v. 12; see 2:17; Dan 2:47), for He is God, and only God can comprehend God (Jn 1:18).

19:13 His **robe dipped in blood** (see Gn 49:11; Is 63:1–6) unites Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, granting forgiveness of sin and fulfilling all righteousness, with His making war "in righteousness" (v. 11), judging sin (see the reaping of the harvest of 14:14–20; Ps 44:3–7; WSol 18:15, 16; Jn 12:31).

19:14 The **armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen** are likely the 144,000 faithful (14:4) who, having survived the great tribulation in purity, have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (7:14).

19:15 The **sharp sword** from the **mouth** is judgment, the prophetic word fulfilled (1:16; 2:12; 11:6; Is 11:4); the **rod of iron** (2:27; 12:5; Ps 2:9) is rule. He **treads the winepress**, executing God's wrath on earth (14:19, 20; Is 63:3; Lam 1:15).

19:17, 18 A graphic portrayal of the triumph of Christ over Antichrist, forming a macabre contrast with the wedding supper of the Lamb of God (v. 9; 2:17; 3:20). The destruction is total (see Is 34:1–7; Ezk 39:17–20; Mt 24:28).

19:20, 21 Worldly authority and worldly religion are overthrown. The first **beast** (false deity) and the second beast (**false prophet**) of 13:11–15 are captured and **cast alive into the lake of fire**, hell. Hell is pictured in Gehenna, the noxious, smoldering garbage dump just outside Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnom. In the past, pagan rituals, including child sacrifice, had occurred in this valley. It came to be associated with the abode of the wicked dead, either awaiting final judgment or actually experiencing eternal torment (see Mt 18:9). **Brimstone**, a yellow sulphurous substance that burns easily, exuding a foul odor, is found in the Dead Sea region. **The rest were killed** (v. 21) so as to await the final judgment.

20:1 The **bottomless pit** (abyss) is the great nether regions (Ps 87:7) where the disobedient are confined awaiting final judgment. The demons fear it (see Lk 8:31; Jude 6). It is reached through a chasm, the **key** to which is in the hand of the **angel**. The **great chain** binds Satan (Mk 5:3).

20:2 Though most did not, a few early Fathers and writers believed in a literal **thousand year** binding of Satan and reign of Christ and the saints on earth (vv. 2–7). The Church, however, authoritatively rejected this teaching (called *chiliasm*) at the Second Ecumenical Council. In apocalyptic literature, numbers have symbolic significance. “Thousand” is often used in the Scriptures to denote a long period of time, a great quantity, completion, perfection, thoroughness (Job 9:3; 2Pt 3:8). Here, a *thousand years* (vv. 2–7) is interpreted as the Church age, when Jesus reigns on earth in those who believe. It is that era between the first and second comings of Christ, also called the “last times,” when Satan's effectiveness at deceit is restricted through the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, and the saints share in Christ's earthly reign through the Church. For these persecuted Christians threatened by martyrdom, this is a consoling hope.

20:3 The devil is thrown into the pit, which is **shut** and **sealed** for a **thousand years**—meaning a long period of time—to allow the Church to be planted, to grow and to overcome, even in times of persecution and trial. The word “millennium” is synonymous with *thousand years*, and carries with it no connotations of peace and prosperity. The Bible teaches that Satan was bound at the completion of Christ's saving work (Mt 12:28, 29; Lk 10:17, 18; Jn 12:31, 32; Col 2:15). He is not totally inactive (Acts 5:3; 1Co 5:5; Eph 6:11), but he cannot **deceive the nations** by keeping the gospel from them. At the close of the millennium or Church age, Satan will be **released for a little while** (vv. 7, 8).

20:4-6 Those who have died **for their witness to Jesus** are in heaven living and reigning with Him (5:9, 10; Mt 19:18; 2Ti 2:12) as royal **priests** (1:6; 5:9, 10; Is 61:6; 1Pt 2:9, 10) while the Church serves Him here on earth. **The first resurrection** (v. 6) is the heavenly life of souls who have died in Christ before His Second Coming. Those not in Christ who die are in Hades awaiting the resurrection of the body at His coming. For the righteous saints with Christ, the **second death has no power** (v. 6). These righteous spirits (Heb 12:23) await only the reuniting of soul and body after the final judgment, when all things are made new (21:1). Hell or Hades (Sheol), where sinners' souls are separated from their bodies, will give up its dead to Gehenna (vv. 13, 14), the lake of fire that burns with sulphur (21:8), which is eternal damnation (Mt 25:41). Sinners will be excluded from the blessedness of the age to come. Hell cannot harm the victorious in Christ (2:11).

20:7-10 The lengthy millennial period of Satan's binding and the saints' heavenly reign (vv. 1–6) is concluded by the release of Satan and the final battle of history (probably the same as that of 16:12–16; 19:14–21). **Gog and Magog** (v. 8; see Ezk 38; 39) are nations hostile to God's people, gathered for one final assault directed against **the beloved city** (v. 9), Jerusalem as the Church. As Elijah called down **fire** . . . **out of heaven** on his persecutors (4Kg 1:10–12), so here God sends a consuming fire (see Gn 19:24; 3Kg 18:38; Ezk 38:22; 39:6). The **devil** joins **the beast and the false prophet** in the **lake of fire**, the second death of eternal damnation, and is no longer a threat to the world.

20:11 God executes judgment from the **great white throne** (see Dan 7:9; see also 1En 18:8). The One who sits on the *throne* in Revelation is God the Father (4:2–9; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10; etc.). However, in the rest of the NT Christ is the judge on the throne (Mt 25:31–46; Jn 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2Co 5:10). John is about to show their unity: “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (22:1). **Earth** and **heaven** flee **away** (Mt 24:35; 2Pt 3:10–13) in terror, a cosmic sign of the great Day of the Lord and the coming of the new heaven and earth (21:1).

20:12 **Standing before God** at His throne at the final judgment, **the dead** are confronted with **their works**. **The books** of judgment (Dan 7:10) contain a record of men's deeds; *their* own *works* will judge them (Ps 61:13; Jer 17:6). This judging of believers' works is a common NT theme (Mt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2Co 5:10; 1Pt 1:17; see also the Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil and the hymns for the Sunday of the Last Judgment). In contrast is ***the Book*** **of Life**. It contains the names of all saved by grace (see Ex 32:32; Is 4:3; Dan 12:1, 2)—not that they have no *works*, but that God's mercy is far greater in comparison. The Orthodox liturgy thus petitions God for a “good account before the dread judgment seat of Christ.”

20:13-15 The **sea**, **Death**, and **Hades**—the powers that held men captive—show all the dead are judged. That Christ has the keys to *death* and *Hades* (1:18) expresses not His power to put men to death, but His trampling of death by death. He is victorious over death. The *sea* as a symbol of turbulence, chaos, and the unknown will be no more (21:1). *Death*, the "last enemy *that* will be destroyed" (1Co 15:26), and *Hades*, the intermediate state between death and resurrection, will end. They are cast into hell, **the lake of fire** (vv. 14, 15), along with all who reject the grace of God.

21:1 The NT teaching that the present world will pass away (see Mt 5:18; Mk 13:31; 1Co 7:31; 2Pt 3:10–13; 1Jn 2:17) does not mean the present creation will be utterly destroyed. It will be totally renewed (5:9; 21:5; Is 65:17–25; Rom 8:19–22; 2Co 5:17; 2Pt 3:13): freed from corruption, purified, transfigured, glorified. The first cosmos will pass away.

21:2 **The holy city, New Jerusalem** is the city built by God (Heb 11:10). It is the perfected Church, the **bride** ready for **her husband**, Christ, the abode of the righteous eternally. The OT prophesied a restored and exalted Jerusalem (Is 2:1–4; 54:11–15; 60:1–22; 62:1–12; 65:17–25; Ezk 40–48).

21:3, 4 The OT also prophesied that God would dwell with His people. The Immanuel prophecy (Is 7:14; see also Ps 45:5–8) is fulfilled in the Incarnation (Jn 1:14; 17:22), but comes to completion in the messianic age, when God will fully dwell (lit., “in-tent”) with His people, restoring the paradise of old (Gn 2; Lv 26:11, 12; Ezk 37:26, 27; Jer 38:33; 2Co 6:16). Therefore joy displaces sorrows and sufferings, a great consolation for persecuted believers.

21:6-8 The **water of life** (“living water,” Jn 4:10–14; 7:37–39, or “living fountains of waters,” Rev 7:17) is the grace of the Holy Spirit, bestowed along with baptism in chrismation. Only the one **who thirsts** will be given the *water* forever (v. 6). And, repeating the concluding exhortation of each of the seven letters (chs. 2; 3), only those **who overcome** (v. 7), who persist in their allegiance to God, **inherit**, becoming permanent sons of God. Those who fall away through cowardice or unbelief face instead **the lake** of **fire** (v. 8). They lose God's inheritance, receiving instead the damning recompense of sin and death (see 20:15; 22:15), along with Satan, the beast, the false prophet, Death, and Hades.

21:9 In stark contrast to the harlot arrayed in gaudy finery (17:3), the messianic **bride** comes from God and so reflects God's splendor.

21:10 Like Ezekiel's, John's vantage point is a **high mountain** (Ezk 40:2); the perfected Church he sees resembles Ezekiel's new temple (Ezk 40–42). The New **Jerusalem** descends **out of heaven from God**, for God Himself completes the reunion of heaven and earth. She completes and fulfills the old Jerusalem just as the new covenant fulfills the old.

21:12-14 The splendor described is fitting for the place where God will dwell with His people (vv. 3, 7). As the breastplate of the high priest was adorned with twelve jewels corresponding to the twelve tribes (Ex 28:15–21), so the Church is founded on the twelve precious foundation stones of the **apostles** (v. 14): Heaven is fundamentally priestly. All who are espoused to Christ, who feast at the wedding supper, and who dwell in the Holy City, are members of the royal priesthood (1:6; 5:10; 20:6; 1Pt 2:9).

21:15-21 As in Ezekiel's vision, the angel measures **the city** (Ezk 40–42): a colossal cube (12 x 1,000 stadia = 1,500 miles square), recalling the shape of the holy of holies (3Kg 6:19, 20; Ezk 41:4) and symbolic of its perfection: the multiples of 12 symbolize the people of God, and 1000 shows its greatness. The precious stones portray its glory. As the priests in the Jerusalem temple walked on pavements of gold (3Kg 6:29), so the new, royal priesthood will walk on a **street** of **pure gold** (v. 21).

21:22 There is **no temple** in the old sense in the New Jerusalem (Jn 4:21). **Its temple** is the presence of God in all (v. 22; 1Co 15:28; Col 3:11; 1Pt 2:4–10). The Church itself is the temple.

21:23-27 The OT prophecies concerning the glorification of Jerusalem are fulfilled in the eternal Kingdom (see Is 60). Created light is unnecessary. For the everlasting Uncreated Light will illumine all (Ps 35:10) with true and clear vision to see things as they really are. The true Light, the Light of the world (Jn 8:12), was incarnate (Jn 1:9), and even while on earth He shone with Uncreated Light (Mk 9:2–8; 2Pt 1:16–18). As prophesied, all the earth will stream to the Holy City to honor it (Is 55:5; Jer 16:19–21; Tb 13:13; see also 1En 10:21; 48:4, 5)—it has no enemies—but only the pure will live within it (Mt 5:8).

22:1 The **river of water of life** manifests the Giver of Life, the Holy Spirit (see 21:6; also Ezk 47:1–12; Zec 14:8; see also 2En 8:5). The OT Feast of Tabernacles, the festival of the Messianic Kingdom, emphasized light and water. As in his Gospel, so here John shows these themes are fulfilled by Christ and His Church. Christ is the Light of the World (21:23–26; 22:5 with Jn 8:12); the Holy Spirit is the Water of Life (22:1, 2; 21:6 with Jn 7:37–39). The Church is the Messianic Kingdom.

God the Father and **the Lamb**, the Son incarnate, share one **throne**, for they are consubstantial and one worship is offered them. With the Spirit **proceeding from** the *throne*, the entire Trinity is here.

22:2, 3 **The tree of life**, a symbol of Christ Himself, gives immortality. It fulfills the tree of life in Paradise (Gn 3:22) and the other tree of life, the Cross of the Savior, the tree of obedience (1Pt 2:24), a tree of curse (Gal 3:13). But there is **no more curse** (v. 3) in the Holy City: a reversal of the curse of Gn 3:16–19. The **fruits** and **leaves** of the *tree* are completely and universally therapeutic, reversing the effects of the fruit of the tree of disobedience (Gn 3:6).

22:4 The **face** of God is that of the glorified Christ (see Jn 14:9; 1Jn 3:2). The *face* which cannot be seen is the hidden essence of God (Jn 1:18; 1Ti 6:16). Normally, even to **see His** energy is not possible in this life (Ex 33:20–23; Mt 5:8; Jn 1:18; 1Co 13:12; Heb 12:14; 1Jn 3:2). But in the age to come the faithful, who bear Jesus' **name . . . on their foreheads**, may *see* Him ceaselessly. In the OT only the high priest bore the unspeakable *name* of God on his *forehead*, and that he did externally, on a golden headband around his turban (Ex 28:31–33; see Ezk 9:4–6; Rev 3:12; 7:3). In the NT, all who believe are granted His *name*.

22:5 **The Lord God gives them light** perfects the priestly blessing of Nm 6:23–26, a concluding benediction of the daily morning and evening sacrifices of the OT temple. When you have God's uncreated light, there can be **no night** (see 21:23; Is 60:19, 20).

22:7 Keeping **the words . . . of this book** refers to repentance, faithfulness, and steadfastness, no matter the circumstances of life. The “overcomers” are **blessed**.

22:8, 9 John repeats his error of attempting to worship **the angel** (see 19:10). The fact is, even mature Christians and leaders sometimes err. But we press on to change and to continue with Christ. The command to John is, **“Worship God”** (v. 9). *The angel* affirms John is a brother of **the prophets** (v. 9).

22:10, 11 The command not to **seal the words of the prophecy** is a reversal of 10:4 and Dan 8:26; 12:4, 9. **For the time is** now, the message is for the contemporary communities John is addressing. Some are unable to repent: those who still persist in their wickedness (see Is 6:9, 10; Ezk 3:27; Dan 12:10; Mk 4:12); the **righteous** are encouraged to be steadfast.

22:12, 13 For the divine titles, see notes on 1:8 (see also 1:17; 2:8; 21:6; Is 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:12). Divine recompense (Is 40:10; Jer 17:6) will be visited on the earth soon (v. 12).

22:14, 15 A clear distinction is drawn between the eternal state of the blessed and that of the damned (see 21:8). Many texts read “wash their robes” (see 3:4; 7:14; 16:15) rather than **do His commandments**. The point is the same: it is the pure in Christ who enter the Kingdom. **Dogs** (v. 15) refers to the impure (Dt 23:18, 19; Php 3:2; 2Pt 2:22).

22:16 Jesus confirms this is His message. It fulfills the intent of OT prophecy, for He Himself is the prophesied Messiah.

22:17 A liturgical dialogue, a reflection of eucharistic theology. The Church as bound to God, **the bride** in union with the Holy **Spirit**, invites Christ to **“Come!”** We plead for His return (see His answer in v. 20). Those who desire God (21:6; Ps 41:2, 3; 63:1; Is 26:8, 9; Jn 6:35; 7:37) but who are not yet overcoming the world are in turn invited to **come** to Christ.

22:18, 19 This severe warning refers to the Book of Revelation, not to the Bible as a whole, and admonishes those in the communities addressed not to distort its message. To do so is to threaten one's very salvation (see Dt 4:2; 12:32; Gal 1:8, 9).

22:20 A liturgical benediction to the book. The bride, recognizing the voice of her Beloved as He testifies to His advent, runs “out to meet Him” (Mt 25:6) and in her joy proclaims, **Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!** This echoes *maranatha* (“O Lord, come!” in 1Co 16:22), which was part of the eucharistic dialogue of the early Church.

22:21 An appropriate final benediction, considering the book was to be read aloud in **all** seven churches.

Prologue This introduction was written by the grandson of Jesus ben (son of) Sirach, who translated his grandfather's book from the original Hebrew to Greek in about 132 BC, some fifty years after the book was written. Note how God's gift of wisdom is closely connected with the reading and learning of the Holy Scriptures.

1:1 In the first-century Greek world, there was a general pattern by which all letters were begun: name of sender(s), the addressee(s), the greeting itself. As with most of Paul’s epistles, this pattern is followed here but Christianized.

1:2 **Give thanks** in NT Greek is *eucharisto*, from which we get our English word “Eucharist.” A spirit of thanksgiving constantly pervades the prayers of Paul, as here when he specifically remembers the Christians in Thessalonica.

1:3 **Remembering** and **without ceasing** describe effective prayer (see 2:13; 5:16–18). **Faith**, **hope**, and **love** are three Christian virtues Paul links together in other letters (1Co 13:13; Col 1:4, 5). These virtues are connected to actions: faith works, love labors, hope produces **patience**, showing that salvation goes beyond attitudes to action.

1:6 **Followers** (lit. “imitators”) of Christ also imitate spiritual leaders—pastors, bishops, in this case the apostles—even in their suffering. “Let [others] be instructed by you, at least by your deeds. With their wrath you be mild, with their boastful speech you be humble-minded, with their abuse you offer prayers, with their deceit you be firm in faith, with their cruelty you be gentle, not eager to imitate them” (IgnAnt). The **joy of the Holy Spirit** is not an easy emotional high, but comes with the struggle proper to spiritual life, including persevering through affliction. The one who suffers is the one who is comforted.

1:7–10 What a tribute to the Thessalonian believers. People everywhere were speaking of them!

1:10 The early Christians expected Christ to return in their lifetime. This hope helped purge their lives of sin.

2:1–16 Paul defends his apostolic work, claiming he has served with courage (vv. 1, 2), humility (vv. 3–6), love (vv. 7, 8), financial integrity (v. 9), and godly authority (vv. 10–12). Following this example, the Thessalonians can manifest similar holiness amidst hostility (vv. 13–16).

2:2 Christians are repeatedly challenged in the NT to be **bold** in confessing Christ before others (see Acts 4:29–31; Rom 1:16).

2:4–6 Paul has been accused of seeking his own glory, but he knows God does not share His glory with any other (Is 48:11). As His servants, we must step outside the circle of world-pleasers and into the arena of pleasing God, whatever the cost.

2:7, 8 Spreading the gospel means putting our lives on the line for those we seek to reach, as a mother sacrifices herself for her children. Thus, the holy martyrs gave their lives with great joy for Christ and His Church.

2:11 Note the three verbs Paul uses to describe his apostolic preaching to the Thessalonians: (1) **exhorted**, which can also mean encouraged; (2) **comforted**; and (3) **charged** or implored. These elements are just as important for preaching today!

2:14, 15 While the persecution in Thessalonica comes primarily from Greeks, Paul, a Jew, is frank concerning his countrymen of that day who reject their Messiah, noting that they (1) **killed . . . the Lord Jesus** (v. 15), (2) killed **their own prophets**, (3) **persecuted** the apostles, (4) **do not please God**, and (5) act with hostility to **all men**. This is a strong indictment. But Paul's love for the Jews never wavers. He wishes himself to be cursed if that could cause his fellow Jews to turn to Christ for salvation (Rom 9:3; 10:1).

2:18 Though unable to prevail against the Church (Mt 16:18) or overcome the faithful (Eph 6:11–13; Rev 12:11), the enemy at times is permitted to hinder faithful Christians. It is here that we enact God’s promise: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (Jam 4:7).

2:19, 20 This passage shows that all the trials and disappointments of the Christian life and ministry are worthwhile.

3:1–5 As healthy as the Thessalonian church is, Paul takes nothing for granted. Even well-grounded, deeply committed Christians need constant encouragement, instruction, and prayer.

3:2 **Minister** is from the Greek *diakonon*, from which we get “deacon.” **Fellow laborer** is Greek *synergon*, from which we get “synergy.” As ministers, we not only represent God, we work together with Him and our fellow Christians.

3:6 **Always** and **remembrance** probably speak of prayer life.

3:13 Paul’s goal here is for all Christians.

4:1–12 Holiness includes sexual purity (vv. 3–8), mutual love (vv. 9, 10), and honest labor (vv. 11, 12). As for knowing God’s will, this passage comes through in brilliant simplicity. God’s will is our **sanctification** (v. 3), our being set apart to the Lord as His special possession. We are being sanctified as we walk with Him in faith and obedience.

4:4 **His own vessel** speaks of the entire human being (Rom 9:20–23; 2Co 4:7; 2Ti 2:20, 21)—probably one’s own self, perhaps one’s wife (or husband). In either case one’s *vessel* must be possessed with purity, self-control, and chastity.

4:11 The bedrock practicality of the Scriptures: In Paul’s time and ours, we are to live quietly, mind our own business, and work hard.

4:13–18 One of the clearest NT passages on the Second Coming of Christ. The first-century document, *The Didache*, lists three signs that will mark the return of the Lord: (1) “the sign spread out in the heavens”—Christ and His hosts; (2) “the sign of the trumpet”; and (3) “the resurrection of the dead.” For the righteous, the return of Christ is a comfort (v. 18), not a threat.

5:1–11 The Thessalonian Christians had been speculating about the return of the Lord and making their own predictions. Paul tells them, **you have no need** (v. 1) for that kind of information (indeed, it is not available!). Does **a thief in the night** (v. 2) announce his coming? The disciples had gotten the same kind of answers to their questions on the Second Coming from Christ Himself (Mt 24:36; Acts 1:6, 7). And suppose we know the end; what is this to us? Christians are called not to set dates but to make themselves ready to meet the Lord by being watchful and **sober** (v. 6). Our place is to be ceaselessly aware of the primacy of God's Kingdom and to have full control over our spiritual faculties.

5:12–22 The requirements of harmonious life in community include the honoring of sacramental leadership (vv. 12–14), pursuit of good works (v. 15), continual prayer and thanksgiving in worship (vv. 16–18), and proper regard for the prophetic gift and spiritual discernment (vv. 19–22).

5:12 The Greek term for **over you** has a liturgical connotation. It refers to the leader of the congregation in the eucharistic assembly. **To recognize** is a weaker translation of “to know” (see 4:5). In a healthy church, the people recognize their pastor as their leader in Christ and willingly follow his admonitions.

5:15 When is it proper to return **evil for evil**? From the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:44) to the end of the NT, the answer is, “Never.”

In Paul’s writings, words such as **rejoice**, **always** (v. 16), **without ceasing** or “constantly” (v. 17), and **give thanks** (v. 18) refer primarily to prayer. The spiritual Fathers of the Church teach that unceasing prayer is a proper goal, for spiritual growth comes through such discipline. For centuries, Christian people have used the “Jesus Prayer” as a way to pray unceasingly from the heart: “O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

5:19–22 The Holy Spirit is to be actively present in the life of the Church. But there is constant need of discernment and testing so as to avoid being misled (see 1Co 12—14).

5:23–27 Note the liturgical overtones with regard to the corporate meetings. There is (1) the benediction (v. 23), (2) intercessory prayer (v. 25), (3) the kiss of peace (v. 26), and (4) the public reading of the Scriptures (v. 27). The practice of **a holy kiss** (v. 26)very early became a part of the worship liturgy (see Rom 16:16; 1Co 16:20; 2Co 13:12; 1Pt 5:14). Just prior to Communion, the faithful would exchange the kiss of peace, on one cheek and then the other, to show their reconciliation in Christ. Thus, Christ is in our midst and ever shall be!

5:27 The Bible is to be **read** aloud during corporate worship.

1:3–10 This passage on God’s judgment teaches that (1) suffering is redemptive for the Christian (v. 5); (2) God promises to return tribulation to our enemies (vv. 6, 8); (3) punishment of the wicked is everlasting (v. 9); and (4) God’s glory will be displayed in His saints (v. 10), for as Christ was transfigured, so will be His faithful (see Mt 13:43; Col 3:4).

Why does God reveal His dread judgment and His glory to us? To help us toward righteousness. “If the fear of an earthly king withdraws us from so many evils, how much more the fear of the King Eternal!” (JohnChr). How we bear up under unjust persecution now is **manifest evidence** (v. 5) of how we will stand at the final judgment.

1:11, 12 Some say Paul and James contradict each other, but here is the essence of James 2. Paul teaches that God’s **calling** and the **work of faith** are a unity through our cooperation with God’s power.

2:3–12 While we are warned against predicting the Day of the Lord (Mt 24:36; Acts 1:7; 1Th 5:1), there will be signs preceding His Coming. Paul instructs the Thessalonians concerning two such signs: (1) a general **falling away** (v. 3; apostasy) from Christ and the Church and (2) the revealing of **the man of sin**, **the son of perdition** (v. 3), who is the Antichrist of 1 and 2 John, similar to the Dragon and the Beast of Rev 13. This lawless one is described in the OT (Dan 7:25; 8:25; 11:36), mentioned by Christ (Mt 24:15), and discussed by Paul on his first visit to Thessalonica (v. 5). The devil incites divisions among people so they will readily receive the Antichrist when he comes. The man of sin is a counterfeit messiah with a counterfeit kingdom. He (1) exalts himself above God (v. 4), (2) performs deceptive miracles and wonders through satanic power (v. 9), (3) will fool the unrighteous into following him (vv. 10–12), and (4) will be removed from power by Christ Himself at His Second Coming (v. 8).

Paul instructs that when the world gets worse, Christians must not be distressed or deceived (vv. 11, 12), but rather persevere as good stewards (vv. 13–17).

2:15; 3:6 In the NT we read of two types of **traditions**: (1) *The tradition of men* (Mt 15:1–9; Col 2:8) is soundly condemned. Jesus (quoting Is 29:13) describes this as “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt 15:9). (2) *The tradition of the apostles* or “Holy Tradition,” by contrast, is to be preserved by the Church, for God is its source. Holy Tradition is that which Jesus taught to the apostles, and which they in turn taught the Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in (a) their instructions as they visited the churches and (b) their writings. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we adhere to Holy Tradition as it is present in the apostles’ writings and as it is resident in the Church to which the truth is promised (Jn 16:13).

3:6 See 2:15.

3:13 A warning filled with great wisdom. While sin is burdensome, we can also grow tired and fatigued by **doing good**. Paul, as our spiritual director, cautions us not to cease or tire of good works.

3:17 Paul’s authorship is emphasized here because of the fraudulent letters mentioned in 2:2.

1:1-3 This passage is read during Vespers on Great and Holy Saturday.

1:1-13 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent. It is also read on the Eve of the Feast of the Nativity, during Vespers at the Feast of Theophany (Epiphany), and at Vespers for Great and Holy Saturday.

1:14-23 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

1:24-3 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

2:4-19 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

2:20-20 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

3:21-7 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

4:8-15 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

5:1-24 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

5:32-8 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

6:9-22 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

7:1-5 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

7:6-9 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

7:11-3 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

8:4-21 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

8:21-7 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

9:8-17 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

9:18-1 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

10:32-9 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

12:1-7 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

13:12-18 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

14:14-20 This passage is read during the Feasts of the Holy Fathers.

15:1-15 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

17:1-9 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

17:1 Gen 17:1, 2, 4–8, 9–12, 14: These verses are read at the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

18:20-33 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

22:1-18 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

27:1-41 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

28:10-17 This passage is read on the Feasts of the Theotokos: the Annunciation (March 25); the Dormition (August 15); and the Nativity (September 8).

31:3-16 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

32:1-10 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

43:26-31 This passage, coupled with 45:1–16, is read during Wednesday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

45:1-16 This passage, coupled with 43:26–31, is read during Wednesday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

46:1-7 This passage is read at Thursday Vespers during the sixth week of Great Lent.

49:1 Gen 49:1, 2, 8–12: This passage is read during Saturday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

49:33-26 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

1:1-20 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in Passion Week.

2:5-10 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in Passion Week and at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

2:11-22 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in Passion Week.

3:1-8 These verses are read as the first reading in the Liturgy during the Feast of the Annunciation.

12:51 Ex 12:51; 13:1–3, 10–12, 14–16; 22:29: These verses are read as the first reading of the Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.

13:20-19 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

14:15-18 Ex 14:15–18, 21–23, 27–29: This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

19:10-19 This passage is read on Holy Thursday, the Thursday before Pascha (Easter).

33:11-23 Ex 33:11–23; 34:4–6, 8: These verses are read as the second reading during the Feast of the Transfiguration.

40:1-5 Ex 40:1–5, 9, 10, 16, 34, 35: These verses are read during the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple.

3:7 Josh 3:7, 8, 15–17: This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

5:10-15 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

6:36-40 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

17:8-24 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

18:30-39 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

19:3-9 3Kingd 19:3–9, 11–13, 15, 16: This passage is read on August 6, the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

2:6-14 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

2:19-22 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

4:8-37 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

37:1 **Prayer of King Manasseh** The Prayer of King Manasseh is chanted during the service of Great Compline.

2:1 The Church includes Ps 2 in the Nativity (Christmas) Eve and Good Friday services. On Nativity Eve it is used in the refrain (called the prokeimenon or gradual) before the Epistle is read in the Divine Liturgy. On Good Friday, the entire psalm is part of the First Hour prayers.

3:1 Ps 3 is the first of the six psalms in the Orthros (or Matins) service. The other five are 37, 62, 87, 102, and 142.

4:1 The Church in her prayers uses Ps 4 as a prokeimenon at Vespers on Mondays. It is also one of the psalms for Great Compline during Great Lent.

5:1 Thus, the Church uses Ps 5 as one her fixed psalms in the First Hour, and the clergy often pray vv. 8, 9 upon entering the church just prior to the services.

6:1 Ps 6 is used in Great Compline, and v. 2 is a frequently repeated refrain in liturgical hymnography throughout the church year.

8:1 Ps 8 is the communion hymn on Lazarus Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday, and it is also sung at Palm Sunday Orthros (Matins).

11:1 Ps 11 is a regular prokeimenon in the Sunday Liturgy, and it is also chanted before the Gospel reading in the marriage ceremony, as a prayer for the preservation of the union of husband and wife.

12:1 Ps 12 is an evening prayer, used in Great Compline and in the services of Great Lent.

13:1 Ps 13 is used in the Ninth Royal Hour of Great and Holy Friday, the hour of Christ's death on the cross. Portions of vv. 1 and 3 form the prokeimenon before the reading from Jeremiah.

14:1 Ps 14:1 is used in Orthros for the Feast of the Transfiguration.

15:1 Ps 15:3 is often used in the services of the Church to honor the saints.

16:1 Ps 16 is used in the Third Hour Prayers of the Church.

17:1 Verses 46–50 are sung on appointed Sundays immediately before the reading of the Holy Gospel, announcing the word of Christ, who is victor over death and the One who is our life.

18:1 Verses 2, 3 are sung as the Alleluia before the Gospel reading in the Divine Liturgy on Nativity. And v. 6 is sung in the second canon of canticle five during Orthros for the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

20:1 Verses 1–6, 14 are used in the Divine Liturgy on Pentecost Sunday, on which the ascended and exalted Lord sent the Church His Holy Spirit.

21:1 Ps 21 is used throughout Great and Holy Friday, in Orthros, in the First Hour, and in Great Vespers. It is also used in the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

22:1 Ps 22 is used in the service of preparation for Holy Communion, and as the prokeimenon in Vespers for Tuesdays.

23:1 Verses 7–10 are proclaimed as the priest knocks on the door of the church on Pascha (Easter) morning, signaling our triumphant entrance into the kingdom of heaven through Christ's glorious Resurrection. This same action takes place at the consecration of a church building throughout the Orthodox Christian world. Also, verse 1 is said at the grave of the newly departed faithful, when earth is scattered in the form of a cross over the resting place.

24:1 Ps 24 is read in Great Compline and in the Third Hour Prayers.

25:1 Verses 6–12 are prayed by an Orthodox priest as part of the vesting service as he washes his hands before serving the Divine Liturgy.

26:1 Verse 1 is the prokeimenon before the Epistle reading in the Sacrament of Baptism, before the Isaiah readings at the Ninth Royal Hour and Great Vespers on the Eve of Theophany (Epiphany), and before the Epistle reading in the Great Blessing of the Waters. Verses 1–14 are also read as one of the psalms in the First Royal Hour on the Eve of Theophany.

27:1 Verse 9 is sung repeatedly in various services of the Church, and it is also woven into numerous hymns.

28:1 Verse 3 is used as the prokeimenon in the following places in the services of Theophany: before the Isaiah readings in the First, Third and Sixth Royal Hours; before the Gospel reading in the Great Blessing of the Waters; after Ps 37 and within the first canon of canticle four in Orthros; and before the Gospel reading in the Divine Liturgy. And in addition to this, vv. 1–11 are read as one of the psalms in the Third Royal Hour.

29:1 Ps 29 is viewed by numerous early Church Fathers as fulfilled in Christ's Resurrection.

30:1 Ps 30 is used as one of the psalms in Great Compline.

32:1 Verse 1 is a communion refrain, sung on days of commemorating great saints of the Church. Also, verse 6 is sung on Pentecost Sunday in glorification of the Trinity. Then too, verse 22 is a favorite Orthodox prayer asking the Trinity for continued mercy. **The abysses** (v. 7) are deep, immeasurable places.

33:1 Ps 33 is both historically and liturgically the favorite psalm of the Church to accompany the receiving of Holy Communion. And v. 9 is seen throughout the Church as describing the act of receiving the body and blood of Christ. Also, in present Orthodox practice, Ps 38 is sung, with 33:9 as the refrain, during the receiving of Communion at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts in Great Lent.

34:1 Ps 34 is prayed in the Third Royal Hour on Great and Holy Friday.

35:1 Verses 10, 11 are used in the Great Doxology, sung at the close of Sunday Orthros, and v. 10 is used repeatedly in the Forefeast of Theophany, identifying Christ as “the river of delight,” who was baptized in the Jordan. Also in the Creed, the Son is called “Light of light,” a phrase derived from this psalm.

36:1 Verses 30, 31 are used in the Church to commemorate St. John the Baptist and other followers of Christ who endured martyrdom.

37:1 Ps 37 is the second of the six psalms (3; 37; 62; 87; 102; 142) in Orthros, and v. 18 is the prokeimenon used before the Isaiah reading in the Third Royal Hour on Great and Holy Friday.

40:1 Ps 40 is used liturgically on Great and Holy Thursday and Great and Holy Friday.

41:1 Verse 7 is used on all days during the Forefeast of Theophany, and is prayed at the Third Hour on the feast itself.

43:1 Ps 43 is prayed at the Orthros of Great and Holy Saturday, and v. 27 is sung as the prokeimenon before the reading of Ezekiel's prophecy regarding the dry bones coming to life.

44:1 Verses 4, 5 are prayed by a priest as he vests for the Divine Liturgy, and v. 10 is recited in honor of the Mother of God as he prepares the holy gifts. Also, v. 18 is quoted in Lk 1:48 as part of the Magnificat, which is also sung in Orthros. Then too, this psalm is prayed in the First Royal Hour on Nativity Eve, and vv. 4, 5, and 8 are sung on the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman (see also Jn 4).

45:1 Ps 45 is prayed during the First Royal Hour on Nativity Eve.

46:1 Ps 46 is used in the services of the Feast of Ascension.

48:1 Ps 48 is used on feast days of the great fathers of the Church, for they exemplify what it means to be children of the kingdom.

50:1 Ps 50 is used daily in the services of Orthros, the Third Hour, and Compline, and it is also recited in every Divine Liturgy by the priest as he censes before the Great Entrance.

53:1 Ps 53 is prayed daily at the Sixth Hour, the hour of the Crucifixion, and v. 3 is also used as the prokeimenon for Wednesday Vespers.

54:1 Ps 54 is prayed daily at the Sixth Hour and, in part, on Great and Holy Thursday and Friday.

56:1 Verse 6 is prayed by the priest at the end of the Divine Liturgy when he censes the holy gifts after Communion.

59:1 Verse 6 is the inspiration for many Orthodox hymns concerning the cross of Christ.

60:1 Ps 60:6 is prayed as the evening prokeimenon of Sunday Vespers during Great Lent.

62:1 Ps 62 is the third of the Six Psalms (3; 37; 62; 87; 102; 142) in Orthros.

63:1 Verse 11 is used in the Church's commemoration of St. John the Baptist and all martyrs.

64:1 Verse 5 is used often in prayers for the departed and for their rest in the new city of peace. Also, verse 12 is incorporated into a hymn in the service of supplication on the first day of the church year, September 1.

65:1 Ps 65 forms a unit with 66 and 67, which are used throughout the services of Pascha and Bright Week.

66:1 Ps 66 forms a unit with 65 and 67, which are used throughout the services of Pascha and Bright Week.

67:1 Ps 67 forms a unit with 65 and 66, which are used throughout the services of Pascha and Bright Week. And vv. 2–4 are sung all through the paschal season with the refrain, Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

68:1 Verses 18, 19 are used in the service of Forgiveness Sunday to usher in the season of Great Lent.

69:1 Ps 69 is read in both Little Compline and Great Compline.

71:1 Ps 71 is used all through the Nativity services.

73:1 Verse 12 is used at the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and vv. 13–15 on the Eve of Theophany.

76:1 Verses 14b, 15a are sung as a refrain in Vespers at Pascha, Pentecost, and Nativity.

79:1 Verses 15, 16 (**Look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vineyard which your right hand planted, and perfect it**) are sung by the bishop in the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, as he blesses his people.

81:1 Ps 81 is sung on Holy Saturday at the Liturgy of St. Basil, and again at Great Vespers, with v. 8 repeated as a refrain after each verse. Verse 6 is also quoted by Christ in Jn 10:34.

83:1 Ps 83 is read in the Ninth Hour each day, and also at the Feast of the Transfiguration.

84:1 Ps 84 is read at the Ninth Hour each day.

85:1 Ps 85 is read each day at the Ninth Hour.

86:1 Verse 5 is used as the prokeimenon before the Isaiah reading at the Ninth Royal Hour on Nativity Eve. Also, the verses of the entire psalm are used as refrains before the Isaiah 11 reading in Great Vespers.

87:1 Ps 87 is prayed in the Service of Lamentations in Holy Week. It is also one of the six psalms of Orthros. The other five are 3; 37; 62; 102; 142.

88:1 Verse 13 is sung both in Great Vespers and in the Divine Liturgy of the Feast of the Transfiguration.

89:1 Ps 89 is read daily at the First Hour.

90:1 Ps 90 is read at the Sixth Hour each day, along with 53 and 54. It is also read in Great Compline and in the funeral service.

91:1 Verses 2, 3, 5 are sung as the First Antiphon (psalm sung responsively) on a regular Sunday.

92:1 At every Great Vespers service (including the Feast of Theophany), v. 1 is sung. Ps 92 is also read in the Ninth Royal Hour of the Feast of Theophany.

94:1 Ps 94 is sung responsively in the Third Antiphon of the Divine Liturgy.

97:1 Verses 2 and 3 are sung at the Feast of Christ's Presentation in the Temple, and other portions of the psalm are sung on Palm Sunday. Both feasts emphasize the two comings of Christ.

98:1 Thus, this psalm is sung at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and this feast identifies the cross as His footstool.

100:1 This psalm is read daily in the morning at the First Hour, along with Ps 5 and 89.

101:1 Verse 14 is quoted in the Divine Liturgy on Pascha morning before the reading of the Holy Gospel.

102:1 This psalm is the fifth of the six Matins psalms (3; 37; 62; 87; 102; 142). It is often used in the First Antiphon of the Divine Liturgy. Verses 20, 21 are also used on days when angels are honored in the Church.

103:1 This psalm is the great psalm of Vespers. Because of v. 30, this psalm is also used on the Day of Pentecost.

107:1 Verse 6 is used on Ascension Day, and is also said by the priest after Holy Communion is served.

108:1 Ps 108 is prayed at the Third Royal Hour on Great and Holy Friday.

109:1 Verse 3 is used throughout the services of the Nativity season.

110:1 Verse 9 is used as a Communion hymn in the Divine Liturgy on Nativity.

111:1 This psalm is the most popular song in the Church for use on days of the commemoration of saints. Verses 6b and 7a make up the Communion Hymn for most saints' days.

112:1 Verse 2 is sung at the close of the Divine Liturgy.

113:1 This psalm is used in the celebration of the Feast of Theophany, and at other feasts as well.

114:1 This psalm is used on Palm Sunday with reference to the resurrection of Lazarus the day before. His resurrection forecasts the resurrection of us all.

115:1 This psalm is one of several Communion hymns in the Eucharist. Verse 5 is sung at the feasts of the Mother of God and of the saints.

116:1 This psalm is used liturgically each day at Vespers.

117:1 This psalm is rich in the liturgical usage of the Church. For example, v. 24 is sung on Pascha; vv. 25, 26a are sung on Palm Sunday; and vv. 26, 27a are sung daily at Orthros.

118:1 This psalm is prayed in its entirety at the Lamentations of Orthros on Great and Holy Saturday, when the Church assembles around the tomb of Christ. Further, this psalm is the core of the Church's funeral service.

119:1-1 In addition, Ps 129 is a daily vesperal hymn. Ps 131, a messianic psalm, is used at Nativity and for the feasts of the Mother of God. Verse 11 of this psalm shows that God the Son became Man in her womb.

134:1-1 These two psalms form the core of Orthros for the great feast days of the Church.

136:1 In this context of exile, it is used in the Orthros service beginning just before Great Lent on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son (the exile returning home), and throughout the Lenten Season in the Matins services.

137:1 This psalm is used on feast days honoring the angels.

139:1 This psalm is the last of the Passion psalms used in the Church. It is sung at the Sixth Royal Hour on Great and Holy Friday.

142:1 This psalm is the last of the Six Psalms of Orthros. The other five are 3; 37; 62; 87; 102. Verse 10b is used in the Church at the Feast of Pentecost.

144:1 Verse 2 of this psalm is part of the Great Doxology sung at the close of Sunday Orthros.

145:1 In many Orthodox churches, this is the ordinary Second Antiphon (psalm sung responsively) in the Divine Liturgy.

148:1-1 These psalms are sung every morning in the Church as the Praises of Orthros.

1:1-12 This passage is read on Holy Monday, the Monday before Pascha (Easter).

1:13-22 This passage is read on Holy Tuesday, the Tuesday before Pascha (Easter).

2:1-10 This passage is read on Holy Wednesday, the Wednesday before Pascha (Easter).

38:1-25 This passage (with 42:1–5) is read on Holy Thursday, the Thursday before Pascha (Easter).

42:1-5 This passage (with 38:1–25) is read in the church at Vespers on Holy Thursday.

42:12-17 This passage is read on Holy Friday, the Friday before Pascha (Easter).

1:1-20 This passage is read at Monday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

1:20-35 This passage is read at Tuesday Vespers during the first week of Great Lent.

2:1-23 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

3:1-20 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

3:11-18 This passage is read on September 13 at Vespers for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

3:21-36 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the first week of Great Lent.

3:37-21 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

5:1-15 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

5:15-23 This passage, including 6:1–3, is read during Wednesday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

6:3-24 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

6:24-40 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the second week of Great Lent.

8:1-21 This passage is read at Monday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

8:22-30 This passage is read on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos.

8:32-35 This passage is read at Tuesday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

9:1-11 This passage is read at the feasts of the Mother of God, for the consecration of a church, and at the Feast of Mid-Pentecost.

9:12-18 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

10:1-22 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

10:32-10 This passage is read at Friday Vespers in the third week of Great Lent.

12:8-22 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

12:24-31 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

13:22-6 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

14:15-26 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the fourth week of Great Lent.

14:28-4 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

15:8-21 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

16:13-8 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

17:19-5 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the fifth week of Great Lent.

19:16-25 This passage is read during Monday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

21:3-20 This passage is read during Tuesday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

21:22-30 This passage is read during Wednesday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

23:15-5 This passage is read during Thursday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

31:10-30 This passage is read during Friday Vespers in the sixth week of Great Lent.

4:6 Mic 4:6, 7; 5:1–3: This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

5:1-3 This passage is read on the Eve of Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

2:23-5 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of Pentecost.

3:8-15 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

3:14-19 This passage is read at Great Vespers in the Sixth Week of Great Lent.

9:9-15 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday).

11:10-13 This passage is read on Holy Friday, the Friday before Pascha (Easter).

14:1 Zec 14:1, 4; 8–11: This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

1:16-20 This passage is read on January 5, the Eve of the Feast of Theophany.

2:1-3 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

6:1-12 This passage is read on Thursday of the second week of Great Lent and on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple.

7:10-16 This passage is read on the Eve of Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

8:1-4 Is 8:1–4, 8–10: This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

9:5, 6 This passage is read on the Eve of Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

11:1-10 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

12:3-6 This passage is read on January 5, the Eve of the Feast of Theophany and on the Feast Day, January 6.

19:1-5 Is 19:1–5, 12, 16, 19–21: This passage is read on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple.

35:1-10 This passage is read on January 5, the Eve of the Feast of Theophany and on the Feast Day, January 6.

49:8-15 This passage is read on January 5, the Eve of the Feast of Theophany.

50:4-11 This passage is read on Holy Thursday and Holy Friday, the Thursday and Friday before Pascha (Easter).

52:13-1 This passage is read on Holy Friday, the Friday before Pascha (Easter).

55:1-13 This passage is read on the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

60:1-16 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

60:11-16 This passage is read on September 13 at Vespers for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

61:1-9 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

61:10-5 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

62:10-9 This passage is read at Vespers of the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

63:11-5 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

11:17-5 Jer 11:17–12:5, 9–11, 14, 15: This passage is read on Holy Thursday and Holy Friday.

3:36-4 This passage is read on the Eve of Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

2:31-36 Dan 2:31–36, 44–45: This passage is read in Church on Christmas Eve.

3:1-90 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

1:1-25 This passage is read on the Sunday before Christmas, called the Sunday of the Holy Fathers.

2:1-12 This passage is read on December 25, the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Christmas).

2:13-23 This passage is read on December 26, the Synaxis of the Theotokos.

3:13-17 This passage is read on January 6, the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Theophany).

5:14-19 This passage is read on days commemorating holy hierarchs.

6:14-21 This passage is read on the Sunday before Great Lent, called Cheese Fare Sunday or Forgiveness Sunday.

7:12-21 This passage is read on days commemorating holy monks.

9:9-13 This passage is read on November 16, the Feast of the Apostle Matthew.

9:36 Mt 9:36; 10:1–8: This passage is read on June 30, the Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles.

10:1 Mt 10:1, 5–8: This passage is read on days commemorating holy unmercenary healers.

10:16-22 This passage is read on days commemorating holy martyrs and on August 1, the Feast of the Procession of the Cross.

10:32 Mt 10:32, 33, 37, 38; 19:27–30: This passage is read on the first Sunday after Pentecost, called Sunday of All Saints.

11:2-15 This passage is read on February 24 and May 29, the two feasts commemorating the Finding of the Head of John the Baptist.

11:27-30 This passage is read on days commemorating holy monks.

15:21-28 This passage is read on days commemorating female martyrs.

16:13-19 This passage is read on June 29, the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

17:1-9 This passage is read on August 6, the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

18:10-20 This passage is read on the Monday after Pentecost, called the Day of the Holy Spirit.

23:29-39 This passage is read on days commemorating holy prophets.

24:3-35 This passage is read on Holy Monday, the Monday before Pascha (Easter).

24:36-2 This passage is read on Holy Tuesday, the Tuesday before Pascha (Easter).

25:1-13 This passage is read on days commemorating holy nuns.

25:31-46 This passage is read on the second Sunday before Great Lent, called Meat Fare Sunday, or Sunday of the Last Judgment.

26:1, 2 This passage is read on Holy Wednesday and Holy Thursday of the week before Pascha (Easter).

27:1-61 This passage is read at Vespers of Great and Holy Friday, the Friday before Pascha (Easter).

27:62-66 This passage is read at Matins of Great and Holy Saturday, the Saturday before Pascha (Easter).

28:1-20 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday.

1:9-11 This passage is read on January 5, the Eve of the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Theophany).

2:1-12 This passage is read on the second Sunday of Great Lent, called the Sunday of the Paralytic and Commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas.

6:14-30 This passage is read on August 29, the Feast of the Beheading of John the Baptist.

8:34-1 This passage is read on the third Sunday of Great Lent, called the Adoration of the Holy Cross.

9:17-31 This passage is read on the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, on which is commemorated St. John of the Ladder.

9:42-1 This passage is read on December 17, the Feast of the Prophet Daniel.

15:43-8 This passage is read on the third Sunday of Pascha, on which is commemorated the Myrrhbearing Women, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

1:1-15 Lk 1:1–15, 57–68, 76, 80: This passage is read on June 24, the Feast of the Birth of John the Baptist.

1:5-25 This passage is read on September 23, the Feast of the Conception of John the Baptist.

1:24-38 This passage is read on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary.

2:1-20 This passage is read on December 24, the Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

2:20 Lk 2:20, 21, 40–52: This passage is read on January 1, the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ.

2:22-40 This passage is read on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple.

3:1-18 This passage is read on the Eve of the Feast of the Baptism of Christ (Theophany).

4:16-22 This passage is read on September 1, the beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year.

4:22-30 This passage is read on July 20, the Feast of the Prophet Elias.

6:17-23 Lk 6:17–23; 10:22–24; 14:25–35: This passage is read on days commemorating hierarchs, hieromartyrs and monks.

7:36-50 This passage is read on days commemorating holy nuns.

10:1-15 This passage is read for the commemoration of apostles.

10:16-21 This passage is read on April 25, the Feast of the Apostle Mark, and on November 8, the Commemoration of Holy Archangels.

10:22-24 This passage is read for the commemoration of hieromartyrs.

10:38-42 Lk 10:38–42; 11:27, 28: This passage is read on the several feasts of the Virgin Mary, on September 8, October 1, November 21, the Friday after Pascha, and August 15.

11:47-54 This passage is read on days commemorating holy prophets.

12:1-12 This passage is read on days commemorating a holy martyr.

12:32-40 This passage is read on days commemorating a priest martyr.

13:10-17 This passage is read on December 9, the Feast of the Conception of the Theotokos.

14:16-24 This passage is read on the second Sunday before Christmas, called the Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ.

14:25-35 This passage is read for the commemoration of hieromartyrs.

15:11-32 This passage is read on the third Sunday before Great Lent, called the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.

18:10-14 This passage is read on the fourth Sunday before Great Lent, called the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee.

19:1-10 This passage is read on the fifth Sunday before Great Lent, called Zacchaeus Sunday.

21:12-19 This passage is read on days commemorating holy martyrs.

22:43-45 This passage is read on Holy Thursday, the Thursday before Pascha (Easter).

23:39-43 This passage is read at Vespers of Great and Holy Friday, the Friday before Pascha (Easter).

24:36-53 This passage is read on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:1-17 This passage is read on the Feast of Pascha (Easter), the day of the Resurrection of Christ.

1:29-34 This passage is read on January 7, the Feast of the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist.

1:35-52 This passage is read on November 30, the Feast of the Apostle Andrew.

1:43-51 This passage is read on the first Sunday of Great Lent, called the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and on November 14, the Feast of the Apostle Philip.

3:1-5 This passage is read on January 4, the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles.

4:5-42 This passage is read on the fifth Sunday of Pascha, called the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman.

5:1-15 This passage is read on the fourth Sunday of Pascha, called the Sunday of the Paralytic.

5:17-30 Jn 5:17–30; 6:35–44, 48–54: This passage is read on days commemorating the departed.

7:37-52 Jn 7:37–52; 8:12: This passage is read on Pentecost (Trinity Sunday), the seventh Sunday after Pascha (Easter).

9:1-38 This passage is read on the sixth Sunday of Pascha, called the Sunday of the Blind Man.

10:9-16 This passage is read on days commemorating a holy hierarch.

11:1-45 This passage is read on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, called Lazarus Saturday.

12:1-18 This passage is read on Palm Sunday, the Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

13:3-17 This passage is read on Holy Thursday, the Thursday before Pascha (Easter).

15:17-2 This passage is read on days commemorating a holy martyr.

17:1-13 This passage is read on the Feast of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

19:6-11 Jn 19:6–11, 13–20, 25–28, 30–35: This passage is read on September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

19:25-27 Jn 19:25–27; 21:24, 25: This passage is read on September 26, the Feast of St. John the Theologian.

19:31-37 This passage is read on Great and Holy Friday, the Friday before Pascha (Easter).

20:19-31 This passage is read on the second Sunday of Pascha, called Thomas Sunday.

1:1-8 This passage is read on Holy Pascha (Easter).

1:1-12 This passage is read on the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

2:1-11 This passage is read on the Feast of Pentecost (Trinity) Sunday, the seventh Sunday after Pascha (Easter).

5:12-20 This passage is read on the second Sunday of Pascha, called Thomas Sunday.

6:1-7 This passage is read on the third Sunday of Pascha, which commemorates the Myrrhbearing Women, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

9:32-42 This passage is read on the fourth Sunday of Pascha, called the Sunday of the Paralytic.

11:19-30 This passage is read on the fifth Sunday of Pascha, called the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman.

12:1-11 This passage is read on days commemorating a holy martyr.

13:25-32 This passage is read on August 29, the Feast of the Beheading of John the Baptist.

16:16-34 This passage is read on the sixth Sunday of Pascha, called the Sunday of the Blind Man.

19:1-8 This passage is read on January 7, the Feast of the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist.

20:16-18 This passage is read on the Feast of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

6:3-11 This passage is read on Great and Holy Saturday, the Saturday before Pascha (Easter).

8:28-39 This passage is read on days commemorating martyrs and monk martyrs.

13:11-4 This passage is read on the Sunday before Great Lent, called Cheese Fare Sunday or Forgiveness Sunday, and on June 24, the Feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist.

16:6-9 This passage is read on days commemorating the departed.

1:18—2:2 This passage is read at Vespers of Great and Holy Friday, the Friday before Pascha (Easter).

1:18-24 This passage is read on September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

4:9-16 This passage is read for the commemoration of apostles.

6:12-20 This passage is read on the third Sunday before Great Lent, called the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.

8:8-2 This passage is read on the second Sunday before Great Lent, called Meat Fare Sunday, or Sunday of the Last Judgment.

9:19-27 This passage is read on January 5, the Eve of the Feast of Theophany.

10:1-4 This passage is read on January 5, the Eve of the Feast of Theophany.

12:27-8 This passage is read on days commemorating unmercenary healers.

14:20-25 This passage is read on days commemorating prophets.

15:20-28 1Cor 15:20–28, 39–57: This passage is read on days commemorating the departed.

5:1-10 This passage is read on days commemorating the departed.

6:1-10 This passage is read on days commemorating female martyrs.

11:21-9 This passage is read on June 29, the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

3:23-29 This passage is read on days commemorating nuns and female martyrs.

4:4-7 This passage is read on December 25, the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

4:22-31 This passage is read on September 23, the Feast of the Conception of the John the Baptist, and on December 9, the Feast of the Conception of the Theotokos.

5:22-2 This passage is read on days commemorating holy monks.

5:9-19 This passage is read on the Monday following Pentecost, called the Day of the Holy Spirit.

6:10-17 This passage is read on days commemorating holy confessors.

2:5-11 This passage is read on the Feasts of the Theotokos: Nativity (September 8) and Dormition (August 15).

3:20-3 This passage is read on days commemorating hieromartyrs.

4:4-9 This passage is read on the Feast of the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem, also called Palm Sunday.

2:8-12 This passage is read on January 1, the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ.

3:4-11 This passage is read on the second Sunday before Christmas, called the Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ.

1:8-18 This passage is read on days commemorating monk martyrs.

2:1-7 This passage is read on September 1, the beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year.

3:13-5 This passage is read on January 4, the Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles.

2:1-10 This passage is read on days commemorating a martyr and for the Finding of the Head of John the Baptist (February 24 and May 29).

3:10-15 This passage is read on the fourth Sunday before Great Lent, called the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee.

3:4-7 Ti 3:4–7, 11–14: This passage is read on January 6, the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

1:1-12 This passage is read on December 24, the Eve of the Nativity of the Lord.

2:2-10 This passage is read on November 8, the Synaxis of Michael and All Angels.

2:11-18 This passage is read on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos, and on December 26, the Synaxis of the Theotokos.

4:14-6 This passage is read on the third Sunday of Great Lent, called the Sunday of the Adoration of the Cross.

5:4-10 This passage is read on days commemorating hieromartyrs.

6:13-20 This passage is read on days commemorating prophets.

7:7-17 This passage is read on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple.

7:26-2 This passage is read on days commemorating a hierarch.

9:1-7 A description of the Mosaic tabernacle, which prefigures the heavenly altar. This passage is read during feasts of the Virgin Mary and Advent to describe the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Mary's womb was prepared to be Christ's tabernacle, the very dwelling place of God.

9:1-7 This passage is read on November 21, the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple.

11:9 Heb 11:9, 10, 17–23, 32–40: This passage is read on the Sunday before Christmas, called the Sunday of the Holy Fathers.

11:24-26 This passage is read on the first Sunday of Great Lent, called the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

11:33-2 This passage is read on December 17, the Feast of the Prophet Daniel; on August 1, the Procession of the Cross; and on the first Sunday after Pentecost, called the Sunday of All Saints.

12:28-8 This passage is read on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, called Lazarus Saturday.

13:7-16 This passage is read on days commemorating hieromartyrs.

13:17-21 This passage is read on days commemorating hierarchs.

5:10-20 This passage is read on days commemorating prophets.

5:6-14 This passage is read on April 25, the Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist.

1:10-19 This passage is read on August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord.

4:12-19 This passage is read on September 26, the Feast of St. John the Theologian.

4:13–17 This passage is read on days commemorating the departed.

1:7[a] NU-Text reads *Asaph.*

1:10[a] NU-Text reads *Amos*.

1:25[a] NU-Text reads *a Son.*

3:11[a] M-Text omits *and fire*.

3:16[a] Or *he*

4:10[a] M-Text reads *Get behind Me.*

5:22[a] NU-Text omits *without a cause.*

5:27[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to those of old*.

5:32[a] Or *fornication*

5:44[a] NU-Text omits three clauses from this verse, leaving, *“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”*

5:47[a] M-Text reads *friends*.

5:47[b] NU-Text reads *Gentiles*.

6:4[a] NU-Text omits *openly*.

6:6[a] NU-Text omits *openly*.

6:13[a] NU-Text omits *For Yours* through *Amen*.

6:18[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *openly*.

7:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *How* . . . *!*

8:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Him*.

8:28[a] NU-Text reads *Gadarenes*.

8:31[a] NU-Text reads *send us.*

9:8[a] NU-Text reads *were afraid*.

9:13[b] NU-Text omits *to repentance*.

9:14[a] NU-Text brackets *often* as disputed.

9:35[a] NU-Text omits *among the people*.

9:36[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *harassed*.

10:3[a] NU-Text omits *Lebbaeus, whose surname was.*

10:4[a] NU-Text reads *Cananaean*.

10:8[a] NU-Text reads *raise the dead, cleanse the lepers;* M-Text omits *raise the dead.*

10:25[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul*.

11:2[a] NU-Text reads *by* for *two of*.

11:19[a] NU-Text reads *works*.

11:23[a] NU-Text reads *will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be.*

12:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *even*.

12:15[a] NU-Text brackets *multitudes* as disputed.

12:22[a] NU-Text omits *blind and*.

12:24[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul*.

12:35[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *of his heart*.

13:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *would*.

13:33[a] Greek *sata*, approximately two pecks in all

13:51[a] NU-Text omits *Jesus said to them.*

13:51[b] NU-Text omits *Lord*.

13:52[a] Or *for*

13:55[a] NU-Text reads *Joseph*.

14:24[a] NU-Text reads *many furlongs away from the land.*

14:30[a] NU-Text brackets *that* and *boisterous* as disputed.

14:33[a] NU-Text omits *came and*.

14:34[a] NU-Text reads *came to land at.*

15:6[a] NU-Text omits *or mother.*

15:6[b] NU-Text reads *word*.

15:8[a] NU-Text omits *draw near to Me with their mouth, And.*

15:39[a] NU-Text reads *Magadan*.

16:3[a] NU-Text omits *Hypocrites*.

16:4[a] NU-Text omits *the prophet*.

16:8[a] NU-Text reads *you have no bread*.

16:19[a] Or *will have been bound . . . will have been loosed*

17:4[a] NU-Text reads *I will*.

17:11[a] NU-Text omits *first*.

17:15[a] Literally *moonstruck*

17:20[a] NU-Text reads *little faith*.

17:22[a] NU-Text reads *gathering together.*

17:24[a] NU-Text reads *Capharnaum* (here and elsewhere).

17:27[a] Greek *stater*, the exact amount to pay the temple tax (didrachma) for two

18:19[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Again, assuredly, I say.*

18:29[a] NU-Text omits *at his feet.*

18:29[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *all*.

18:35[a] NU-Text omits *his trespasses*.

19:4[a] NU-Text reads *created*.

19:9[a] Or *fornication*

19:16[a] NU-Text omits *Good*.

19:17[a] NU-Text reads *Why do you ask Me about what is good?*

19:17[b] NU-Text reads *There is One who is good.*

19:20[a] NU-Text omits *from my youth.*

19:29[a] NU-Text omits *or wife*.

20:6[a] NU-Text omits *idle*.

20:22[a] NU-Text omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.*

20:23[a] NU-Text omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.*

21:1[a] M-Text reads *Bethsphage*.

21:4[a] NU-Text omits *All*.

21:7[a] NU-Text reads *and He sat.*

21:12[a] NU-Text omits *of God.*

22:13[a] NU-Text omits *take him away, and*.

22:30[a] NU-Text omits *of God.*

23:3[a] NU-Text omits *to observe*.

23:8[a] NU-Text omits *the Christ.*

23:17[a] NU-Text reads *sanctified*.

23:21[a] M-Text reads *dwelt*.

23:25[a] M-Text reads *unrighteousness.*

24:6[a] NU-Text omits *all*.

24:7[a] NU-Text omits *pestilences*.

24:33[a] Or *He*

24:36[a] NU-Text adds *nor the Son*.

24:42[a] NU-Text reads *day*.

24:48[a] NU-Text omits *his coming*.

25:6[a] NU-Text omits *is coming*.

25:31[a] NU-Text omits *holy*.

25:44[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him*.

26:3[a] NU-Text omits *the scribes.*

26:26[a] M-Text reads *gave thanks for.*

26:28[a] NU-Text omits *new*.

26:42[a] NU-Text reads *if this may not pass away unless.*

26:52[a] M-Text reads *die*.

26:59[a] NU-Text omits *the elders*.

26:60[a] NU-Text puts a comma after *but found none,* does not capitalize *Even,* and omits *they found none.*

26:60[b] NU-Text omits *false witnesses*.

27:2[a] NU-Text omits *Pontius*.

27:16[a] NU-Text reads *Jesus Barabbas*.

27:24[a] NU-Text omits *just*.

27:34[a] NU-Text omits *sour.*

27:41[a] M-Text reads *with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders.*

27:42[a] NU-Text reads *He is the King of Israel!*

27:42[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *we will believe in Him.*

27:56[a] NU-Text reads *Joseph*.

27:64[a] NU-Text omits *by night*.

28:2[a] NU-Text omits *from the door.*

28:19[a] M-Text omits *therefore.*

28:20[a] NU-Text omits *Amen*.

1:2[a] NU-Text reads *Isaiah the prophet.*

1:10[a] NU-Text reads *out of*.

1:14[a] NU-Text omits *of the kingdom.*

1:27[a] NU-Text reads *What is this? A new doctrine with authority.*

2:2[a] NU-Text omits *Immediately*.

2:16[a] NU-Text reads *of the*.

2:17[a] NU-Text omits *to repentance*.

3:5[a] NU-Text omits *as whole as the other.*

3:14[a] NU-Text adds *whom He also named apostles.*

3:15[a] NU-Text omits *to heal sicknesses and*.

3:16[a] NU-Text reads *and He appointed the twelve: Simon*. . . .

3:32[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *and Your sisters*.

4:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *of the air.*

4:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them*.

4:40[a] NU-Text reads *Have you still no faith?*

5:1[a] NU-Text reads *Gerasenes*.

5:3[a] NU-Text adds *anymore*.

5:13[a] NU-Text reads *And He gave*.

6:11[a] NU-Text reads *whatever place.*

6:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *or.*

6:33[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *they*.

6:36[a] NU-Text reads *something to eat* and omits the rest of this verse.

6:44[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *about*.

7:2[a] NU-Text omits *when* and *they found fault*.

7:19[a] NU-Text ends quotation with *eliminated,* setting off the final clause as Mark's comment that Jesus has declared all foods clean.

7:24[a] NU-Text omits *and Sidon*.

8:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *they*.

8:17[a] NU-Text omits *still*.

8:26[a] NU-Text reads *“Do not even go into the town.”*

9:23[a] NU-Text reads “*‘If You can!’ All things. . . .*”

9:29[a] NU-Text omits *and fasting*.

9:40[a] M-Text reads *against you is on your side*.

10:24[a] NU-Text omits *for those who trust in riches.*

10:29[a] NU-Text omits *or wife*.

11:1[a] M-Text reads *Bethsphage*.

11:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *a*.

11:10[a] NU-Text omits *in the name of the Lord*.

12:4[a] NU-Text omits *and at him they threw stones.*

12:28[a] NU-Text reads *seeing*.

12:33[a] NU-Text omits *with all the soul*.

12:42[a] Greek *lepta*, very small copper coins worth a fraction of a penny

13:8[a] NU-Text omits *and troubles.*

13:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *will stand.*

13:11[a] NU-Text omits *or premeditate*.

13:14[b] NU-Text omits *spoken of by Daniel the prophet.*

13:29[a] Or *He*

14:22[a] NU-Text omits *eat.*

14:24[a] NU-Text omits *new*.

14:27[a] NU-Text omits *because of Me this night*.

14:65[a] NU-Text reads *received Him with slaps.*

14:70[a] NU-Text omits *and your speech shows it.*

15:4[a] NU-Text reads *of which they accuse You.*

15:8[a] NU-Text reads *going up*.

15:32[a] M-Text reads *believe Him*.

15:39[a] NU-Text reads *that He thus breathed His last.*

16:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *quickly*.

16:18[a] NU-Text reads *and in their hands they will.*

1:1[a] Or *are most surely believed*

1:28[a] NU-Text omits *blessed are you among women.*

1:29[a] NU-Text omits *when she saw him.*

1:78[a] NU-Text reads *shall visit*.

2:5[a] NU-Text omits *wife*.

2:9[a] NU-Text omits *behold.*

2:14[a] NU-Text reads *toward men of goodwill.*

2:17[a] NU-Text omits *widely.*

2:21[a] NU-Text reads *for His circumcision*.

2:33[a] NU-Text reads *And His father and mother.*

2:37[a] NU-Text reads *a widow until she was eighty-four.*

2:38[a] NU-Text reads *to God*.

2:40[a] NU-Text omits *in spirit*.

2:43[a] NU-Text reads *And His parents.*

3:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.*

3:19[a] NU-Text reads *his brother's wife*.

4:1[a] NU-Text reads *in.*

4:4[b] NU-Text omits *but by every word of God.*

4:5[a] NU-Text reads *And taking Him up, he showed Him.*

4:8[a] NU-Text omits *Get behind Me, Satan.*

4:8[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.*

4:18[a] NU-Text omits *to heal the brokenhearted*.

4:23[a] Here and elsewhere the NU-Text spelling is *Capharnaum.*

4:26[a] Greek *Sarepta*

4:41[a] NU-Text omits *the Christ.*

4:44[a] NU-Text reads *Judea*.

5:17[a] NU-Text reads *present with Him to heal*.

5:30[a] NU-Text reads *But the Pharisees and their scribes.*

5:33[a] NU-Text omits *Why do*, making the verse a statement.

5:36[a] NU-Text reads *No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old one.*

5:38[a] NU-Text omits *and both are preserved*.

5:39[a] NU-Text omits *immediately*.

5:39[b] NU-Text reads *good*.

6:1[a] NU-Text reads *on a Sabbath*.

6:9[a] M-Text reads *to kill*.

6:10[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *to him.*

6:10[b] NU-Text omits *as whole as the other.*

6:26[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you*.

6:26[b] M-Text omits *all*.

6:45[a] NU-Text omits *treasure of his heart*.

6:48[a] NU-Text reads *for it was well built.*

6:49[a] NU-Text reads *collapsed*.

7:10[a] NU-Text omits *who had been sick.*

7:19[a] NU-Text reads *the Lord*.

7:28[a] NU-Text reads *there is none greater than John.*

7:31[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *And the Lord said.*

8:3[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *them*.

8:26[a] NU-Text reads *Gerasenes*.

8:27[a] NU-Text reads *who had demons and for a long time wore no clothes.*

8:37[a] NU-Text reads *Gerasenes*.

8:45[a] NU-Text omits *and those with him.*

8:45[b] NU-Text omits *and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’*

8:48[a] NU-Text omits *be of good cheer.*

8:49[a] NU-Text adds *anymore*.

8:51[a] NU-Text adds *with Him*.

8:51[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *Peter, John, and James.*

8:54[a] NU-Text omits *put them all outside*.

9:23[a] M-Text omits *daily*.

9:35[a] NU-Text reads *This is My Son, the Chosen One.*

9:50[a] NU-Text reads *you*.

9:50[b] NU-Text reads *your.*

9:54[a] NU-Text omits *just as Elijah did*.

10:1[a] NU-Text reads *seventy-two others*.

10:11[a] NU-Text reads *our feet*.

10:12[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *But*.

10:15[a] NU-Text reads *will you be exalted to heaven? You will be thrust down to Hades!*

10:17[a] NU-Text reads *seventy-two*.

10:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *rather.*

10:22[a] M-Text reads *And turning to the disciples He said, “All . . .”*

10:35[a] NU-Text omits *when he departed*.

10:39[a] NU-Text reads *the Lord's*.

10:41[a] NU-Text reads *the Lord*.

11:2[a] NU-Text omits *Our* and *in heaven*.

11:4[a] NU-Text omits *But deliver us from the evil one.*

11:11[a] NU-Text omits the words from *bread* through *for* in the next sentence.

11:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul*.

11:29[a] NU-Text omits *the prophet*.

11:44[a] NU-Text omits *scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*

11:53[a] NU-Text reads *And when He left there*.

11:54[a] NU-Text omits *and seeking* and *that they might accuse Him.*

12:6[a] Greek *assarion*, a coin of very small value

12:15[a] NU-Text reads *all covetousness*.

12:31[a] NU-Text reads *His kingdom, and these things*.

12:39[a] NU-Text reads *he would not have allowed.*

13:9[a] NU-Text reads *And if it bears fruit after that, well. But if not, you can cut it down.*

13:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Hypocrites*.

13:19[a] NU-Text omits *large*.

13:21[a] Greek *sata*, approximately two pecks in all

13:31[a] NU-Text reads *In that very hour.*

13:35[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *assuredly*.

14:3[a] NU-Text adds *or not.*

14:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *son.*

14:15[a] M-Text reads *dinner.*

15:8[a] Greek *drachma*, a valuable coin often worn in a ten-piece garland by married women

15:22[a] NU-Text reads *Quickly bring.*

16:6[a] Greek *batos*, eight or nine gallons each (Old Testament *bath*)

16:7[a] Greek *koros*, ten or twelve bushels each (Old Testament *kor*)

16:9[a] NU-Text reads *it fails*.

16:21[a] NU-Text reads *with what fell.*

17:3[a] NU-Text omits *against you*.

17:4[a] M-Text omits *to you*.

17:9[a] NU-Text ends verse with *commanded;* M-Text omits *him.*

17:21[a] NU-Text reverses *here* and *there*.

17:23[a] NU-Text reverses *here* and *there*.

18:28[a] NU-Text reads *our own*.

19:5[a] NU-Text omits *and saw him*.

19:13[a] The *mina* (Greek *mna*, Hebrew *minah*) was worth about three months' salary.

19:29[a] M-Text reads *Bethsphage*.

19:45[a] NU-Text reads *those who were selling*.

19:46[a] NU-Text reads *shall be.*

20:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *then.*

20:19[a] M-Text reads *but they were afraid*.

20:23[a] NU-Text omits *Why do you test Me?*

20:31[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the seven also left no children.*

21:4[a] NU-Text omits *for God*.

21:8[a] NU-Text omits *Therefore*.

21:36[a] NU-Text reads *may have strength.*

22:14[a] NU-Text omits *twelve*.

22:18[a] NU-Text adds *from now on.*

22:31[a] NU-Text omits *And the Lord said*.

22:57[a] NU-Text reads *denied it.*

22:60[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *a rooster.*

22:61[a] NU-Text adds *today.*

22:64[a] NU-Text reads *And having blindfolded Him, they asked Him.*

22:68[a] NU-Text omits *also* and *Me or let Me go*.

23:2[a] NU-Text reads *our.*

23:6[a] NU-Text omits *of Galilee*.

23:15[a] NU-Text reads *for he sent Him back to us.*

23:23[a] NU-Text omits *and of the chief priests*.

23:25[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them*.

23:38[a] NU-Text omits *written* and *in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.*

23:39[a] NU-Text reads *Are You not the Christ?*

23:42[a] NU-Text reads *And he said, “Jesus, remember me.”*

23:44[a] NU-Text adds *already.*

23:45[a] NU-Text reads *obscured*.

23:51[a] NU-Text reads *who was waiting*.

24:1[a] NU-Text omits *and certain other women with them.*

24:4[a] NU-Text omits *greatly*.

24:12[a] NU-Text omits *lying*.

24:13[a] Literally *sixty stadia*

24:17[a] NU-Text reads *as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad.*

24:42[a] NU-Text omits *and some honeycomb*.

24:46[a] NU-Text reads *written, that the Christ should suffer and rise.*

24:49[a] NU-Text omits *of Jerusalem.*

24:53[a] NU-Text omits *praising and*.

24:53[b] NU-Text omits *Amen*.

1:5[a] Or *overcome*

1:9[a] Or *That was the true Light which, coming into the world, gives light to every man.*

1:16[a] NU-Text reads *For.*

1:18[a] NU-Text reads *only begotten God.*

1:28[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Bethany*.

1:42[a] NU-Text reads *John*.

1:51[a] NU-Text omits *hereafter.*

2:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *will eat.*

2:22[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them*.

3:13[a] NU-Text omits *who is in heaven.*

3:15[a] NU-Text omits *not perish but*.

4:42[a] NU-Text omits *the Christ.*

5:2[a] NU-Text reads *Bethzatha*.

5:4[a] NU-Text omits *waiting for the moving of the water* at the end of verse 3, and all of verse 4.

5:16[a] NU-Text omits *and sought to kill Him.*

6:11[a] NU-Text omits *to the disciples, and the disciples*.

6:19[a] Literally *twenty-five or thirty stadia*

6:22[a] NU-Text omits *that* and *which His disciples had entered*.

6:45[b] M-Text reads *hears and has learned.*

6:47[a] NU-Text omits *in Me*.

6:55[a] NU-Text reads *true food* and *true drink*.

6:69[a] NU-Text reads *You are the Holy One of God*.

7:8[a] NU-Text omits *yet*.

7:16[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *So Jesus*.

7:26[a] NU-Text omits *truly*.

7:29[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *But*.

7:33[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them*.

7:39[a] NU-Text reads *who believed*.

7:40[a] NU-Text reads *some*.

7:50[a] NU-Text reads *before*.

7:52[a] NU-Text reads *is to rise*.

7:53[a] The words *And everyone* through *sin no more* (8:11) are bracketed by NU-Text as not original. They are present in over 900 manuscripts.

8:2[a] M-Text reads *very early.*

8:4[a] M-Text reads *we found this woman.*

8:5[a] M-Text reads *in our law Moses commanded*.

8:5[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *to stone such*.

8:5[c] M-Text adds *about her.*

8:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *as though He did not hear.*

8:7[a] M-Text reads *He looked up*.

8:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *being convicted by their conscience*.

8:10[a] NU-Text omits *and saw no one but the woman;* M-Text reads *He saw her and said.*

8:10[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *of yours*.

8:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *from now on*.

8:38[a] NU-Text reads *heard from.*

8:54[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *our*.

9:4[a] NU-Text reads *We*.

9:8[a] NU-Text reads *a beggar.*

9:9[a] NU-Text reads *“No, but he is like him.”*

9:11[a] NU-Text omits *the pool of*.

9:35[a] NU-Text reads *Son of Man.*

10:8[a] M-Text omits *before Me*.

10:26[a] NU-Text omits *as I said to you.*

10:38[a] NU-Text reads *understand*.

[11:18a] Literally *fifteen stadia*

11:30[a] NU-Text adds *still*.

11:31[a] NU-Text reads *supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.*

11:41[a] NU-Text omits *from the place where the dead man was lying.*

11:50[a] NU-Text reads *you*.

12:1[a] NU-Text omits *who had been dead*.

12:7[a] NU-Text reads *that she may keep*.

12:41[a] NU-Text reads *because*.

12:47[a] NU-Text reads *keep them*.

13:2[a] NU-Text reads *And during supper.*

13:18[a] NU-Text reads *My bread*.

13:25[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *thus*.

14:2[a] Literally *dwellings*

14:2[b] NU-Text adds a word which would cause the text to read either *if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?* or *if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.*

14:14[a] NU-Text adds *Me*.

14:15[a] NU-Text reads *you will keep*.

14:28[a] NU-Text omits *I said*.

15:2[a] Or *lifts up*

15:7[a] NU-Text omits *you will*.

16:3[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you*.

16:4[a] NU-Text reads *their.*

16:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *He takes of Mine and will declare it to you.*

16:33[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *will*.

17:2[a] M-Text reads *shall*.

17:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *keep them through Your name which You have given Me.*

17:12[a] NU-Text omits *in the world*.

17:12[b] NU-Text reads *in Your name which You gave Me. And I guarded them;* (or *it;*).

17:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *will*.

18:15[a] M-Text reads *the other.*

18:20[a] NU-Text reads *where all the Jews meet.*

19:3[a] NU-Text reads *And they came up to Him and said.*

19:7[a] NU-Text reads *the law.*

19:16[a] NU-Text omits *and led Him away.*

19:28[a] M-Text reads *seeing*.

20:16[a] NU-Text adds *in Hebrew.*

20:18[a] NU-Text reads *disciples, "I have seen the Lord,"* . . .

20:19[a] NU-Text omits *assembled*.

20:29[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Thomas*.

21:3[a] NU-Text omits *immediately*.

21:15[a] NU-Text reads *John*.

21:16[a] NU-Text reads *John*.

21:17[a] NU-Text reads *John*.

1:8[a] NU-Text reads *My witnesses*.

1:14[a] NU-Text omits *and supplication*.

1:15[a] NU-Text reads *brethren*.

1:20[c] Greek *episkopen*, position of overseer

2:1[a] NU-Text reads *together.*

2:23[a] NU-Text omits *have taken*.

2:30[a] NU-Text omits *according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ* and completes the verse with *He would seat one on his throne.*

2:41[a] NU-Text omits *gladly*.

2:47[a] NU-Text omits *to the church.*

3:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before.*

3:24[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *proclaimed*.

4:25[a] NU-Text reads *who through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father, Your servant David.*

4:36[a] NU-Text reads *Joseph*.

5:23[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *outside*.

5:24[a] NU-Text omits *the high priest*.

5:25[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *saying*.

5:41[a] NU-Text reads *the name;* M-Text reads *the name of Jesus.*

6:8[a] NU-Text reads *grace*.

6:13[a] NU-Text omits *blasphemous*.

7:14[a] Or *seventy* (compare Exodus 1:5)

7:30[a] NU-Text omits *of the Lord*.

7:37[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him you shall hear.*

8:5[a] Or *a*

9:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit the last sentence of verse 5 and begin verse 6 with *But arise and go.*

9:17[a] M-Text omits *Jesus*.

9:20[a] NU-Text reads *Jesus*.

9:31[a] NU-Text reads *church* . . . *was edified.*

10:21[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *who had been sent to him from Cornelius.*

10:30[a] NU-Text reads *Four days ago to this hour, at the ninth hour.*

10:39[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *also*.

12:5[a] NU-Text reads *constantly* (or *earnestly*).

12:25[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *to*.

13:6[a] NU-Text reads *the whole island*.

13:17[a] M-Text omits *Israel*.

13:23[a] M-Text reads *for Israel salvation*.

13:42[a] Or *And when they went out of the synagogue of the Jews;* NU-Text reads *And when they went out, they begged.*

15:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Christ*.

15:18[a] NU-Text (combining with verse 17) reads *Says the Lord, who makes these things known from eternity (of old).*

15:20[a] Or *fornication*

15:22[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Barsabbas*.

15:24[a] NU-Text omits *saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law.”*

15:29[a] Or *fornication*

15:33[a] NU-Text reads *to those who had sent them.*

16:7[a] NU-Text adds *of Jesus*.

17:5[a] NU-Text omits *who were not persuaded;* M-Text omits *becoming envious.*

17:18[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *also*.

17:26[a] NU-Text omits *blood.*

18:7[a] NU-Text reads *Titius Justus*.

18:17[a] NU-Text reads *they all*.

18:21[a] NU-Text omits *I must* through *Jerusalem.*

19:13[a] NU-Text reads *I*.

19:16[a] M-Text reads *and they overpowered.*

19:16[b] NU-Text reads *both of them*.

19:24[a] Greek *Artemis*

19:27[a] NU-Text reads *she be deposed from her magnificence.*

19:37[a] NU-Text reads *our.*

20:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *we*.

20:24[a] NU-Text reads *But I do not count my life of any value or dear to myself.*

20:28[a] M-Text reads *of the Lord and God.*

[20:34a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Yes*.

21:4[a] NU-Text reads *the disciples*.

21:8[a] NU-Text omits *who were Paul's companions*.

21:22[a] NU-Text reads *What then is to be done? They will certainly.*

21:25[a] NU-Text omits *that they should observe no such thing, except.*

21:29[a] M-Text omits *previously.*

22:9[a] NU-Text omits *and were afraid*.

22:20[a] NU-Text omits *to his death.*

23:5[a] Exodus 22:28

23:9[a] NU-Text omits last clause and reads *what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?*

23:15[a] NU-Text omits *tomorrow.*

23:30[a] NU-Text reads *there would be a plot against the man.*

24:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *joined the attack.*

24:15[a] NU-Text omits *of the dead.*

24:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *say what wrongdoing they found.*

24:26[a] NU-Text omits *that he might release him.*

[25:2a] NU-Text reads *chief priests*.

25:16[a] NU-Text omits *to destruction*, although it is implied.

26:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *now*.

27:14[a] NU-Text reads *Euraquilon.*

27:16[a] NU-Text reads *Cauda*.

27:17[a] M-Text reads *Syrtes*.

[**28:25**[a]] NU-Text reads *your.*

1:16[a] NU-Text omits *of Christ*.

1:29[a] NU-Text omits *sexual immorality.*

1:31[a] NU-Text omits *unforgiving*.

2:17[a] NU-Text reads *But if*.

3:22[a] NU-Text omits *and on all*.

4:1[a] Or *Abraham our (fore)father according to the flesh has found?*

5:1[a] Another ancient reading is, *let us have peace*.

8:26[a] NU-Text omits *for us*.

9:3[a] Or *relatives*

9:28[a] NU-Text reads *For the* L*ORD* *will finish the work and cut it short upon the earth.*

9:29[a] Literally, in Hebrew, *Hosts*

9:31[a] NU-Text omits *of righteousness*.

9:32[a] NU-Text reads *by works*.

10:1[a] NU-Text reads *them*.

10:15[a] NU-Text omits *preach the gospel of peace, Who.*

11:22[a] NU-Text adds *of God*.

11:26[a] Or *delivered*

13:9[a] NU-Text omits “*You shall not bear false witness.*”

14:9[a] NU-Text omits *and rose*.

14:10[a] NU-Text reads *of God*.

14:18[a] NU-Text reads *this*.

14:21[a] NU-Text omits *or is offended or is made weak.*

14:22[a] NU-Text reads *The faith which you have—have*.

15:7[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *you*.

15:14[a] M-Text reads *others*.

15:24[a] NU-Text omits *I shall come to you* (and joins *Spain* with the next sentence).

15:29[a] NU-Text omits *of the gospel*.

16:5[a] NU-Text reads *Asia*.

16:11[a] Or *relative*

16:16[a] NU-Text reads *All the churches*.

16:18[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Jesus*.

1:23[a] NU-Text reads *Gentiles*.

2:1[a] NU-Text reads *mystery*.

2:4[a] NU-Text omits *human.*

2:13[a] NU-Text omits *Holy*.

4:3[a] Literally *day*

5:1[a] NU-Text omits *named*.

5:5[a] NU-Text omits *Jesus*.

5:7[a] NU-Text omits *for us*.

6:20[a] NU-Text ends the verse at *body.*

7:34[a] M-Text adds *also.*

7:37[a] Or *virgin daughter*

7:38[a] NU-Text reads *his own virgin.*

9:18[a] NU-Text omits *of Christ*.

9:20[a] NU-Text adds *though not being myself under the law*

9:21[a] NU-Text reads *God's law.*

9:21[b] NU-Text reads *Christ's law.*

9:22[a] NU-Text omits *as*.

10:11[a] NU-Text omits *all*.

10:23[a] NU-Text omits *for me*.

10:23[b] NU-Text omits *for me*.

11:15[a] M-Text omits *to her.*

11:24[a] NU-Text omits *Take, eat*.

11:24[b] NU-Text omits *broken*.

11:27[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the blood*.

11:29[a] NU-Text omits *in an unworthy manner.*

11:29[b] NU-Text omits *Lord's*.

12:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *when.*

12:9[a] NU-Text reads *one*.

12:13[a] NU-Text omits *into*.

12:31[a] NU-Text reads *greater.*

13:3[a] NU-Text reads *so I may boast.*

14:5[a] NU-Text reads *and*.

14:25[a] NU-Text omits *And thus*.

14:34[a] NU-Text omits *your.*

14:38[a] NU-Text reads *if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.*

15:39[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *of flesh*.

.:1Cor.15:47"[a] NU-Text omits *the Lord*.

15:49[a] M-Text reads *let us also bear.*

15:55[b] NU-Text reads *O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?*

1:10[a] NU-Text reads *shall*.

1:11[a] M-Text reads *your behalf*.

2:10[a] NU-Text reads *For indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it.*

2:17[a] M-Text reads *the rest.*

6:16[a] NU-Text reads *we*.

8:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *that we would receive*, thus changing text to *urgency for the favor and fellowship*. . . .

8:16[a] NU-Text reads *has put.*

8:24[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *and*.

9:4[a] NU-Text reads *this confidence*.

9:10[a] NU-Text reads *Now He who supplies* . . . *will supply.* . . .

10:7[a] NU-Text reads *even as we are*.

10:8[a] NU-Text omits *us*.

11:3[a] NU-Text adds *and purity.*

11:6[a] NU-Text omits *been*.

12:1[a] NU-Text reads *necessary, though not profitable, to boast.*

12:11[a] NU-Text omits *in boasting.*

12:19[a] NU-Text reads *You have been thinking for a long time. . . .*

13:2[a] NU-Text omits *I write*.

13:7[a] NU-Text reads *we*.

1:18[a] NU-Text reads *Cephas*.

2:11[a] NU-Text reads *Cephas*.

2:14[a] NU-Text reads *how can you.*

3:1[a] NU-Text omits *that you should not obey the truth.*

3:1[b] NU-Text omits *among you*.

3:17[a] NU-Text omits *in Christ*.

4:7[a] NU-Text reads *through God* and omits *through Christ.*

4:15[a] NU-Text reads *Where*.

4:24[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *the*.

5:1[a] NU-Text reads *For freedom Christ has made us free; stand fast therefore.*

5:19[a] NU-Text omits *adultery*.

5:21[a] NU-Text omits *murders*.

1:10[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *both*.

1:14[a] NU-Text reads *which.*

1:18[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *hearts*.

3:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *stewardship (dispensation)*.

3:9[b] NU-Text omits *through Jesus Christ.*

3:14[a] NU-Text omits *of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

4:6[a] NU-Text omits *you;* M-Text reads *us.*

4:9[a] NU-Text omits *first*.

4:17[a] NU-Text omits *the rest of*.

5:5[a] NU-Text reads *For know this.*

5:9[a] NU-Text reads *light.*

5:21[a] NU-Text reads *Christ*.

6:9[a] NU-Text reads *He who is both their Master and yours*.

6:12[a] NU-Text reads *rulers of this darkness*.

1:1[a] Literally *overseers*

1:23[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *But*.

1:28[a] NU-Text reads *of your salvation.*

[3:3a] NU-Text and M-Text read *who worship in the Spirit of God.*

3:16[a] NU-Text omits *rule* and the rest of the verse.

4:3[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Yes*.

4:13[a] NU-Text reads *Him who.*

4:23[a] NU-Text reads *your spirit*.

1:2[a] NU-Text omits *and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

1:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *and growing*.

1:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *through His blood*.

1:27[a] M-Text reads *who*.

2:2[a] NU-Text omits *both of the Father and*.

2:7[a] NU-Text omits *in it.*

2:11[a] NU-Text omits *of the sins*.

2:18[a] NU-Text omits *not.*

2:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Therefore*.

3:24[a] NU-Text omits *for.*

4:8[a] NU-Text reads *you may know our circumstances and he may.*

4:12[a] NU-Text reads *fully assured*.

4:13[a] NU-Text reads *concern*.

4:15[a] NU-Text reads *Nympha* . . . *her house*.

1:17[a] NU-Text reads *to the only God*.

2:7[a] NU-Text omits *in Christ.*

3:1[a] Literally *overseer*

3:3[a] NU-Text omits *not greedy for money.*

3:16[a] NU-Text reads *Who*.

4:10[a] NU-Text reads *we labor and strive.*

4:12[a] NU-Text omits *in spirit*.

5:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *good and*.

5:16[a] NU-Text omits *man or.*

[6:5a] NU-Text and M-Text read *constant friction*.

6:7[a] NU-Text omits *and it is certain*.

1:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Christ Jesus*.

1:11[a] NU-Text omits *of the Gentiles*.

1:18[a] *To me* is from the Vulgate and a few Greek manuscripts.

2:3[a] NU-Text reads *You must share*.

2:7[a] NU-Text reads *the Lord will give you*.

2:19[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the Lord*.

4:1[a] NU-Text omits *therefore* and reads *and by* for *at*.

4:22[a] NU-Text omits *Jesus Christ*.

1:4[a] NU-Text reads *and Christ Jesus*.

1:7[a] Literally *overseer*

2:7[a] NU-Text omits *incorruptibility.*

2:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *us*.

1:2[a] NU-Text reads *to our sister Apphia*.

1:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *us*.

1:7[a] NU-Text reads *had.*

1:7[b] M-Text reads *thanksgiving*.

[1:12a] NU-Text reads *back to you in person, that is, my own heart.*

1:3[a] NU-Text omits *by Himself*.

1:3[b] NU-Text omits *our.*

3:6[a] NU-Text omits *firm to the end*.

4:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *profit them*, since they were not united by faith with those who heeded it.

6:3[a] M-Text reads *let us do.*

6:10[a] NU-Text omits *labor of*.

6:18[a] M-Text omits *might*.

7:14[a] NU-Text reads *priests*.

7:17[a] NU-Text reads *it is testified*.

8:12[a] NU-Text omits *and their lawless deeds.*

9:11[a] NU-Text reads *that have come*.

10:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *O God*.

10:30[b] NU-Text omits *says the Lord.*

10:34[a] NU-Text reads *the prisoners* instead of *me in my chains*.

10:34[b] NU-Text omits *in heaven*.

10:38[a] NU-Text reads *My just one*.

11:11[a] NU-Text omits *she bore a child*.

11:13[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *were assured of them.*

11:26[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *of*.

11:37[a] NU-Text omits *were tempted*.

12:7[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *It is for discipline that you endure; God* . . . .

12:18[a] NU-Text reads *to that which.*

12:18[b] NU-Text reads *gloom*.

12:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of this verse.

12:26[a] NU-Text reads *will shake*.

12:28[a] M-Text omits *may*.

13:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *away*.

13:21[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *us*.

1:19[a] NU-Text reads *Know this* or *This you know.*

1:26[a] NU-Text omits *among you*.

2:18[a] NU-Text omits *your*.

2:18[b] NU-Text omits *my*.

2:20[a] NU-Text reads *useless*.

3:3[a] NU-Text reads *Now if*.

3:12[a] NU-Text reads *Neither can a salty spring produce fresh water.*

4:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Yet*.

4:4[a] NU-Text omits *Adulterers and*.

4:12[a] NU-Text adds *and Judge*.

4:12[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *But who*.

4:12[c] NU-Text reads *a neighbor.*

4:13[a] M-Text reads *let us*.

5:4[a] Literally, in Hebrew, *Hosts*

5:5[a] NU-Text omits *as*.

5:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *judged*.

5:12[a] M-Text reads *hypocrisy*.

5:16[a] NU-Text reads *Therefore confess your sins.*

5:20[a] NU-Text reads *his soul*.

1:8[a] M-Text reads *known*.

1:12[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *you*.

[1:22a] NU-Text omits *through the Spirit*.

1:23[a] NU-Text omits *forever.*

1:24[a] NU-Text reads *all its glory.*

2:2[a] NU-Text adds *up to salvation*.

2:7[a] NU-Text reads *to those who disbelieve.*

2:21[a] NU-Text reads *you*.

2:21[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *you*.

3:8[a] NU-Text reads *humble*.

3:15[a] NU-Text reads *Christ as Lord*.

3:18[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *you*.

3:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *when the longsuffering of God waited patiently.*

4:1[a] NU-Text omits *for us*.

4:3[a] NU-Text reads *time*.

4:14[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

.:1Pet.4:16"[a] NU-Text reads *name.*

5:2[a] NU-Text adds *according to God.*

5:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *because*.

5:10[a] NU-Text reads *But the God of all grace . . . will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

5:10[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *you*.

1:19[a] Or *We also have the more sure prophetic word.*

1:20[a] Or *origin*

1:21[a] NU-Text reads *but men spoke from God.*

2:3[a] M-Text reads *will not*.

2:17[a] NU-Text reads *and mists*.

2:17[b] NU-Text omits *forever.*

2:18[a] NU-Text reads *are barely escaping*.

3:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *commandment of the apostles of your Lord and Savior* or *commandment of your apostles of the Lord and Savior.*

3:9[a] NU-Text reads *you*.

3:10[a] NU-Text reads *laid bare* (literally *found*).

1:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *our.*

2:7[a] NU-Text reads *Beloved.*

2:7[b] NU-Text omits *from the beginning*.

2:18[a] NU-Text omits *the.*

2:20[a] NU-Text reads *you all know.*

2:27[a] NU-Text reads *you abide*.

2:28[a] NU-Text reads *if*.

3:1[a] NU-Text adds *And we are*.

3:1[b] M-Text reads *you*.

3:14[a] NU-Text omits *his brother.*

3:19[a] NU-Text reads *we shall know.*

3:23[a] M-Text omits *us*.

4:3[a] NU-Text omits *that* and *Christ has come in the flesh*.

4:19[a] NU-Text omits *Him*.

4:20[a] NU-Text reads *he cannot.*

5:4[a] M-Text reads *your.*

5:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit the words from *in heaven* (verse 7) through *on earth* (verse 8). Only four or five very late manuscripts contain these words in Greek.

5:9[a] NU-Text reads *God, that.*

5:18[a] NU-Text reads *him*.

1:3[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *us*.

1:8[a] NU-Text reads *you*.

1:8[b] NU-Text reads *you.*

1:9[a] NU-Text reads *goes ahead.*

1:4[a] NU-Text reads *the truth.*

1:5[a] NU-Text adds *especially*.

1:8[a] NU-Text reads *support.*

1:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *but*.

1:1[a] NU-Text reads *beloved*.

1:4[a] NU-Text omits *God.*

1:12[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *along*.

1:22[a] NU-Text reads *who are doubting* (or *making distinctions*).

1:23[a] NU-Text adds *and on some have mercy with fear* and omits *with fear* in first clause.

1:24[a] M-Text reads *them*.

1:25[a] NU-Text reads *To the only God our Savior.*

1:25[b] NU-Text omits *Who . . . is wise* and adds *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1:25[c] NU-Text adds *Before all time*.

1:5[a] NU-Text reads *loves us and freed;* M-Text reads *loves us and washed.*

1:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *a kingdom*.

1:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *the Beginning and the End.*

1:8[b] NU-Text and M-Text add *God*.

1:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *both*.

1:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *I am* through third *and*.

1:11[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *which are in Asia*.

1:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*.

1:19[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Therefore, write*.

1:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *which you saw.*

2:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *likewise* for *which thing I hate*.

2:19[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *faith, service*.

2:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *I have against you that you tolerate*.

2:20[b] M-Text reads *your wife Jezebel*.

2:20[c] NU-Text and M-Text read *and teaches and seduces*.

2:21[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality.*

2:22[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *her.*

2:24[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *and*.

2:24[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *will*.

3:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *My God*.

3:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Nevertheless you have a few names in Sardis.*

3:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *which no one can shut.*

3:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Behold*.

3:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *in Laodicea*.

3:16[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *hot nor cold.*

4:3[a] M-Text omits *And He who sat there was* (which makes the description in verse 3 modify the throne rather than God).

4:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *robes, with crowns*.

4:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *voices, and thunderings.*

4:5[b] M-Text omits *the*.

4:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *something like*.

4:8[a] M-Text has *holy* nine times.

4:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *our Lord and God*.

4:11[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *existed*.

5:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *and read*.

5:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to loose*.

5:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *I saw in the midst* . . . *a Lamb standing.*

5:10[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *them*.

5:10[b] NU-Text reads *a kingdom.*

5:10[c] NU-Text and M-Text read *they*.

5:13[a] M-Text adds *Amen*.

5:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *twenty-four.*

5:14[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him who lives forever and ever.*

6:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *seven seals*.

6:3[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *and see*.

6:12[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *behold*.

6:12[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *the whole moon*.

6:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the commanders, the rich men.*

7:5[a] In NU-Text and M-Text *were sealed* is stated only in verses 5a and 8c; the words are understood in the remainder of the passage.

7:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *My lord*.

7:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *to fountains of the waters of life.*

8:7[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *and a third of the earth was burned up.*

8:13[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *eagle*.

9:19[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the power of the horses.*

9:21[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *drugs*.

10:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *sounded*.

10:4[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*.

10:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *right hand.*

10:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *they*.

11:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *And the angel stood*.

11:4[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Lord.*

11:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *their.*

11:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *nations see* . . . *and will not allow.*

11:12[a] M-Text reads *I*.

11:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *kingdom* . . . *has become.*

11:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *and who is to come.*

11:19[a] M-Text reads *the covenant of the Lord*.

12:8[a] M-Text reads *him.*

12:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *Christ*.

13:1[a] NU-Text reads *he*.

13:1[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *ten horns and seven heads*.

13:5[a] M-Text reads *make war.*

13:7[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *and people*.

13:14[a] M-Text reads *my own people*.

13:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *or*.

14:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the*.

14:1[b] NU-Text and M-Text add *His name and*.

[14:4a] M-Text adds *by Jesus*.

14:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *falsehood.*

14:5[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *before the throne of God.*

14:8[a] NU-Text reads *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, which has made*; M-Text reads *Babylon the great is fallen. She has made.*

14:12[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *here are those.*

14:13[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.*

14:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *for You*.

15:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *over his mark*.

15:3[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *nations*.

15:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *behold*.

16:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *seven bowls*.

16:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *O Lord*.

16:5[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *who was, the Holy One.*

16:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.*

16:7[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *another from*.

16:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *of the earth and*.

16:16[a] M-Text reads *Megiddo*.

17:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*.

17:4[a] M-Text reads *the filthiness of the fornication of the earth.*

17:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *and shall be present*.

17:16[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *saw, and the beast.*

18:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *mightily.*

18:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *have been heaped up*.

18:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you*.

18:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *has judged*.

18:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *been lost to you*.

18:20[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *saints and apostles*.

19:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *something like*.

19:1[b] NU-Text and M-Text omit *the Lord*.

19:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *both*.

19:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *our*.

19:12[a] M-Text adds *names written, and.*

19:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *pure white linen.*

19:15[a] M-Text adds *two-edged*.

19:17[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the great supper of God*.

19:18[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *both free*.

20:4[a] M-Text reads *the*.

20:10[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *also*.

20:12[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the throne*.

20:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text add *the lake of fire*.

21:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *John*.

21:5[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*.

21:6[a] M-Text omits *It is done*.

21:7[a] M-Text reads *overcomes, I shall give him these things*.

21:8[a] M-Text adds *and sinners*.

21:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*.

21:9[b] M-Text reads *I will show you the woman, the Lamb's bride*.

21:10[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *the great* and read *the holy city, Jerusalem.*

21:14[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *twelve names*.

21:23[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *in it.*

21:23[b] M-Text reads *the very glory.*

21:24[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *of those who are saved*.

21:24[b] M-Text reads *the glory and honor of the nations to Him.*

21:26[a] M-Text adds *that they may enter in.*

21:27[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *anything profane, nor one who causes.*

22:1[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *pure*.

22:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *spirits of the prophets*.

22:8[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *am the one who heard and saw.*

22:9[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.*

22:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *do right*.

22:13[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

22:14[a] NU-Text reads *wash their robes.*

22:15[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *But*.

22:18[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.*

22:18[b] M-Text reads *may God add.*

22:19[a] M-Text reads *may God take away.*

22:19[b] NU-Text and M-Text read *tree of life*.

22:21[a] NU-Text reads *with all;* M-Text reads *with all the saints.*

1:1[a] NU-Text omits *from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2:2[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit *even*.

2:11[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *implored*.

4:8[a] NU-Text reads *who also gives.*

4:14[a] Or *those who through Jesus sleep*

5:27[a] NU-Text omits *holy*.

1:10[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *have believed.*

2:2[a] NU-Text reads *the Lord*.

2:3[a] NU-Text reads *lawlessness*.

2:4[a] NU-Text omits *as God*.

2:7[a] Or *he*

2:7[b] Or *he*

3:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text read *they*.

16:22[a] Greek *anathema*

16:22[b] Aramaic *Maranatha*

.:1Pet.2:25"[a] Greek *Episkopos*

6:6[a] Greek *choinix;* that is, approximately one quart

1:6[a] Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Greek.

1:23[a] Isaiah 7:14. Words in oblique type in the New Testament are quoted from the Old Testament.

2:6[a] Micah 5:2

2:15[a] Hosea 11:1

2:18[a] Jeremiah 31:15

3:3[a] Isaiah 40:3

4:4[a] Deuteronomy 8:3

4:6[a] Psalm 91:11, 12

4:7[a] Deuteronomy 6:16

4:10[b] Deuteronomy 6:13

4:16[a] Isaiah 9:1, 2

5:21[a] Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17

5:27[b] Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18

5:38[a] Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21

5:43[a] Compare Leviticus 19:18

8:17[a] Isaiah 53:4

9:13[a] Hosea 6:6

10:36[a] Micah 7:6

11:10[a] Malachi 3:1

12:7[a] Hosea 6:6

12:21[a] Isaiah 42:1–4

13:15[b] Isaiah 6:9, 10

13:35[a] Psalm 78:2

15:4[a] Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16

15:4[b] Exodus 21:17

15:9[a] Isaiah 29:13

17:21[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

18:11[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

18:16[a] Deuteronomy 19:15

19:4[b] Genesis 1:27; 5:2

19:5[a] Genesis 2:24

19:19[a] Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20

19:19[b] Leviticus 19:18

20:7[a] NU-Text omits the last clause of this verse.

20:16[a] NU-Text omits the last sentence of this verse.

21:5[a] Zechariah 9:9

21:9[a] Psalm 118:26

21:13[a] Isaiah 56:7

21:13[b] Jeremiah 7:11

21:16[a] Psalm 8:2

21:42[a] Psalm 118:22, 23

22:32[a] Exodus 3:6, 15

22:37[a] Deuteronomy 6:5

22:39[a] Leviticus 19:18

22:44[a] Psalm 110:1

23:14[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

23:39[a] Psalm 118:26

24:15[a] Daniel 11:31; 12:11

25:13[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

26:31[a] Zechariah 13:7

27:10[a] Jeremiah 32:6–9

27:35[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of this verse.

[27:35b] Psalm 22:18

27:46[a] Psalm 22:1

28:9[a] NU-Text omits the first clause of this verse.

1:2[b] Malachi 3:1

1:3[a] Isaiah 40:3

4:12[a] Isaiah 6:9, 10

6:11[b] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

7:7[a] Isaiah 29:13

7:8[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

7:10[a] Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16

7:10[b] Exodus 21:17

7:16[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

9:44[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

9:46[a] NU-Text omits the last clause of verse 45 and all of verse 46.

9:48[a] Isaiah 66:24

9:49[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

10:6[a] Genesis 1:27; 5:2

10:8[a] Genesis 2:24

10:19[a] Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20

11:9[a] Psalm 118:26

11:17[a] Isaiah 56:7

11:17[b] Jeremiah 7:11

11:26[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

12:11[a] Psalm 118:22, 23

12:26[a] Exodus 3:6, 15

12:30[a] Deuteronomy 6:4, 5

12:30[b] NU-Text omits this sentence.

12:31[a] Leviticus 19:18

12:36[a] Psalm 110:1

13:14[a] Daniel 11:31; 12:11

14:19[a] NU-Text omits this sentence.

14:27[b] Zechariah 13:7

15:28[a] Isaiah 53:12

15:28[b] NU-Text omits this verse.

[a] **15:34** Psalm 22:1

16:20[a] Verses 9–20 are bracketed in NU-Text as not original. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other manuscripts of Mark contain them.

1:17[a] Malachi 4:5, 6

2:23[a] Exodus 13:2, 12, 15

2:24[a] Leviticus 12:8

3:6[a] Isaiah 40:3–5

3:24[a] This and several other names in the genealogy are spelled somewhat differently in the NU-Text. Since the New King James Version uses the Old Testament spelling for persons mentioned in the New Testament, these variations, which come from the Greek, have not been footnoted.

4:4[a] Deuteronomy 8:3

4:8[c] Deuteronomy 6:13

4:11[a] Psalm 91:11, 12

4:12[a] Deuteronomy 6:16

[a] **4:19** Isaiah 61:1, 2

7:27[a] Malachi 3:1

8:10[a] Isaiah 6:9

9:55[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

9:56[a] NU-Text omits the first sentence of this verse.

10:27[a] Deuteronomy 6:5

10:27[b] Leviticus 19:18

11:2[b] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

13:35[b] Psalm 118:26

17:36[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit verse 36.

18:20[a] Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20

19:38[a] Psalm 118:26

19:46[b] Isaiah 56:7

19:46[c] Jeremiah 7:11

[a] **20:17** Psalm 118:22

20:30[a] NU-Text ends verse 30 here.

20:37[a] Exodus 3:6, 15

20:43[a] Psalm 110:1

22:37[a] Isaiah 53:12

22:44[a] NU-Text brackets verses 43 and 44 as not in the original text.

23:17[a] NU-Text omits verse 17.

23:30[a] Hosea 10:8

23:34[a] NU-Text brackets the first sentence as a later addition.

23:46[a] Psalm 31:5

24:40[a] Some printed New Testaments omit this verse. It is found in nearly all Greek manuscripts.

1:11[a] That is, His own things or domain

1:11[b] That is, His own people

1:23[a] Isaiah 40:3

2:17[b] Psalm 69:9

6:31[a] Exodus 16:4; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalm 78:24

6:45[a] Isaiah 54:13

7:1[a] That is, the ruling authorities

7:39[b] NU-Text omits Holy.

8:59[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

10:34[a] Psalm 82:6

12:5[a] About one year's wages for a worker

12:13[a] Psalm 118:26

12:15[a] Zechariah 9:9

12:38[a] Isaiah 53:1

12:40[a] Isaiah 6:10

13:18[b] Psalm 41:9

15:25[a] Psalm 69:4

19:24[a] Psalm 22:18

19:36[a] Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20

19:37[a] Zechariah 12:10

1:20[a] Psalm 69:25

1:20[b] Psalm 109:8

2:21[a] Joel 2:28–32

2:28[a] Psalm 16:8–11

2:35[a] Psalm 110:1

3:23[a] Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19

3:25[a] Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

[a] **4:11** Psalm 118:22

4:26[a] Psalm 2:1, 2

6:1[a] That is, Greek-speaking Jews

7:3[a] Genesis 12:1

7:7[a] Genesis 15:14

7:7[b] Exodus 3:12

7:28[a] Exodus 2:14

7:32[a] Exodus 3:6, 15

7:34[a] Exodus 3:5, 7, 8, 10

7:35[a] Exodus 2:14

7:37[a] Deuteronomy 18:15

7:40[a] Exodus 32:1, 23

7:43[a] Amos 5:25–27

7:50[a] Isaiah 66:1, 2

8:33[a] Isaiah 53:7, 8

8:37[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit this verse. It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition.

10:6[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit the last sentence of this verse.

10:32[a] NU-Text omits the last sentence of this verse.

13:22[a] Psalm 89:20

[b] **13:22** 1 Samuel 13:14

13:33[a] Psalm 2:7

13:34[a] Isaiah 55:3

13:35[a] Psalm 16:10

13:41[a] Habakkuk 1:5

13:47[a] Isaiah 49:6

15:17[a] Amos 9:11, 12

15:34[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit this verse.

24:6[a] NU-Text ends the sentence here and omits the rest of verse 6, all of verse 7, and the first clause of verse 8.

28:19[a] That is, the ruling authorities

28:27[a] Isaiah 6:9, 10

28:29[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

1:17[a] Habakkuk 2:4

2:6[a] Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12

2:24[a] Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:22

3:4[a] Psalm 51:4

3:12[a] Psalms 14:1–3; 53:1–3; Ecclesiastes 7:20

3:13[a] Psalm 5:9

3:13[b] Psalm 140:3

3:14[a] Psalm 10:7

3:17[a] Isaiah 59:7, 8

3:18[a] Psalm 36:1

4:3[a] Genesis 15:6

4:8[a] Psalm 32:1, 2

4:17[a] Genesis 17:5

4:18[a] Genesis 15:5

4:22[a] Genesis 15:6

7:7[a] Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21

8:1[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

8:36[a] Psalm 44:22

9:7[a] Genesis 21:12

9:9[a] Genesis 18:10, 14

9:12[a] Genesis 25:23

9:13[a] Malachi 1:2, 3

9:15[a] Exodus 33:19

9:17[a] Exodus 9:16

9:25[a] Hosea 2:23

9:26[a] Hosea 1:10

9:27[a] Isaiah 10:22, 23

9:29[b] Isaiah 1:9

9:33[a] Isaiah 8:14; 28:16

10:5[a] Leviticus 18:5

10:6[a] Deuteronomy 30:12

10:7[a] Deuteronomy 30:13

10:8[a] Deuteronomy 30:14

10:11[a] Isaiah 28:16

10:13[a] Joel 2:32

10:15[b] Isaiah 52:7; Nahum 1:15

10:16[a] Isaiah 53:1

10:18[a] Psalm 19:4

10:19[a] Deuteronomy 32:21

10:20[a] Isaiah 65:1

10:21[a] Isaiah 65:2

11:3[a] 1 Kings 19:10, 14

11:4[a] 1 Kings 19:18

11:6[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

11:8[a] Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10

11:10[a] Psalm 69:22, 23

11:27[a] Isaiah 59:20, 21

11:34[a] Isaiah 40:13; Jeremiah 23:18

11:35[a] Job 41:11

12:19[a] Deuteronomy 32:35

12:20[a] Proverbs 25:21, 22

13:9[b] Exodus 20:13–15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17–19, 21

13:9[c] Leviticus 19:18

14:6[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this sentence.

14:11[a] Isaiah 45:23

14:23[a] M-Text puts Romans 16:25–27 here.

15:3[a] Psalm 69:9

15:9[a] 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49

15:10[a] Deuteronomy 32:43

15:11[a] Psalm 117:1

15:12[a] Isaiah 11:10

15:21[a] Isaiah 52:15

16:24[a] NU-Text omits this verse.

16:27[a] M-Text puts Romans 16:25–27 after Romans 14:23.

1:19[a] Isaiah 29:14

1:31[a] Jeremiah 9:24

2:9[a] Isaiah 64:4

2:16[a] Isaiah 40:13

3:19[a] Job 5:13

3:20[a] Psalm 94:11

5:13[a] Deuteronomy 17:7; 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7

6:9[a] That is, catamites

6:16[a] Genesis 2:24

9:9[a] Deuteronomy 25:4

10:7[a] Exodus 32:6

10:26[a] Psalm 24:1

10:28[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

10:28[b] Psalm 24:1

14:21[a] Isaiah 28:11, 12

15:27[a] Psalm 8:6

15:32[a] Isaiah 22:13

15:45[a] Genesis 2:7

15:54[a] Isaiah 25:8

15:55[a] Hosea 13:14

4:13[a] Psalm 116:10

6:2[a] Isaiah 49:8

6:16[b] Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27

6:17[a] Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34, 41

6:18[a] 2 Samuel 7:14

8:15[a] Exodus 16:18

9:9[a] Psalm 112:9

10:17[a] Jeremiah 9:24

13:1[a] Deuteronomy 19:15

2:14[b] Some interpreters stop the quotation here.

3:6[a] Genesis 15:6

3:8[a] Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

3:10[a] Deuteronomy 27:26

3:11[a] Habakkuk 2:4

3:12[a] Leviticus 18:5

3:13[a] Deuteronomy 21:23

3:16[a] Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7

4:27[a] Isaiah 54:1

4:30[a] Genesis 21:10

5:14[a] Leviticus 19:18

4:8[a] Psalm 68:18

4:25[a] Zechariah 8:16

4:26[a] Psalm 4:4

5:30[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

5:31[a] Genesis 2:24

6:3[a] Deuteronomy 5:16

1:16[a] NU-Text reverses the contents of verses 16 and 17.

5:18[a] Deuteronomy 25:4

5:18[b] Luke 10:7

6:5[b] NU-Text omits this sentence.

1:5[a] Psalm 2:7

1:5[b] 2 Samuel 7:14

1:6[a] Deuteronomy 32:43 (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scrolls); Psalm 97:7

1:7[a] Psalm 104:4

1:9[a] Psalm 45:6, 7

1:12[a] Psalm 102:25–27

22:44[a] Psalm 110:1

2:7[a] NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of verse 7.

2:8[a] Psalm 8:4–6

2:12[a] Psalm 22:22

2:13[a] 2 Samuel 22:3; Isaiah 8:17

2:13[b] Isaiah 8:18

3:11[a] Psalm 95:7–11

3:15[a] Psalm 95:7, 8

4:3[a] Psalm 95:11

4:4[a] Genesis 2:2

4:5[a] Psalm 95:11

4:7[a] Psalm 95:7, 8

5:5[a] Psalm 2:7

5:6[a] Psalm 110:4

6:14[a] Genesis 22:17

7:17[b] Psalm 110:4

7:21[a] NU-Text ends the quotation here.

[**7:21**[b]](#) [Psalm 110:4](#)

8:5[a] Exodus 25:40

8:12[b] Jeremiah 31:31–34

9:20[a] Exodus 24:8

10:7[a] Psalm 40:6–8

10:16[a] Jeremiah 31:33

10:17[a] Jeremiah 31:34

10:30[a] Deuteronomy 32:35

10:30[c] Deuteronomy 32:36

10:38[b] Habakkuk 2:3, 4

11:5[a] Genesis 5:24

11:18[a] Genesis 21:12

12:6[a] Proverbs 3:11, 12

12:20[b] Exodus 19:12, 13

12:21[a] Deuteronomy 9:19

12:26[b] Haggai 2:6

13:5[a] Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:5

13:6[a] Psalm 118:6

2:8[a] Leviticus 19:18

2:11[a] Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18

2:11[b] Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17

2:23[a] Genesis 15:6

4:6[a] Proverbs 3:34

1:16[a] Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7

1:25[a] Isaiah 40:6–8

2:6[a] Isaiah 28:16

2:7[b] Psalm 118:22

2:8[a] Isaiah 8:14

2:22[a] Isaiah 53:9

3:12[a] Psalm 34:12–16

3:14[a] Isaiah 8:12

4:8[a] Proverbs 10:12

4:18[a] Proverbs 11:31

5:5[a] Proverbs 3:34

2:22[a] Proverbs 26:11

5:13[a] NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

2:27[a] Psalm 2:9

3:7[a] Isaiah 22:22

7:3 See note at 4:21.

7:14 See note at 4:21.

7:22 See note at 4:21.

9:7 Ex 9:7, 12, 34, 35: See note at 4:21.

11:10 See note at 4:21.

14:4 Ex 14:4, 8, 17: See note at 4:21.

9:22 The **Burning**, the **Temptation**, and the **Graves of Lust** are recorded respectively in Nm 11:1–3; Ex 17:1–7; and Nm 11:4–34. See notes at these places.

2:11 The virtue of abandoning one's former life for the sake of the Lord is a prominent and recurring theme. See note on 1:14, 15.

14:1, 2 Hiram king of Tyre is the first foreign ruler to support David rather than fight him. He may be seen as prefiguring the Gentile believers who will help **build . . . a house**. (See note at 3Kg 5:29.)

18:4-34 See note on 3Kg 22:10.

20:35-37 The **ships** were **wrecked**: See note on 19:1–3.

22:5 **Hazael**: See note on 4Kg 8:12–19.

22:7-9 **Jehu**: See note on 4Kg 9:1–3.

8:31 **He delivered us**: See note on 8:21–23.

3:33-35 A **fox** could destroy the **wall**: As critics of God's work are prone to do, they use ridicule in an effort to distract. (See note on 2:19, 20.)

8:5 See note for 3:11.

14:6 **The Gentiles**: See note at 13:3.

8:9 **According to their own language**: See note at 1:22.

8:12m **Our deliverer and constant benefactor:** See note at 4:1–3.

8:15 **Royal raiment:** See note at 6:6–9.

5:42 **A Phalaris:** See note on 5:20. The **firm oath** is undoubtedly to Dionysus, the patron of Alexandria at that time. **Hades** is the abode of the dead, not hell in the Christian understanding of a place of torment for sinners.

8:3 See note at 2:6.

8:4 See note at 2:7.

4:6 See note at 3:10–12.

49:10 See notes for 46:12 and 48:11 on the doctrine of the resurrection. **Their place** is their burial place.

3:1-5 The Apostle Peter quoted this prophecy on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17–21; see Jn 20:22), when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Christian believers, fulfilling the prophecy. Although this section forms a separate chapter, this passage should be understood as the culmination of the longer preceding prophecy. See note on 2:22–32.

4:15 Changes in the sky are a result of the war between God and his enemies. See note on 2:30, 31.

23:7, 8 See note on 16:15.

26:10 **Gilead/balm**: See note on 8:20.

27:16 See note on 26:16.

28:7 See note on 27:25.

35:3 **Vessels**: See note on 34:14.

39:39, 40 See note on 38:33.

1:14 See note on Bar 4:7. See also Jer 10:3–5.

1:25 The use of the word **till** does not imply that Joseph had marital relations with Mary after the Savior's birth. In the Bible, this word (sometimes translated “to”) is often used to express a situation that actually continues after the event mentioned (see 28:20; Gn 8:7; Dt 34:6; 2Kg 6:23). The witness of the entire Church throughout history is that Mary remained a virgin for life. **Firstborn**: See note on Lk 2:7.

2:1 **Herod**: See note on Lk 1:5. The **wise men**, or magi, who come **from the East** (most likely Persia), were the scholars of their time. In the OT, Balaam (Nm 23; 24) was one of their predecessors, a Gentile who anticipated the Messiah. These foreigners prefigure the Church, in which membership is determined by faith and not by ethnic lineage.

3:10 See note at 3:8. **Fire** here refers to divine judgment (see Is 33:11; 66:24; Ezk 38:22; 39:6; 2Th 1:6–9). See also fire in v. 11.

4:17 Christ's first word, like that of John the Baptist, is “**Repent**.” (See note on 3:1–3.) The **kingdom of heaven** is present wherever Christ is.

5:20 **Righteousness** that leads to salvation must **exceed** that of the Pharisees because theirs was an outward, works-based righteousness. The righteousness of salvation is the communion of the heart, soul, mind, and body in Jesus Christ. (See notes on Rom 1:17; 3:26.)

5:29 This imagery is not to be taken literally, but refers to decisive action to avoid sin and to continue in purity. (See note for 18:8.)

7:24-27 See note on Lk 6:46–49.

10:35-39 See note at Lk 12:53. To carry **his cross**, a true disciple must be ready, if necessary, to sacrifice even family relationships.

12:34 **Brood of vipers**: See note on 3:7. *Brood* means “offspring.”

12:38 After so many signs, the **Pharisees** show their wickedness by demanding yet another. Jesus does not cater to those who demand a sign out of wicked intent. The only sign to them will be His Passion and Resurrection. (See note at Lk 23:8, 9.)

13:13-15 See note at Jn 12:40.

13:36-43 See note on vv. 24–30.

13:54-58 See note at Lk 4:22–27.

13:55 **Brothers**: See note at 12:46–50.

14:1-12 See note at Mk 6:17–29. The Beheading of St. **John the Baptist** is remembered in the Church on August 29 with a day of fasting. As part of God's plan of salvation, John's martyrdom allowed the coming of the Messiah to be announced to the souls in Hades, for John was the forerunner of Christ there as well as on earth. At Matins on this day we sing, “Your tongue which constantly speaks of God has preceded Christ into death, and is sent to preach Him to those in Hades.”

St. John is further remembered for his obedience to the Law in general, and as a defender of marriage in particular, in condemning Herod's unlawful marriage to his brother's wife (vv. 3, 4). St. John's obedience to God was one that preferred death over compromise. At Vespers on this day, we sing, “When your head was cut off, you revealed to us the Law of God, abolishing man's disobedience to the Law.”

16:4 **Adulterous generation**: See note on 12:39. Jesus refuses to prove Himself in a spectacular way, for **a sign** is never given to those whose motive is to test God. See also 4:5–7. **The sign of the prophet Jonah** is a veiled prediction of Christ's death and Resurrection (12:40), the ultimate sign that Jesus is the Christ.

18:10 **Little ones**: See note for v. 6. **Angels**: St. John Chrysostom teaches that not only the saints, but all people have guardian angels. However, the angels of humble people have greater boldness and greater honor before **the face** of God because of the humility of the person they guard. It is not the nature of God, but the weakness of men, that requires the angels' service.

19:3-9 The basis of the **Pharisees'** test is Dt 24:1–4. God's condescension, or allowance for human weakness, does not override the original principle of permanent monogamous marriage as revealed in Gn 1; 2. With authority, Christ adds His own clear prohibition against **divorce** in vv. 6 and 9. (See note at 5:31, 32; Mal 2:15, 16.)

19:9 The permissible reasons for divorce were expanded in the ancient Church to include threat to a spouse's or child's life and desertion, in all cases acknowledging the spiritual tragedy of such a situation. See note at 5:31, 32.

19:13-15 The disciples rebuked the mothers for bringing **little children** to Christ both because their manner was “unruly” and because they thought children “diminished His dignity as Teacher and Master” (Theoph). Christ rejects this thinking, setting little children as an example of those who inherit the **kingdom of heaven**. Therefore, children are invited (even as an example to adults) to participate in the Kingdom through prayer, worship, baptism, chrismation, and Communion. See note at Lk 18:15–17.

19:28 **Judging**: See note at Lk 22:30.

20:24-28 See note at Lk 22:24–27. **For many** (v. 28) is an Aramaic expression meaning “for all.”

21:33-43 See note at Lk 20:9–16.

21:41 Again, the Jewish leaders convict themselves. See note for 21:31.

22:14 **For many**: See note at 20:24–28.

22:15-22 See note at Lk 20:20–26. The distinction between **things that are Caesar's** and **things that are God's** does not imply the division of a believer's life into the secular and the sacred. Rather, God is Lord over all of life, including the secular. We do, however, fulfill governmental requirements that do not conflict with our first responsibility to God (Rom 13:1–7; contrast Acts 4:19; 5:29). Paying taxes and similar civil duties are not detrimental to holiness.

23:35 **Zechariah**: See note at Lk 11:51.

24:19 See note at Lk 23:29.

24:28 See note at Lk 17:37.

26:26-28 Jesus institutes the Eucharist, the long-awaited messianic banquet, to which He admits even Judas (compare Est 7), seeking by all means to save Him. Because of his wicked heart, Judas' participation leads to his condemnation (1Co 11:27–30).

Christ's words are repeated in the Divine Liturgy, inviting the faithful to receive His **body** and **blood**. In Holy Communion, we are truly united to Christ. (See note at Lk 22:19, 20.) He **gave thanks** (from the Greek word for “eucharist”) to teach us (1) how we are to celebrate this sacrament, (2) that He comes willingly to His Passion, and (3) to accept sufferings with thankfulness, knowing that God can use sufferings for ultimate good.

The Old Covenant was sealed with the blood of bulls and goats. The New is sealed by the gift of Christ, who **shed** His own blood to conquer sin and death and to reconcile us with God. Christ calls it the **blood of the new covenant**, which is God's promise and the fulfillment of the Law. By *new*, He means this covenant brings immortality and incorruptible life; this covenant will always have the quality of newness. **For many**: See note at 20:24–28.

26:69-75 See notes at Lk 22:56, 61.

27:17-26 See note at Lk 23:13–25.

1:1-8 See notes on Mt 3:1–12; Lk 3:1–18.

1:1 **Gospel** (lit. “good news” or “good tidings”) refers not to Mark's writings per se, but to the story of the life, death, and Resurrection of **Jesus Christ**, the good news of our salvation. **Beginning** points to the opening events of Christ's public ministry, namely the preparation by His forerunner, St. John the Baptist, and Christ's encounter with him.

1:9, 10 See notes at Mt 3:15–17 and Lk 3:21, 22.

1:13 See notes at Mt 4:1–10 and Lk 4:1–13.

1:34 **He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him**: See note at Mt 12:16–21.

1:21-39 See notes for Lk 4:31–43.

2:1-12 See note at Mt 9:2–8. Note that one purpose of Christ's coming into the world is to **forgive sins** (v. 10), freeing humanity from its bondage. Forgiving sins is a greater power than physical healing, for, as the scribes correctly note, **God alone** can forgive sins (v. 7). Thus, the **easier** task (v. 9) is to grant physical healing. Though Christ is fully God and holds the authority to forgive, He condescends to those gathered and heals this man in order to draw people to God, whom they **glorified**.

2:13-17 See note at Mt 9:9–13.

2:18-22 See note at Mt 9:14–17.

2:23-28 See note at Lk 6:1–5.

3:1-6 See note at Lk 6:7.

3:12 See note at Mt 12:16–21.

3:20-27 See note at Mt 12:22–30.

3:31-35 See note at Mt 12:46–50.

4:10-12 See note at Jn 12:40.

4:30-32 See note at Mt 13:31–33.

4:35-41 See notes at Mt 8:23–27 and Lk 8:22–25.

5:21-34 See notes at Mt 9:18–26.

6:1-3 This double response of being both **astonished** (v. 2) and **offended** (v. 3) occurs frequently with those who encounter Christ (Lk 11:14–16; Jn 9:16). Christ's rejection in **his own country** foreshadows His rejection by the whole Jewish nation at His trial before Pilate (Jn 19:14, 15). **Brother**: See note at Mt 12:46–50.

6:7-13 See notes at Mt 10:1–15.

6:37-44 See notes at Mt 14:14–21.

6:45-52 See note at Mt 14:27.

7:24-30 See notes at Mt 15:21–28.

8:1-9 See note at Mt 15:32–39.

8:11 See note at Mt 16:1–3.

8:27-30 See note at Mt 16:13–20.

8:31-33 See note at Mt 16:21–23.

8:34-38 See notes at Mt 16:24–26.

9:14-29 See notes at Mt 17:14–21.

9:33-37 See note at Mt 18:1–4.

9:38-40 See note at Lk 9:46–50.

9:43-48 See note at Mt 18:8.

9:49 Being **seasoned with fire** means being tested to see if one's faith and works are genuine (see 1Co 3:11–15). In saying **every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt**, Jesus is quoting Lv 2:13, in which salt stands for the remembrance of God's covenant with His people. See note at Mt 5:13–16.

10:2-12 See notes at Mt 5:31, 32, 19:3–9.

10:13-16 See note at Mt 19:13–15.

10:17-27 See notes at Mt 19:16–26.

10:28-30 See note at Mt 19:29.

10:35-40 See note at Mt 20:20–23.

11:1-11 See notes at Mt 21:1–11.

11:15-19 See note at Mt 21:12, 13.

11:23-25 See note at Mt 21:21.

11:26 See note at Mt 6:14, 15.

11:27-33 See Lk 7:29, 30. See note at Mt 21:23–27.

12:1-12 See note at Lk 20:9–16.

12:13-17 The **Herodians** were Jewish political supporters of the ruling house of Herod the Great and thus willing servants of Rome. See note at Mt 22:15–22.

12:18 The **Sadducees** represent landowners and other wealthy families in Jerusalem. They held many high offices in Israel, controlling the temple and the Sanhedrin. They differed from the Pharisees in that they were politically prudent and adapted to the presence of the Romans. The Sadducees interpreted the law even more rigidly than the Pharisees and, unlike them, rejected belief in angels and in the **resurrection** from the dead at the end of the age. The Sadducees completely disappeared after the destruction of Jerusalem. (See notes on Mt 22:23, 29).

12:28-31 In His response to **one of the scribes**, Jesus quotes Dt 6:4, 5, the greatest Jewish confession of faith, called the *shema'* (meaning “hear,” the first word of the confession). In v. 31, He quotes Lv 19:18, combining what is already present in the OT to create a new understanding: love of **neighbor** is an expression of love of **God**. See notes at Mt 22:35–40.

12:35-37 See note at Mt 22:41–46.

13:5-23 See notes at Mt 24:3–31. The account of the end times is given here in a reverse parallel (or *chiastic*) form, in which the topics mentioned in the first half of the passage are repeated and amplified in reverse order in the second half. Thus, the passage both begins and ends with a warning to **take heed** about false christs (vv. 5, 23). The second warning is about **wars** (v. 7), while the second-to-last warning is about **tribulation** (v. 19). The third warning concerns being delivered up **to councils** (v. 9), while the third-to-last warning is also about being delivered up, this time by family members (v. 12). At the center of this discourse is the prophecy that **the gospel must first be preached to all the nations** (v. 10), which is at the heart of the apostolic ministry and mission of the Church (Mt 28:19, 20).

14:3-9 See note at Mt 26:6–13.

14:12 **When they killed the Passover *lamb***: See note at Jn 19:14.

14:22-25 See note at Lk 22:19, 20.

14:32 **Gethsemane**, meaning “oil press,” is an orchard of olive trees at the foot of the Mount of Olives. See note at Jn 18:2.

14:43-45 **One of the twelve**: See note for v. 20. The fact that a **kiss** is needed to signal the mob is a commentary on those who comprised that mob. The Jewish leaders and even the most common people would have recognized Him. This shows these soldiers were mercenaries, dispatched by **the chief priests and the scribes and the elders**, a group which according to John's Gospel included Romans (Jn 18:3). Orthodox Christians pray at every Liturgy for the strength not to kiss Jesus in betrayal as did Judas.

14:47 See note at Mt 26:52–54.

14:66-72 See notes at Lk 22:56, 61.

15:6-11 **The chief priests stirred up the crowd** (v. 11): Pilate was hoping to release Jesus, a Man he knew to be innocent (vv. 10, 14; Jn 18:38; 19:4, 6). Thus, he turns to the crowd for support, hoping they will ask for Jesus in spite of the chief priests. **Barabbas**: See note at Mt 27:16.

15:16-20 See note at Mt 27:27–31.

15:26 **The inscription**: See note at Jn 19:19–22.

15:34 See note at Mt 27:46.

15:37 See note at Mt 27:50.

15:38 **Veil**: See note at Mt 27:51.

15:43-46 See note at Lk 23:50–53.

16:1 Because Christ died so close in time to **the Sabbath**, the burial customs of the Jews could not be completed. Therefore, these faithful women went as early as possible to complete the rites of burial. **Mary *the mother* of James**: See note at Lk 24:10. Many teach that **Salome** was the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John.

16:15 See note at Mt 28:19.

16:19 See note at Lk 24:51.

2:52 See note at 2:40.

3:1 See note at 1:5.

4:35 **Be quiet**: See note on Mt 12:16–21.

4:38 See note on Mt 8:14–17.

5:17-26 See note at Mt 9:2–8.

6:14-16 See note at Mt 10:1–4.

6:17-49 See the notes at Mt 5–7. This Sermon on the Plain (**level place**, v. 17) is similar in content to the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7), though not as extensive. Jesus repeated many of His teachings over a period of three years (see note at Jn 2:23).

8:19-21 See note at Mt 12:46–50. It was not Christ's will to deny **His mother and brothers**. Rather, Jesus is correcting both them and His hearers “to the right idea concerning Himself,” that the family of His Kingdom “is not by nature but by virtue” (JohnChr; see also 11:27, 28).

8:26-39 See note on Mt 8:28–34.

8:40-56 See note on Mt 9:18–26.

8:54 See note at 7:11–17.

9:1-5 See note at Mt 10:1–4.

9:46-50 **Little child**: See note on Mt 18:1–4. Theophylact sees John's comment as a regret, his conscience having been pricked by what Christ said about the **least** and the **great**. St. Ambrose, on the other hand, sees John as expecting full obedience to accompany such blessings. In either interpretation, Christ's response shows those acting in good faith are not excluded, even if they are not currently numbered among the disciples. “See how divine grace is at work even in those who are not His disciples” (Theoph; see also Nm 11:24–30). On those using Christ's name without good faith, see 11:23; Acts 19:13–16.

11:33 See note at Mt 5:13–16.

11:34-36 See note at Mt 6:22, 23.

11:39-52 See notes at Mt 23:13–24. **Woe**: A term indicating complete and devastating destruction (6:24–26; see Is 5:18–24; Am 5:18, 19; Rev 12:12).

12:22-31 See notes on Mt 6:25–33.

13:10-17 Healing on the **Sabbath**: See note at 6:7.

13:24 See note on Mt 7:13, 14.

14:1-6 **On the Sabbath**: See note at 6:7. Jesus' illustration builds on His words in 13:15.

14:27 See note on 9:23.

14:34 **Salt**: See note at Mt 5:13–16.

16:17 See note at Mt 5:18.

16:18 See note at Mt 5:31, 32.

17:4 See note at Mt 18:21–35.

17:12-14 See notes on 5:12, 14.

18:15-17 **Infants** are the standard of faith by which adults **receive the kingdom of God**, and not the other way around. “**A little child** is not arrogant, he does not despise anyone, he is innocent and guileless. He does not inflate himself in the presence of important people, nor withdraw from those in sorrows. Instead, he lives in complete simplicity” (Theoph). See note at Mt 19:13–15.

18:18-30 See notes at Mt 19:16–29.

18:22 See note at Mt 19:21.

18:35-43 See note at Mt 20:30.

19:11-27 See note at Mt 25:14–30.

19:28-40 See notes at Mt 21:1–11. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem marks the public acclamation of Jesus as Messiah. However, the crowd's understanding of the Messiah is flawed in that they are expecting a political leader, a king, whereas Christ comes to establish a Kingdom “not of this world” (Jn 18:36).

19:45 See note at Mt 21:12, 13.

20:27-40 See note at Mt 22:23–33.

20:45-47 See notes at Mt 23:1–39.

21:5-36 See notes at Mt 24:1–44.

22:7, 8 See note at v. 1. The term **Passover** (Gr. *Pascha*) can refer to the original event itself, the celebration of that event, the food that is eaten, or the lamb that is slain. According to the Fathers, **Peter** represents zeal and **John** represents spiritual understanding, the virtues with which we are to partake of the Lord's Supper.

23:45 **The veil of the temple was torn in two**: See note at Mt 27:51.

24:1 **The first *day* of the week** was the day after the Sabbath—Sunday—which in the Christian tradition is called the Lord's Day, the day of worship (Acts 20:7). **Spices**: See note at 23:55, 56.

24:46 See note for vv. 26, 27.

2:11 **Glory**: See note at 1:14.

2:13-17 See note on the cleansing of **the temple** at Mt 21:12, 13. In the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), this event occurs at the end of Christ's ministry, while John places it at the beginning. Certain Fathers teach Christ performed this act twice.

3:6 See note for 1:13.

6:2-14 The feeding of the multitude is the fourth of our Lord's signs reported by John (see note 2:1–11) and is recorded in all four Gospels. On the parallel between this sign and the story of Israel's Exodus, see note 6:1–71 above. The description of Christ as He **took the loaves**, gave **thanks** (Gr. *eucharisto*), and **distributed** them (v. 11) prefigures the celebration of the Eucharist. See notes at Mt 14:14–21.

6:26 See note on 6:14, 15.

6:38 **My own will**: Since Christ has two natures, He has two wills—the divine will and a human will. The Sixth Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople (AD 680–681), proclaims these two wills of Christ do not work contrary to one another, but rather “His human will follows, not resisting nor reluctant, but subject to His divinity and to His omnipotent will.” See notes at 1:14; 5:30.

6:51-59 The eucharistic significance of this passage is indisputable. Our Lord's declaration that He is Himself **the living bread** that gives life reveals the Mystical Supper of the NT Church. John never reports the details of the Last Supper (such as the “words of institution” recorded in Lk 22:19, 20); instead, he reveals the significance and truth of these events (events that were already known to his hearers) by reporting here Christ's own words. See notes at Mt 26:26–28 and Lk 22:19, 20.

6:60-66 Even **His disciples** took Christ's teaching on His Body and Blood as a **hard saying** (v. 60), and many **walked with Him no more** (v. 66). To this day, there are still those who reject Christ's own words concerning the sacramental eating of His Body and drinking of His Blood, and thus do not *walk* in His teaching. Because of the difficulty of grasping the depth of this Mystery, many attempt either to define its nature rationally or to explain away Christ's words altogether, giving them a purely metaphorical meaning. Either extreme is dubious; to reject this sacramental teaching is to reject the witness of the Scriptures and the unanimous teaching of the Church throughout history. See note at Lk 22:19, 20.

6:68, 69 See note at Mt 16:13–20 and Lk 9:20.

7:3 **Brothers**: See note at Mt 12:46–50.

7:23 **Sabbath**: See note at Mt 12:3–5.

8:13-18 **Your witness**: See note at 5:31–47.

8:54 See note for 5:31–47.

11:28 See note at v. 20.

12:27 See notes at Mt 26:39 and Lk 22:41–44.

13:23 See note at 18:15.

14:26 **Helper**: See note at 14:16. We have confidence in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) because **the Holy Spirit** is their Teacher; He brings to **remembrance** not only Christ's words, but also their meaning. We have confidence in the Church because the Holy Spirit is our Instructor as well from Pentecost until today, leading us into all truth (16:13). “Where the Church is, there is the Holy Spirit and the fullness of grace” (Iren).

15:12 See note on 13:34.

16:7 **Helper**: See note at 14:16.

20:13 **Woman**: See note at 2:3–5.

20:14 See note at Lk 24:16.

20:30 **Signs**: See note at 2:1–11.

21:4 See note at Lk 24:16.

1:1 **The former account** is the Gospel of Luke (see Lk 1:3). The Gospel covers over 30 years of Christ's earthly life; Acts covers over 30 years of early Church life. **Theophilus**: See note at Lk 1:3.

2:25-32 See notes at Ps 15.

3:6 **In the name**: See note at Jn 14:13, 14.

4:32-37 See note at 2:44, 45. The mandate for the Church is not communal living *per se*, but to be willing to do what is necessary for the good of the community. **Barnabas** (v. 36) is highlighted as an example of Christian generosity.

5:15 The power of God rests in His Church. While many people had great faith, **Peter** is given a particular grace to heal in order to draw people to the unity of the Church (see also Jn 14:12). Furthermore, this passage reveals how God works through physical creation, for even light and **shadow** are given divine power. See note at 19:11–19.

5:29 See note at 4:19.

10:9 The **sixth hour** is 12:00 noon, a traditional hour of liturgical prayer. See note at v. 3.

10:28 See note at 10:14, 15.

10:30 The ninth hour: See note at v. 3. **A man** . . . **in bright clothing** signifies an angel.

12:25 See note at v. 12.

13:5 **The synagogues** were the initial places of Christian preaching, for Christianity arose from Judaism, and the Jews had been prepared through the OT for the Christ. **John**: See note at 12:12.

13:13 **John**: See note at 12:12. His **departing from them** became the cause of great strife with Paul, and also between Paul and Barnabas (15:37–40). But God's work still flourishes.

13:16 **You who fear God**: See note at 10:2.

14:3 See note at 4:24–30.

15:36 See note at 14:22.

16:15 Again, faith leads immediately to baptism not only of the adults, but of the entire **household**, including children and servants. See note at 8:36–39.

18:1-5 See notes at 8:35; 16:14. These **Greeks** were “God-fearers,” those who accepted Judaism but had not yet fully converted.

18:19 Entered the synagogue: See note at 16:14.

19:5, 6 **Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**: See note at 8:16, 17. The laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit (chrismation) is a distinct sacrament from baptism, though always united to it. In the Church today, chrismation can be administered not only by the bishop, but also by presbyters who anoint with a special oil consecrated by the bishop.

20:5 **Us**: See note at 16:10.

21:8 **We**: See note at 16:10. This **Philip the evangelist** is one of the seven deacons whose selection was recorded in 6:5, not the apostle of the twelve.

24:25 **Reasoned**: See note at 17:2, 3. **Felix was afraid**: According to the historian Josephus, Felix had an adulterous marriage and was prone to accepting bribes (v. 26), and thus he responds negatively to Paul's teachings about **righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come**. Paul does not back off from proclaiming the truth, even though it means remaining in prison.

27:2 **We**: See note at 16:10.

28:23 See notes at 8:35; 13:17–41.

1:7 **Called *to be* saints** refers to the present time; it is not something limited to the future. In the NT, all who are true Christians are saints even while they live (see note at 16:1, 2; see also Eph 1:1; 3:8; Php 1:1; Col 1:2; 2Th 1:10; Jude 3). From among all the saints, meaning those "set apart to God," the Church canonizes or glorifies certain exemplary saints as having lived such dedicated and faithful lives that they are worthy for us to follow and imitate (1Co 11:1). See note at Acts 9:32.

3:9 See note for vv. 1, 2.

5:18 **One Man's righteous act** refers primarily to Christ's death and Resurrection, but also to His incarnate life as a whole, which reunites human nature with God. **Justification**: See notes at 3:24; 5:1.

6:18 **Set free from sin**: See vv. 1–14 and notes. **Slaves of righteousness**: See note for v. 16.

6:20 **Free**: See note on v. 16.

7:20 See note for v. 17.

12:1 See note for 11:36. **Service** (Gr. *latreia*, lit. “bow down”) refers to liturgical service and is better translated “worship” (see 1:9, 25; Heb 9:14). Just as man's failure to worship God led to his downfall (1:20–25), so now true worship is the first expression of mankind's renewal. This true worship is:

(1) **Physical:** We are called to present our **bodies** for worship, meaning both the physical aspect of our nature and our whole human nature in general.

(2) **Living:** A contrast to the old covenant, under which sacrifices were put to death. Under the new covenant, to die sacrificially means also to be resurrected. Thus true worship is a living, dynamic expression of both the believer's faith and the community's faith.

(3) **Holy:** True worship is set apart from the world, both in its form and its expression. Worship that is **acceptable** is patterned after the Kingdom of Heaven (see Is 6:1–7; Heb 8:5) and filled with virtue that transcends earthly existence.

(4) **Reasonable** (Gr. *logike*): This term means more than “logical.” As Jesus Christ is the Logos of God (Jn 1:1), true worship must be “Logos-like,” which means it must be in Christ and according to Christ (see Jn 4:24). True worship is filled with the wisdom and truth of the Son of God, the Word made flesh. To worship *reasonably* means both to worship and to live according to Christ.

13:9 See Mt 22:39, 40.

1:16 See Mt 5:48. The cleanliness code (Lv 11–15) instructed Israel how to prepare for worship (Lv 1–10).

Holiness belongs to God, and we, who cannot attain holiness on our own but receive it from Him, are called to live a holy life before Him. Indeed, Christians are called to holiness in every area of their lives. In the Lord's Prayer we say, “Hallowed be Your Name.” It is not that we want God's name to be made holy by our prayers, but that His name may be made holy in us.

1:23 See Jn 1:12, 13. The Lord's suffering and death is **incorruptible** and **abides forever**, and is the foundation of our baptism through which we are **born again** (see Jn 3:1–6; Rom 6:3–5).

1:4 See Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Php 2:2.

1:9[b] **Patmos**: A small rocky island 40 miles off the western coast of modern Turkey, fifty miles south of Ephesus, to which the Romans exiled criminals. John's preaching must have been considered a seditious threat to the public interest if he was indeed a prisoner there.

6:6[b] This was approximately one day's wage for a worker.

3:6[a] Or *spirit*

4:4[a] Or *made*

6:14[a] Or *by which* (the cross)

6:6[a] Or *and have fallen away*

10:37[a] Or *that which*